

Our Ref: A114658

London Borough of Camden

Planning Department
5 Pancras Square
London
N1C 4AG

06 March 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO UTOPIA VILLAGE

Introduction

On behalf of our client, Utopia A Ltd, we formally submit a full planning application for external alterations in association with the refurbishment of the existing building at Utopia Village, Chalcot Road, Primrose Hill, London, NW1 8LH. There is no change of use proposed, only external alterations with the aim of improving the aesthetics and usability of the building and enhancing the surrounding area.

A number of plans have been prepared by Anderson Orr Architects to support the application and these are as follows:

Drawing Number	Drawing Title
19094 – L0002 –	Location Plan
19094 – PP1030 – A	Proposed Ground Floor Plan
19094 – PP1031 – A	Proposed First Floor Plan
19094 – PP1032 – A	Proposed Second Floor Plan
19094 – PE1050 – A	Elevation as Proposed (ref. 9)
19094 – PE1051 – A	Elevation as Proposed (ref. 11)
19094 – PE1052 –	Elevation as Proposed (ref. 8, 10)
19094 – SU1030 –	Survey – Ground Floor
19094 – SU1031 –	Survey – First Floor
19094 – SU1032 –	Survey Second Floor
19094 – SU1033 –	Survey – Roof
19094 – SU1050 –	Survey – Elevation (ref. 9)
19094 – SU1051 –	Survey – Elevation (ref. 11)
19094 – SU1052 –	Survey – Elevations (ref. 8 & 10)
19094 – PV1060 –	Existing Photographs

Site Context

The site measures approximately 0.4 hectares in size and is comprised of a mews style complex of circa 25 commercial units known collectively as Utopia Village. Utopia Village is in productive use serving a vibrant community which employs circa 180 people.

The building comprises a part two and part three storey building. The total Gross Floor Area is approximately 5,500m². The site is predominantly permitted for B1(a) Office use.

The site is predominantly surrounded by terraces of mid-19th century homes on Gloucester Avenue, Edis Street, Chalcot Road, Egbert Street and Fitzroy Road that are three storeys high with a raised ground floor from street level, a basement and further accommodation in the roof space. To the rear elevation the windows are staggered in order to serve the half-landing staircase area and the roof form has a butterfly profile.

There are two pedestrian and vehicle entrance points, one off Chalcot Road and one off Egbert Street. The existing properties surrounding the site do not have off street parking or any opportunities to do so, with the exception of 1 Fitzroy Road. Parking in the area is controlled by means of a Controlled Parking Zone. Parking near commercial units on the southern side of Chalcot Road is controlled through the use of resident permits and Pay and Display requirements.

The site is relatively free of constraints, with its only local planning policy designation being that it lies within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area. Neither the site itself or any immediately adjacent buildings are listed, and the site is wholly within Flood Zone 1.

Planning History

Having conducted an online search of the Council's planning register it is apparent that the site has an extensive history of planning. The following applications are considered to be relevant:

Reference	Application Type	Description	Decision
2013/5111/P	GPDO Prior Approval Class J Change of use	Change of use from offices (Class B1a) to 57 residential units (Class C3).	Withdrawn
2013/6589/P	GPDO Prior Approval Class J Change of use	Change of use from offices (Class B1a) to 53 residential units (Class C3). Excluding units 8c, 11 and 11a.	Appeal allowed (recovered by Secretary of State)
PEX0100374	Full planning permission	The erection of a curved roof extension to the main block fronting Egbert Street and an extension to the inner central block by a pitch roof extension over the existing walkway	Withdrawn

Applications relating to separate units are as follows:

