

Planning Reference - PP-03476364

12 Highgate Road

Justification for loss of A1

Paragraph 23 of the NPPF outlines that LPA's should recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality. The shell of the ground floor unit was completed during the construction of the residential units (consent granted 2008). An end user was never identified and the unit has never been fully completed or occupied. The building as it currently stands is not supporting the viability and vitality of the Kentish Town Town Centre.

Policy CS7 of the adopted Core Strategy (2010) resists the loss of shops where this would affect the character and function of the area. As part of the previously consented application in 2013, Leslie Perkins Chartered Surveyors marketed the site from January 2011. Their marketing targeted A1 occupiers focusing mainly on food shops and show rooms and offering the space as a flexible unit (potentially divisible up to 3 units). As the ground floor has never been occupied for retail purposes it currently does not contribute to the function of the wider area. Co-Op have taken a lease for part of the building, however did not require the full amount of space. Instead the reoccupation of a long term vacant unit in the other part would contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre should be acceptable in this location. Particularly given the Council recently granted a change of use to A3, and that permitted development rights exist from A1 to A2.

Policy DP12 of Camden's development management document states that the Council will ensure the development of shopping, services, food, drink, entertainment and other town centre uses does not cause harm to the character, function, vitality and viability of a centre, the local area or the amenity of neighbours. The building is detached from the main retail centre. There is no significant retail nearby and the loss of an A1 use would not cause harm to any other town centre uses located within the main high street near to the train station. The proposal is to change the use of part of the building to another 'town centre' use, whilst around two thirds remains as an A1 use, which will be sublet to Co-Op. The proposed unit, an estate agents, will facilitate approximately 20 employees, which will not only contribute to the economic growth but also help to enhance the town centre, in comparison to the previous vacant building.