

Address:	184 Royal College Street London NW1 9NN		1
Application Number:	2006/5313/P	Officer: Thomas Smith	
Ward:	Cantelowes		
Date Received:	21/11/2006		
Proposal: Change of use of basement, ground and mezzanine level from offices (B1) to alcohol and drug information and advice centre (D1). Drawing Numbers: Site Location Plan; Drawing No JAL/184RCS/PA/01.			
RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY: Grant planning permission subject to conditions and a Section 106 Agreement			
Applicant: Crime Reduction Initiatives 3rd Floor Tower Point 44 North Road BRIGHTON BN1 1YR			

ANALYSIS INFORMATION

Land Use Details:			
	Use Class	Use Description	Floorspace
Existing	B1a Business - Office		175m ²
Proposed	D1 Non-Residential Institution		175m ²

Parking Details:		
	Parking Spaces (General)	Parking Spaces (Disabled)
Existing	0	0
Proposed	0	0

OFFICERS' REPORT

Reason for Referral to Committee: Clause vi. Involving a Section 106 Agreement

1. SITE

- 1.1 This application relates to a 4-storey plus basement terraced property on the north-eastern side of Royal College Street on the junction with Camden Road opposite Camden Road Station.
- 1.2 The site is located within an identified Neighbourhood Centre, the Camden Broadway Conservation Area and the Kentish Town Light Industrial Area.
- 1.3 The authorised use of the property is as an office (Class B1) at ground and basement levels with residential (Class C3) above. There are a variety of uses within the Neighbourhood Centre which extends round onto Camden Road but the area to the north-west along both sides of Royal College Street is predominantly residential.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This application proposes a change of use from office (Class B1) to an alcohol and drug information centre (Class D1) at basement and ground floor levels by Camden's Crimes Reduction Initiative (CRI). The application will also be subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement relating to a Local Management Agreement, which sets out measures to ensure that the proposed use is managed effectively and appropriately and to minimise any impact on the locality. Details of this agreement have been provided.
- 2.2 Based in Camden for Camden people, the purpose of this service to provide substance misusers with advice, information and counselling about drugs, alcohol and wider social issues. This would include one-on-one counselling sessions and structured group work. Clients would be mainly referred to the centre on an appointment basis rather than a 'drop-in' centre and incentives such as food or clothes would not be offered. The service would not involve any medical treatment and drugs and alcohol would not be permitted in the premises.
- 2.3 People who are not from Camden will be directed back to their borough of origin for treatment. Many people, especially those not from the immediate area, will not need to attend the service at all as they can get help by phoning a 24 hour helpline run by the service.
- 2.4 CRI currently operate Camden's Street Services team, which aims to reduce rough sleeping and anti-social street activity in an area. An established social care provider within the London Borough of Camden, CRI have a good track record and are committed to working very closely with the police to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime occurring in your community. Other areas where CRI have worked have witnessed a marked reduction in crime.

2.5 There would be 6 full time staff with an additional 4/5 sessional staff working when required and it is estimated that there would be approx 50 clients per week.

2.7 No external alterations are proposed.

3. RELEVANT HISTORY

3.1 None

4. CONSULTATIONS

Adjoining Occupiers

<i>Number of letters sent</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Total number of responses received</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Number of electronic responses</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Number in support</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Number of objections</i>	<i>11</i>

4.1 Eleven objections have been received, all of which are primarily concerned about the presence of drug and alcohol abusers in the area and the potential for increased crime and anti-social behaviour exacerbating existing problems. This is addressed in paras. 6.7-6.11. Other concerns can be summarised as follows:

- The use does not sit comfortably with the designation of the area as a conservation area – *Response: There is no policy to support the opinion that the proposed use is inappropriate for a conservation area. There are measures put in place to prevent any harm to amenity through conditions and the S106 Legal Agreement.*
- There is already a pharmacy in close proximity to the application site – *Response: The presence of a nearby pharmacy can be accorded little weight. No medical treatment would available at the application property.*
- Whilst drug handouts are not currently proposed, this could change if a different operator took over the premises – *Response: To be addressed by S106 Agreement, see para. 6.11.*
- There are other preferable sites for this type of use in the area – *Response: This application must be considered on its own merits and is considered to comply with UDP policy.*

4.2 The applicant held a 3 hour public meeting on 27th February 2007 at the London Irish Centre. Seventy five invitations were sent to resident and business organizations and other local groups. Nine residents, Councillor Ben Rawlings (Executive Member for Community safety) and Rebecca Harrington (Assistant Director, Strategic Planning and Joint Commissioning, Camden Council and PCT) and the applicant Crime Reduction Initiative (CRI) attended.

