

13 HAWLEY CRESCENT AND 29 KENTISH TOWN ROAD

PLANNING DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT:

COMMERCIAL OFFICE FLOORSPACE:

INTRODUCTION:

The applicants have submitted a statement which outlines the needs of the of the office users. In summary the applicants need to provide more natural light into the office floorspace. This is a particular requirement of the proposed office users.

PLANNING ISSUES

1. **EMPLOYMENT PROVISION.**

The proposals aim to facilitate the use of vacant of offices within a mixed use scheme granted planning permission 2009 under planning reference 2009/3072/P. The planning permission was for:

Redevelopment of site to provide a mixed use building comprising 1,369sqm of commercial floorspace (Class 131/138) at ground and basement level and 114 student accommodation units at the upper four levels fronting Kentish Town Road and upper part four/five levels fronting Hawley Crescent.

The applicants have been in discussions with Camden Council's Employment Strategy Development team to discuss our plans for WorkLife which they have been extremely supportive of. The applicants hope to work closely with the Council on an on-going basis to promote small business in Camden and to offer workspace and businesses support to as many entrepreneurs and SMEs as possible.

In addition it is considered the mix of small business office space with student accommodation could lead to interaction between the uses. With entrepreneurial students finding space to expand the ideas and also employers finding high calibre employees on their door step. This mix could be exciting and provide an employment stepping for the locality.

It should also be noted that in 2013 planning application 2013/6908/P for the change of use of the basement offices to Use Classes D1/D2 was refused, the planning officer made a number of pertinent and lucid comments regarding the use of the offices which have been copied below

"In this instance, the employment floorspace is new and purpose built space, therefore built with the needs of modern employers in mind. Indeed, it is noted that as part of the 2009 application the applicant submitted several different floor plans showing how the space could be flexibly divided in to smaller spaces such as studio and creative spaces to meet the needs of small and medium sized businesses (SME's). In light of this it is considered that this space is flexible and fully equipped to meet the needs of modern employers and therefore should be safeguarded in terms of Policy CS8."

"With respect to the B1 use at the site the applicants have stated that the space is too large for single occupation and difficult to sub-let; the lighting is unsuitable in both levels and the lack of car parking spaces puts people off. On the issue of sub-letting and the space being too large for a single occupier, this could be easily overcome by indicating to prospective tenants on the sales brochure how flexible the space actually is. The applicants provided this information as part of the supporting information for the 2009 application and it clearly shows how the space could be used by start-ups and creative industries, hence the argument that the space is too large for a single occupier is not accepted. **Office space does not generally need to benefit from great daylight levels to be lettable,** but the ground floor space does have lengthy road frontage and will benefit from daylight levels, **despite the depth of the floorplate.** In any case poor lighting is not necessarily a barrier to say a small studio company who will rely on their own equipment. The lack of car parking is not considered to be a deterrent due to the fact that the site is located within Camden town centre and walking distance from the tube and many buses routes pass the site on Kentish Town Road."

It is clear the planning officer was quite correct, the applicants share the vision for the floorspace. It is noted reference is made to the light and this is a distinct disadvantage of the premises that the applicants have identified. The applicants are experts in the provision of this type of accommodation and therefore significant weight should be attached to their aspirations and conclusions of the office space.

The proposals would be consistent with Camden Core strategy. In particular Policy CS7 Promoting Camden's Centres and Policy CS8 Promoting a Successful and Inclusive Economy.

2. PARTIAL LOSS OF BROWN ROOF.

The scheme would also result in some loss of brown roof approved as part of the planning conditions relating to planning permission 2009/3072/P. To compensate the remaining brown roof will be upgraded to provide relevant species and ecological upgrades. It is considered this could be done through a planning condition.

It is not considered there would be amenity concerns regarding the introduction of the sky lights.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposals will facilitate the use of vacant office floorspace while there would be some loss of brown roof this will be ameliorated by improving the ecological level of the remaining floor space of the brown roof.