

The Development Control Manager
London Borough of Camden
Development Control Planning Services
Town Hall
Argyle Street
London
WC1H 8ND

FAO Mr Gavin Sexton

6 June 2014

Our ref. 14/938
SUBMITTED VIA PLANNING PORTAL

Dear Sir,

277A GRAY'S INN ROAD, LONDON WC1X 8QF

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR TEMPORARY USE OF WAREHOUSE (CLASS B8) AS A
COMMERCIAL CAR PARK (SUI GENERIS) AND STORAGE (CLASS B8)**

On behalf of our client, Regal GI Limited, we enclose a planning application to regularise the temporary use of 277a Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8QF as a commercial car park, with ancillary offices, and storage.

Planning permission is sought for:

Retention of the ground floor of the building (Class B8) for temporary use as a car park, with ancillary office (Sui Generis), and associated storage and distribution (Class B8); for a period of six months.

The retrospective application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (ref. PP-03429428) and comprises the following:

- Application form and certificates;
- Community Infrastructure Levy Additional Information Form;
- Planning application drawings:
 - Site Location Plan (dwg ref. 126 – 0100);
 - Existing Ground Floor Plan (dwg. 0101); and
 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan (dwg. 1101).

A cheque for £385.00 made payable to the London Borough of Camden to cover application fee will follow by post. Please could you issue a receipt.

a. The Proposal

The use of the site commenced in March 2014 and the applicant is seeking a temporary planning permission to regularise the use for a six month period.

The car park provides 100 spaces. Vehicles access the site from the existing site entrance on Gray's Inn Road. There is sufficient circulation space within the building to allow vehicles to enter and exit the building in forward gear. The St Chad's street entrance is not used.

The car park is open Monday to Friday between the hours of 06:30hrs to 20:00hrs and Saturdays 06:30hrs to 17:00hrs. The car park, operated by Rainbow Car Park & Valet Services Ltd, employs three members of staff and is manned during opening hours.

b. The Site and its Surroundings

The site comprises a vacant warehouse (Class B8) building. The site is approximately 0.2853 hectares (ha). The site is accessed via 12 St Chad's Street and 277a Gray's Inn Road.

The building was last used as a storage facility for cars and a workshop (for car repairs and servicing) by Stratstone Ltd, under planning permission LPA ref. 8700953. In this respect the current temporary car parking use is similar to the long term historical use of the site.

The site is in the Kings Cross Conservation Area and the audit for this area identifies that the building does not have any architectural merit.

The site is adjacent to Grade II listed buildings at No's 13 and 14 St Chad's Street. 277-295 Gray's Inn Road and 11 St Chad's Street, also adjacent to the site, are identified as buildings which make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

The area has a mixed character in terms of land use, urban form and activity. The site is bordered by the seven storey residential blocks on Birkenhead estate to the immediate east; four to five storey buildings at 275-305 Gray's Inn Road (with commercial uses); four storey terraces at 11, 13 and 14 St Chad's Street and a four storey building at 55 Argyle Street (most of which are at least in part in residential use). Gray's Inn Road is predominantly commercial in character.

Allocations/Designations

According to the adopted Proposals Map (2010), the site is subject to the following planning designations:

- Central Activities Zone (CAZ);
- Central London Area;
- Kings Cross / St Pancras Conservation Area; and
- Strategic viewing corridor (part between Parliament Hill and St Paul's Cathedral).

The site is also identified for development in Camden's Site Allocation Development Plan Document (DPD), adopted in 2013. It is referred to as Site Number 4 and has been allocated for mixed use flexible employment floorspace and permanent (Class C3) accommodation.

c. The Context of this Application

The purpose of this application is site security and public safety.

Regal GI Limited are in advance discussions with the Council regarding a comprehensive scheme for redevelopment of this allocated development site. The applicant is committed to investing in the area and has recently held a public exhibition (on 2 and 3 June 2014) to introduce, and get feedback on, the draft proposals. It is anticipated that an application for the site's comprehensive redevelopment

will be submitted in June 2014. A decision on the application is anticipated in October 2014 in line with the Planning Performance Agreement that our client has been entered into with the Council.

The temporary use of 277a Gray's Inn Road has arisen primarily to ensure that site is occupied and remains safe and secure, and it also provides an opportunity to generate economic activity from an otherwise vacant and redundant site; until such time that the comprehensive redevelopment of the site is approved.

