



VIABILITY & SUITABILITY OF USE REPORT

**3-6 SPRING PLACE,
KENTISH TOWN,
LONDON, NW5 3BH**



Prepared By

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Background

Currell Commercial have been commissioned to prepare a brief report with our opinion as to the suitability of 3-6 Spring Place ("the subject premises") for continued Class B2/B8 employment use.

In preparing this Report, we have inspected the subject premises and been provided with information and plans.

The subject premises is situated in Spring Place, close to its junction with Holmes Road and a short walk from Prince of Wales Road. The building is single storey, double height brick built with corrugated roof and also incorporates railway arches to the rear of part of the building. The building is currently occupied by Addison Lee as a vehicle servicing and repair depot (Class B2 use). We understand that the site is no longer fit for purpose, the location is not practical for their use and they are therefore intending to relocate to a more suitable premises in Hayes early next year and will be vacating the building. The buildings on the site are disjointed and in poor condition, there are damp issues throughout and the space requires enormous investment and even then we have doubts that the current building and layout could be brought into a suitable condition to attract a Class B2/B8 occupier.

To retain a Class B2/B8 use it would be more cost effective to redevelop the site and create a modern building rather than retain the existing building which will constantly need attention and will deter a potential occupier due to the potential ongoing maintenance costs that would be required.

Suitability of Location and Context

The buildings are run down and we believe would not appeal to current Class B2/B8 occupiers' requirements for a quality of presence. The cost of refurbishment and ongoing maintenance would not be viable and we do not believe the location would be appropriate for the majority of Class B2/B8 occupiers as it is not an established (current) light industrial/warehouse location, with the majority of the surrounding occupiers being residential. In this regard you have to also consider what users would be appropriate and not cause nuisance to the residential in the immediate vicinity with noise, pollution, traffic generation etc. Furthermore, most Class B2/B8 occupiers prefer to be located on established industrial estates where there is adequate parking and loading and unloading facilities.

Camden Policy DP13

Referring to Camden Development Policies DPD Policy DP13 – Section 2, paragraph 13.3 where the Council wish to retain current use for properties where possible. The current site does not meet the majority of the criteria required for some of the reasons already mentioned above and, in particular, the following:

- The subject buildings are not in a location suitable for large scale general industry and warehousing and also is not well related to nearby land uses. The immediate and surrounding area is mostly residential and it would be detrimental to the area to have ongoing, and potentially enhance, industrial use. We are aware the current use of the site has raised issues with neighbouring properties due to vehicles coming in and out of the site frequently throughout the day and night.
- The building is not in a reasonable condition to allow the use to continue and we have already noted above that the current tenant is moving out as the building and location have become not fit for purpose. Even if the building is redeveloped we believe the location will not be attractive or indeed appropriate to a Class B2/B8 occupier.
- The building would not be suitable to provide a range of unit sizes for small businesses under 100 sq m. There are only high level windows along the front of the building and the rest of the space has no natural light and we do not believe there would be demand for dark "box like" spaces for Class B2/B8 use.
- In terms of accessibility and the road links between the subject site and Central London, these are inadequate and road restrictions in the immediate area would make it very difficult for larger vehicles associated with Class B2 and B8 uses for deliveries etc to effectively service the wider area and including Central London from this location.

Review and Categorisation of the Site

In paragraph 13.4 of the Camden Development Policies document, it states that the Council will seek to retain flexible use of a premises, if possible to include Class B2/B8 current use. We believe that it is impossible to provide adequate loading facilities and parking for commercial vehicles associated with Class B2/B8 uses, due to the location and the constrained nature of the site. The current building incorporates railway arches and several large structural walls and therefore it is not possible to have (and therefore retain) "clear and flexible space" and again the issue of lack of natural light arises. However, the proposed redevelopment of the site would enable more of the criteria to be met for flexible use including:

- Clear and flexible space with few supporting columns
- Adequate floor to ceiling heights
- Wide doors/corridors
- Large amounts of natural light
- Availability of a range of unit sizes

On the basis that Class B2/B8 uses are not appropriate, redevelopment of the site for flexible Class B1 use would enable the above criteria to be met that cannot be currently met with the existing site. We believe that this would attract Class B1 occupiers that would be more suited to the location than the current Class B2 use.

