

Our ref:- JC/Mar/Cam/6869

Mr Peter Ottery  
Planning Consultant  
112 Southbury Road  
Enfield  
EN1

29<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Dear Mr Ottery

**RE 97 CAMDEN MEWS, CAMDEN, LONDON, NW1**

This letter details the marketing campaign undertaken in respect of 97 Camden Mews, London, NW1 by Jon Christopher Sales & Lettings Department who are an established firm of Chartered Surveyors and Commercial Estate Agents with extensive experience, principally in dealing with the management, letting, and sale of commercial properties within the Camden area. Our client base includes a significant number of companies and individual investors who have substantial property portfolios within the area.

Over recent years we have dealt with the sale and letting of a number of similar mews properties within Camden including 26 and 37 Kings Terrace, NW1, where the majority of buildings in the road have changed from commercial to residential use over the last decade or so.

**Location**

The subject premises are located on the north west side of Camden Mews, close to the junctions with Canteloves Road and Camden Park Road. The mews is cobbled, narrow, with a one-way traffic system in place. Almost all the properties in the mews are residential in nature with a wide variety of ages and styles depending on whether the houses are the result of conversions or new-build developments. There is a high quality of architectural design and construction apparent, apart from the subject property.

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There are a number of bus services that serve the surrounding area and Camden Mews is convenient to Camden Town Underground Station and Camden Road Railway Station. Whilst many of the houses have integral garages we are advised that the current policy is for any proposed use to be car-free which makes the disposal of the premises for continued commercial use even less attractive.

### **The Premises**

97 Camden Mews is a single-storey industrial building arranged in two internally communicating bays each with their own large roller shutter doors, of recent installation with facing brick piers to the sides of the doors.

The total net internal floorspace is approx. 1,292 sq.ft [120 sq.m.]

The building was probably erected in the 1970s according to the vendor. The premises were last used as a motor repair workshop with ancillary kitchen and wc facilities. We were instructed to market the premises by the owner shortly after he retired in January 2013.

### **Condition and Use of the Premises**

The condition of the premises has not proved to be an obstacle to the marketing campaign. It is structurally sound but needs re-decoration as would be expected with industrial premises used for motor repairs for many years. In line with our advice, the landlord agreed to incentivise prospective applicants by way of significant rent free periods to counter any potential fit out.

The lack of interest from commercial occupiers is not due to the condition of the property but because of it's location within a residential road.

### **Marketing History**

Initially the premises were offered 'to let', at £30,000 pa with little response. The rent was subsequently reduced to £20,000 pa and it was also marketed on a 'May Sell' basis.

Jon Christopher's Marketing Department, were instructed by the Freeholder who was the proprietor of the Garage on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2013 to market the premises as per the attached correspondence.

The premises were marketed as follows:-

- By regular circulation of marketing particulars to applicants on our commercial database.

- Initially, the property was advertised on our company website.
- Targeted mail shots to suitable commercial users including:-
  - Light industrial*
  - Office*
  - Motor repair*

**NB** No boards were erected as the owner felt that it would conflict with the Conservation status of the area and would not attract passing interest due to the lack of passers-by in such a quiet and secluded backwater.

In addition, we approached other companies such as KFMG Ltd who also exposed the unit to a variety of suitable applicants. However, it was abundantly clear that there was no real interest from any type of commercial users and there were many other more modern and fashionable alternatives that we were unable to compete with.

We approached motor repair operators who were actually looking to expand into inner London areas but were not prepared to consider the subject property due to its specific location, size, lack of visibility and poor vehicular access.

In addition, other competing commercial buildings are more appealing to tenants regardless of the competitive rents and very flexible lease terms we offered. The only genuine interest received was from developers and residential occupiers seeking a change of use, clearly reflecting the redundant nature of its current use and the need to change the building's character.

As you are aware my firm has close links with many Landlords within Camden and because of this we have a clear awareness of market trends.

I understand your client would prefer to maintain the current use and save himself the inconvenience and additional costs and delays of submitting a planning application, however, empty property rates are now being incurred and the prospect of finding a commercial tenant in the foreseeable future is remote.

Camden Mews is now almost completely residential and commercial occupiers do not want to be surrounded by residential homes. There is a large demand for commercial uses within established commercial locations.

- The residential location, with the consequent noise and other possible frictions.
- The restricted access and lack of off-street parking, both for cars and commercial vehicles.
- The tertiary location for commercial use away from public view.

- The size and layout was only suitable for it's former motor repair use, or limited storage. However, its size meant an MOT licence would not be possible. The fact is, generally speaking motor repair units of this size and style are no longer popular with occupiers.
- There was a distinct lack of interest from B1 office occupiers reflecting the more convenient offices available within the local area which would provide a more professional image.

In November last year following 17 months of abortive marketing the Owner decided to enter into a joint venture agreement with Paul Simon Developments in order to apply for planning permission to demolish the existing garage and erect a pair of contemporary houses, similar to others in the Mews, one to be occupied by the Owner, and one to be sold on the open market.

### **Conclusion**

Over the last few years there has been a significant downturn in demand for secondary vehicle repair garages and other workshop space particularly in high value, high demand, residential locations, such as Camden Mews. Furthermore, other commercial uses including office space which are surrounded by residential dwellings on residential streets similarly are no longer sought after as commercial occupiers prefer to be located within a more professional setting.

Finally, commercial users are seeking more energy efficient, purpose-built units, located close to good infrastructure, and with proper vehicle parking and servicing provision. In fact everything that the subject premises are lacking. This is an anti-social use conflicting with existing neighbouring residential properties.

Kind regards,



**JON CHRISTOPHER SALES & LETTINGS**