

Camden Council
Planning Advice and Information Service
FAO. Elaine Quigley
2nd Floor,
5 Pancras Square c/o Town Hall,
Judd Street
London WC1H 9JE

9th September 2015

Dear Ms. Quigley,

28 - 30 Hanway Street – Comments on Application 2015/3281/P

I am writing in relation to the submitted planning application for the redevelopment of nos. 28-30 Hanway Street, which I understand you are now considering. I understand you and colleagues will be visiting the building shortly, and I might have the opportunity of meeting you then.

I am the Managing Director and owner of E I Rogoff Ltd, which has occupied and operated from this site for some 19 years. Our business is a London-based wholesaler of fabrics and textiles, and we currently employ 10 staff, based at the property. Since occupying the building, we've only ever had a maximum of 14 staff (including myself) working from the building.

Following the sale of the building, by arrangement with the new freeholder, we are continuing to trade from the premises, and are currently in negotiation to purchase a new building which is also in the Camden Borough. We hope to move early in the New Year or sooner.

We had originally intended to retain 28-30 Hanway Street and rent it. However, having appointed agents and tried to find tenants over a 12 month period, we were advised that we may have more success if we offered the freehold for sale. The current freeholder acquired the premises in October 2014.

Unfortunately, for many reasons, the building no longer suited our requirements. Hanway Street has become increasingly busy with shops and restaurants and we often found it difficult when we had deliveries. There are clearly huge changes in the immediate environment with the Frogmore scheme, Cross Rail and many other developments.

The freeholder's Planning Consultant has advised that you require clarification of how E I Rogoff have used the building. Our business supplies fabrics and materials to the fashion industry and our customers include companies like Primark, M&S, Top Shop, H&M, etc. So much of the space is allocated to display and storage of fabric samples and our customers often visit the showroom to discuss their requirements.

There are offices, of course, where our staff are employed, but it is not (and never has been during our occupation) a 'traditional office'. It's more 'office with wholesale showroom and storage space'.

Access to the building is difficult as the ground floor is raised above pavement level, so visitors with disabilities struggle, and it's impossible for wheelchairs, which at times has proved a challenge to us as employers and a trading business.

The basement has always been used primarily for storage. There are no windows or ventilation in the basement which is generally pretty horrible. Not surprisingly none of our staff want to work in this space.

The ground floor provides access to the front, and includes a reception area. This floor has always been used for display and storage of fabric samples, whilst the two upper floors are more traditional office space.

As indicated, it has become more and more difficult to run the business satisfactorily. We appreciate that the building and internal accommodation are both tired and in need of significant investment. We contemplated refurbishing the accommodation – but that wasn't a feasible option from our perspective. It would be too costly and of course would not address some of the fundamental issues, location, access, etc.

We were advised it would require substantial investment to make the basement habitable, introduce the minimum height, natural light and ventilation. The building also requires a lift which was another huge expense.

In view of all of the above we made the decision to move premises and seek good quality accommodation, with accessibility and reduced running costs. We were pleased to find that there were plenty of alternatives in the Borough and are currently in negotiation for a property in Kentish Town. We are confident this property will meet our future needs.

I understand the new proposal is to demolish the existing building and rebuild to include both residential accommodation and office/retail space. In all the circumstances this seems to be a good solution as the current building is in such a poor state and in our experience really is unsuitable for modern office space.

If you would like to get in contact with me directly, please do contact my office.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Rothgiesser