

Our Ref: DHA/M/SWL/LBC 270317



27 March 2017

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Dear Sirs

24-32 STEPHENSON WAY, LONDON, NW1 2HD

On behalf of Unilabs Limited, please find enclosed a planning application relating to the lower ground floor and the first floor of the above-mentioned premises for a flexible planning permission involving a change from Class B1 offices to a flexible Class B1 office use and/or Class D1 use for the purposes of providing cellular pathology services to the health sector. To this end, copies of all the relevant forms, plans and notices are enclosed, together with payment for the sum of £385.00, payable to the London Borough of Camden in respect of the requisite planning application fee.

The application proposals have been prepared by taking into account the relevant provisions of the planning policies contained within the adopted Camden Core Strategy (2010), the adopted Camden Development Policies (2010) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

The Application Documents

For the avoidance of any doubt, the proposed planning application comprises of the following:

Ordnance Survey Plan	-	Site Location Plan
Drawing No. A0355-01	-	Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan
Drawing No. A0355-03	-	Existing First Floor Plan
Drawing No. A0355-01	-	Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan
Drawing No. A0355-03	-	Proposed First Floor Plan
HNG Chartered Surveyors	-	Sales Particulars - August 2016
HNG Chartered Surveyors	-	Sales Particulars - January 2017
HNG Chartered Surveyors & Knight Frank	-	Sales Particulars - January 2017
Planning, Design and Access Statement	-	Letter dated 27 March 2017
Community Infrastructure Levy Form		
Planning Application Form		

The Site and the Surrounding Area

The application site comprises the lower ground floor and the first floor within a six-storey building, which has an authorised use falling within Class B1 offices of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 2015.

The site has undergone various refurbishment works to include changes to the fenestration, the upgrading of plant and equipment and general works of repair, renewal and internal decoration, to widen its appeal to the market for continued office use.

The immediate area within Stephenson Way is predominately commercial in character, but this changes to a mixed use character involving residential, hotel, hostel and medical related uses.

The application site is in a highly accessible location and benefits from Euston Square London Underground Station and Euston over ground mainline rail terminal in the immediate vicinity. It is close to all of the Central London amenities, including a multitude of bus routes. The area is very accessible and hence it enjoys a very diverse economy through the range of land uses during the day and the evening.

The application site itself comprises the lower ground floor and the first floor of an existing six-storey building. The whole of the lower ground floor comprises an area of 391 sqm and the whole of the first floor area comprises an area of 579 sqm, giving a total application floor area of 970 sqm. The application site is in essence in a very sustainable location and suited to uses that would generate complementary and multi-purpose trips.

The application site does not benefit from any off-street car parking and none can be provided. That said, the proposed use is aimed at the provision of local services and all employees would be travelling by public transport given the area's high level of accessibility.

Planning History

Although the current authorised use of the whole building falls within Class B1 offices of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 2015, it is interesting to note that the building was once used on the lower ground floor, ground floor and first floor for the purposes of a Class D1 non-residential institution, under the remit of planning permission PL/9500191 dated 9 June 1995.

The Application Proposals

The proposal seeks to change the use of the lower ground floor and the first floor for the provision of cellular pathology services to the health sector. The proposal would utilise the floorspace in broadly the same way as the consented office use but would involve a reconfiguration of the internal space and facilities. No changes are proposed to the external appearance of the existing building.

The lower ground floor area would be used for the purposes of administrative offices together with storage. The first floor area would be used for the purposes of a laboratory, which would occupy approximately two thirds of the area, and the remaining one third would be used for the purposes of administrative offices.

The lower ground floor and the first floor would be accessed via the existing entrance off Stephenson Way, providing a level threshold arrangement. Upon entry into the application premises from the street, there would be a lobby area providing both stair and lift access to all of the floors within the building, which would be shared with the occupiers of the other floors.

Given the applicant's existing presence within the City of Westminster, where they offer the same type of services, it has been proven that their use falls within Class D1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 2015, because they originally took occupancy of

Class B1 offices, and the local planning authority required them to make a retrospective planning application, which was subsequently approved.

The Proposed Concept

Unilabs Limited is the UK's largest private provider of cellular pathology services. Led by a team of highly experienced Consultants, Unilabs offers a comprehensive range of investigations including routine histopathology and cytopathology, immunohistochemistry and molecular tests.

