



Objection to appeal to planning application refusal

Reference Number: APP/X5210/W/16/3153454

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Introduction

Third Door is a flexible daycare Nursery with an onsite Coworking space. We cater to working parents that need both a 'professional' place to work, with full office services, rather than their kitchen table; away from household distractions but with onsite childcare facilities/services; on a flexible basis, rather than fixed times, to facilitate flexible working patterns.

Clients are self-employed, freelance, part-time employees or work independently of their employer's location. They book plans of monthly total hours or days, to be used at their convenience. It is possible to use the Nursery or Workhub on their own, or both together.

With one site in Wandsworth, Southwest London, we are seeking a second location in North London, with ready access to public transport into central and London north of the Thames. Dartmouth Park has north-south tube (Northern Line), east-west overground trains (Gospel Oak station) and buses to everywhere.

Summary of case

Third Door's market is professional parents who are relatively affluent but not in a position to cover the overheads of childcare whether or not they need to use it; entrepreneurs and small business owners, self-employed professionals, freelance consultants and senior staff members who do not need to commute into their company's office all or every day—the profile of many residents of this part of London.

Early year's childcare provision is in crisis in several ways: in terms of the amount available, the cost to parents and its inflexibility—parents have to use services at predetermined times rather than when they need them.

Further details are below on the rising importance of being able to working flexibly, the rise of women-owned small businesses and the particular characteristics of the borough of Camden that makes it attractive to Third Door.

Combining Third Door services with sports users

The Mansfield Bowling Club site is currently classed for D2 use. Third Door would seek to partner with a sport or leisure user, each using a portion of the site and sharing responsibility for establishing and maintaining the outside space for general public use.

We are aware that there are several sports clubs and similar that are seeking premises (e.g. Camden Fencing Club), but not necessarily of the size of the MBC building. Combining different activities would generate more than one income stream for the site as a whole. There are precedents of fencing clubs sharing premises with offices: in New York a developer has incorporated such a facility in a prime office block in Manhattan. A similar

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project existed in Holborn, central London, when the Prudential incorporated a dedicated facility for a table tennis club in their head office.

We are also aware of private schools in Hampstead and Belsize Park with no sports facilities that have to transport pupils by coach to Hendon, 3-4 miles away (a long time in London traffic) in order to use an indoor sports hall. These schools are very keen to find to a facility that is closer (the bowling club is less than half this distance). These schools (e.g. The Village School and St Christopher's School) have been criticised by schools inspectors and parents for their lack of sports provision and are looking actively for other options.

Reasons for objecting to this planning appeal

I am against the appeal proposals for the following reasons:

- **The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the loss of the facility would not undermine the range of services and facilities needed to support local communities.**

The proposed residential development would house over 80 people, including many families, probably including a dozen or so children. There is one primary school in Dartmouth Park, 250-300m from the bowling club. In spring there were 183 applications for 60 Reception class places for the school year starting September 2016. The catchment area was 482m from the school. The school has no scope for expansion of any of its classes, from nursery upwards. In contrast, Third Door would add to local preschool provision at a time when the borough is struggling to find places to fulfil the forthcoming increase in free preschool places and hours per child.

- **The proposed development would fail to mitigate the harm to the range of leisure services and facilities needed to support local communities.**

They have also failed to ensure that the development would not undermine the provision of existing leisure services and facilities to support local communities

The Mansfield Bowling Club and the nearby Highgate Newtown Community Centre (pedestrian entrance 200m up Croftdown Road) are the only two local venues able to accommodate large social gatherings, especially those that require catering facilities.

Highgate Newtown Community Centre is to be redeveloped under the Camden Community Investment Programme (where the council is to build houses for sale to fund other projects). This will drastically reduce centre's social and sports space.

The MBC regularly rented their clubhouse and grounds for weddings and parties. Third Door would follow practice in its Putney location, where the workhub can be

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cleared of easily moved desks to create a large room for social functions, with guests also able to access the garden.

We also have a full programme of exercise, dance, business and social events, unlike anything the MBC offered. The existing community facilities Highgate Newtown and the room at the back of the library, on Croftdown Road next to Brookfield school, are fully booked and with long waiting lists for dance lessons, exercise classes, film clubs etc. Third Door would add to the existing provision rather than diminish them.

- **The applicant has failed to ensure that the open space will be sustainably managed and maintained for the benefit of the public.**

In considering the application, the Development Control Committee was severely sceptical that the proposed 'pocket park' would be maintained for public use for any length of time. Attention was drawn to how the design ensured it could be gated off to prevent public access, and that residents of the development would resent the public intrusion on the open space adjacent to their properties and having to pay for its maintenance for use by non-residents.

