

Planning Statement

Site: 50-52 Eversholt Street

Proposal:

Change of use from Class A1 to two class A1 units at the front and two self-contained studio flats at the rear.

1.0 Application Site and Location

The site lies within a designated Neighbourhood Centre

The site lies within a designated “safeguarded area” due to possible future use as part of Crossrail 2.

The site lies within Flood zone 1

2.0 Relevant Planning History

Prior approval was refused for: *“Change of use of the ground floor level from A1 (retail) to 4x studios (Class C3).”*

3.0 Proposal

Change of use from Class A1 to two class A1 units at the front and two self-contained studio flats at the rear.

The proposal would protect the existing retail frontage by providing two retail units. The smallest unit has been leased to a “money exchange shop” on a ten-year lease commencing 4th July 2017 - refer to lease agreement which has been submitted as part of the application documents.

The proposed studio flats meet London Plan standards and would have sufficient light and outlook.

4.0 Planning Policy Context and Assessment

Government policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”). Of relevance are the following:

Paragraph 6 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Paragraph 14 states that at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.

Paragraph 187 states that local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development.

Relevant adopted Local Policies

Policy H1 – Maximising Housing Supply

The justification for this policy states, inter-alia:

“The Council will aim to secure a sufficient supply of homes to meet the needs of existing and future households by maximising the supply of housing and exceeding a target of 16,800 additional homes from 2016/17 - 2030/31, including 11,130 additional self-contained homes.”

Paragraph 3.16 of the Local Plan states, inter alia: *“To meet Camden’s housing needs as far as possible the Council will therefore seek to ensure that all available sites deliver as much additional housing as possible.”*

Policy TC2 - Camden’s centres and other shopping areas

This policy in part seeks to protect retail frontages.

In Neighbourhood Centres, which the application site falls within, the Council “will seek to retain convenience shopping for local residents in Camden’s Neighbourhood Centres and will ensure that development in them does not harm the function, character or success of that centre.”

Paragraph 9.23 of the Local Plan states: *“The Council will seek to retain a strong element of convenience shopping for local residents in Camden’s neighbourhood centres and ensure that any development in them does not harm the function, character or success of that centre. We will take into account the individual character of the centre when assessing development proposals but, as a guide, we will resist schemes that would result in less than half of ground floor premises in a neighbourhood centre from being in retail use or in more than three consecutive premises being in non-retail use. We will also take into account any history of vacancy in shop units and the prospect of achieving an alternative occupier for vacant premises.”*

5.0 Planning Assessment

The main planning considerations are as follows:

- Quality of residential units being provided
- The proposed impact on the character, function, vitality and viability of the wider Eversholt Street.
- Car free development.

Quality of units

The proposed flats meet minimum London Plan standards and have good levels of outlook and light.

The proposed impact on the character, function, vitality and viability of the wider Eversholt Street.

The application site is located within a designated Neighbourhood Centre within the Central London Area [16-76 Eversholt Street (Euston House) (east side); 42-44 Doric Way and 80-118 Eversholt Street (east side)].

A marketing statement (dated October) has been submitted as part of the application documents.

This statement confirms that securing tenants for the retail premises is difficult because of the low footfall of pedestrians and the fact the terrace has been designated for compulsory purchase for the future Crossrail 2 project.

The statement comments that those businesses surviving in this street are specialist retailers, betting offices or restaurants.

The marketing statement confirms the terrace had been designated as a “safeguarded area” due to possible future use as part of Crossrail 2. And this poses the biggest challenge to secure retail tenants because the safeguard designation for the Cross-Rail project serves as a negative blight to securing retail occupiers.

The application documents include a Cross Rail 2 Fact Sheet. This sheet confirms that the application site is located within a “designated area”.

Despite the challenges to rent the premises the applicant has been successful in leasing one of the retail units on a ten-year lease (money exchange shop). The other unit remains vacant but the applicant intends to persevere with renting this premise.

While the proposal would lead to a loss of retail floorspace at the rear, the retail frontage will be protected in compliance with Local Plan policy - there are no policies which restrict the change of use of retail floorspace at the rear. The smallest unit has been proven to be unaffected by the smaller provision of retail floor space demonstrated by the lease agreement the applicant has secured for ten years.

Car-free development

Policy DP18 states that the Council seeks to ensure that developments provide the minimum necessary car parking provision. The site is close to Euston, Kings Cross and Mornington Crescent underground stations also mainline railway services interchanges. The application site has a PTAL rating (public transport access level) of 6a (Excellent).

The council routinely allow car free development in highly accessible locations like this one, subject to a Section 106 legal agreement designating the development as ‘car free’. The applicant is willing to enter into such an agreement.