

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	04/09/2018
		N/A / attached	Consultation Expiry Date:	
Officer			Application Number(s)	
Obote Hope			2018/2824/P	
Application Address			Drawing Numbers	
54 Belsize Lane London NW3 5AR				
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
Change of use from Launderette (Sui Generis) to shop (Class A1).				
Recommendation(s):	Refuse Planning Permission			
Application Type:	Full Planning Permission			

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:			No. of responses	30	No. of objections	51
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>Press notice was displayed in the Ham & High between 19.07.2018 to 12.08.2018</p> <p>Site Notice was published on 13.07.2018 to 06.08.2018</p> <p>Objections were received from various residents on Belsize Lane and Belsize Village on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Laundrette is always busy as there are many people that locally- in particular the HMOs around the Belsize Village who are not able to have washing machines; <li>• The laundrette represents a form of social cleansing; <li>• The laundrette is an essential part of the community; <li>• Request that the Council impose “article 4” to ensure this essential amenity is retained; <li>• This laundrette (and the one on England’s Lane) is an essential public service. Not everyone living in the local area has a washing machine at home and this service is an essential for them to ensure they can clean their clothes in a local, affordable facility; <li>• The Belsize Park area is a mixed area with much council housing and services like laundrettes are very important; <li>• Our local communities need to maintain their mixed services to ensure everyone in the community is catered for. Yet another retail unit will not be able to serve the community in the same way; <li>• The loss of the laundrette will be a great loss to the community; <li>• Judging by how busy this launderette is - I have to go in the daytime only if I'm to get a free machine - there are still many people who do not own their own washing machines; <li>• The launderette is very needed in our village and there are other properties that are empty that can be used as retail use; <li>• The launderette is one of the few remaining useful facilities on Belsize Terrace; we have lost the Post Office/stationers, hardware shop, shoe repairers, off-licence and pub; <li>• The area is rapidly losing diversity - we have more eateries than we know what to do with; <li>• The availability of a local launderette in a community is a vital element of infrastructure and an essential community facility; <li>• It is the only launderette in Belsize Park and one of only two in an area bounded by Swiss Cottage, Hampstead and Chalk Farm. Both of these launderettes are in the same ownership, with the other, in England’s Lane, also under risk of closure; <li>• The Local Plan main goal is “to achieve mixed, inclusive and sustainable communities” (CLP 3.136) and this cannot happen without the appropriate mix of community facilities, as the Council recognises throughout the Local Plan, e.g. <li>• 4.24 Policy C2 Community Facilities - ensure existing community 					

	<p>facilities are retained recognising their benefit to the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4.43 Safeguarding community facilities - Community facilities are vulnerable to pressure from uses, which attract higher land values and once they are lost would not be replaced. The Council will normally seek the retention of community facilities;• 9.36 other town centre uses - The Council will not grant planning permission for development that it considers would cause harm to the character, amenity, function, vitality and viability of a centre or local area;
Belsize CAACs comments:	<p>Belsize CAAC's has raised the following objection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Object to the loss of the laundrette

Site Description

The laundrette occupies the ground floor with storage space at basement level of a four-storey building on the west kerb of Belsize Lane, south of the junction with Belsize Crescent and the planning history indicate that the upper floors occupies 6 x non self-contained units.

Relevant History

CTP/G7/9/4/4026 – Planning permission **granted** on **07.09.1967** for: Alterations on first, second and third floors to form 6 bedsitting room units at 54, Belsize Lane, Camden.

CTP/G7/9/4/4969 – Planning Permission **granted** on **19.04.1968** for: Erection of an extension at the rear of the ground floor shop at No. 54, Belsize Lane, Camden.

TP/57581/SR50/8607 – Planning permission **granted** on 27.10.1950 for: the use of the shop and basement at No. 54, Belsize Lane, Hampstead, as a launderette (Class III of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order, 1950).

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2018

The London Plan March 2016

Camden Local Plan 2017

The following policies are of relevance to the application:

E1 Promoting a successful and inclusive Camden economy

A1 Managing the impact of development

TC1 Quantity and location of retail development

TC2 Camden's centres and other shopping areas

TC4 Town centres uses

Camden Planning Guidance (SPDs)

Town centres and Retail CPG (2018)

Amenity CPG (2018)

Belsize Park Conservation Area Statement (April 2001)

Assessment

1. The proposal

1.1 Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the existing laundrette (class sui-generis) to a shop (use class A1) covering approximately 162sqm of commercial floor area including the basement floor space.

2. Assessment

2.1. The principal considerations material to the determination of this application are as follows:

1. Land use;
2. Principle of the change of use, and;
3. The impact upon the amenities of nearby residential occupiers.

3. Land use

3.1 The application site is located within the Belsize Village Neighbourhood Centre and forms part of the Belsize Park Conservation Area. The Council's retail surveys show that the site has been in use as a launderette for over 10 years; the application form with the submitted covering letter indicates that the launderette is currently in use, which was confirmed during site visit. The planning history indicates that there is a 6-bedroom HMO above the launderette.

3.2 The 2016 retail survey indicates that there were just under 30 commercial units located within the neighbourhood centre, of which 11 were in A1 Use and 2 were vacant. Several of the A1 units were not conventional shops, which includes a dry cleaner, two hairdressers, a gallery and a café within the parade of commercial properties.