Unilabs has an excellent track-record of delivering cellular pathology services to the health sector with a portfolio of major clients spanning GPs, NHS Trusts, private acute hospitals and corporate organisations. Unilabs is the 'preferred histology provider' to some of the UK's largest private hospital groups and has around 65% market share of private cellular pathology in Central London.

Unilabs owe their success to providing a consistently high-quality diagnostic service to users underpinned by responsive customer care and account management. Their consultant pathologists hold substantive posts in NHS teaching hospitals and so they are acutely aware of the financial and operational challenges currently faced by the NHS. They offer a high-quality, CPA accredited, cellular pathology service at affordable and transparent rates with no hidden costs.

Unilabs supports a number of NHS Trusts in providing short and long-term cover in histopathology and cytopathology. Their flexible approach has helped NHS departments to tackle critical back logs as well as day-to-day operations when challenged by staff shortages of biomedical scientists and consultant pathologists.

In addition to clinical diagnostics, Unilabs-IHS provides expert medical review services to the NHS and private sectors. With a diverse team of experienced medical experts Unilabs-IHS has the in-house capability to provide world-class duty of care reviews and second opinions. In some subspecialty areas our pathologists belong to a limited worldwide network that has experience and expertise to review complex cases.

The proposed use would employ a total of 52 full time and 11 part time staff, which would include managerial, professional, administrative and technical positions at various levels. To this end, the proposed use would result in the provision of employment at various levels and degrees.

Distribution of Growth

The Borough of Camden, like many parts of the country, is facing the challenge of where and how to accommodate a growing and changing population and the facilities and infrastructure needed to support it.

To this end, the Council is focusing growth in the most suitable locations, and managing it to make sure that it delivers its opportunities and benefits and achieves sustainable development, while continuing to preserve and enhance the features that make Camden such an attractive place to live, work and visit.

The Council therefore recognises the need to promote a concentration of development in the growth areas of Euston and through appropriate development at other highly accessible locations, in particular Central London.

The Council therefore seeks to promote the most efficient use of land and buildings in Camden by seeking development that makes full use of its site, taking into account quality of

design, its surroundings, sustainability, amenity, heritage, transport accessibility and any other considerations relevant to the site.

The proposed use for the provision of cellular pathology services to the health sector would fulfil an important and much needed role, which would be consistent with the above-mentioned objectives of the Council.

Policy DP1 recognises the importance and benefits of mixed-use development, because it allows the Council to adapt successfully with the challenges faced by a growing and changing businesses. To this end, the need to make the best use of the Borough's limited land is fully recognised and developing a mix of uses on individual sites and across an area is deemed to be beneficial in a number of ways by contributing to the creation of areas that are diverse, distinctive and successful, and by reducing the need to travel between homes, jobs and services.

Large parts of the Borough have a well-established mixed-use character and the Council seeks to extend this. The proposed development in this regard would fulfil all of these key objectives of Policy DP1 through the provision of a use that would integrate and feed very successfully with other locally based businesses and activities.

Promoting a Successful and Inclusive Camden Economy

Policy CS8 of the adopted Core Strategy seeks to secure a strong economy in the Borough and wants to ensure that no one is excluded from its success. To this end, the Council will recognise the importance of other employment generating uses, including retail, markets, leisure, education, tourism and health.

The proposed use involved in the provision of cellular pathology services to the health sector would therefore squarely fall into these alternative category of employment generating uses. Furthermore, the reasoned justification at Paragraph 8.8 of the adopted Core Strategy recognises that the future supply of offices in the Borough can meet projected demand, hence the proposed use would not undermine the availability of office space within the Borough.

Achieving a Successful Central London

The southern part of Camden plays an important part in providing the vibrancy, diversity and identity that makes the Borough such a popular place to visit and live in. It forms part of Central London whose unique role, character and mix of uses provides much of the Capital's distinctiveness. Camden's Central London area has a concentration of nationally important medical, research and higher education institutions, is a major business and employment centre and the main focus of Camden's economy. It contains a significant proportion of the Borough's office floorspace, a variety of shopping areas, from neighbourhood centres to specialist retail locations, and is home to many other uses, including legal, health and professional services; food, drink and entertainment and cultural and tourism uses.

The Council will therefore support and promote the Central London area of Camden as a successful and vibrant part of the Capital to live in, work in and visit. To this end, the Council will support the concentration of medical, educational, cultural and research institutions within Central London.

