



Our Ref. : ASA/AG/14850
Your Ref. : 2017/5699/P
Date : 3rd May 2018

**HUGH
CARTWRIGHT
& AMIN**

SOLICITORS AND PRIVY COUNCIL AGENTS

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Dear Mr Hope,

Planning Ref: 2017/5699/P

Property: 12 John Street, London, WC1N 2EB

I refer to your email to my planning consultant, Mr Pansuria, dated 23rd February 2018 in respect of the above planning application, and revert as follows.

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

1. I am aware that 12 John Street (“**the Building**”) is a “**Grade II**” listed building and that the other premises on 10-20 John Street are also listed buildings.
 - 1.1. These terraced houses were constructed between 1799 to 1824 as Georgian residences, which was the primary purpose, and have been listed since 24th October 1951.
 - 1.2. I have enclosed with this letter a copy of the list entry from the Historic England website (marked as **Annex A**).
 - 1.3. Apart from the Building being listed, there are certain parts of the Building which are also listed, bearing in mind that they have architectural significance, and these are described in detail on pages 2-4 of Annex A.
2. It is with this view in mind and with a sympathetic approach that I would be converting the building to its former residential use and any alterations proposed would be made only after obtaining listed building consent from Camden Council (“**the Council**”), which would not be applied for without seeking advice and input not only from Historic England but a specialist architect whose specialism is to convert buildings such as the Building back to their original Georgian state.

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BY THE
SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY OF ENGLAND & WALES
(SRA NUMBER: 66896)
A LIST OF PARTNERS IS AVAILABLE AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS

3. I am so conscious of the historic significance of the Building (and its inherent character) that I have even today maintained those parts which are specifically described in Annex A including the cast-iron balconies to the first-floor windows and the panelled double doors at the entrance, as well as some parts which are not specifically listed (such as the original window shutters at ground floor and first-floor level). I have in fact restored them to their original style to ensure that the Building retains its original inherent character.
4. The active steps taken by me to restore, maintain and repair these features from time to time to ensure that the inherent character and beauty of the Building its originality is maintained, clearly demonstrates my desire to comply with not only the listing but also more importantly, the bases on which these buildings were originally constructed (namely Georgian residences), and it is my wish to convert this house back to its original Georgian purpose.
5. For the avoidance of doubt, any alterations intended to be made to the Building will be limited strictly to the non-listed parts and even those would be subject to consultation with Historic England and suitable experts in the field of listed buildings. It is my desire that the Building will form my residence in the long term (in respect of which see below).

CAMDEN LOCAL PLAN

Maximising Housing Supply (Policy H1).

1. Policy H1 of the Camden Local Plan (“**CLP**”) stipulates the need to “***secure a sufficient supply of homes to meet the needs of existing and future households by maximising the supply of housing***” and exceeding the targets specified.
2. My planning application for change of use, if successful, will assist the Council (in its small way) in achieving its targets, which is clearly the primary aim of the CLP, and will comply with the above-mentioned policy
3. In addition, it will also assist the Council in complying with the minimum monitoring target (889 additional homes per year from 2015 to 2025) set by the London Plan 2015 which estimates the need for at least 49,000 additional homes across London per year (see paragraphs 3.12-3.13 of the CLP)

Maximising the Supply of Affordable Housing (Policy H4).

1. Policy H4 of the CLP states that the Council will “***expect a contribution to affordable housing from all developments that provide one or more additional homes and involve a total addition to residential floorspace of 100sqm GIA or more***”.
2. I accept that a change of use of the Building to residential would satisfy the criteria set out above and that the Council would expect me to make a contribution towards affordable housing in the Borough.
3. According to the draft section 106 agreement (“**the Agreement**”) prepared by the Council, I would be required to make an affordable housing contribution of £23,638



(which was calculated by you) and I confirm that the above sum will be available to the Council on completion of the Agreement.

4. However, refusing to grant planning consent for a change of use will result in a failure to receive the affordable housing contribution which would have an impact (again in a small way) on the Council's affordable housing targets and be contrary to the policy of maximising the supply of affordable housing within the Borough.