4. Principle of the change of use

4.1 Camden's Local Plan policies for shopping provision focus in protecting A1 shops, and ensuring that the introduction of other uses (particularly food and drink uses) does not harm the centre. Policy TC2 in the Camden Local Plan 2017 indicates that the Council will seek to retain convenience shopping for local residents in Camden's Neighbourhood Centres and will ensure that development in these centres does not harm the function, character or success of that centre. Supporting para 9.23 states "*We will take into account the individual character of the centre when assessing development proposals and would 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.*"

4.2 Policy TC4 provides more information about other town centre uses. Generally, it indicates that development should not cause harm to the character, function, vitality and viability of a centre, the local area or the amenity of neighbours. A number of specific considerations are listed, below including:

- the effect of development on shopping provision and the character of the centre in which it is located;
- the individual planning objectives for each centre, as set out in the supplementary planning document Camden Planning Guidance on town centres and retail;
- the health impacts of development.

4.3 Camden's CPG on Town Centres and Retail (March 2018) does not contain a great deal of policy considerations for Neighbourhood Centres. However, the Supplementary Planning Guidance documents states: '*Camden's Neighbourhood Centres provide for the day-to-day needs of people living, working or staying nearby. They generally consist of groupings of between five and fifty premises, which focus on convenience shopping. Other uses that can make a positive contribution to the character, function, vitality and viability of these centres include launderettes.*'

4.4 In further recognition of the service launderettes can provide the Council served an Article 4 Direction adopted on 1 June 2018 preventing the change of use of launderettes to dwelling houses (Sui Generis to C3) which would otherwise be bestowed permitted development rights as a result of recent changes to the GPDO. The permitted development right only applied to

launderettes which were located outside of a conservation area hence the application site not being included in this article 4.

- 4.5 Thus, the mix and balance of uses is of critical importance to the success of the high street and as such the Council has in place planning policies and guidance to control the balance of uses. These policies are set out in Planning Guidance 5 – Town Centres, Retail, and Employment, Local Plan policies TC1 Quantity and location of retail development and TC2 Camden's centres and other shopping areas
- 4.6 Laundrettes, amongst other ranges of shops, contribute to the vitality and function of this part of Belsize Lane, so much so that the LPA has taken steps to protect its vital function within town/neighbourhood centres. This is due to the demand for a use that is in short supply. The proposed change of use of the laundrette to shop would reduce neighbourhood centre in maintaining a range of shops including independent shops, services, food, drink and entertainment and other suitable uses to provide variety, vibrancy and choice. Thus, the proposed change of use would fail to protect and enhance the role and unique character of Belsize Neighbourhood Centre.
- 4.7 There are only 18 launderettes in the borough that, by their very use are acknowledged as valuable to the town centres use in the Local Development Framework and the Local Plan. Camden Planning Guidance 5 recognises that launderettes can make a positive contribution to the character, function, vitality and viability of neighbourhood centres. Namely, for residents without access to washing machines, as launderettes provide an essential service. Those without access to a washing machine at home, including those living in more temporary forms of accommodation, are likely to be on lower incomes. In addition, launderettes can perform a social function as a meeting place. Officers therefore consider that it is important to retain these facilities.
- 4.8 Less than half the units in the town and neighbourhood centres were categorised within the A1 Use in 2016 and it is not considered that the addition of another retail use would benefit the character, function, vitality and viability of the centre any further than existing levels. When balanced against the loss and the potential Sui Generis use, the proposal would have an impact with the reduction of launderettes facilities within the borough, which provides essential services for residents living in bedsits.
- 4.9 The loss of the laundrette could therefore be more harmful to the character, function, viability and viability of the centre. The loss could also harm the health and wellbeing of those without access to a washing machine, and reduce the inclusiveness of the centre. The loss of the laundrette would represent a 5% reduction in the total number across the borough.
- 4.91 It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the gain of an additional retail use would have a lesser impact when looked at in context with the loss of the laundrette. Mainly due to the greater impact on residential amenity to all those who depend on these limited essential service that laundrettes offers to the end user. Particularly, those living above in the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) units and other users locally that are reliant on the laundrette. Whilst, the Council's policies generally favour the addition of A1 Uses in centres and limit the introduction of non-A1 Uses in the interests of supporting the character, function, vitality and viability of the centre. There is clear evidence that this would not be the effect in this instance and it is vital in the interests of supporting the centre and the community reliant upon it in this case for the existing use as a laundrette be retained.

4.9.2 The accompanying cover letter from the applicant suggest '*there is a decline in people using the*

facilities' and if the existing use is no longer viable due to attracting too little trade and turnover to fund the costs associated with the premises, this may result in the loss of the laundrette. Nevertheless, there was no viability assessment that was submitted as part of this proposal and given the number of objections that were received from current users of the premises the laundrette seems to provide some social function as a meeting place for people living in bedsits above.

5.0 Impact on residential amenity

5.1 Development should not cause a loss of amenity to adjacent properties with regard to sunlight, daylight, outlook, overshadowing, light pollution/spillage, privacy/overlooking and sense of enclosure in accordance with CPG 6 and planning policy A1 of the Local Plan 2017.

5.2 There is no external alterations proposed to have an impact with sunlight, daylight, outlook or privacy to the neighbouring properties. The proposal is considered acceptable in this respect.

6.0 Recommendation:

6.1 Refuse planning permission.