

Planning statement

2 Torriano Mews, London, NW5 2RZ

Regmar House Investments Ltd

July 2019

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This planning statement is submitted in support of a full planning application for the change of use of the building from office (use class B1a) to residential (use class C3), providing three two-bedroom units. This application is submitted to Camden Council (“the Council”) on behalf of our client Regmar House Investments Ltd (“the Applicant”). The site comprises the premises at 2 Torriano Mews, London, NW5 2RZ (“the site”).

The proposal

- 1.2 The full application proposes:

“Conversion and change of use from office (use class B1a) to create three residential units (use class C3)”

Key benefits

- 1.3 The proposal delivers a series of key benefits to the Council and the locality of the site, as set out below:
1. The provision of three high quality new residential units, which make a small but valuable contribution towards the Council’s housing targets;
 2. A contribution towards off-site affordable housing; and
 3. Reusing dated commercial space that no longer meets market demand, for a residential use which is Camden’s strategic priority.

The application

- 1.4 This statement has been informed by a comprehensive set of planning application documents and plans, as set out below. This statement should be read in conjunction with these planning application documents and plans that will provide further information on the points summarised and assessed against planning policy in this report. The application comprises the following:
- Application forms, certificated, and notices;
 - Drawings by TR Studo;
 - Planning Statement by Maddox; and
 - Marketing report by TRP.

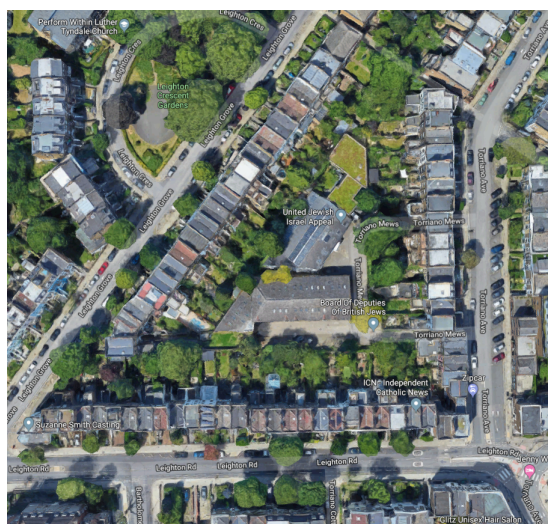
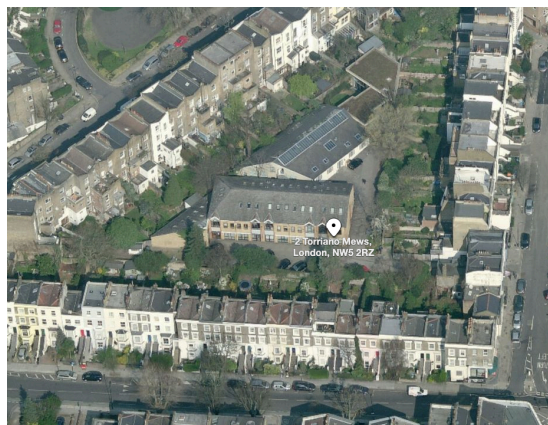
The statement

- 1.5 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:
- Section 2 examines the site and its surroundings;
 - Section 3 sets out the pre-submission consultation that has been undertaken;
 - Section 4 provides details of the proposed development;
 - Section 5 sets out the relevant planning policies against which the proposal should be assessed;
 - Section 6 provides an assessment of the proposal against the relevant planning policies and material considerations; and

- Section 7 concludes that permission should be granted in light of the foregoing.
- 1.6 This statement provides a comprehensive review of the national, strategic and local planning policy and guidance relevant to the proposals. It assesses the degree to which the proposals accord with the policies of the statutory development plan and considers other material considerations, in accordance with the requirements of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the statutory tests for the determination of planning applications.
- 1.7 The proposed development has been fully assessed in relation to planning policy guidance and the statutory tests and, for the reasons set out within this statement, is considered to be compliant with these. Furthermore, the proposals will deliver tangible public benefits to the local area including the delivery of much needed housing.

2.0 Site and area description

- 2.1 The site address is 2 Torriano Mews, situated off Torriano Avenue, within the London Borough of Camden. Images of the site are found below.



