

Mr Henry Skinner
The Treasury Office
Lincoln's Inn
London WC2A 3UP

Application Ref: **2017/3976/P**
Please ask for: **Charles Thuaire**
Telephone: 020 7974 **5867**

1 December 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

DECISION

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Full Planning Permission Granted

Address:
24 Old Buildings
London WC2A 3UP

Proposal: Change of use of four self-contained flats (Class C3) on 4th floor to use as overnight visitor accommodation, specifically for visiting judges and barristers (Sui Generis).

Drawing Nos: 1245-PL-001, 002, 003; Planning Statement plus appendices dated April 2017 by The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn

The Council has considered your application and decided to grant permission subject to the following condition(s):

Condition(s) and Reason(s):

- 1 The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the end of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the



following approved plans- 1245-PL-001, 002, 003; Planning Statement plus appendices dated April 2017 by The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.

- 3 This permission is personal to The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn and shall endure for the period of their occupation only. On The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn vacating the premises, the use shall revert to the lawful use for Class C3 residential purposes.

Reason: In recognition of the special circumstances of the applicant and intended occupiers and to accord with policies G1 and H3 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

Informative(s):

- 1 Your proposals may be subject to control under the Building Regulations and/or the London Buildings Acts that cover aspects including fire and emergency escape, access and facilities for people with disabilities and sound insulation between dwellings. You are advised to consult the Council's Building Control Service, Camden Town Hall, Judd St, Kings Cross, London NW1 2QS (tel: 020-7974 6941).
- 2 Reasons for granting permission

The proposal is to use the 4 self-contained flats (three 1 bedroom and one 2 bedroom) as overnight accommodation (Sui Generis) specifically for judges and barristers who need to visit the Inn and stay for court cases and trials. This will entail a loss of permanent residential accommodation within Class C3, which is contrary to policy. Policy H3 aims to protect housing from permanent conversion to short-stay accommodation intended for occupation for periods of less than 90 days. However policy G1 also recognises the unique role, character and challenges of Central London in balancing its economic, social and cultural role and seeks to 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.

Furthermore CPG5 (Town centres etc) gives guidance on Central London Local Areas and in particular the Inns of Court, where it states that 'The Inns of Court require flexibility in order to provide the size and type of floorspace required in order to remain competitive and attractive to tenants in the legal profession'. Although it states that there should be no net loss of residential floorspace, it implies that flexibility could be taken on the type of residential uses within the Inns in order to ensure their continuing operations. The applicant has provided a robust justification as to why these specific flats should be used for alternative short term residential purposes and why there is a justified case for flexibility in the application of policy here.

The existing flats within Lincolns Inn are let to members of the Inn, generally practising barristers. These particular 4 flats are the least popular on the estate and are proving very difficult, if not impossible, to let to permanent residents, mainly on

account of poor outlook, privacy and noise. There is a need to provide short term accommodation for visiting judges and barristers who have to attend hearings and other legal functions, and demand for this remains high. The accommodation has to be close to the Inn, the use of private hotels is prohibitively expensive, and the use of the previously available 7 flats in Chichester Rents next door is no longer possible. It is also noted that such overnight accommodation as proposed contributes to the character and collegiate nature of the Inn.

It is considered on balance that, given these unique circumstances, an exception can be made to the policy to retain permanent residential accommodation as it has been shown that there is a serious need for short term accommodation for legal visitors and that the 4 flats in question are difficult to let and unusable on a permanent basis. It is thus considered that a personal permission can be granted that is restricted to the specific use and user, so that it does not set a precedent. Thus conditions are imposed to make the decision personal to the Lincoln's Inn. As the use is very specific and is Sui Generis, it could not be used for any other form of visitor accommodation (i.e. hotel).

There are no amenity, transport or design issues as there will be no external alterations to the flats, they will continue to be used for residential purposes, albeit on a short term basis, and accessible by public transport as before.

The proposed use is considered to preserve the character of the conservation area. Special attention has been paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, under s.72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.

No objections have been received prior to making this decision. The planning history of the site has been taken into account when coming to this decision.

- 3 As such, the proposed development is in general accordance with policies G1, H3, A1, T1 and D1 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017. The proposed development also accords with the London Plan 2016 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

In dealing with the application, the Council has sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way in accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

You can find advice about your rights of appeal at:

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/appeals/guidance/guidancecontent>

Yours faithfully

David T. Joyce

David Joyce
Director of Regeneration and Planning