

Planning Support Statement

3 Brecknock Road
London
N7 0LB

Prepared by: Planning.Solutions



1. Introduction

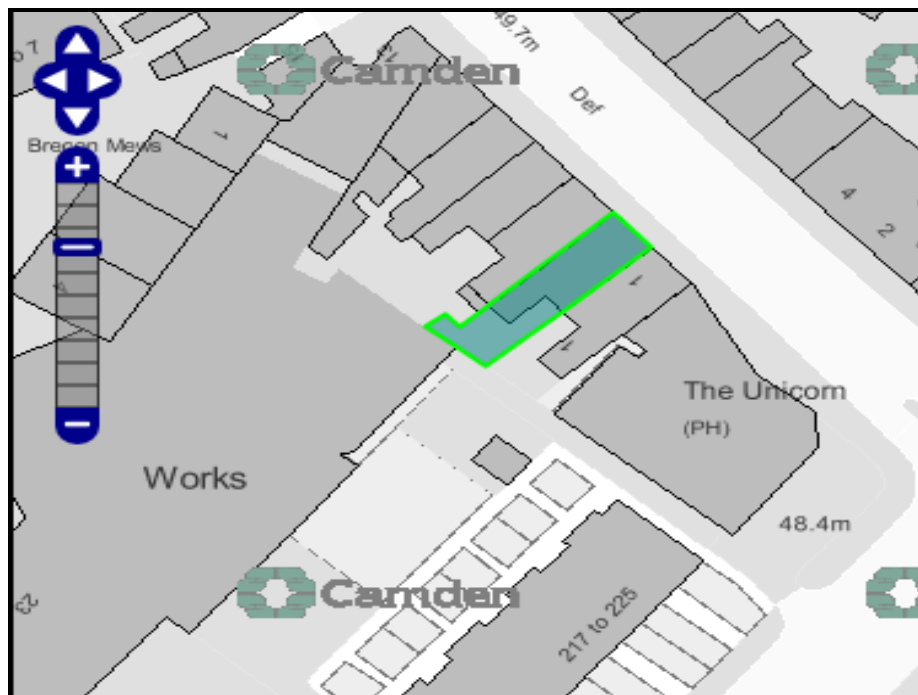
This document has been drafted to inform the application for change of use of the planning unit at 3 Brecknock Road, London. The change of use would result in the premises being converted from its current A1 (Retail) designation to a use falling within D1 (Vet Surgery).

It is anticipated that the proposed change of use would retain approximately 30sq.m of retail floor space to the front section of the unit that would be visible from the public realm.

2. Context

The site is located within the London Borough of Camden and constitutes a commercial unit which previously traded as a Sharif's Cash and Carry on the southern side of Brecknock Road. The building is part of a terrace of 12 mainly three storey buildings with shop fronts at ground floor level and some residential above.

The buildings are stock brick with slate roofs and have stucco decoration at first and second floor. The terrace includes nos. 1-13 (odd) Brecknock Road. The site lies within Brecknock Road neighbourhood Shopping Centre. The unit is located in an area characterised by similar retail units as shown in figures 2 and 3 below.