- 2.2 Unit 2 Torriano Mews is located within a two storey brick building with a pitched roof that provides accommodation within the roof space. The premises is a mid-terraced property within a row of similar units on Torriano Mews. Access to the site is from Torriano Avenue to the east of the site. The mews itself comprises a mix of residential and commercial uses.
- 2.3 The building is not locally or statutorily listed, nor is it within a conservation area. The site is not within a conservation area or near to any listed buildings. The property is however covered by an Article 4 direction which removes permitted development rights for properties within a specific area to change from office (B1) to residential use (C3) hence the submission of a full planning application. The site is shown to be within Flood Risk Zone 1, affording a low probability of flooding.
- 2.4 In front of the building is a small car parking area capable of accommodating two vehicles.

- 2.5 The site is located within a triangle of two and three storey residential terraced properties, as shown on the above images. Immediately adjacent to the site to the north is a two-storey office building.
- 2.6 The site is not designated on the adopted Camden proposals map.
- 2.7 The site has a PTAL of 4, making it a highly sustainable location. Kentish Town train station is 650m west of the site and Tufnell Park underground station is 850m north of the site. The 390 bus route travels along Brecknock Road, close to the site, travelling to Archway and Victoria.

3.0 Relevant planning decisions

3.1 The relevant on-site planning decisions are set out below.

Table 1: on-site planning decisions

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
2017/5705/P	Change of use of Office (B1a Use) into 3 x 2 bed residential flats (C3 Use)	Refuse prior approval (The application site is covered by an Article 4 direction which removes permitted development rights for a change of use from office to residential use.)	17 October 2017
2017/4261/P	Change of use of Office (B1a Use) into 3 x 2 bed residential flats (C3 Use)	Withdrawn	24 August 2017
2017/4260/P	Installation of 1 rooflight and repositioning of 2 rooflights to rear roofslope	Grant	8 August 2017
9200664	Change of use of Units 1-4 from B1 business use to provide 4 ground floor flats and 4 maisonettes plus two additional parking spaces and new boundary fence.	Withdrawn	7 July 1992

3.2 The relevant off-site planning decisions are set out below.

Table 2: off-site planning decisions

Reference	Address	Description	Decision	Date
2014/0808/P	3 Torriano Mews	Change the use from office (Class B1) to 3 x self contained residential flats (Class C3).	Grant	12 February 2014
2013/7023/P	The Works Torriano Mews	Change of use of building from offices (Class B1a) to 6 self-contained flats (Class C3).	Grant prior approval	
2013/3957/P	3 Torriano Mews	Change the use from office (Class B1) to 3 x self	Refuse prior approval (In the absence of an agreed s106 planning obligation, suitable	1 July 2012

		contained residential flats (Class C3).	mitigation measures are not secured to mediate against the additional parking stress and congestion on the local highway network as a result of the development and therefore it fails to comply with Class J2(a) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2013.)	
PEX0201019	7 Torriano Mews	Erection of a new single dwelling house with lower ground and ground floor levels to vacant land to the north of The Works building. As shown on drawing numbers: Location Plan, 2214/01, 2214/02 and 2214/03	Grant	25 November 2002
9300532		Change of use from permission to build B.1 office to permission to build single detached house. (Plans Submitted).	Withdrawn	4 May 1993
9300701	7 Torriano Mews	Erection of a part-one part-two storey house with associated car parking space as shown on drawing nos. 9304/01 02 03 04 05 and as detailed in letter of 4th August 1993.	Grant	10 June 1993

4.0 Proposed development

4.1 The proposed description of development is:

“Conversion and change of use from office (use class B1a) to create three residential units (use class C3)”

Layout

4.2 The proposed development comprises three two-bedroom, four person flats. The flats are laid out in a similar fashion with living spaces to the front facing the mews and double bedrooms to the rear. The accommodation schedule is as follows:

Flat No.	GIA [gross internal area]	Living area	Bedroom (Total)	Built-in Storage
A	72	30.85	24.53	5.73
B	71	33.75	25.41	4.74
C	73	26.62	24.21	5.29

Scale and massing

4.3 The existing building is three storeys in height with the top storey within the loft space of the building. There is no change proposed to the scale and massing of the building.

Tenure

4.4 The new residential units are proposed to be sold on the private market. However, an affordable housing contribution will be secured through a section 106 agreement in accordance with Camden’s adopted small-sites policy H4 (see section 6 of this statement).

External appearance

4.5 There are no alterations to the external appearance of the building. A planning permission has been granted for the addition and repositioning of rooflights, which will be implemented in conjunction with the proposed conversion subject to this application (Ref: 2017/4260/P).

Landscaping

4.6 As the planning application relates solely to the conversion of existing floorspace, no landscaping is proposed.

Amenity space

4.7 As the planning application relates solely to the conversion of existing floorspace, there is no opportunity to provide external amenity space on site.

