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Date: 06/01/2020
Our ref: 2019/2750/PRE
Contact: Laura Hazelton
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DP9 Ltd
100 Pall Mall
London
SW1Y 5NQ
By email

Dear Sir,

Re: 551-557 Finchley Road, NW3

Thank you for submitting a pre-planning application enquiry for the above property which was received on 28/05/2019 together with the required fee of £4,872.00.

This letter represents the Council's initial view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage. It should not be interpreted as formal confirmation that your application will be acceptable nor can it be held to prejudice formal determination of any planning application we receive from you on this proposal.

1. Drawings and documents

Design study brochure dated April 2019, existing and proposed rear elevation drawing.

2. Proposal

Change of use and works of conversion to provide 37 room aparthotel with ancillary café and co-working space at ground/basement, with a separate retail unit at ground floor level, including erection of rear extensions and a double mansard roof extension to facilitate the addition of a fifth floor.

3. Site description

The application site comprises 4 x 4 storey terrace buildings with basement floor. They are located on the west side of Finchley Road, south of the busy junction with Platt's Lane and Fortune Green Road. The application site (ground floor of no.551, and all floors of no.557) is currently in D1 use as a language school.

The application site is not listed, nor located in a conservation area, but the opposite side of the Finchley Road marks the boundary of Redington and Frogna Conservation Area. The site is within the Fortune Green & West Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum area.

4. Relevant planning history

Please refer to previous pre-application advice report for full planning history.

5. Relevant policies and guidance

[National Planning Policy Framework 2019](#)

[The London Plan March 2016](#)

[Camden Local Plan 2017](#)

Policy G1 Delivery and location of growth

Policy H1 Maximising the supply of self-contained housing from mixed-use schemes

Policy H4 Maximising the supply of affordable housing

Policy H6 Housing choice and mix

Policy H7 Large and small homes

Policy C2 Community facilities

Policy C3 Cultural and leisure facilities

Policy C6 Access for all

Policy E1 Economic development

Policy E2 Employment premises and sites

Policy E3 Tourism

Policy A1 Managing the impact of development

Policy A4 Noise and vibration

Policy D1 Design

Policy D3 Shopfronts

Policy CC1 Climate change adaptation

Policy CC2 Adapting to climate change

Policy CC5 Waste

Policy TC1 Quantity and location of retail development

Policy TC3 Shops outside of centres

Policy T1 Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport

Policy T2 Parking and car-free development

Policy DM1 Delivery and monitoring

[Camden Planning Guidance](#)

CPG Design 2019

CPG Developer Contributions 2019

CPG Energy efficiency and adaptation 2019

CPG Interim housing 2019

CPG 2 Housing (2006 updated 2019)

CPG Transport 2019

CPG Amenity 2018

CPG Employment sites and business premises

[Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan](#)

Policy 2 Design & Character

Policy 7 Sustainable transport

Policy 8 Cycling

Policy 12 Business, Commercial and Employment Premises & Sites

6. Assessment

- Background
- Land use background
- Land use assessment
- Design
- Neighbouring Amenity
- Transport considerations
- Sustainability
- Planning obligations/CIL

7. Background

The current pre-application enquiry has been submitted as a follow up to previous pre-application proposals (report attached for your information) relating to the following development:

Change of use and works of conversion to provide 12 residential units (Class C3) and two flexible retail units at basement and ground floor level (Class A1-A5), including erection of a single storey rear extension at basement level and a double mansard roof extension to facilitate the addition of a fifth floor.

Although officers supported the principle of the creation of residential units at the site, concerns were raised relating to the standard of accommodation provided. The proposed lower ground floor extension covering the entire curtilage was considered to constitute over development of the site and result in overlooking of neighbouring dwellings. The applicant was advised that although there were concerns about the proposed roof extension, its acceptability would depend on a very high standard of design being put forward, which included reinstatement of historic features at the site.

Following this, a revised proposal was submitted which increased the size of the lower ground floor courtyards to reduce the overall scale of development, reduced the ground floor terraces to limit overlooking concerns, revised the third floor terraces to retain the pitch profile of the rear outriggers as suggested by officers, and changed the mix of units of the two top floors. The revised layout was considered to address previous concerns relating to over-development of the site and overlooking issues between the flats on site and neighbouring flats to the rear. However, significant concerns were raised in relation to the revised unit mix – 11 x 1 bedroom units and 5 x 2 bedroom units. Officers advised that the unit mix would not be policy compliant and would not be supported.