We have also reviewed the Camden Planning Guidance 5 to see where the subject site fits in terms of its relevance for its existing use. The site falls short of many of the criteria required to be classed as Category 1 or 2 including:

- 24 hour operation is difficult due to the close proximity of residential neighbours
- It is not purpose built accommodation
- Access and egress for large delivery and servicing vehicles (associated with Class B2/B8 uses) is not easy as they are mainly residential streets surrounding which are not built for large vehicles which can block the streets and cause problems for other vehicles. There is no suitable loading bay or yard for loading or unloading
- Natural light is limited to small windows near the roof along the frontage of the site
- Whilst there are a couple of similar uses in the vicinity, this part of Kentish Town (on Spring Place) is not an industrial location, being in a mainly residential location with some shopping facilities nearby on Prince of Wales Road
- The current site is about to become vacant and we believe that it would be difficult to find another Class B2 occupier to take the site as it is not fit for purpose. The current building is dilapidated and would need significant investment to try and bring it up to a good standard. This would not be cost effective or a viable option.

From the above it can be seen that the site performs poorly against the key criteria necessary to be classed as a Category 1 or 2 site and therefore falls within the Category 3 definition, being a site that does not warrant protection, against its loss as an industrial site, and one which "could be suitable for (a change of use to) office B1(a) space" (CPG5 paragraph 7.18).

Although there is strong demand for commercial space, the majority of occupiers are still being very particular on the type of space they want, demanding quality facilities in more established industrial locations with good loading/unloading facilities and good access. As a result, there are some properties that languish on the market due to their poor location, profile, facilities, access, condition or layouts.

Occupiers expect to get quality space for their money and therefore the tendency is to go for either modern buildings or quality character buildings that conform to modern standards with good natural

light. Unfortunately, the subject buildings are not able to currently facilitate either of those requirements. The current space we believe has a limited appeal to the Class B2/B8 market and is only likely to attract industrial occupiers that require cheap short term space such as car wash, car repairs, filming etc.

Summary and Conclusion

We believe that the site is not fit for purpose for the following reasons:

- (i) The distance from other similar commercial uses and the lack of adequate servicing facilities combine to make this location at best a very secondary industrial location and at worst completely unsuitable for its current commercial purpose. Therefore we believe that even if it was technically viable by reference to open market rent levels to demolish the existing buildings and create new build industrial space, this would be insufficient to attract suitable Class B2/B8 occupiers to Spring Place due to its location.
- (ii) From our experience potential occupiers are being more particular about the quality of the space they are taking. This is especially important for companies and organisations where their profile and presentation is as important as the work they do for and with their clients.
- (iii) As commercial agents in our opinion we do not consider Spring Place as an industrial pitch as there is a distinct lack of established similar accommodation in that location - especially where the subject site is located. Also it would be difficult in terms of deliveries, loading and unloading as Spring Place is mainly a residential street with residential streets surrounding and this could cause noise and disturbance issues and have an impact on the enjoyment and amenity of the neighbouring residential occupiers.

Whilst the industrial market is buoyant in parts of Camden and neighbouring Boroughs, and there is demand for space, there is still some second hand and new build space in off pitch and non-established industrial locations that are more difficult to let. We have significant concerns about the future trends for demand for any industrial space at 3-6 Spring Place due to the limitations with the buildings cited and the location. Whilst we understand that the Council want to retain light industrial, industrial, storage and distribution uses on as many sites as possible, there are certain sites that are just not effective to retain for their existing use, such as the subject site, due to factors outlined above.

The proposal to demolish the existing building, which is not fit for purpose, to provide Class B1 floorspace is considered to be more appropriate to the location and would provide a viable and productive employment use in this part of Kentish Town.

In overall conclusion, it is my firm opinion that the buildings are redundant and inappropriate for their current Class B2 use.