Economic Development (Policy E1)

1. Policy E1 of the CLP states that the Council will “***maintain a stock of premises that are suitable for a variety of business activities, for firms of differing sizes and available on a range of terms and conditions for firms with differing resources***”:
2. It is my assertion that the Council cannot maintain that the Building is “***suitable for a variety of business activities***” for the following reasons:
 - 2.1. events since year 2000 and the rapid progress of the Internet and e-commerce means that premises such as the Building are simply not suitable for modern business purposes without carrying out extensive alterations which would involve changing room sizes (which would not be permitted because this is a Grade II listed building) and the character of the Building;
 - 2.2. the area in which the Building is situated still does not enjoy general fibre-optic broadband internet connection and the ability to use the Building as an office is thereby substantially diminished;
 - 2.3. the inability to install a lift (without listed building consent (which we are advised will be refused)) and major structural alterations at significant cost) renders the use of the third and fourth floors of the Building very difficult as it is extremely impractical for people to have to walk up, and for office equipment (such as photocopiers, filing cabinets, and furniture) to have to be moved up, four or five (in the case of the basement) flights of stairs to reach the fourth floor of the Building. Anybody who is even slightly overweight or disabled is unable to access these floors;
 - 2.4. the lack of other modern amenities required by businesses of today including large rooms, open plan flexible spaces, air conditioning and raised floors, as well as the fact that the Building would require substantial alterations (where listed building consent would most likely be refused) to make it compliant with disability discrimination legislation, compound the fact that the Building is simply no longer suitable for office use; and
 - 2.5. the rooms in the Building are of various sizes and dimensions rendering them unattractive for office occupation and again, due to the listed status, it would not be possible to alter the internal layout to suit incoming tenants.
3. The inability to convert the Building substantially to make it suitable for small and enterprising businesses, and the inability to provide fast broadband internet connection



has resulted in a dearth of premises in and around John Street area, which are available for letting as office space.

4. John Street currently has available a number of purpose-built office premises (2 to be precise) which have been on the market for letting for quite some time. I have enclosed with this letter photos showing these premises which have boards affixed indicating that they are available to let (marked as **Annex B**, **Annex C** and **Annex D**). I have been advised that these premises have been available to let for at least 9 months.
5. I have also been advised that the building immediately opposite the Building (27 John Street), which is available for letting as a whole building, has been vacant for at least 6 months. It should be noted that the building at number 25 John Street had been vacant for a number of years and in fact we had investigated the possibility of taking a lease in respect of the whole of that building but for the reasons explained in this letter, we decided not to proceed.
6. I have enclosed an email from Morgan Lambert & Partners (“**Morgan Lambert**”), a specialist in this area (marked **Annex E**) which summarises why landlords are finding it difficult to let properties in this area and explains the accessibility problems with premises such as the Building.
7. If planning consent for change of use to residential is granted, then:
 - 7.1. the number of local residents will increase (it is intended that my family (comprising 6 people) or a similar size family would occupy the Building (in my case as my primary home); and
 - 7.2. the firm, Hugh Cartwright & Amin, will move to the currently available modern office space across the road which is much more suitable for offices and provide flexible occupation.
 - 7.3. the direct result of this would be that the number of employees coming to the area would remain the same (and we shall be able to expand) but the number of residential occupiers would increase.
8. The increase of residential occupiers would also result in a benefit to the local businesses in the Borough such as cafes, restaurants, supermarkets and gyms which are currently not being used by employees travelling from outside the Borough into work.
9. The Council has acknowledged (at paragraph 5.19 of the CLP) that the premises in this area are mainly used by the legal, accountancy and management consultant sectors. There is no evidence in this area of any engineering or other such sectors, seeking space. The difficulty with premises such as the Building is that a substantial part of it is completely incapable of use particularly for the existing business which are in the legal sector (and by extrapolation, in the accountancy and management consultant sectors) due to its inability to be converted into flexible office space and limited access to the third and fourth floors of the Building.