Access and parking

- 4.8 The site provides two existing parking spaces which will be allocated between the units on a first come first served based. The applicant is intending on entering into a legal agreement with the Council to prevent future occupiers from obtaining parking permits.

Accessibility

- 4.9 As the planning application relates solely to the conversion of existing floorspace, it has not been possible to accommodate the space required to ensure compliance with Part M4(3)

Refuse and servicing

- 4.10 The existing refuse storage arrangement can be accommodated within the existing estate refuse provisions just inside the estate access road as shown on the submitted site location plan. There are three large industrial bins that all of the Torriano Mews occupants (including the existing flats) use. Two bins are general waste, and one is for paper/plastic recycling.

5.0 Development plan policy and planning guidance

- 5.1 To the extent that development plan policies are material to an application for planning permission the decision on an application must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). The chapter below provides a summary of the relevant development plan policies in relation to the proposed development.

Development plan

- 5.2 The statutory development plan for the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 comprises:

- The London Plan 2016;
- Camden Local Plan 2017; and
- Kentish Town Neighbourhood Plan 2016.

Camden Local Plan

- 5.3 As the proposal does not raise matters of strategic importance, the relevant policies are considered to be those within the Camden Local Plan. The main policies of relevance are considered to be:

- H1 Maximising housing supply;
- H4 Maximising the supply of affordable housing;
- H6 Housing choice and mix;
- E1 Economic Development;
- E2 Employment premises and sites; and
- T2 Parking and car-free development.

Kentish Town Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.4 The Kentish Town Neighbourhood Forum adopted its Neighbourhood Plan in September 2016. The main policy of reference is SW1, which provides support for small businesses but echoes the principles in policy E1 and E2 within the Camden Local Plan.

Material considerations

- 5.5 The material considerations considered to be associated with the assessment of the application are:
- 5.6
- National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF);
 - Planning Practice Guidance 2019 (PPG);
 - Mayor's Housing SPG;
 - Camden Planning Guidance (Interim Housing and Employment Sites and Business Premises).

6.0 Key issues and considerations

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise. This section therefore assesses the proposal against the development plan policies outlined above and examines relevant material considerations where appropriate. The assessment draws upon the suite of application documents listed at Section 1 of this statement. The main planning considerations are considered to be:
- Loss of office space;
 - Principle of residential use;
 - Affordable housing;
 - Housing mix and quality of accommodation; and
 - Parking.

Loss of office space

- 6.2 Policy E1 of the Local Plan seeks to safeguard existing employment sites and premises in the Borough that meet the needs of industry and other employers. This is echoed in policy E2 where further policy requirements are set out. Principally, the Council will resist development of business premises and sites for non-business use unless it is demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction:
- the site or building is no longer suitable for its existing business use; and
 - that the possibility of retaining, reusing or redeveloping the site or building for similar or alternative type and size of business use has been fully explored over an appropriate period of time.
- 6.3 The supporting text of E2 notes the requirements for assessing proposals that involve the loss of a business use to a non- business use. The Council requires the applicant to submit evidence of a thorough marketing exercise, sustained over at least two years.
- 6.4 Further detail on the specifics of the marketing requirements needed to justify the loss of office use is set out within Camden Planning Guidance Document on Employment Sites and Business Premises. Paragraph 47 notes that the Council will consider shorter marketing periods (than the two years) where the premises have been actively marketed for sale for at least 12 months up to the date of the submission of the planning application.
- 6.5 In accordance with Camden's requirements the application is accompanied by reputable local agents TSP. The agents were initially instructed to dispose of the property in April 2018. At this time, they came on board as joint agents with Victorstone, also a reputable local firm. Following limited interest, the instruction was extended to offering the premises for rent. As a result, at least 12 months marketing for sale has been carried out meaning that a shorter time period for marketing for rent is deemed appropriate. 12 months rental marketing has been carried out which is considered to be appropriate given the small scale nature of the premises and the severe lack of interest that has been received to date.