4.3 The meeting included an introduction by the two councillors present and a 30

minute presentation by CRI followed by a question and answer session. Residents were also provided with copies of the presentation.

4.4 Additional concerns raised at the meeting are set out below:

- Concern that the drug service proposal will increase any negative impact from the proposal by ABC Chemist for a 100-hour pharmacy in Royal College Street - *Response: The issue of the proposed pharmacy on 63 Camden Road is completely separate to this planning application. It will operate as an independent business and Camden PCT has received an application for this service, which it is considering with due regard to national regulations and is due to make final decision shortly. Camden PCT may chose to commission a range of services from this pharmacy (smoking cessation, supervised methadone, minor ailments) although any decisions would be informed by a pharmaceutical needs assessment. The proposals would not be subject to planning permission.*
- Concern that the proposed drug service, the 100 hr pharmacy and the James Whigg GP surgery (Kentish Town Health Centre, Bartholomew Road, likely to commence construction of soon), which prescribes to drug users will increase the number of service users seeking treatment in a relatively small geographic area - *Response: Please see response above and below.*
- Concern that the proposed drug service will also compound the negative impact of two brothels already located in Royal College Street - *Response: Given the Local management Agreement and additional methods put in place, such as an Acceptable Behaviour Agreement. It is not considered that the proposal will have a negative impact on community safety in the vicinity of the site.*
- Concern that drug related acquisitive crime and disorder will increase due to the presence of drug users or dealers in the area – *Response: Please see above.*
- Residents accepted that treatment services were needed but felt that the location of the service should be elsewhere. St Pancras Hospital was suggested – *Response: This service could not by run from either St Pancras Hospital or Kentish Town Health Centre owing to the location of these services, the layout of the buildings (especially in relation to St Pancras Hospital) and the type of treatment, which could be delivered.*
- Residents asked that CRI provide evidence from residents living and working near similar drug services they operate in London - *Response: CRI operate similar 2/3 tier services in Bromley and Hounslow and has not received any complaints from either service. Evidence will be available for inspection at committee.*

Comments on the consultation process as follows:

- Residents were concerned that the consultation had not been publicized to every household in the locality or given sufficient time for appropriate responses.
- There was a feeling amongst those present that the proposal was presented as a 'done deal' and would be delivered regardless of residents concerns.

- There was an expectation that residents should have been engaged in the discussions that led to the shaping of the proposal.
- Residents requested additional opportunities to engage CRI in relation to the outline proposal.
- Residents requested a timetable in relation to the proposal and its planned implementation.

Response: Adjoining occupiers were consulted as part of the planning consultation process. In addition a site notice was erected near the site. Officers will accept comments made on the proposal up to the date of committee.

5. POLICIES

- 5.1 Set out below are the UDP policies that the proposals have primarily been assessed against, together with officers' view as to whether or not each policy listed has been complied with. However it should be noted that recommendations are based on assessment of the proposals against the development plan taken as a whole together with other material considerations.

Camden Unitary Development Plan 2006

SD1d	Community safety	<i>Complies subject to S106</i>
SD2	Planning obligations	<i>Complies</i>
SD6	Residential amenity	<i>Complies subject to S106</i>
T3	Pedestrians and cycling	<i>Complies</i>
T9	Impact of parking	<i>Complies</i>
R7b	Neighbourhood centres	<i>Complies</i>
E2	Retention of business uses	<i>Complies</i>
E3b	Kentish Town Industrial Area	<i>Complies</i>
C1	New community uses	<i>Complies</i>

6. ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The principal considerations material to the determination of this application are summarised as follows:

Land Use

- 6.2 Policy E3 seeks to resist the loss of Class B1 floorspace within the Kentish Town Industrial Area which could be used for light industrial or local warehousing purposes. The application property is in office (Class B1) use but would not be suitable for use for light industrial or local warehousing purposes due to its size, internal layout, lack of off-street servicing and means of access through a single door.

- 6.3 Policy E2 recognises that when a site is not suitable for the continuation of any business use other than offices, the Council may allow a change to other uses identifying a preference for residential or community uses.
- 6.4 Policy C1 states that permission will be granted for the development of community uses in suitable locations. The application site is located at a highly accessible busy intersection (see para. 6.13) and within an identified neighbourhood centre where there is a variety of Class A1, A2 and A3 type uses and hence an established level of pedestrian activity. The proposal would result in visitors to the property of a similar level to the existing office use. As such the location is considered to be suitable for community use in accordance with this policy.
- 6.5 Policy R7b states that permission will only be granted for development which will not cause harm to the character, function, vitality and viability of the centre. Whilst the proposed use would make a limited contribution to the character, function, vitality and viability of the centre, the existing office use has a similarly limited role and it is considered that an appropriate balance of uses would be retained.
- 6.6 The proposed change of use accords with the UDP land use policies and is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle subject to compliance with other UDP policies.