The current pre-application now proposes a 37 room aparthotel with ancillary café and co-working space at ground/basement, with a separate retail unit at ground floor level. The hotel would provide a variety of rooms, some of which will include a kitchen, and all will have an en-

suite bathroom/shower. An ancillary gym for guest use is proposed within the basement. The proposals retain the previously proposed roof extension and reinstatement of historic shopfronts, but revises the lower ground, ground and first floor layout.

8. Land Use Background

Please refer to the previous pre-application advice report for a discussion of the planning history of the site. In summary, the site is in use as a language school (D1 use – non-residential institution), and the majority of the historic planning permissions were personal to the Hampstead School of Language. These were approved on the condition that when this occupier vacated the premises, the use would revert to the original lawful use. The original uses comprise Retail (A1) & Light industrial (B1c) at basement/ground floor of 551 – 553, Non-residential institution (D1) use at 1st – 3rd floors of 553, Retail (A1) at basement and ground floor of 555 and 557, and office at 1st – 3rd floor of 557. There is no history for the 1st – 3rd floor of 555, although it is assumed this was historically residential use. The 1st – 3rd floor of 551 is not within the scope of the pre-application proposals.

9. Land Use Assessment

Based on the existing drawings submitted with the original pre-application proposals, I calculate the original (and established lawful) land uses at the site as being of the following areas:

- A1/B1c – 348sqm
- D1 – 206sqm
- A1 – 353sqm
- B1a – 197sqm

The current pre-application proposes the following land uses:

- A1 – 45sqm (25sqm café and 20sqm retail unit at ground level)
- B1a – 120sqm co-working space in basement
- C1 – 963sqm Hotel (assuming an average of 26sqm per apart-room, plus ancillary reception, gym, plant and storage space).

The pre-application document suggests the proposed hotel would provide 30 apart-hotel rooms and 15 hotel rooms, and that the majority would have kitchens. Policy E3 states that the Council will allow smaller-scale visitor accommodation in town centres, including Finchley Road/Swiss Cottage. Policy E3 goes on to state that visitor accommodation must be easily reached by public transport; provide any necessary pickup and set down points for cars and coaches; and must not harm the balance and mix of uses in the area. The application site is not located within a town centre location (located approximately 0.6 miles from the northern boundary of the Finchley Road Town Centre) and has an average PTAL rating of 4 being served principally by bus routes along Finchley Road. Given it's out of town-centre location, limited transport provision, and location on a TfL Red Route, the site is not considered appropriate for hotel use.

However, the proposed apart-hotel use seems to be more in line with short stay letting than traditional hotel use, which may be considered more appropriate than hotel use in this location.

Policy H2 states that where non-residential development is proposed, the Council will promote the inclusion of self-contained homes as part of a mix of uses. As such, the Council's preferred land use for the site would be predominantly residential use (C3) (or at least the re-provision of the original residential use on site), with an element of office use (B1a) and retail use (A1), with active ground floor uses. Should you not decide to proceed with a residential scheme, it is recommended that the existing retail and office uses are re-provided, before any remaining floor area could be considered for self-contained residential use, or short stay accommodation.

Please see the previous pre-application report for a discussion of the loss of D1 use.

10. Employment and Training

The Council's Economic Development Team have confirmed that providing there was no loss of employment floorspace, they would broadly welcome the proposed scheme. The proposed development has the potential to provide employment and skills-related opportunities for local residents. With a view to ensuring that local people benefit from the scheme, the Economic Development team would seek to secure the following employment and training opportunities for residents through a Section 106 agreement:

Construction phase:

- The applicant should work to CITB benchmarks for local employment when recruiting for construction-related jobs as per section 68 of the Employment sites and business premises CPG
- The applicant should advertise all construction vacancies and work placement opportunities exclusively with the King's Cross Construction Skills Centre for a period of 1 week before marketing more widely.
- The applicant should provide a specified number (to be agreed) of construction work placement opportunities of not less than 2 weeks each, to be undertaken over the course of the development, to be recruited through the Council's King's Cross Construction Skills Centre, as per section 70 of the Employment sites and business premises CPG
- If the build costs of the scheme exceed £3 million the applicant must recruit 1 construction apprentice per £3million of build costs and pay the council a support fee of £1,700 per apprentice as per section 65 of the Employment sites and business premises CPG. Recruitment of construction apprentices should be conducted through the Council's King's Cross Construction Skills Centre. Recruitment of non-construction apprentices should be conducted through the Council's Economic Development team.
- If the value of the scheme exceeds £1 million, the applicant must also sign up to the Camden Local Procurement Code, as per section 71 of the Employment sites and business premises CPG; and

- The applicant provide a local employment, skills and local supply plan setting out their plan for delivering the above requirements in advance of commencing on site, as per section 63 of the Employment sites and business premises CPG.

