

ROUTE ONE PLANNING

24 – 32 STEPHENSON WAY, LONDON, NW1 2HD

Policy H2 response – addendum

October 2019

Policy H2 Maximising the supply of self-contained housing from mixed use schemes

It has previously been demonstrated that the application building is not suitable for the provision of an element of self-contained residential use. This has been discussed and agreed with relevant officers.

Policy H2 states:

Where the Council is satisfied that providing on-site housing is not practical or housing would more appropriately be provided off-site, we will seek provision of housing on an alternative site nearby, or exceptionally a payment-in-lieu.

This document considers alternative off-site locations for the provision of housing.

The Council do not have a defined methodology in assessing the requirements of this policy. Therefore, it is an arbitrary process.

Discussions were undertaken with Planning Officer's to agree the search methodology and sites of between 180sqm to 400sqm were considered as part of this exercise. A catchment area was agreed of 1,200sqm within LB Camden.

HNG Chartered Surveyors were instructed to undertake a search of available commercial floorspace within the catchment. Properties for rent and sale were identified.

Further discussions with Officer's were undertaken to establish those sites that should form part of this assessment. In addition, the parameters against which properties should be assessed against.

There is an extensive range of commercial floorspace available for rent and sale. However, the majority are far in excess of the 180sqm – 400sqm search criteria and are considered unavailable or suitable. Private landlords are unlikely to let out small areas of their buildings for residential use, seeking to install tenants for larger areas and secure income.

To provide floorspace for self-contained residential purposes would require the land/building to be held in perpetuity. Therefore, rented accommodation could not guarantee this and is another reason why such floorspace would not be viable.

It is also unclear whether buildings would be suitable for residential purposes, and to understand whether they could be retrospectively fitted out to allow for a dual use (commercial & residential) would require time and investment.

Buildings would require separate entrances. Shared entrances are unusual and would impact on lettable. They would impact covenant strength and would not be attractive to landlords. Furthermore, shared entrances would raise security concerns.

To provide an element of residential within an existing office building would require a change of use application. Policy E2 (Employment premises and sites) in the Local Plan states that the Council will

ROUTE ONE PLANNING

resist development of business premises for non-business use, unless the building is no longer suitable for its existing use. The office space within the catchment area is in a central London location and generally of high quality. Consequently, a change of use to residential would be contrary to policy.

There are properties identified within designated retail shopping frontages, such as Tottenham Court Road, and would be unsuitable for residential purposes.

Many properties are on short term leases. A residential use would need to be held in perpetuity. Consequently, those sites would not be suitable.

Taking the above into account a comprehensive search of alternative, off-site locations for residential development. No sites were identified that would be suitable or viable to provide the amount of floorspace required under policy H2.