Location Plan

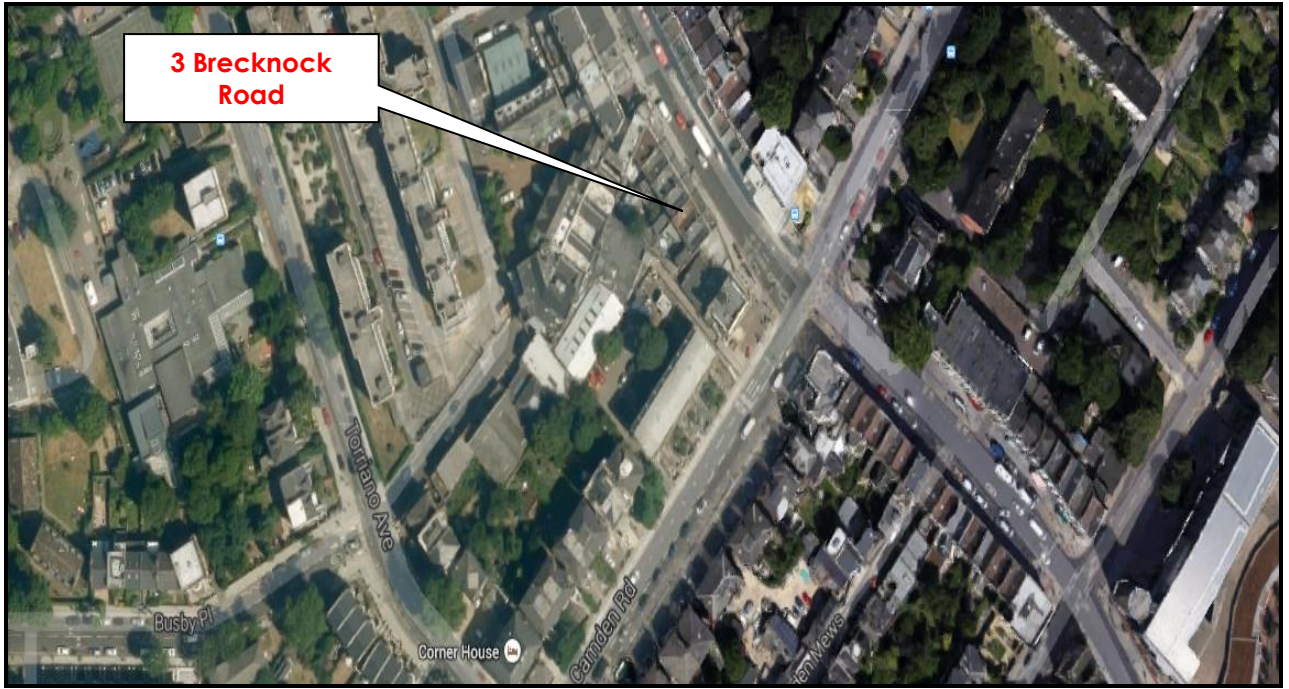


Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

3. Planning History

8802191	3 Brecknock Road NW5	Erection of a first storey rear extension to the existing residential maisonette on the first and second floors as shown on drawing nos 56/04-A & 56/05-C and revised on 5th August 1988.	FINAL DECISION	30-03-1988	Grant Full or Outline Perm. with Condit.
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8480015	3 Brecknock Road N7	The display of an internally illuminated fascia sign measuring 5.185m(17ft) x 0.965m(3ft2ins) as shown on your submitted drawing numbered 4555.	FINAL DECISION	31-01-1984	Grant Approval for Advertisement
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4. Analysis

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into effect on 27 March 2013.

In paragraph 2 the NPPF re-enforces the fact that planning law requires that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It goes on to state that the NPPF should be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Further guidance is set out in paragraph 215 as to what would constitute an up to date Local Plan. The NPPF states that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with this framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

The London Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework both require town centre boundaries and primary and secondary frontages to be defined, and a sequential approach to approving sites for main town centre uses. Existing centre sites should be used where possible, then edge of centre and out of centre locations considered in that order.

Town Centre Uses

The development of new shops or other town centre uses, particularly when they are large in scale, can have an impact on other centres. In line with government guidance the Council will seek to protect the vibrancy and vitality of its centres.

The Council will ensure that development in its centres is appropriate to the character, size and role of the centre in which it is located, and does not cause harm to neighbours, the local area or other centres. Shop and service uses (in use classes A1 and A2) and markets are considered suitable for all levels of centre.

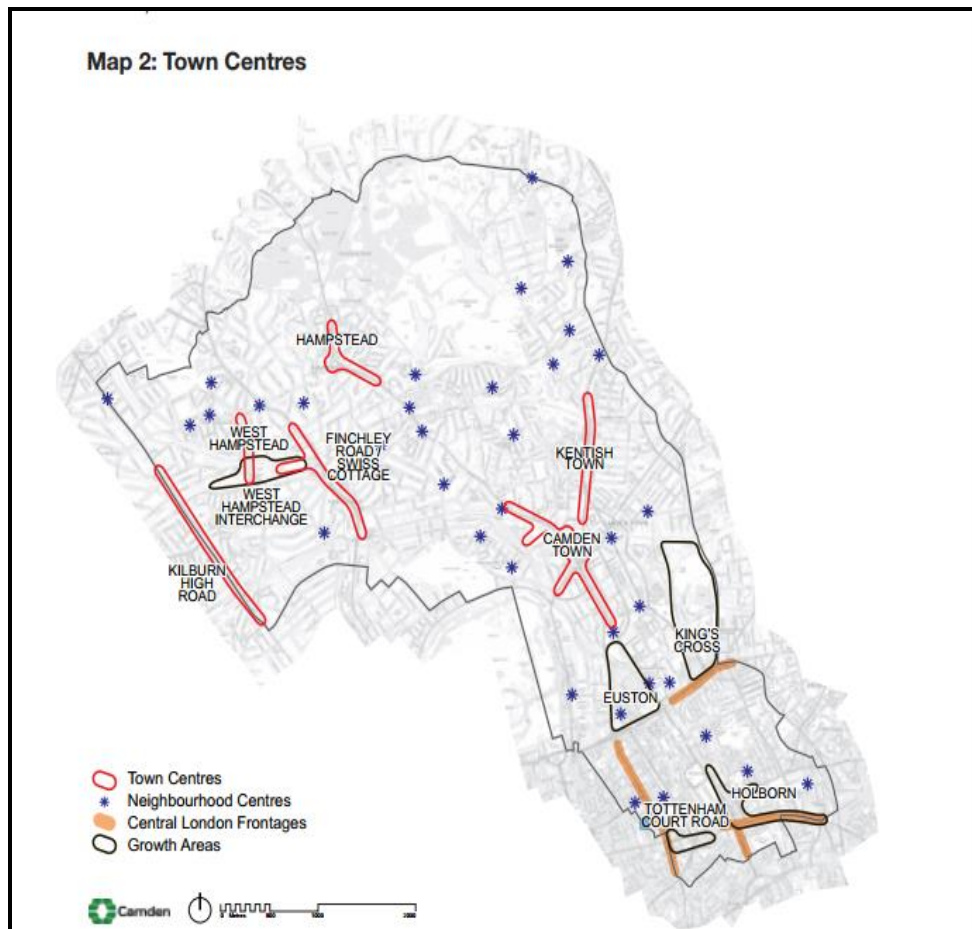
The success of a centre is strongly influenced by the variety and choice of shops, services and other uses within it. Policy DP12 in Camden Development Policies sets out more detail on the Council's approach to protecting the character, function, vitality and viability of our centres through managing the mix of uses in them and ensuring that development does not cause harm to a centre, to its neighbours or to the local area.