Community Safety

- 6.7 A key consideration and the primary concern of all objectors is the impact of the proposal on community safety. Policy SD1d states that proposals will be required to incorporate measures to address personal safety including fear of crime, security and crime prevention.
- 6.8 CCTV is proposed to monitor the reception and external areas to discourage anti-social or criminal behaviour. An informative is attached to advise that a separate planning application may be required for external CCTV cameras.
- 6.9 Given the manner in which the proposal is intended to operate, and the numbers of clients involved, it is not considered that the scheme is likely to result in any significant community safety risk.
- 6.10 Notwithstanding all of the above, there is undoubtedly a fear of crime associated with the use and this is also a legitimate planning concern. Furthermore, it is difficult to control the manner in which the premises are operated through planning conditions and there could be community safety problems if a less responsible group were to take over the running of the service.
- 6.11 In order to address these issues, the applicant has agreed to provide a Local Management Agreement to include procedures for effective management of the street activity of clients and that the operator facilitates regular community liaison meetings. That process would need to be developed using the Community Council Approach (an external management model) including appropriate service providers, street wardens and the police to discuss and address any safety concerns engendered by the presence of the project. This Local Management Agreement

would be secured through a Section 106 Agreement as referred to in paragraph 2.1.

Residential Amenity

- 6.12 There are no restrictions on the hours of operation of the existing office. The proposed hours of operation are 0830 to 2000 hours Mondays to Saturdays with clients attending from 0930 onwards. It is considered that these times are acceptable given the location of the premises. In addition to the 6 full time staff and 4/5 sessional workers, the number of clients is anticipated to be approx 50 per week although up to 12 clients may attend at a time for occasional group work sessions.
- 6.13 It is acknowledged that there is often a fear that such uses will bring crime and anti-social behaviour to an area and some residents have objected to the proposal on these grounds. Such uses can sit uncomfortably in predominantly residential areas as the comings and goings tend to be greater than residential uses and are more noticeable. However, given the site's neighbourhood centre location surrounded by other retail uses, the number of clients proposed and measures put in place to control its operation it is difficult to prove demonstrable harm from the proposed use.
- 6.14 In view of the current work that CRI do within the borough and the strategies put forward by the CRI to ensure that the centre operates with minimal disruption to the locality, it is considered that another occupier using the premises for a similar use would not necessarily operate in the same manner. For this reason it is considered necessary to make any approval personal to CRI.

Transport and Access

- 6.15 The application site is has excellent public transport links being located on a number of bus routes, opposite Camden Road Station and within 5 minutes walking distance of Camden Town Underground Station.
- 6.16 Due to the public transport links, the nature of the clientele of the proposed use and that it would serve a generally local need, it is not considered that the proposal would be likely to attract any more vehicles than the existing office use and is therefore acceptable in highway safety and transport terms.
- 6.17 Disabled access and toilet facilities would be provided at ground floor level in accordance with DDA requirements and is welcomed.
- 6.18 Whilst it is not considered that the proposed use would have any significant on-street parking implications, other Class D1 uses could be more problematic in this regard. Therefore, a condition is attached to prevent the use of the building as a place of worship or a day nursery on transport and residential amenity grounds.

Sustainability

- 6.19 The application does not propose any sustainable improvements to the existing building. However, given that the application is for a change of use only with no external alterations, it would be not be reasonable to require Policy SD9 to be addressed in this instance.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed change of use is considered to be acceptable in principle and would not have any significantly harmful impact on residential amenity or community safety subject to a legal agreement to require a Local Management Agreement.

8. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 8.1 Members are referred to the note from the Legal Division at the start of the Agenda.

9. RECOMMENDATION 1: Grant planning permission subject to conditions and a Section 106 Agreement to secure a Local Management Agreement

10. RECOMMENDATION 2: That in the event of the Section 106 Agreement referred to in Recommendation 1 not being signed, the Head of Development Control be given authority to refuse the application for the following reason:

1. The proposed development, in the absence of a legal agreement to secure a Local Management Agreement, would increase fear of crime and compromise community safety in the locality, contrary to policies SD1(d) and SD6 of the London Borough of Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006.