End use phase:

- We would request provision of end use apprenticeships. The apprenticeships could be within a range of roles (examples include hospitality, business administration, finance, customer service, IT)
- The applicant should provide a specified number (to be agreed) of end use work placement opportunities of not less than 2 weeks each, to be undertaken over the course of the development, to be recruited through the Council's Economic Development team, as per section 70 of the Employment sites and business premises CPG; and
- The applicant should facilitate promotion of the Camden STEAM Commission objectives amongst end use occupiers

It is likely that provision of a hotel would trigger a requirement to provide an employment and training contribution to support, in accordance with CPG Employment sites and business premises. The formula used to calculate that contribution varies depending on the existing use of the site.

11. Design

The Council's design policies are aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments, including where alterations and extensions are proposed. Policy D1 of the Local Plan requires development to be of the highest architectural and urban design quality, which improves the function, appearance and character of the area; and Policy D2 states that the Council will preserve, and where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and listed buildings.

Camden's Development Policies Document is supported by CPG (Design) and the Fortune Green & West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan.

Rear extension

The proposals include demolition of the existing full-depth extensions to the lower levels of nos. 553 and 555 at lower ground floor level, and the erection of a shallower, full width extension which spreads across all properties. The submitted plans do not show the full site curtilage, so it is unclear what the distance is between the proposed extension and the rear boundary line. At ground level, the extensions would again be full width, but pulled back from the rear building line of the lower floor level. These areas do not appear to be accessible from the hotel rooms at ground level. At first floor level, the existing gap between the closet wings of 555 and 557 would be infilled, to provide a uniform first floor extension spanning the width of the site. At second floor level, there are no proposed extensions, but terraces would be created to the roofs of the first floor infill extensions below.

The reduction in the existing massing and pulling the lower ground floor extension back away from the rear building line is welcomed. Although the Council generally resists full width extensions on account of them often resulting in over-development, in combination with the reduction of the existing extensions, the proposed extensions are considered acceptable. At present, the rear elevation is characterised by a number of ad-hoc extensions with no particular uniformity. The proposed first floor infill extension would remain a full storey below the eaves level as recommended by Camden guidance, and overall, the proposals are considered subordinate to the host building and would help to provide a more uniform appearance to the rear elevation.

The proposed external terraces would sit above the flat roofed first floor infill extension, and as such, would not require alterations to the pitched roofs of the closet wings as previously proposed, which is welcomed.

Roof extension

The proposals include a new set back mansard roof extension as previously proposed. This element appears to be slightly smaller in plan form, however, other than a rear elevation, there are no sections, elevations or visuals of the proposed roof extension. Please therefore refer to Officers' previous comments on this element of the proposals.

Shopfronts

The proposals include the replacement of the existing, unsympathetic glazed ground floor frontage with new traditional shopfronts. They would retain the original corbels and re-introduce traditional detailing such as stallrisers and fanlights above the doors in line with CPG1 design guidance. These alterations would have clear heritage benefits, and would enhance the character and appearance of the host building and wider area in accordance with policy D1.

However, the proposals include leaving the ground floor unit of no.553 as an empty void to provide light into the basement co-working space. There is concern that this could result in this unit appearing as a vacant unit and providing no activation to the streetscene. It is recommended that an alternative solution is found such as walk on glazing, or perhaps reducing the size and position of the void.

12. Amenity

Policy A1 seeks to protect the amenity of Camden's residents by ensuring the impact of development is fully considered and would not harm the amenity of neighbouring residents. This includes privacy, outlook, noise, daylight and sunlight.

The nearest residential dwellings are Burgess Park Mansions to the south-west of the site, and the existing flats on the upper floors of nos. 551 and 559.

The proposals are unlikely to impact the neighbouring flats at 551 and 559. The reduction in massing at lower ground floor level is welcomed and would reduce the existing impacts on the outlook from Burgess Park Mansions. The proposed external terraces are set within the

existing closet wings and do not project further than the existing first floor rear windows; however, given the proposed use is likely to result in increased occupation of these rooms and spaces during the evenings and night time, there is likely to be greater overlooking of the residential neighbouring buildings than the existing education use.