Small and independent shops contribute to the character and diversity of Camden's centres by adding to the choice and variety of shopping facilities available, and avoiding centres being dominated by national multiple

retailers. The Council will seek to promote the provision of small units where appropriate and independent shops where possible.

The Council will also seek to protect shops, including those on small shopping parades, where their loss would cause harm to a centre or local area.

The detailed approach to protecting shops and promoting small and independent businesses is set out in Camden Development Policies (policy DP10).



Neighbourhood Centres

Camden has over 30 neighbourhood centres which cater for the day-to-day shopping and service needs of their local populations. They contain a range of uses including shops, food and drinks uses, doctor's and dentist's surgeries and financial and professional services, and often have housing on upper floors. Housing is the Council's preferred use above ground floor level in neighbourhood centres and we will promote the residential use of vacant or underused floors.

Commercial and community uses are considered acceptable uses of upper floors providing they do not cause harm to the amenity of existing residents or introduce activity that would prejudice future residential use on other levels or in neighbouring properties.

The Council will seek to retain a strong element of convenience shopping for local residents in Camden's neighbourhood centres and ensure that any development in them does not harm the function, character or success of that centre. We will take into account the individual character of the centre when assessing development proposals but, as a guide, we will resist schemes that would result in less than half of ground floor premises in a neighbourhood centre from being in retail use or in more than three consecutive premises being in non-retail use. We will also take into account any history of vacancy in shop units and the prospect of achieving an alternative occupier for vacant premises.

Applications for food, drink and entertainment uses will be carefully assessed to minimise the impact on local residents and the local area.

Policy DP10 - Helping and promoting small and independent shops

Small shops, often run by independent traders and providing specialist shopping, help to sustain the diversity, vibrancy and character of our centres and smaller shopping areas and provide suitable premises for local businesses.

However, they are threatened by the continuing trend towards fewer, larger shops. Many residents have expressed support for measures to encourage small shops and initiatives to encourage and promote retail diversity and entrepreneurialism in the borough.

Camden has many individual shops, traditional pubs, cafés and small shopping and service parades, complementing the role of larger town and neighbourhood centres. These provide for the day-to-day needs of the local population, workers and visitors and help provide locally accessible facilities for people with mobility difficulties. They also play an important social role in the surrounding community, as well as contributing to the character and identity of the local area.

The Council wishes to retain local shops outside centres where possible, including those on small shopping parades.

Therefore, we will resist the loss of shops (Use Class A1) unless there is alternative provision within 5-10 minutes walk (approximately 400-800 metres), depending on the scale of provision. The Council will further also take into account the viability of the premises for the existing use, in particular any history of vacancy in a shop unit and the prospect of achieving an alternative occupier.

However, we recognise that, as the number of people shopping locally has declined, it is unlikely that all shops outside centres will continue to find an occupier.

Neighbourhood Centres outside of the Central London Area

Camden's Neighbourhood Centres provide for the day-to-day needs of people living, working or staying nearby. They generally consist of groupings of between five and fifty premises which focus on convenience shopping. Other uses that can make a positive contribution to the character, function, vitality and viability of these centres include:

- financial and professional services;
- food and drink uses;
- laundrettes;
- doctors;
- dentists; and
- **veterinary surgeries.**

As a guide the Council will resist schemes that result in:

- less than 50% of ground floor premises being in retail use; or
- more than 3 consecutive premises being in non-retail use.

