

Date
16 August 2019

Development Management
Regeneration and Planning
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

By Email Only

Dear Sir or Madam,

RE: Units 3 & 4 Spectrum House, NW5 1LP – Planning Application Submission Change of use of Units 3 & 4 from Use Class B1 to Use Class D2

Daniel Watney LLP have been instructed to submit a planning application for the change of use of Units 3 & 4 from Use Class B1 to Use Class D2 (gym).

The application comprises:

- Location Plan
- Existing Plans
- Proposed Plans

The proposed change of use will not result in any external alterations.

Site Description

Units 3 & 4 comprise two of 34 units within Spectrum House complex located on the north side of Gordon House Road. Spectrum House is located within the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area, comprising some 5,334sqm of Class B1 floorspace. The total floorspace subject to the change of use is 225sqm.

Policy Position

Local Plan Policy E2 'Employment Premises and Sites' emphasises the Council's aim across the borough to protect existing employment generating uses for Camden Residents and those that support the functioning of the Central Activities Zones (CAZ) or the local economy. The policy states that development of business premises and sites for non-business use will be resisted unless it is demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction:

a. the site or building is no longer suitable for its existing business use; and

b. 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.

The site is not located within the Central Activities Zone. The proposal will therefore not harm the functioning of the CAZ in this regard.

The 2014 Camden Employment Land Study identifies Kentish Town to be one of the key locations for office provision within the borough. Spectrum House is identified as typically

accommodating business activity linked to artistic studios, media production, technology, charities, architecture, consulting and design. This reflects the current activity. The study does also highlight the increasing pressure within the Kentish Town area for new residential development, to the detriment of the employment floorspace provision in this area.

Of the 5,000sqm of floorspace across Spectrum House, just over 1500sqm is currently vacant, with further vacancies expected in the coming months. This equates to 15 units at present. These vacancies have presented an ideal juncture to enhance the overall B Use Class offering available across the complex amid the ongoing process of re-letting the units. Unit 4 itself has been vacant for 8 months after the previous occupiers left in January 2019. Despite attempts to let, there has not been any interest. Alongside Unit 3, the floorspace is an ideal option to accommodate the proposed gym.

Using the British Council for Offices standard, Spectrum House can accommodate a total of 673 employees, of which 30 could be attributed to Units 3 and 4, equating to 4% of the overall provision. Such a percentage is considered minimal, with the resultant proposal a significant material enhancement to the office offering of Spectrum House.

As the office market has altered in recent years, there is an expectation for workplaces to be provided by a variety of supplementary facilities such as exercise spaces, break out spaces and cafes that improve the overall quality of the office offering and usability. As existing, Spectrum House is not served by any accompanying facilities to support the function of the primary office floorspace on site.

The gym will provide a valued amenity for the surrounding offices of Spectrum House, with the location ideally situated for employees using the facility outside of working hours. F45 is considered unique in that members can only attend group classes via the online booking system. The planned exercise classes are organised to co-inside with typical office hours to further encourage take up of these classes. The Monday to Friday timetable for gym classes is as below:

- 6am to 9am
- 12:30pm
- 6pm to 8pm

As existing, such amenities are noticeably absent from the site and immediate area, to the detriment of the attractiveness of the office space.

The supporting text to Local Plan Policy E1 'Economic Development' acknowledges the importance of innovative new floorspace, stating that:

'we will seek the provision of innovative new employment floorspace in developments that will provide a range of facilities including: flexible occupancy terms; flexible layouts; studios; workshops; and networking, socialising and meeting space that will meet the needs of a range of business types and sizes.'

The proposal will enhance the quality of the office floorspace available within Spectrum House, providing a key facility that is becoming increasingly popular within new employment floorspace across London. This enhancement is considered to improve the flexibility of the office floorspace, attracting a wider variety of potential occupiers, to the material enhancement of the ongoing appeal and desirability of the office space within Spectrum House.

Amenity

Local Plan Policy A1 'managing the impact of development' states that the Council will seek to ensure that the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours is protected.

Class capacity is limited to 28 members at any one time. Members are not permitted to attend the gym freely and must pre-book a class online before attending. This approach will ensure there is not a continuous movement of gym members at the complex. Music will be played during the group classes. The timetable for these classes is scheduled predominantly outside of typical working hours, ensuring the amenity of surrounding users is protected in this regard.

The proposal will feature a rubber floor to minimise internal noise from the music and gym equipment and the windows and doors will be kept closed as often as practically possible to minimise noise leakage. This will ensure that the amenity of surrounding uses is protected, in accordance with Local Plan Policy A1.

Closing

We trust that the application includes sufficient information, however, should officers require further information, please contact Sophie King at these offices (sking@danielwatney.co.uk) 02030773411.

Yours Faithfully,

Daniel Watney LLP