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Head of Planning
London Borough of Camden
Development Management
Camden Town Hall Extension
Argyle Street
London
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Our ref: JMS/sos/010318/Camden

1 March 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

PIZZA SOPHIA, 50 TAVISTOCK PLACE, LONDON WC1H 9RG

I act on behalf of Abomnes Ltd which is the leaseholder and operator of Pizza Sophia at 50 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9RG. Following discussions with your Council's Enforcement Team and Environmental Health Officer, I attach for your attention an application for retrospective planning permission for one coldroom condensing unit and two air conditioning condensing units and the installation of new housing for the coldroom condensing unit on the rear elevation at ground floor level of Pizza Sophia. This equipment is essential for the continued operation at Pizza Sophia. Accordingly, the following documents are attached which forms the planning application:

- i) Application form, signed and dated;
- ii) Ownership Certificate and Agricultural Land Declaration, signed and dated;
- iii) Site Location Plan (at 1:1250 scale);
- iv) Existing Floor Plans (drawing ref: A103);
- v) Existing Rear Elevation and Section A-A (drawing ref: A104);
- vi) Proposed Floor Plans (drawing ref: A105);
- vii) Proposed Rear Elevation and Section A-A (drawing ref: A106);
- viii) Noise Impact Assessment prepared by Q T Acoustics.
- ix) Completed Community Infrastructure Levy form, signed and dated.

Please note the relevant planning application fee has been paid electronically via the Planning Portal. In addition to the enclosed documents, I would be grateful if the contents of this letter could be taken into account in your consideration of the planning application.

Background

Pizza Sophia is an independent, highly successful and popular restaurant within the Bloomsbury area of Camden. The restaurant receives excellent ratings from TripAdvisor, Yell etc currently having a 5/5 rating on Yell and 5.4/5 rating on TripAdvisor. A recent review on TripAdvisor dated 21 January 2018 describes the application site as a *"lively atmospheric place, which represents the best of London's small*

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restaurants.” The air conditioning and coldroom condensing units, which are sought to be regularised through the enclosed retrospective planning application, are essential to the operation of Pizza Sophia.

The Application Site

The application site comprises Pizza Sophia, which is located at the ground floor of 50 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9RG. Pizza Sophia is located on the southern side of Tavistock Place just to the west of its junction with Marchmont Street. The unit has a traditional shopfront glass and green tiles with a traditional shop sign above.

The rear of the unit is accessed from a narrow alleyway, which runs along the rear of the units accessed from Kenton Street. Other units in the group of four include IPB Shopping Experts, Continental Stores and an Indian restaurant. To the west (ie to the right as looking at the unit) is a small, single storey residential entrance and then the Valencia Café on the corner with Marchmont Street. The block in which Pizza Sophia is located is four storeys (ground with two floors above and a further storey in the roof space). The building predominantly comprises red brick but has poor quality windows at the upper floors. Tavistock Place is single carriageway (going eastwards) at this location but has a cycle carriage on each side of the central vehicular carriageway.

The application site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area incorporates the area between Euston Road to the north; Gray’s Inn Road, High Holborn to the south and Tottenham Court Road to the west and covers Marchmont Street. The development of the area began in the late 17th Century with Bloomsbury Square. Subsequent development was undertaken on a speculative basis, with plots of land surrounding the square being sold off for terraced housing and developed in line with the classical brief of the Opera House. According to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement, the area is characterised by three or four storey terraces, constructed in a rectangular street pattern and incorporating open squares.

Planning History

A review of the application site’s planning history has been undertaken which has identified only three applications pertaining to the site.

Planning permission was granted for *‘the installation of a new shopfront’* (LPA ref: 9000058) by decision dated 3 July 1990.

Subsequently a Certificate of Lawful Use was granted on 17 October 2000 (LPA ref: PSX0004574) for use of the site as a restaurant, including takeaway, (Class A3) on ground floor and basement. Planning permission was granted for application PSX0005329 by decision dated 13 February 2001 for alterations to the existing shopfront to include new entrance door. No other relevant planning history relating to the commercial use of the premises has been granted.

The Certificate of Lawfulness confirms that a restaurant has been operating on the site for at least 10 years prior to the date of granting of the Certificate but more likely since 1979. The planning history of the site does therefore confirm that the site has been in longstanding restaurant use. It is assumed, that this longstanding restaurant use would also have had plant on the rear wall etc.

The Proposal

The application seeks retrospective planning permission for two air conditioning condensing units and a coldroom condensing unit as well as new acoustic housing around the coldroom condenser to be 1,150 mm wide x 1,350 mm high x 825 mm deep. No other physical works to the building are proposed. Neither are any changes to the use of the building proposed.

The full technical acoustic details relating to the proposed plant are set out within the accompanying Noise Impact Assessment.

Planning Policy

Relevant local planning policy relevant to the proposed planning application has been considered.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the policies of the statutory development plan, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

For the purposes of Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the statutory development plan comprises The London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations Since 2011) (March 2016), and the Camden Local Plan (adopted 3 July 2017). Due to the minor nature of the application proposal it is the Camden Local Plan which is most relevant.