The Council will take into account any history of vacancy in the centre and the viability of retail use at that location.

Parking

It is anticipated that parking will be provided within the existing parking areas available in the vicinity of the application site as this would represent a continuation of the existing status quo.

Refuse

The proposed use would utilise the existing refuse collection facilities available and it is not envisaged that the proposed use would put any greater pressure on this services compared to the current use.

Operating hours

The proposed hours would reflect those of other uses within the immediate vicinity of the site and would be as follows:

Monday – Friday – 8:00 to 20:00

Saturday – 9:00 to 17:00 and

Sundays and Public Holidays – 9:00 to 13:00

Calculate the percentages of uses for frontages

A frontage will start at a road junction or where there are ground floor residential uses in the run, at the beginning of the first two consecutive non-residential uses at ground floor level. Frontages may continue around corners, or across entrances to premises above or rear, and may include isolated ground floor residential uses, but are ended at roadways that interrupt the run of premises.

The percentage is calculated as the number of premises in the specified use (e.g. food, drink and entertainment use) as a percentage of the total number of premises within the frontage. All calculations should be based upon the existing lawful use of the properties and valid planning permissions with potential to be implemented, and refer only to ground floor uses.

In some instances a shop unit may include a number of addresses, such as where two shops have been combined into one. For the purposes of this guidance they will be counted as one unit.

In the example below there are 11 different addresses within the commercial frontage, but only 8 individual shop premises. The percentage should be calculated on the basis of the 8 individual uses. For example, if there are two individual A3 uses within the frontage, this would account for 25 per cent of the frontage.

With regard to the application site the applicant's research shows as follows:

1. The Unicorn Pub
2. Bangalore Brasserie
3. Sharif's cash and carry - A1
4. T.R. Hardware - A1
5. Hair by Demetra -A1
6. Select dry Cleaners - A1
7. Universal Dry Cleaners - A1
8. Muya restaurant)
9. Picture Framers - A1

10. Star Fish Bar
11. Aura Pharmacy (a retail pharmacy) - A1
12. Classic Shoe Repairs (shoe shop and cobblers) - A1

From the above it is evident that there are 8/12 A1 use units in the run of shops.
The change of use would result in 7/12 retail units.



Conclusion

Based on an assessment of the details contained in this statement I conclude that the Council supports Neighbourhood Centres which provide for the day-to-day needs of people living, working or staying nearby. In achieving these objective these centres generally consist of groupings of between five and fifty premises which focus on convenience shopping.

Other uses that can make a positive contribution to the character, function, vitality and viability of these centres include:

- financial and professional services;
- food and drink uses;
- launderettes;
- doctors;
- dentists; and
- **veterinary surgeries.**

For this particular Change of use it is noted that Policy CS7 seeks to promote successful and vibrant neighbourhood centres through resisting the loss of retail units where this would cause harm to the character and function of the respective centre.

This is supported by policy DP10 which seeks to protect shop premises suitable for small and independent businesses.

CPG5 provides further guidance on how to assess the impact that the loss of a retail unit may have on a neighbourhood centre. It states that proposals which result in less than 50% or more of the ground floor of a frontage being in non-retail use, or 3 consecutive non-retail uses, should be resisted.

The site is part of a frontage of 12 units. From the information available it appears that 8 of the units are in A1 Retail Use and that the proposed change of use will change this to 7 units being retained for retail purposes. The proposal would not result in more than 3 consecutive units being in non-retail use.

It is also the case that the overall aim of policies CS7 and DP10 is to promote successful and vibrant centres which means that regard must also be had to the proposed replacement use, which in this case is a veterinary surgery (Class D1).

Para 3.59 of CPG5 lists 'veterinary surgeries' as a complimentary use which contributes to the character and function of Neighbourhood Centres. What is more, policies CS10 and DP15 seek to provide a range of community facilities in order to meet the needs of the Borough's growing population.

In addition to the above and as stated earlier, the proposed change of use would retain approximately 30sq.m of retail floor space to the front section of the unit that would be visible from the public realm thereby retaining the appearance of a retail unit.

Weighing these policy considerations, I conclude that the change of use of this site to a veterinary surgery would not reduce the number of retail units and will also have no detrimental affect on the character and function of the Neighbourhood Centre, particularly having regard to its proximity to a range of other shops, and would maintain the character and function of the Neighbourhood Centre. This accords with policies CS7, CS10, DP10 and DP15.