

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	13/02/2008
			Consultation Expiry Date:	15/02/2008
Officer			Application Number(s)	
Jenny Fisher			2007/6133/P	
Application Address			Drawing Numbers	
70 Marchmont Street London WC1N 1AB				
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
Change of use of the basement from ancillary storage for the ground floor retail unit (Class A1) to education use (Class D1) to be used in conjunction with a new bookshop on the ground floor.				
Recommendation(s):		Grant planning permission with conditions		
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission		

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	22	No. of responses	02	No. of objections	00
			No. electronic	02		
Summary of consultation responses:						
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify	<p>Having spoken to the applicant <u>Camden Arts and Tourism</u> would be supportive of them being granted the variation on the use of the premises. The proposed activity will be of benefit to the local community and the residents of Camden as a whole. The organisation is self funded and so will not present an additional commitment to Camden Council in the future. Their programme will also be complimentary to other projects and organisations being supported by Camden so adding extra value. Marchmont Street will be a beneficial location due to the mix of uses and residents in the area and also because the road is an important pedestrian route from the British Library to the British Museum and the activities they plan will be of interest to people on this route. The walking route between St. Pancras International/King's Cross to the British Museum is being developed by the Council and partners as a cultural trail and this project will complement that activity.</p> <p><u>The Marchmont Street Association</u> unreservedly supports this application, because it will bring an underutilised and previously inaccessible space into productive use, by providing valuable educational activities which will serve to increase footfall in the locality for the benefit of other Marchmont Street shops, whilst increasing the viability of this new book shop within this historically difficult trading environment.</p>					

Site Description

Vacant retail premises comprising ground floor and basement. Located on the east side of Marchmont Street, close to the junction with Tavistock Place. Upper floors are in residential use. There are separate entrances for the residential apartments and for the shop. The basement has provided storage space and an office associated with the ground floor retail use. The parade of buildings on the opposite side of Marchmont Street are listed. The site is with easy access to a variety of public transport networks. It is also within close proximity to major cultural sites (British Library and British Museum) and a pedestrian route linking them.

Within the Central London Area and a designated Neighbourhood Centre.

Relevant History

None

Relevant policies

Replacement UDP 2006: S1/S2; SD1; SD3; SD6; B4; R2; R7

Camden Planning Guidance: Shop fronts

Assessment

There are no alterations to the shop front proposed. Applicant should be reminded that new signage may require advertisement consent.

The ground floor would be used as a bookshop. The basement would be used as an informal classroom for literary and philosophical seminar discussions to complement the bookshop (Class D1). Up to 20 adults would take part. 1 member of staff would be employed full time in the seminar room and one in the bookshop. Hours of operation would be 10.00 – 23.00 Monday – Saturday and 10.00 – 18.00 Sunday.

Impact

The number of people that could be accommodated within the proposed seminar room is unlikely to create a nuisance to adjoining occupiers by reason of noise or activity. The premises are within close proximity to public transport, covering a number of routes, therefore unlikely to have an adverse impact on the local transport network. The character of the area would not be harmed because the retail use of the ground floor would continue. The use of the ground floor unit as a bookshop would contribute to the character, amenity, function, vitality and viability of the area. The proposal complies with UDP policy R2 concerned with the general impact of retail and entertainment uses and in line with SD6 and the amenity of adjoining occupiers.

The justification for UDP policy R7 declares although the loss of convenience shopping within Neighbourhood Centres will be resisted, the Council is aware that the number of people shopping locally has fallen. As a consequence account will be taken of the history of shop and the prospect of an alternative take up. It is considered that the loss of the basement storage area would not compromise the use of the ground floor for retail purposes. Although situated within a designated Neighbourhood Centre, this retail unit has not been used as a convenience store for a considerable time. The majority of shops in the Street are convenience stores, and the Brunswick Centre provides additional A1/A2/A3/A4 units. The change of use of the basement from A1 to D1 (non residential education centre) is considered acceptable, it would be used in association with the bookshop. Conditions are recommended to restrict the D1 use to that proposed rather than any other within the D1 Use Class, and to ensure that should the use for which the current application for approval is sought cease here, the basement reverts to A1 use. The proposal is in line with policy R7.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed uses (bookshop and seminar rooms) would enhance the vitality and viability of the area and compliment existing service provision for both the local community and visitors attracted by major, and less important, cultural sites within close proximity. Recommend approval subject to conditions as suggested above.

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