If Third Door and a sports club were to obtain the MBC site the *raison d'être* of both types of activity is they are for public benefit. The cost and organisation of outside garden space would be an integral part of our business plan, because access to well-tended outside space would be part of Third Door's service.

Background information on the market served by Third Door and its local characteristics follows below:

Availability of child care places for young children

Demand for childcare places is due to increase greatly in 2017, with the extension of free early education of children from 2+years old to cover 30 hours, up from the current 15 hours per week.

(Childcare in London: Family and Childcare Trust Evidence to the London Assembly's Economic Committee, January 2016)

This report predicts that, 'The 30 hour extension will come at the same time as increased help with childcare costs through Universal Credit and the new Tax Free Childcare scheme. Given this, it is highly likely that some London parents, particularly mothers, will return to work or increase their hours, leading to extra demand for childcare places. It is uncertain if this extra demand can be met in the short-term in London.'

Demand for childminders and preschool places will rise, but the Family and Childcare Trust says, 'Whether there is sufficient capacity among childminders to cover this extra demand is uncertain, as there tends to be fewer childminders per head of population in London,

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particularly in areas where housing costs are high In London, childminder numbers declined by 9 per cent between 2013 and 2015, according to Ofsted data. This decline has been caused by low incomes and the opportunity to earn more in other occupations, for example, as a teaching assistant in a school, without the business risk.' (Childminders have to pay for their own training, insurance etc.)

Though parents will be entitled to 30 hours free childcare, there is no obligation on nurseries/preschools, state or private, to provide them. The central funding will be insufficient to meet the cost of provision, forcing providers to further cross-subsidise from income derived from paying parents, and to ration the number of free hours they can offer.

The Family and Childcare Trust report (*Understanding the childcare provider market*, April 2016, for the British Educational Suppliers association) reviews the various types of childcare. Whilst there is data on nurseries etc., there are no figures on crèches. Most are provided by public-sector employers or further/higher education institutions for (student and staff use), though it does state that, 'a number of college crèches have closed in recent years. In Scotland and Wales, where there are statistics on crèche places, there has been marked fall in their numbers in the last five years.'

Whilst Third Door offers a nursery provision i.e. follows the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, our flexibility naturally places us close to the provision of crèches and thus we meet a demand for flexible childcare.

Whilst there are state and private nurseries in the Dartmouth Park area, and co-shared work spaces in Kentish Town, there is no combination of the two.

The shortage of childcare places and their cost, an increasing desire for a better work-life balance, more parents working at places other than an employer's office and the unpredictable working hours that can result are combining to create great demand for the type of flexible child care with office support services that Third Door provides.

The desire and trend for achieving work/life balance, working from home

5 Jun 2015, [TUC report](#) on home working

Number and proportion of homeworkers, 2005–2015

2005	2015	Increase 2005-15
3,418,098 (12.0%)	4,218,669 (13.7%)	+800,601 (+1.7%)

Number and proportion of homeworkers by gender

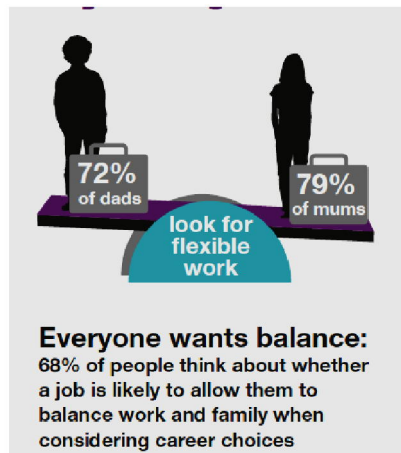
Sex	2005	2015	Increase 2005-2015
Men	2,336,596 (15.2%)	2,651,032 (16.1%)	+314,436 (+0.9%)
Women	1,081,502 (8.2%)	1,567,667 (10.9%)	+486,165 (+2.7%)

