



PLANNING REPORT

In respect of an application for
mezzanine floor restaurant.

At the O2 Centre, Finchley Road

On behalf of X Leisure

March 2007

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning Potential have been instructed by X Leisure to submit a planning application for proposals for an additional mezzanine floor for A3 class use within the existing O2 Centre.
- 2.1 The O2 Centre was granted permission in September 1996. The facility is an urban entertainment centre providing an important hub to the Finchley Road. HOK architects designed the landmark building which was to be themed. The interior reflected this theme, although has evolved overtime.
- 2.2 The centre is now looking tired and is in need of an upgrade. The vitality and viability of the centre needs to be maintained through the provision of additional uses and initiatives, to provide a continually fresh environment for visitors and operators alike.
- 2.3 The most recent changes in the O2 Centre have seen two A3 units consolidated to provide one A1 use with additional space created through the construction of a mezzanine floor and an extension to the front of the units. Habitat has taken the place of Pizza Hut and Old Orleans. As a result the centre has seen a reduction in the overall amount of A3 floorspace available.
- 2.4 There is now an opportunity to further enhance the offer within the centre to widen the range and choice available.
- 2.5 This proposal is also accompanied by further initiatives which aim to improve the centre. In addition to the new floorspace proposed by this application, two further proposals have been submitted for a new café and juice bar in the central atrium. The aspiration is that these

applications will enable the centre to be brought up to date and provide a new sense of vitality to the public areas.

- 2.6 Further details of the application proposals are contained in section two of this Supporting Planning Statement as well as the Design and Access Statement.
- 2.7 The site context and planning history are dealt with in Section Three.
- 2.8 Section Four considers the proposals in relation to the relevant planning policy in place as well as any further material considerations. This is followed by our conclusions in Section Five.

2 APPLICATION PROPOSALS

- 2.1 This application seeks approval for the introduction of additional floorspace as a type of mezzanine floor above part of the void created by the central atrium. It will provide 315m² of new floorspace for use as a restaurant (Use Class A3).
- 2.2 The new unit is to be located between the existing cinema and another A3 unit currently occupied by the Fine Burger Company at first floor level.
- 2.3 The mezzanine floor will sit partially over the existing atrium void. Frameless glass walls and balustrades will separate the open area and the new restaurant (as shown on drawing 1877/SK/11). This design is to ensure there is no loss of light to the open atrium space below.
- 2.4 The new unit will be accessed through a shutter frontage to match the existing units. During opening hours this shutter will not be visible to ensure the open feeling between units and throughout the centre is maintained.
- 2.5 The overall design of the floorspace will be modern and use similar materials so will therefore be compatible with the vision for the centre as a whole.

3 SITE CONTEXT AND PLANNING HISTORY

Planning History

- 3.1 The schedule at appendix two outlines a brief summary of the relevant planning history of the O2 Centre after the original permission was granted for the redevelopment of the site in September 1996 (Application reference – 9501238R2).
- 3.2 As illustrated in the planning history schedule, the list is extensive as the centre has evolved over time since the original construction. The application proposals represent an initiative to continue the enhancement and improvement of the centre over time.

Site Context

- 3.3 The O2 Centre is a large retail and leisure complex built in the 1990s. An internal mall contains a variety of A1/A3 units as well as a cinema, health club, nursery, community facilities and a Sainsbury foodstore to the rear.
- 3.4 The centre lies on the west side of Finchley Road and is wholly within the defined shopping centre. It is located just north of the tube station and has its own car park and service yard at the rear. It forms a key anchor to Finchley Road and its vitality and viability are crucial to the role and function of the shopping centre and its continued success.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY AND ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 As stated the O2 Centre is a key anchor to Finchley Road shopping centre and as such is intrinsic to the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole. It is essential to protect and enhance the O2 Centre in this respect.

Planning Policy

- 4.2 The Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan adopted in June 2006 provides the relevant policy framework for assessing these proposals. Town centres, retail and entertainment issues are considered in Section 6 of the plan.
- 4.3 Policy R1 of the Adopted Camden Replacement UDP (June 2006) states that the Council will grant planning permission for development for food and drink uses in Town Centres. Developments should be of an appropriate scale and character for the centre to which they relate. This application, therefore, meets the requirements of Policy R1 as it is of an appropriate scale and character of both the O2 Centre and Finchley Road.
- 4.4 Policy R2 considers food and drink uses and licensed entertainment. In particular, under Policy R2, the Council will consider the following factors:
- The effect of the development on shopping provision (Use Class A1)
 - The effect of the development on nearby residential uses and amenity, and any prejudice to future residential development nearby
 - Any record of harm to amenity caused

- Any record of littering or anti-social behaviour
- Noise and vibration generated inside and outside the site
- The effect of the development on ease of movement on the footway

These proposals can be deemed to be entirely in accordance with Policy R2. As the new unit will be situated within the existing O2 Centre the character or amenity of the area will not be compromised. The operation will be under the same controls as the rest of the Centre.

4.5 It has been confirmed by Camden Borough Council that there have been no reports of littering or anti-social behaviour arising from the O2 Centre.

4.5 Policy R3 of the adopted UDP exists to protect A1 uses in the area. As this application is proposing additional A3 floorspace it will not result in the loss of any A1 floorspace or effect the existing A1 space within the Centre. The recent change of use of the two A3 units on the ground floor and construction of a mezzanine floor will provide a net gain of A1 floor space in the O2 Centre and as such Finchley Road shopping centre, even if this application is included in the calculation.

4.6 The application site is clearly very well served by a number of different methods of public transport and therefore meets the requirements of Policy T1 which encouraged sustainable transport development.

Assessment

4.4 These proposals will act to improve the range and choice available at the O2 Centre in order to promote the vitality and viability of not only the Centre but the whole area.

- 4.5 There are no controversial elements associated with this application as the new unit will adhere to the existing opening hours of the O2 Centre and the amenity of the area will remain unharmed.
- 4.6 These proposals are entirely in accordance with the aforementioned planning policies and should therefore be deemed acceptable.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 In summary this application aims to improve and enhance the existing O2 Centre, to maintain the success of centre and as an important anchor to Finchley Road. The proposals meet up to date policy considerations and we respectfully request that the proposals are granted consent.