

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	24/02/2020
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:	17/02/2020
Officer			Application Number(s)		
Sofie Fieldsend			2019/5888/P		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
47 England's Lane London NW3 4YD			See decision notice		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		
Proposal(s)					
Change of use from launderette (Sui Generis) to retail (A1) at ground/basement.					
Recommendation(s):		Refuse planning permission			
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission			

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	00	No. of responses	30	No. of objections	19
			No. electronic	00	No of comments	11
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>A site notice was displayed on the 24/01/2020 and the consultation period expired on the 17/02/2020. A press notice was advertised on 09/01/2020 and expired on 02/02/2020.</p> <p>25 objections and comments were received.</p> <p>A petition was submitted with 406 signatures also objecting to the development.</p> <p>Their objections can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vital community asset, local residents without a washing machine rely on it• Would be detrimental to vibrant local community and negatively impact the functionality of a strong residential neighbourhood.• Dry cleaners next door does not provide a comparable service to the launderette (i.e. self-service washing facilities at an affordable price)• Homeless families in the temporary accommodation in England’s Lane and other social housing would be without washing facilities• Area already saturated with cafes, do not need another A1 use• Unlikely for another laundrette to open in the area• Services still in demand and operational					
Councillors	<p>Cllr Tom Simon:</p> <p>“I would like to oppose this application. The England’s Lane Residence at the other end of the street is a temporary accommodation hostel for families. It has no washing facilities in house so the families rely almost exclusively on the launderette. It is essential that it remains open.”</p> <p>Cllr Luisa Porritt:</p> <p>“I object to this application on the grounds that it would deprive the residents of the England’s Lane Residence of the only facilities available to them to wash their clothes.”</p>					
Belsize CAAC	Belsize CAAC were consulted and no response was received.					

Site Description

The site is three storey mid terrace property and is located along the eastern side of England's Lane. The building is subdivided into a Launderette (Sui Generis) at ground floor and basement level while the upper floors contain two residential flats (C3).

The building is not listed but is located within the Belsize Conservation Area. It is located in the England's Lane Neighbourhood Centre.

England's Lane hostel for homeless families is located on England's Lane.

Relevant History

Application site

17020- Change of use from retail to office in the first floor rear room at 47, England's Lane, NW3. – **Refused 26/10/1973**

Sites within Belsize area

54 Belsize Lane

2018/2824/P - Change of use from Launderette (Sui Generis) to shop (Class A1). – **Refused 22/02/2019**

Reason for refusal: "The proposed change of use, by reason of the loss of a launderette which provides a specific and essential service and social function, would be detrimental to the character, function, vitality and viability of the Belsize neighbourhood centre, contrary to policies TC2 (Camden's centres and other shopping areas) and TC4 (Town centres uses) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017."

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

London Plan (2016)

The London Plan (Intended to publish) (2019)

Camden's Local Plan (2017)

- 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

Supplementary Guidance

- Town centres and Retail CPG (2018)
- CPG Amenity (2018)

Belsize Park Conservation Area Statement (April 2001)

Assessment

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) at ground floor and basement level. The change of use involves a floorspace of 158 sqm. No external alterations are proposed.

2.0 Assessment

2.1 The main considerations in relation to this proposal are:

- Land use;
- Principle of the change of use, and;
- The impact upon the amenities of nearby residential occupiers.
- Transport

3.0 Land Use

3.1 The application site is located within the England's Lane 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.

3.2 The 2018 retail survey indicates that there were just under 36 commercial units located within the neighbourhood centre. The survey results are shown below.

Use	Number of units
A1 (retail/café)	17
A2(financial and professional services)	3
A3 (restaurant)	8
A4 (drinking establishments)	1
B1 (business)	1
D1 (Non-residential institutions)	4
Sui Generis	3

3.3 Within the shopping parade that the application site sits of the 8 units (No.s 41-55), 3 are in A1 use, two are sui generis (including the application site), 2 A3 units and 1 B1 unit.

No.	Use Class
41 – Fine Arts College	B1
43 – Black Truffle	A3 (café/restaurant)
45 Chamomille	A3 (café/restaurant)

47 Launderette (application site)	Sui Generis
49 – England's Papers	A1
51 – Fine Arts College Gallery	Sui Generis
53 – Harvey Jones Kitchens	A1
55 - Starbucks	A1

3.4 It is noted that the majority of this shopping parade offers a retail function.

4.0 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 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 England's 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 England's Lane 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 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 Just under half the units (17 out of 36) in the England's Lane neighbourhood centre were categorised within the A1 Use in 2018 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 launderette 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 launderette would represent a 5% reduction in the total number across the borough.

4.10 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 launderette. 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 in local homeless centre for families on England's Lane which are reliant on the launderette as this accommodation does not have onsite washing facilities. The high volume of consultation responses indicates that the launderette is a valuable community asset. 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 launderette be retained.

4.11 The accompanying cover letter from the applicant suggests that the function, character and success of the centre will not be harmed as a result of the loss of the laundrette as Chequers Dry Cleaners at No.48 is located across the street. It is noted that this facility does not offer the same services as the laundrette and is more expensive.

4.12 The agent has stated that the laundrette has gone into administration and had been put up for sale, however it was still operational and a number of objections received outlined that the existing tenant wished to remain. No viability assessment 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 a vital function for the local community.

5.0 Amenity

5.1 Local Plan Policy A1 seeks to ensure that the amenity of neighbours is protected including visual privacy, outlook, sunlight, daylight and overshadowing.

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 Transport

6.1 Secure cycle parking should be provided in accordance with Policy T1, cycle facilities section of CPG Transport, and the draft London Plan. Highways Officers have reviewed the proposal and determined that long-stay parking could be waived as the floorspace is under the threshold.

6.2 Short stay cycle parking spaces should be within the curtilage of the development, however as the development does not have a forecourt highways officers have advised that a financial contribution for cycle parking on the public highway should be secured by Section 106 Legal Agreement. The policy requirement is for the provision of between 3-8 cycle spaces pending on the nature of the use.

6.3 A construction management plan and highways contribution would not be necessary for this development.

7.1 Conclusion

7.1 Overall it is considered that the proposed change of use, by reason of the loss of a laundrette which provides a specific and essential service and social function, would be detrimental to the character, function, vitality and viability of the England's Lane neighbourhood centre, contrary to policies TC2 (Camden's centres and other shopping areas) and TC4 (Town centres uses) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017."

8.0 Recommendation

8.1 Refuse planning permission.