Region	2005	2015	Increase 2005-2015
South East	602,671 (14.8%)	719,660 (16.9%)	+116,989 (+2.1%)
London	430,152 (12.2%)	623,991 (14.6%)	+193,859 (+2.4%)
South West	376,881 (15.3%)	485,858 (18.3%)	+108,977 (+3.0%)
Eastern	361,859 (13.2%)	444,384 (15.0%)	+82,525 (+1.8%)
North West	311,004 (9.8%)	382,923 (11.6%)	+71,919 (+1.8%)
West Midlands	277,200 (11.1%)	320,661 (12.3%)	+43,461 (+2.2%)
Yorkshire and Humber	243,820 (10.3%)	312,474 (12.6%)	+68,654 (+2.3%)
East Midlands	262,109 (12.6%)	293,978 (13.4%)	+31,869 (+0.8%)
Scotland	211,857 (8.7%)	264,640 (10.1%)	+52,783 (+1.4%)
Wales	162,510 (12.3%)	169,339 (12.4%)	+6,829 (+0.1%)
North East	93,575 (8.4%)	126,724 (10.8%)	+33,149 (+2.4%)
Northern Ireland	84,460 (11.4%)	74,147 (9.0%)	-10,313 (-2.6%)

Source: ONS Labour Force Survey, Jan-March quarter datasets.

(The statistics only cover those who usually work from home. The large number who work from home on an occasional basis is not counted in this analysis.)

The demand for flexible work



Fawcett Society research, in *Parents, work and care: Striking the balance*, [March 2016](#)

A mother with two children at nursery needs to earn at least £40,000 a year to make any profit from going to work (after deducting the costs of childcare, travel and pension contributions), making working flexibly from or near home, in a way that incorporates child care, extremely attractive.

[The Times, April 2016](#)

Women are better than men at setting up their own businesses

Women have a more thoughtful, prepared attitude: 26% of SMEs had someone in charge of the finances of the business who was qualified/ trained. SMEs led by women were more likely to have such a person (29%) than those led by men (25%); more small SMEs led by women have someone qualified in charge of the finances. Amongst SMEs with 0-9 employees, 29% of those led by women had someone qualified, compared to 24% of those led by men.

Women-led Businesses, BDRC Continental, July 2016, [report](#)

Camden

Camden is just a fragment of Greater London, occupying only 1.4% by area, but is home to 7% of London's employment and 2.7% of its population.

The mix of social and economic conditions in Camden is like nowhere else in the UK,

Data.gov.uk – [Camden](#)

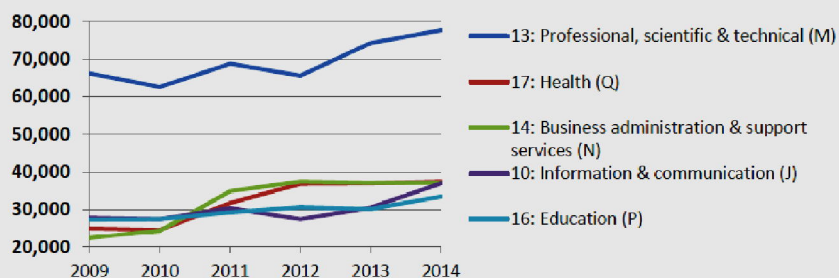
Profile of Camden's working-age population

- Camden residents in work are more likely to be in high skilled jobs than elsewhere in London: a higher proportion of Camden residents work in Professional Occupations (35%) than in London (24%) and in England & Wales (20%)
- The population of Camden is relatively highly educated; in the year to December 2015, 73% of the economically active working age population of Camden were qualified to degree level, (cf. Central London—71%, Greater London—57% or England & Wales—42%). Camden ranks 5th highest in England & Wales.

Education and employment patterns

- Annual Population Survey data on education and skills is for the year to December 2014. It estimates that 72% of the working-age population of Camden were qualified to degree level, far higher than for London (56%) or Great Britain (40%).
- Camden specialises in highly skilled, high value parts of the economy (e.g. law, management consultancy and advertising).
- Professional, Scientific & Technical enterprises are the largest industrial sector in Camden (30% of enterprises, compared with 22% in London).
- The Professional, Scientific & Technical sector is the largest employment sector (22% of employment compared with 14% for London as a whole).

Figure 1: Top 5 Big Industry Groups - Employment Change 2009-14



⁸ Source: Business Register Employment Survey 2014 (ONS); Camden analysis of BRES 2009-2014.

⁹ Source: Business Register & Employment Survey 2014 (ONS).

The median gross pay of people working in Camden is amongst the highest in London; they are more likely to be able to afford private childcare.

Many live and work in Camden, or in neighbouring boroughs

2011 Census:

21% of Camden residents live and work in Camden

A further 14% work mainly at or from home.

91% of people who work in Camden live outside the borough, but not far away—70% live in other London boroughs, the highest proportion from Barnet, Islington, Haringey and Lambeth.

(May 2016 [Camden Business and Employment Bulletin](#))

The Mansfield Bowling Club site is at the north of the borough, a few minutes' walk from the borders with Islington (to the east) and Haringey (to the north), therefore its catchment area is cross-borough.