Policy CA1 (Managing Impact and Development) confirms that the Council will seek to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours and will grant permission for development unless it causes unacceptable harm to amenity.

Policy A4 (Noise and Vibration) confirms the Council will seek to ensure that noise and vibration is controlled and managed.

Planning Issues

Having considered the nature of the application and the relevant planning policy background, it is considered the following issues are most relevant to the application proposal. Namely:

- Residential amenity;
- Economic benefits.

Each of the above issues is now considered in turn below. Heritage matters are considered separately later within this Statement.

Residential Amenity

Given the nature of the planning application, the key relevant issue relates to residential amenity. Adopted planning policy, as set out above, requires the Council to ensure that development does not adversely impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

Submitted in support of the application is a Noise Impact Assessment prepared by QT Acoustics, which provides detailed consideration of the noise impact of the proposal following environmental noise monitoring of the site. QT Acoustics have performed environmental noise and monitoring of the site in

order to establish representative background noise levels for the proposed plant operating periods. Relevant standards in the form of BS4142:2014, BS8233:2014 and model planning conditions from the London Borough of Camden have been considered and pre-application advice has been sought. A Noise Control Package has been selected in order to provide sufficient mitigation of the proposed plant. This provides a low impact to neighbouring noise sensitive properties and complies with the requirements of the London Borough of Camden. QT Acoustics have spoken directly to Peter Rodham of the London Borough of Camden in order to agree with him the approach and mitigation for this site.

In accordance with the proposed mitigation, the accompanying Noise Impact Assessment confirms that there will be no adverse impact to the amenity of neighbouring properties arising from the application proposal. Accordingly, the application proposal is considered to accord with Policy CA1 (Managing Impact and Development) and Policy A4 (Noise and Vibration) of the Camden Local Plan July 2017.

Economic Developments

Pizza Sophia is an independent, highly successful and popular restaurant in the Bloomsbury area of Camden. The restaurant receives excellent ratings from TripAdvisor, from tourists, students and local residents alike. Pizza Sophia therefore provides an important day time and evening economy use for the benefit of the local area and the adjacent Marchmont Street Neighbourhood Centre. Pizza Sophia employs a number of staff. The requirement for air conditioning plant and the coldroom condenser are essential requirements of Pizza Sophia's ongoing operation. Were the restaurant to close there would be an immediate adverse impact on the local economy, the character of the local area through the loss of an independent restaurant and the immediate loss of jobs. Accordingly, the application is considered to accord with Policy E3 (Tourism) of the adopted Camden Local Plan (July 2017).

Heritage Matters

In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF this heritage statement describes the significance of the heritage assets affected by the development proposal.

The purpose of this is to assist with the determination of the application by informing the decision takers on the effects of the development on the historic built environment. Value judgements on the significance of the heritage assets presented and the effects of the proposals upon that significance are appraised. This statement also sets out how the proposals comply with the guidance and policy of the NPPF and the local policy framework. Specifically, this assessment assesses the significance of the relevant designated heritage assets and the effects of the development upon them. Each of these matters is now considered in turn below.

The Significance of the Relevant Heritage Assets

The application site itself is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The significance of this asset is now considered in turn below:

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area incorporates the area between Euston Road to the north; Gray's Inn Road, High Holborn to the south and Tottenham Court Road to the west and covers Marchmont Street. The development of the area began in the late 17th Century with Bloomsbury Square. Subsequent development was undertaken on a speculative basis, with plots of land surrounding the square being sold off for terraced housing and developed in line with the classical brief of the Opera House. According to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement, the area is characterised by three or four storey terraces, constructed in a rectangular street pattern and incorporating open squares.

Impact Assessment on Assets of Heritage Significance

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset. As such, an assessment of the impact of the application proposal on the conservation area is required

It is not considered that the proposed plant will have any adverse impact on the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Whilst the application site lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, the plant is situated on the rear ground floor elevation of Pizza Sophia within a narrow alleyway. This is not within the public domain, being a private alleyway at the rear of the premises which is not in a prominent visual location. As such, it is not considered that the plant in this location has any adverse impact on the conservation area. Rather, the plant, which is essential for the ongoing retention of Pizza Sophia, supports the Conservation Area, as the alternative potentially would be the potential closure of the site. Overall, it is therefore considered the application proposal is acceptable.

One of the existing air conditioning units has been longstanding on site and was in situ when the current operator of Pizza Sophia took it over. It is unclear how long this air conditioning unit has been on site. However, as detailed below, the site has been a longstanding restaurant use for many years.

Summary

The application is essential in order to facilitate Pizza Sophia continuing to trade. Pizza Sophia is a local independent business which is highly successful serving both local residents, students and tourists alike. Pizza Sophia provides vitality and viability to the Marchmont Street Neighbourhood Centre as well as providing a number of local jobs. Overall, it is considered that the application is of benefit to the London Borough of Camden and accordingly, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be forthcoming.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julian Sutton', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Julian Sutton
JMS Planning & Development

Encs.