

### 3 – 6 SPRING PLACE, NW5 3BA (2016/5181/P)

#### PLANNING POLICY COMMENTS RESPONSE

This note provides a response to the comments made by Camden’s Planning Policy Officer, Andrew Triggs, in response to Case Officer Ian Gracie’s email dated 27 October 2016. The comments of Mr Triggs are made in relation to the Currell report (“the report”) attached as Appendix 1 to the Planning Statement submitted with the application. Mr Triggs’ comments are included within this note and are *blue and italicised* for differentiation with the formal responses provided.

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*Prior to commencing their assessment the consultants appear to have ruled out any potential suitability: “we understand that the site is no longer fit for purpose”. The Planning Statement provides evidence that Addison Lee had outgrown the premises, not that the building’s condition, layout or constraints of the site prompted their decision to relocate.*

The report is clear that the ‘understanding’ is that “the site is no longer fit for purpose” for Addison Lee specifically. This is not a case of Currell ruling out the potential suitability of the site, it is a factual statement that Addison Lee consider that it no longer supports their operation, hence their planned departure. Turning to the Planning Statement, the text says that, “*Addison Lee are due to vacate the Site in January 2017, relocating to a larger and fit-for-purpose facility elsewhere in Hayes, near Heathrow*” (paragraph 2.3). This is clearly more than just saying that Addison Lee has “*outgrown the premises*”, as it confirms that the condition, layout and constraints of the site have “*prompted their decision to leave*”. The purpose of the Planning Statement is such that readers are directed to the detail in the Appendix (and the Currell report).

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*The report doesn’t clearly demonstrate that “the building is not in reasonable condition to allow the use to continue”. CP5 says: “Many industrial buildings only require a small amount of investment to maintain them or to bring them back into a reasonable condition. As long as the site has good access other factors, such as the age of a building are irrelevant for most occupiers as the specification for an industrial unit has not changed in many years”. (para. 7.14) There are references to “enormous investment” being needed but it is not clear what this involves.*

This quotation in CPG5 is aimed specifically at buildings that are capable of refurbishment and improvement through relatively minimal works and thus a “*small amount of investment*”. The level of investment required to make the site useable exceeds a ‘small amount’ and includes needing to deal with the significant damp issues that have arisen across the site; the requirement to seal the arches from future damp problems; and also structural works to the arches and the parts of the site that have fallen into disrepair over time (Spring Place and Grafton Road facades, doors, roofs etc.).

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*The report refers to their being “damp issues throughout the building” – the Planning Statement refers only to the water-tightness / integrity of the railway arches, which form part of the site. It should be explored whether the liability for these repairs would rest entirely with the applicant/occupier or whether Network Rail would also be responsible for addressing these issues.*

The reference in the Planning Statement (Paragraph 2.2) is limited to the arches only as this paragraph is talking directly about the arches and them being a key feature of the site, running through the centre of it. The state of the arches is referenced here in this context. The two accounts (Planning Statement and Currell report) are therefore not contradictory. Works to repair the leaks from within the arches are the responsibility of the applicant, as it is within their demise, and not Network rail (although Network Rail have been closely involved in the proposed development throughout the design development and scheme evolution).

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*“We believe it is impossible to provide adequate loading facilities and parking for commercial vehicles associated with Class B2/B8 uses”. Servicing and repairs by the taxi firm have been undertaken from these premises for a number of years. No evidence is presented of this having caused unacceptable planning impacts; therefore the ability of similar types of B2 uses being able to operate from this site seems to exist as a realistic option.*

This quotation is the start of a sentence stating that Currell “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 retain) clear and flexible space...”. Mr Triggs’ response does not raise any questions with the Currell assessment that it is the location and constrained nature of the site that result in Currell believing it to be ‘impossible’ to provide adequate loading facilities etc.

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*The reference to light – It is a double storey building. My understanding is the premises have a suspended ceiling. This is an issue which could readily be overcome if the needs of a future occupant demanded it.*

The response fails to recognise that the Currell report refers to ‘natural light’ being an important criteria for potential B2/B8 users considering sites / premises and that this is compromised on this site. In terms of the suspended ceiling, if this were to be removed (where this is in situ), there would be limited to no natural light gains due to the roof being largely unglazed.

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*Their conclusion that the premises are Category 3 do not seem to fit with the attributes set out in CPG5 (pages 85-6). The report has not directly compared the site against Category 3.*

The Currell report provides a review of the site against Category 1 and 2 criteria (as set out on pages 85-86 of CPG5). The report concludes that *“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”*. This approach and logic is considered to be acceptable and Mr Triggs does not dispute that the site is neither a Category 1 nor a Category 2 site. For the avoidance of doubt, looking at the Category 3 criteria, the site is relatively small; has poor access; has no goods lift; has little space for servicing; and has incompatible neighbouring uses (namely residential). The only Category 3 criteria which it does not satisfy is that it is not located lower ground or basement level. On this basis it is concluded that the site does not fit within Category 1 or 2 and that it meets the majority Category 3 criteria.

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*Assessing compatibility with residential uses in this particular area is affected by the presence of the railway line. I note that there is new residential development in the vicinity of the site which has recently been built out. I would imagine that planning permission would not have been granted if the existing B2 use was seen as giving rise to an unacceptable impact on the amenity of the building’s occupants. It would be helpful to know more about any transport or environmental health issues relating to the operation of the existing premises.*

The existing Class B2 use has not had to demonstrate its acceptability in this location. Residential uses in close proximity to the site are affected by the number and frequency of trips and noise disturbance during the hours of operation (6am – 2am) and the proposed development has been welcomed by residents as well as Camden planning and environmental health / sustainability officers. As can be seen in the supporting documentation, the existing Class B2 use generates over 330 vehicular trips per day, of which over 300 will be removed entirely from the local road network. Planning permission for nearby residential schemes will have had to demonstrate their own compliance with planning policy requirements and standards (in terms of noise exposure, for example) and this will have resulted in these schemes being designed to reduce the impact of the ‘neighbouring’ existing use on the site and mitigate against any predicted issues (for example, window location; room positioning; and materials / glazing used will have fed into the approved schemes).

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### Summary

This note responds to the questions raised by Andrew Triggs in relation to the proposed loss of the existing Class B2 employment use. The purpose of the note is principally to provide clarification on the information submitted in the Planning Statement and Currell report, appended to it. Where required, further detail and explanation is provided. The note reiterates the conclusions of the report that *“the buildings are redundant and inappropriate for their current B2 use”* and that when categorised in accordance with guidance (CPG5) the site 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 Class B1 space. It is important to stress the wider benefits of the scheme, including the significant uplift in employment floorspace proposed and the number of new jobs associated with this.

**10 November 2016**