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Entrepreneurs, self-employed and non-office working in Camden

(May 2016 [Camden Business and Employment Bulletin](#))

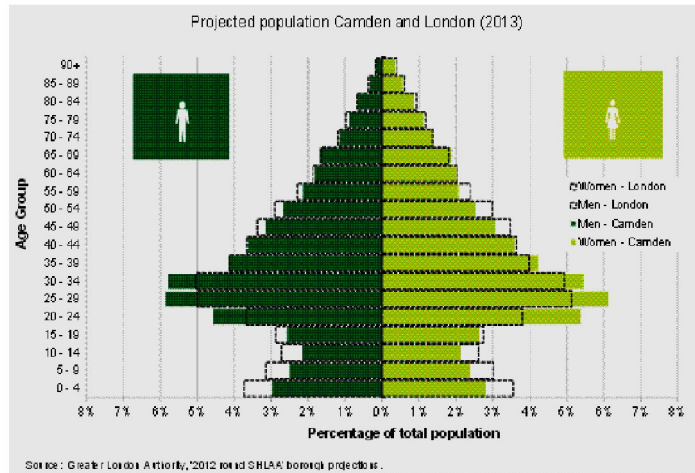
- Camden is home to the second highest number of businesses in London after Westminster and the fourth highest in the UK.
- Camden has the third highest number of business start-ups in London after Westminster and Lambeth.
- Nearly two-fifths of new Camden businesses survive for five years. By virtue of sheer volume, Camden's ranks 3rd nationally by local authority by overall number of start-ups that have survived for 5 years.

Women in Camden

Camden has a higher proportion of self-employed women (10.3%) compared to 7.3% for Greater London.

The unemployment rate for women in Camden is 6.3% (London average 7%).

(2011 [Census](#), Camden)



The proportion women of the age when they tend to start a family is higher than the rest of London, meaning the population of children will increase in coming years.

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Housing – why not working in the company office can be a necessary option

Camden has the third most expensive commercial property estate of London boroughs after Westminster and the City.

The pressure to convert commercial space for housing is causing concern for the supply of workspace suitable and affordable for SMEs in Camden. Most loss of B1 business floorspace has been for redevelopment or conversion to housing. The Government's permitted development rights, (which make it easy to convert office space, including viable and occupied premises, into residential) led to Camden Council receiving just over 200 applications for this purpose. As these are not assessed in the same way as a normal planning application the Council has very limited powers to refuse them.

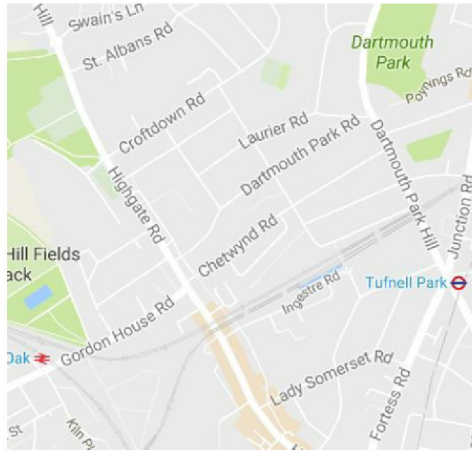
Much has been lost local to Dartmouth Park, e.g. the old bonded warehouses on Highgate Road, the former Linton House small offices, being turned into flats:



The picture above is on Highgate Road, situated opposite the end of Lady Somerset Road, 5 mins walk from the Mansfield Bowling Club site:

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Living in Dartmouth Park

The cost of housing in Camden is amongst the highest for all local authority areas in the country. By March 2016, the average residential property price in Camden had increased to £874,301, 1.6 times higher than the Greater London average and 4.6 times higher than the England & Wales average. Average house prices in Camden are now 66% higher than in January 2008 (before the property crash), compared to a 51% rise in London as a whole and 10% nationally.

Private sector rents are much higher in Camden than London as a whole, fifth after Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster and the City.

