

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		29/10/2017
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		21/09/2017
Officer			Application Number(s)			
Thomas Sild			2017/4154/P			
Application Address			Drawing Numbers			
Ruskin House 40-41 Museum Street London WC1A 1LT			Site location plan, Employment commentary, Marketing details, Design and Access Statement, 17_103-010, 17_103-011, 17_103-209, 17_103-210, 17_103-211			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature			
Proposal(s)						
Change of use of use of first and third floor from B1 to flexible B1 and D1 uses						
Recommendation:		Refuse planning permission				
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission				
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice				
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	00	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
			No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		A site notice was displayed between 29/08/2017 and 19/09/2017 and the application was advertised in the local press between 31/08/2017 and 21/09/2017. No consultation responses were received				
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify		None received				

Site Description

Ruskin House is a 4-storey building (plus basement), situated on the east side of Museum Street within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It is Grade II listed.

The ground floor Museum Street frontage has two units in A1 and one in A3 usage, with the remaining floors under B1 use.

Relevant History

- 1988: 8800304 granted permission for works of conversion and refurbishment including the erection of an extension to the rear with a mansard roof and the use of the ground and basement floors for retail purposes; the formation of a self-contained flat at ground floor mezzanine level and office use in the remainder of the buildings. Granted 19/10/1988.
- 1995: 9501682 refused permission for change of use of ground floor and basement from retail (Class A1) to restaurant (Class A3). Refused 17/11/1995.

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

London Plan 2016

Camden Local Plan 2017

G1 Delivery and location of growth

A1 Managing the impact of development

D1 Design

D2 Heritage

E1 Economic development

E2 Employment premises and sites

TC4 Town centre uses

Camden Planning Guidance

CPG5 Town centres, retail and employment (2013)

Bloomsbury conservation area appraisal and management strategy 2011

Assessment

1. Proposal

1.1 The proposal consists of the change of use of the first and third floors from B1 use to a flexible B1 and D1 use. No alterations to the building or floorspace are proposed.

2. Considerations

2.1 No alterations or extensions to the building's fabric are proposed, as such the principal material consideration in the determination of this application is the principle of the change of use.

3. Land use

3.1 The floorspace is currently vacant and the applicant has been unable to secure new B1 use tenants since advertising began in February 2017. The applicant indicates that interest has been expressed from a user looking for a D1 medical use. It is noted that the vacant floorspace has

successfully attracted B1 occupiers previously, and remaining parts of the building are currently occupied in B1 usage by legal practices.

3.2 Under policy E1 and E2 of the Camden Local Plan business and employment use is specified as referring to a B class and associated unclassified uses only. The Council considers a flexible use other than the existing B1 to be a loss of that use for the duration of the other use.

3.3 The application site is located within the Central London Area, and the Council's aim is to protect premises and sites that are suitable for continued B class business use.

3.4 Policy E2 seeks to retain land and buildings that are suitable for continued B class business use. A change of use from this business use will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the site is no longer suitable for its existing business use and the possibility of retaining the unit has been fully explored over an appropriate period of time.

3.6 In addition, Policy E2 and CPG5 guidance advise that where a change of use to a non-business use is proposed, the applicant must demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that there is no realistic prospect of demand to use the site for an employment use. The applicant must submit evidence of a thorough marketing exercise, sustained over at least two years. The premises should be marketed at realistic prices, include a consideration of alternative business uses and layouts and marketing strategies, including management of the space by specialist third party providers. The marketing assessment would need to include a number of elements such as continuous marketing over at least 2 years; reasonable advertised rents; attractive lease terms; and a commentary on the interest shown in the building.

3.7 The applicant has supplied material indicating that the premises were being advertised as vacant from February 2017. The letting agent has stated that they have not received offers from any interested parties looking for B1 use but have however, received interest in respect to a D1 use. It is not considered that the applicant has fully explored the possibility of retaining, reusing or redeveloping the building for similar or alternative type and size of business use.

3.8 The applicant has not provided any detail on the anticipated employment levels expected to be generated through a D1 use. As such it cannot be demonstrated that the change of use would not result in a loss of employment. It is therefore contrary to the council's economic development policies, specifically E1 and E2 of the Local Plan and CPG5 (Town Centres, Retail & Employment).

4. Recommendation

4.1 Refuse planning permission