Again, the proposed development in this regard would fulfil all of these key objectives of achieving a successful Central London through the provision of cellular pathology services to the health sector.

Provision of a Range of Employment Premises

Paragraph 10.1 of the adopted Core Strategy recognises that a key part of the Council's strategy for managing the Borough's future growth is making sure that the services, facilities and infrastructure to support the local community and visitors to the Borough are provided in suitable locations to meet increasing demand caused by its growing population. The provision of community and health facilities also plays a key role in meeting the Camden Community Strategy, where people lead active, healthy lives, which seeks to encourage a greater sense of community.

In light of the above, Paragraph 10.2 of the adopted Core Strategy acknowledges that the Council will seek to ensure that a wide range of services and facilities to meet community needs are provided in the Borough, including education and childcare, health facilities, police and emergency service facilities, libraries, sports and leisure facilities, culture and arts, advice centres, community halls/meeting rooms, places of worship, youth facilities and public conveniences.

The proposed use involved in the provision of cellular pathology services to the health sector would therefore fulfil the above identified health service needs for the local area and its residents and workers.

Policy DP13 of the Development Policies states that the Council will retain land and buildings that are suitable for continued business use and will resist a change to non-business unless it can be demonstrated that a site is not suitable for any business use other than B1 offices, the Council may allow a change to permanent residential uses or community uses. The proposed use for the provision of cellular pathology services to the health sector would therefore qualify as a community use facility.

Furthermore, the reasoned justification to Policy DP13 recognises that where a change of use has been justified to the Council's satisfaction, they will seek to maintain some business use on site, with a higher priority for retaining flexible space that is suitable for a variety of business uses. The proposed flexible planning permission for Class B1 and/or Class D1 use would therefore achieve these objectives, particularly as the remainder of the building would be retained in Class B1 use and the building has had a previous planning history involving Class D1 uses. Furthermore, only two thirds of the first floor would be used for a laboratory, with the remaining one third, and the whole of the lower ground floor used for office and administrative purposes.

Notwithstanding the above, the current use of the lower ground floor, ground floor and first floor as offices, whilst ideal for the location have lain vacant now for a period of 7 months and actively marketed by local agents and Chartered Surveyors, HNG, and more recently on a joint agency basis with Knight Frank.

Despite the excellent condition of the premises and very accessible location, the only interest that has been received for the premises during this period has been from this one tenant to use the premises for the purposes of providing cellular pathology services to the health sector, and hence the reason for this planning application. I enclose with the planning application a copy of the sales particulars from which it can be seen that the premises have been offered to the market on reasonable terms.

Notwithstanding the Council's employment use policy, the proposed use would provide a total of 52 full time and 11 part time staff, which would include managerial, professional, administrative and technical positions at various levels. To this end, the proposed use would result in the provision of employment at various levels and degrees.

The applicant in recognising the Council's desire to generally preserve the Borough's traditional employment stock and indeed the long term value of their landlord's property asset would not want to permanently extinguish its Class B1 use and would therefore propose a condition, which would require the premises to revert back to Class B1 offices as and when the Class D1 use for the provision of cellular pathology services to the health sector would cease.

Alternatively, it may be more beneficial to grant a flexible planning permission for either Class B1 and/or Class D1 use under the provisions of Part 3, Class E of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 to enable either use to be carried out within a period of up to 10 years. This would also allow dual use of the premises in the event that the use for the provision of cellular pathology services to the health sector was not to utilise all of the floorspace distributed over the lower ground floor and the first floor. This would also make the proposal more acceptable in line with Policy DP13 of the Development Policies.

Supporting Community Facilities and Services

Policy CS10 of the adopted Core Strategy requires the Council to work with its partners to ensure that community facilities and services are provided for the Borough's communities and people who work in and visit the Borough. This includes the need to facilitate the efficient use of community facilities and the provision of multi-purpose community facilities that can provide a range of services to the community at a single, accessible location. The proposed use would be offering a range of services to a very broad section of the local community as described above.

Community facilities include childcare facilities, all educational and training facilities, healthcare facilities, policing facilities, youth facilities, libraries, community halls, meeting spaces, places of worship, public conveniences and other use in use Class D1 that provide a service to the local community.