10. The third and fourth floors had been empty since 2009. Morgan Lambert reluctantly and temporarily agreed to occupy the fourth floor on a short term all-inclusive tenancy which has now expired, and it is considering its options bearing in mind that the walk to the fourth floor is challenging at the best of times and would be problematic for tenants who are old or have disabilities or health related issues. We should mention that the only reason why Morgan Lambert have occupied the fourth floor primarily because they need a “plate office” in the area to maintain their goodwill.
11. From a commercial point of view, for a small legal practice like Hugh Cartwright & Amin, it would be senseless to keep the third and fourth floors empty without marketing them thoroughly. In 2010, after the recession, a letting board was placed outside the Building (which will be confirmed by Morgan Lambert) but unfortunately, this had a detrimental effect on clients visiting the Building (as there was some suspicion that the firm may not be doing financially so well).
12. I enclose copies of email correspondence from prospective tenants at **Annex F**. There was some interest in the letting of the part of the Building, but one major reason cited for failure to select either of the flows available in the Building was the accessibility and the lack of flexible office space.
13. Morgan Lambert continue to market the third and fourth floors but there has been very limited interest. You can rest assured that we would be prepared to let the floors at discounted rates simply to cover our firm’s costs.

OTHER POINTS TO NOTE

1. Most of the buildings on John Street/Doughty Street are currently used as residential premises (the original purpose for which they were constructed) and Morgan Lambert will confirm that nearly all of the properties that have come to the market in recent years have reverted to their former residential use.
2. My team has carried out a survey of the buildings on John Street and Doughty Street and this confirms that 61% (as an average) of the properties are currently used for residential purposes. I have enclosed with this letter a table containing the survey data (marked as **Annex G**).
3. More and more commercial tenants are looking for better equipped, purpose built and business friendly open plan office space (particularly with availability of hot desk facilities to enable off-site working) which have better local amenities. It is not ideal for employees or tenants to walk up and down many flights of stairs several times a day in order to carry out their duties.
4. As mentioned previously, an open plan office on the same level would better serve the purpose of any business and Morgan Lambert will confirm that the demand for commercial occupation in this area is all but non-existent.
5. On 19th December 2016, Camden Council granted listed building consent in respect of 19 John Street (which is a few doors from the Building) for change of use from office to



residential. Whilst this consent pre-dates the adoption by the Council of the CLP, the reasons provided for granting the consent apply equally to the Building (see below).

6. Paragraph 1 of the informatives in the above consent states that “***[the Council] may allow a change from B1(a) offices to another use in some circumstances, such as older office premises or buildings that were originally built as residential dwellings. It is accepted that the buildings are not suitable for commercial occupation, due to the variety of different sized rooms, which cannot be readily altered due to the listed status of the building*”.**
7. On 3rd August 2017, **after the adoption of the CLP**, Camden Council granted planning permission in respect of 27 John Street and 21 John’s Mews for change of use from a publisher’s office (Class B1) to dwelling house (Class C3) together with a rear extension and associated works. One of the reasons given for granting this permission is that:

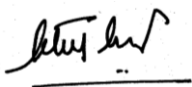
“Policy CS8 and Policy E2 of the emerging Local Plan note that the future supply of office space in the borough can meet projected demand; and the council will consider alternative uses for old office premises. The application building was originally built as a dwelling and has room layout and size not flexible or suitable for modern office accommodation. Due to its listed status, internal alterations to the historic plan form are unlikely to be acceptable. Furthermore, the change back to dwelling house would see the removal of many harmful interventions associated with the office use. Housing is identified as the primary land use in the Local Plan, and The Holborn and Covent Garden Ward has been identified as having a low proportion of larger dwellings. The proposal is therefore acceptable and then use terms”.
8. The Building is no different from 19 John Street or 21 John Street in that it was originally built as a residential dwelling and contains a variety of different sized rooms which cannot be altered as the Building is Grade II listed and are therefore not suitable for modern office accommodation.

In light of the above, I would be grateful if you could please proceed with the application and recommend to the Council (as you had suggested in your email dated 7th February 2018 timed at 9:20am) that planning permission be granted subject to the completion of the Agreement.

Please note that a separate letter from Morgan Lambert regarding attempts to let the third and fourth floors (which is in addition to the emails enclosed with this letter) will follow.

I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Yours sincerely,



Atul Amin
Hugh Cartwright & Amin
Encs.