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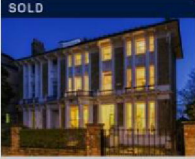











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The Mansfield Bowling Club is in the centre of Dartmouth Park. Typical property prices:

PROPERTIES IN DARTMOUTH PARK

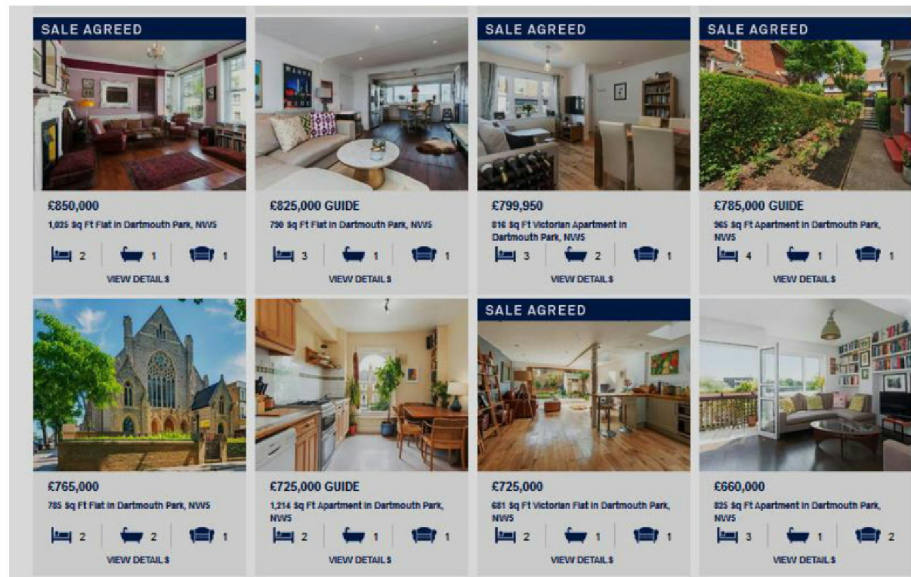
FIRST PREVIOUS 1 2 3 4 5
NEXT LAST

SORT BY PRICE HIGH TO LOW (CHANGE) PAGE 18 (8 PROPERTIES)

<p>SOLD</p>  <p>£3,695,000 3,063 Sq Ft Semi-detached House in Dartmouth Park, NV15</p> <p>4 4 4</p>	<p>SOLD</p>  <p>PRICE ON APPLICATION 4,500 Sq Ft Victorian Detached House in Turfhill Park, N7</p> <p>8 5 3</p>	<p>SOLD</p>  <p>£2,885,000 2,500 Sq Ft Victorian Semi-detached House in Dartmouth Park, NV15</p> <p>5 3 3</p>	<p>SOLD</p>  <p>£2,850,000 1,682 Sq Ft Victorian Terraced House in Dartmouth Park, NV15</p> <p>7 3 2</p>
<p>SOLD</p>  <p>£2,850,000 3,600 Sq Ft End Of Terrace House in Dartmouth Park, NV15</p> <p>5 2 2</p>	<p>SOLD</p>  <p>£2,799,950 2,552 Sq Ft Victorian Terraced House in Dartmouth Park, NV15</p> <p>4 2 2</p>	<p>SOLD</p>  <p>£2,750,000 2,950 Sq Ft Victorian Semi-detached House in Dartmouth Park, NV15</p> <p>6 3 3</p>	<p>SOLD</p>  <p>£2,700,000 2,003 Sq Ft Victorian Semi-detached House in Dartmouth Park, NV15</p> <p>5 2 1</p>
<p>SOLD</p>  <p>£2,650,000 2,862 Sq Ft Victorian Semi-detached House in Dartmouth Park, NV15</p> <p>5 2 2</p>	<p>SOLD</p>  <p>£2,650,000 3,381 Sq Ft Victorian Semi-detached House in Hillmarton Conservation Area, N7</p> <p>6 4 1</p>	<p>SOLD</p>  <p>£2,500,000 3,890 Sq Ft Victorian Semi-detached House in Kerslish Town, NV15</p> <p>6 4 2</p>	<p>SOLD</p>  <p>£2,500,000 2,711 Sq Ft Victorian Semi-detached House in Dartmouth Park, NV15</p> <p>6 1 2</p>

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(Most and least expensive properties in [local estate agent August 2016](#))

Homes may not be big enough to include work space

Most Camden dwellings are flats, either purpose built or converted from a house or other building. Flats, maisonettes and apartments accounted for 85% of accommodation in the borough,

As a result, many people who might work from home find themselves without the space to do so, making them turn to co-shared office spaces.

Conclusion

Third Door's services will be of considerable use to the residents of Dartmouth Park.

- We will facilitate the increasing desire to work in places other than employers' premises, either under flexible working arrangements or because the individuals are self-employed or freelance, without their own office.
- We will add to, rather than diminish, spaces for community activities, both indoor and outdoor.
- Third Door will provide facilities to help enable Camden fulfil its obligation to provide increased numbers of child care places.
- By partnering or sharing the site with a sports organisation(s) we will help meet the demand for sports facilities, rather than reduce them.