- 6.6 Although a letting board was not erected, the site has very limited visibility from public vantage points and therefore this was not deemed appropriate.
- 6.7 From the beginning of the instruction, the building was placed on both Victorstone's and TSP's websites as well as with CoStar, EGi, Rightmove, Realla, Movehut and other online property databases. The property was not enlisted on GLAs Open Workspace Group or other workspace provider websites due to the size and configuration of the property, which would not be suitable for co-working or serviced offices.
- 6.8 Lease and rental terms commensurate with market value were offered to interested parties. The marketing report sets out a robust justification for those terms, evidenced by comparable deals in the local area.
- 6.9 The report notes that limited enquires were received with only 18 viewings to date, two of which were second viewings, and only four this year. The majority of interest and viewings undertaken were for the purchase of the property with very limited interest on a rental basis. TSP believe this to be due to occupiers requiring single floor plates and preferring to be in serviced office options in the area for this size requirement. To date, no parties have shown serious interest in the accommodation with only a handful attending for a second viewing. There have been no offers received to acquire the space despite inviting interested parties to put forward offers. The main feedback has been due to the location as the property is amongst a predominantly residential neighbourhood with few amenities on the doorstep of the property to support the employees.
- 6.10 The TSP report should be read in full but the conclusion that can be reached is that there is no demand for the premises despite a light refurbishment being undertaken to attract further interest. The changing nature of the office market and the shift by SMEs to take up serviced and co-working space means that the site is no longer suitable for its current use. A thorough marketing campaign has been undertaken on a both a disposal and lease basis which has revealed very limited interest in the office use despite the favourable terms on offer. It is considered that the loss of the office floorspace is fully justified against policies E1 and E2 of the Local Plan.

Principle of residential use

- 6.11 Support for the proposed residential use is set out at policy H1 of the Local Plan that notes that self-contained housing is the Local Plan's priority use. Camden's target for housing delivery in the adopted Local Plan is to deliver 16,800 homes between 2016/17 – 2030/31 equating to 1,120 dwellings per annum. This is echoed at policy 3.2 of the London Plan, which seeks to ensure Boroughs achieve and exceed their relevant annual housing target. The proposed development will contribute to this housing target through the delivery of a windfall site in a sustainable location that seeks to make best use of previously developed land.

Affordable housing

- 6.12 In accordance with Camden's small sites affordable housing policy H4, it is noted that the Council will expect a contribution to affordable housing from all developments that provide one or more additional homes. A sliding scale applies to developments that provide between one and 25 additional homes.

- 6.13 As noted within the Camden Planning Guidance (Housing), an assessment of capacity is based on the gross floorspace and capacity is calculated as one home per additional 100 sqm of residential floorspace, with the capacity rounded to the nearest whole number. The capacity is therefore two homes in this instance ($256 \text{ sqm of proposed floorspace} / 100 = 2.56$ homes). Using the sliding scale (2% per unit), 4% would be required of the GEA and 4% of this calculates at 10.24 sqm. The affordable housing payment-in-lieu is therefore considered to be £27,136 ($10.24 \text{ sqm} \times \text{£}2,650$).
- 6.14 It is expected that this contribution will be secured through a section 106 agreement that will be drawn up during the determination period of the application. In summary, the proposal is fully compliant with policy H4.

Housing mix and quality of accommodation

- 6.15 The proposed development will result in three new residential units each comprising two-bedroom, four person units. Policy H6 seeks to secure a variety of housing suitable for Camden's existing and future households. Given the small nature of this development, the mix of units is considered to be in compliance with the aims of policy H6.
- 6.16 The proposal meets the requirements of policy H6 to the extent that the units and rooms within them all meet the nationally prescribed space standards. The proposed units are not provided with external private amenity space, which is often difficult to secure as part of conversion proposals given the lack of outdoor space. Alterations to the building would not be appropriate as it would upset the harmony of the existing terrace. All of the units are dual aspect with living areas at the front where daylight is optimised. Although outlook is more limited within the top floor flat, the addition of rooflights secured through an earlier planning permission will ensure adequate daylighting. There are no privacy or residential amenity issues raised by the proposal. All rooms are accessed via a central circulation space. Finally, although the units are not fully Part M4(3) compliant, H6 only requires this provision to be met for new build dwellings. The proposal therefore complies with the key principles set out at H6 and section 4 of the CPG (housing).

Parking

- 6.17 The proposed development provides two existing off-site parking and the applicant is willing to enter into a car free legal agreement as required by policy T2 of the Local Plan to ensure that no parking permits will be available for future residents. The development also proposes a total of six cycle parking spaces accommodated on cycle racks in the entrance lobby on the ground as shown on the submitted proposed section plan. In this respect, it is considered the proposed development is in accordance with the general aims of transport planning policy and is therefore acceptable.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The submitted marketing report confirms that there has been very limited interest in the occupation of the application site by an office occupier, which justifies the loss of office use. The proposed conversion will provide Camden with three good-quality residential accommodation on a previously developed and small site in a sustainable location, in turn contributing to the Borough's housing target as well as providing a contribution towards affordable housing.
- 7.2 In light of the above, it is considered that all relevant planning policies are complied with= and there are no material considerations to indicate that planning permission should not be granted.