As such, you are advised to complete a full analysis of impact on neighbouring amenity as part of any planning application, to include impact on outlook, daylight/sunlight, lightspill, noise disturbance and privacy.

Noise for prospective occupiers

Depending on the proposed use at ground floor level, a Noise Impact Assessment may need to be submitted to demonstrate that the proposed retail units would not cause disturbance to the residential flats above, particularly if air conditioning units or plant is proposed. This would need to be in accordance with Policy A4 (noise and vibration).

13. Transport

Car Parking

Policy T2 of the Camden Local Plan states that the Council will limit the availability of parking and require all new developments in the borough to be car-free. This includes limiting the availability of both off-street and on-street parking. The proposals do not include the provision of car-parking, in accordance with Policy T2 which is welcomed.

The council will not issue on-street parking permits in connection with new development and use legal agreements to ensure that future occupants are aware that they are not entitled to on-street parking permits.

Cycle Parking

Policy T1 of the Camden Local Plan requires development to provide cycle parking facilities in accordance with the minimum requirements of the London Plan and the design requirements outlined in Camden Planning Guidance CPG - Transport. The London Plan (Table 6.3) requires a minimum of 1 short stay space for the office space and 1 short stay space for the hotel use.

The plans do not appear to show any cycle parking, and as such, you are encouraged to explore this prior to the submission of a full application.

Construction Management Plan

A construction management plan (CMP) and associated CMP Implementation Support Contribution will need to be secured by S106 Agreement for the site, in accordance with Policy A1 and Policy T4 of the Camden Local Plan.

Transport for London (TfL)

Transport for London will need to be consulted as the development is on a TfL red route (TLRN). There will be no Highways Contribution requested from the council, as TfL is the Highway Authority for any TLRN.

14. Sustainability

Please refer to previous pre-application report for a discussion of energy/sustainability requirements.

15. Planning obligations/CIL

The following Section 106 planning obligations would be required if planning permission is granted:

- Car free development;
- Construction Management Plan (CMP) and a one off financial contribution to cover the costs of reviewing the CMP.
- Energy efficiency and renewable energy plan
- Sustainability plan

This is not an exhaustive list and other contributions may be required subject to the details submitted as part of any future planning application.

The scheme will be liable to Community Infrastructure Levies for both the Mayor of London and the London Borough of Camden. The Mayor's CIL will apply to all development that adds one or more dwellings or more than 100sqm of floorspace at a rate of £50 per sqm. The Council's CIL will equally apply to all new dwellings at a rate of £250 per sqm in the Zone B (Rest of Camden) area. Please refer to the Council's website for further information on the Borough's CIL.

16. Conclusion

The application site is not considered an appropriate location for hotel use. You are encouraged to explore the re-provision of the original retail and office uses at the site and providing new residential dwellings, before considering short stay accommodation. The revised design to the rear elevation is likely to be considered acceptable, subject to it being demonstrated that there was no harm to neighbouring amenity.

17. Planning application information

If you submit a planning application which addresses the outstanding issue detailed in this report satisfactorily, I would advise you to submit the following for a valid planning application:

- Completed form – full planning application form.
- An ordnance survey based location plan at 1:1250 scale denoting the application site in red.
- Floor plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'

- Roof plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Elevation drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Section drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Design and access statement
- Energy/sustainability statements
- Air quality assessment
- Acoustic report if plant is proposed
- Sample photographs/manufacturer details of proposed materials
- The appropriate fee
- Please see [supporting information for planning applications](#) for more information.

We are legally required to consult on applications with individuals who may be affected by the proposals. We would put up a site notice on or near the site and, advertise in a local newspaper. The Council must allow 21 days from the consultation start date for responses to be received. However, you are strongly advised to discuss your proposals with neighbouring building prior to submitting an application.

It is likely that that a proposal of this size would be determined by Development Control Committee as it would be a major development that would result in the creation of more than 10 residential dwellings.

This document represents an initial informal officer view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage and would not be binding upon the Council, nor prejudice any future planning application decisions made by the Council.

If you have any queries about the above letter or the attached document please do not hesitate to contact Laura Hazelton on the number above.

Thank you for using Camden's pre-application advice service.

Yours sincerely,

Laura Hazelton

Planning Officer
Planning Solutions Team