Policy DP15 of the Development Policies seeks to meet the increased demand for community facilities. In doing so, it requires new community facilities to be accessible to the community that they intend to serve, accessible by a range of transport modes, in particular walking, cycling and public transport, and be provided in buildings which are flexible and sited to maximise the shared use of premises. The proposed use would meet all of these requirements, and furthermore, its proposed location within Central London would fulfil the locational requirement identified by Criterion (i) of Policy DP15, as it is listed as one of the key locations for new community and leisure facilities.

It is important that Camden's community facilities are located close to the people who use them. Locating these facilities where they are easily reached by a choice of means of transport, particularly walking, cycling and public transport will enable as many people as possible to have access to them. Central London is an appropriate location for community and leisure uses, particularly those that may attract large numbers of people, as they are generally easily reached by a range of means of transport.

Hours of Operation

The proposed use involving the provision of cellular pathology services to the health sector would operate between the hours of 7.00am to 11.00pm during all days of the week.

This is because the laboratories are in use during the day, and the Consultants, who are involved with the analysis and writing up of the reports and recommendations, often return from their daily duties in the evening.

Staff and Enrolment Numbers

The proposed use would employ a total of 52 full time staff and 11 part time staff, which would include managerial, professional, administrative and technical positions at various levels. To this end, the proposed use would result in the provision of employment at various levels and degrees.

Highways, Access, Car Parking and Services

The proposed use, similar to the current authorised use of the premises as offices, would result in a similar requirement for car and cycle parking in accordance with the Council's adopted standards. To this end, the proposed use would maintain the status quo with regard to car and cycle parking.

In terms of trip generation, the proposed use is a parasitic use in that it is devised to take advantage of the needs of local health services, who would already have reason to be within the area. Therefore, the proposed use would not be resulting in any single-purpose visits or destination based trips, but would be part of existing trips for a multi-purpose or more importantly would result in trips by foot and public transport.

The proposed use would generate negligible commercial traffic with regard to service vehicles. Waste would continue to be collected on a weekly basis. Deliveries to the premises normally involve limited products and these would be ordered in bulk and deliveries would take place in the same way as the consented office use.

Given the Central London location of the site and its very high accessibility to public transport, the proposed use is unlikely to attract a high number of destination car borne journeys.

Design Considerations

The proposed change of use would not result in any physical changes to the external appearance of the building and hence the status quo would be maintained.

Daylighting, Sunlighting, Overlooking and Privacy

Similarly, the proposed development would maintain the status quo in terms of impact on the amenity of existing neighbouring occupiers through the loss of daylighting, sunlighting, overlooking and privacy.

Residential Amenity

The proposed use would occupy an existing commercial building, which has already been adequately soundproofed between the various floors. To this end, there would be no noise transmission through the building, although the activities involved would be very similar to the current Class B1 office use.

Other Material Considerations

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) is a very material consideration that should be taken into account in the determination of the proposed application.

The advice at Paragraph 22 of the NPPF states that where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.

Furthermore, in the context of enhancing the vitality and viability of an area, the advice at Paragraph 23 recognises the need to promote customer choice to promote diversity and competitiveness and seeks to facilitate this via a range of land uses, which amongst other things, includes community uses.

In promoting healthy communities, the advice at Paragraph 69 recognises that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. The advice goes further at Paragraph 70, where it promotes social, recreational and cultural facilities as a way of fostering healthy communities.

Finally, the overarching principle of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In this regard, the advice at Paragraph 9 recognises the importance of improvements in people's quality of life through the creation of jobs, improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure and through the effective use of existing brownfield sites.

Conclusion

In my assessment of the proposed development, I have demonstrated in all respects that the application proposals would fully comply with all the relevant policies of the adopted Camden Core Strategy (2010) and the policies of the adopted Camden Development Policies (2010) together with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compensation Act (2004) states that where a proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan and there are no other material considerations to indicate otherwise, there should be a presumption in favour of the proposed development. In view of this statutory requirement, I would hope that your Council would support my client's development proposals and grant a flexible planning permission for a Class B1 and/or Class D1 uses.

I trust that all the application papers and plans are complete and once the planning application has been registered, I will endeavour to contact you to ascertain your views and a timescale to a decision. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to call me if you have any queries and I will endeavour to assist in any way I can.

Yours faithfully



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cc: Unilabs Limited

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