It is difficult to find a suitable use for the site given a) the size of the building, b) the need to ensure efficient management and security, and c) the inherent temporary nature of any new use given the comprehensive proposals and planning programme described above.

The long term historic use of the site was as a car storage warehouse. The previous occupiers of the site (Stratstone Jaguar Land Rover) used the site to park and store vehicles. This occurred for a short period of time throughout the year with most activity taking place when new cars were being stored for number plate issue and licence regulation. In this respect, the proposed temporary use of a building as a car park is very similar in planning terms to the long term use of the site.

d. Assessment and Policy Considerations

The key planning considerations of this application are:

- principle of use;
- design; and
- neighbouring amenity.

Principle of Use

The continued temporary use of 277a Gray's Inn Road needs to be considered in the context of the site's lawful B8 use and its previous use by Stratstone Ltd, since the late 1980s, for car storage and repairs/servicing. There are several similarities which can be drawn between the nature and operation of the previous and lawful use. For example, cars can still drive in and out of the site, and park, but previously these were stored for a few days, rather than a few hours. The storage and ancillary office elements of the scheme are considered to be acceptable.

The car park is commercially operated and is offered for general use on a temporary basis. The opening hours are limited to protect the amenity of neighbours but are sufficiently wide to help mitigate the impact of generated trips on the morning and evening peaks, ie. as early as 06:30hrs and as late as 20:00hrs.

Access is gained to the site via the existing entrance off Gray's Inn Road, there have been no alterations to the crossover or pavement since the site was used by Stratstone Ltd.

As explained above, Regal GI Ltd, as freehold owners of the site, are committed to bringing the site forward for redevelopment and are currently in the process of finalising pre-application discussions with the Council. Granting this application for temporary use would not jeopardise this redevelopment in any way.

The building has been vacant for a while and this application provides an opportunity to contribute to the local economy and it provides employment for three people, on a site which would have otherwise remained vacant until the redevelopment of the site was approved.

The use of the site as a car park does, in part, conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the relevant Development Plan policies which generally resist new off-street public car parks. However, the use of the site is only intended to be temporary in nature. Therefore, in the round,

taking into consideration the planning benefits of the scheme, the principle of temporary continued use is acceptable.

Design

No external alterations have been made to the existing industrial warehouse building's fabric, so the impact on the appearance of the conservation area is considered to be unchanged. Similarly, when the current operation is considered in the context of the lawful and previous use of the site by Stratstone Ltd, it does not detract from character of the conservation area.

The Grade II listed buildings to the north west of the site, no.13 and 14 St Chad's Street, are unaffected by the operation of the site. Visually there are no external alterations which affect the setting of these buildings, and the use is contained within the building so there is no additional impact on the listed buildings in terms of noise, disturbance and pollution. The same applies to the non-designated heritage assets in close proximity to the site (277-295 Gray's Inn Road and 11 St Chad's Street).

In conclusion the continued temporary the use of the building will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and will not detract from the setting of the neighbouring designated and non-designated heritage assets. Therefore, the proposal accords with the NPPF, Core Strategy Policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) and Development Management Policy DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage).

Neighbouring Amenity

The operation is contained within the building, so there is minimal impact on neighbouring amenity in terms of noise, vibration, fumes, and disturbance. Furthermore, there are reasonably restricted operating hours in place which do not allow parking on Sundays and in the week the car park is only open until 20:00hrs and 17:00hrs on Saturdays.

The temporary use of the site provides an opportunity to secure the building, it detracts vandalism and anti-social behaviour, which helps protect the character and amenity of the area.

Therefore, the proposal accords with the NPPF, Core Strategy Policy CS5 (Managing growth) and Development Management Policy DP26 (Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours).

e. Conclusion

On balance we consider that this planning application merits approval. The temporary car park does not have no adverse impact on residential amenity or the local transport network. Given this permission will only be temporary, the continued operation will not materially affect the wider redevelopment potential of the site.

We trust the information provided is sufficient to enable the Council to enable the Council to validate and determine this application. Please contact Kieron Hodgson on 020 3435 4218, or Rebecca Dewey on 020 3725 3849, of this office in the first instance should you have any questions.

Yours faithfully



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cc. Mr P Eden, Regal GI Ltd
Mr Bakall, London Borough of Camden