Reference	Application Type	Unit	Description	Decision
2017/0023/P	Full planning permission	11	Change of use from gym (D2) to office (B1a).	Withdrawn
2018/0243/P	Full planning permission – commercial minor alterations	22	Replacement of single glazed metal framed windows at side and rear 1 st floor level with double glazed aluminium framed windows.	Approved
2010/4019/P	Full planning permission – commercial extension	10	Erection of an additional storey with a curved roof for office use (Class B1) to the existing 2 storey flat-roofed element of a part-2/part-3 storey office building.	Refused
2009/3348/P	Full planning permission – commercial minor alterations	1	Erection of a new staircase within a timber-clad enclosure to replace the existing non-enclosed metal spiral staircase, enlargement of the opening at first floor and insertion of a replacement	Approved

			door at the first floor level of the office building.	
2009/3349/P	Full planning permission – commercial minor alterations	1	Installation of new steps to replace the existing spiral staircase to first floor level and installation of a replacement first floor door to office building (Class B1).	Approved
2006/5606/P	Full planning permission – commercial change of use	3	Change of use from ground floor self-contained unit within existing complex of business units (Class D2) to dental surgery (Class D1).	Withdrawn
2006/0633/P	Full planning permission – commercial change of use	8	Change of use from ground floor office unit (Class B1) to a fitness training facility (Class D2).	Approved

Proposal

Full planning permission is sought for the refurbishment of Utopia Village and this therefore requires some minor external alterations and improvements to the building to enhance its aesthetics. The aim of this is to improve the building visually, given its location within not only a residential area, but a Conservation Area.

The labelled aerial images (reference: 19094 – PV1060 –) taken via drone show the proposed changes to the building, in summary these are as follows:

- Glazed roof lanterns at ground and first floors to be replaced;
- Existing glazed roof to be replaced with solid roof featuring 5no. roof lights;
- Glazing on Egbert Street frontage to be replaced (with existing security shutters retained);
- Existing ground floor window and door openings on northwest elevation altered.

The site will remain within its current B1(a) use; the application is only seeking permission for external alterations to the building. The intention of the refurbishment is to make the building more usable for the applicant, more aesthetically pleasing and sensitive to its location, with the aim of enhancing the Conservation Area and being more energy efficient.

Policy Assessment

The current Development Plan for the London Borough of Camden consists of the following documents:

- Camden Local Plan 2017
- Site Allocations Plan 2013

The relevant policies for the current development plan are explored below. Additionally, a number of Supplementary Planning Documents are of relevance, including the Camden Planning Guidance and Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement.

Due regard must also be given to the London Plan (2016). The 'new' London Plan has recently undergone Examination in Public, this emerging Plan is yet to be adopted but it is within the latter stages of production and therefore some weight can be awarded to its policies.

Camden Local Plan

It is required by **Policy C5** that the incorporation of design principles of safety and security must be demonstrated by developments, particularly in areas of high levels of crime, including Primrose Hill.

Policy A1 seeks to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. Amenity factors that will be considered in determining planning applications will include: visual privacy, sunlight, daylight and overshadowing, artificial lighting levels, transport impacts, construction impacts, noise and vibration, odour, fumes and dust, the microclimate, contaminated land, and impact upon water and wastewater.

Securing high quality design is the focus of **Policy D1**. Integration into the surrounding streets and preserving or enhancing the historic environment are of most relevance to this application.

Policy D2 confirms that Conservation Areas are designated heritage assets. Development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset will not be permitted unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh the harm. Development is required to preserve or where possible enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. It is believed that this application for external alterations to the visual appearance of the building would dramatically improve and enhance the area, thus benefitting the Conservation Area.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was originally published in March 2012, but has been subsequently revised and reissued in July 2018 and February 2019 respectively. This document establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 2 states that the Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Paragraph 8 confirms that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic (building a strong, competitive economy); social (providing the supply of housing required to meet needs and creating a high-quality built environment); and environmental (protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment). Paragraph 9 states that these roles should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of policies, taking into account local circumstances to reflect the need and opportunities in each area.

Paragraph 11 stresses that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of the area, and proposals should accord with an up-to-date development plan.

In terms of determining applications, Paragraph 38 sets out that it is a requirement that Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions in a positive and creative way. This paragraph also states that Planning Authorities should work proactively with applicants to ensure developments will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions, whilst seeking to approve applications for sustainable developments where possible.

Design is discussed in Section 12, where the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Paragraph 124 highlights that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Paragraph 125 stresses that plans should set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable.

Paragraph 126 goes further in stating that maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage and plans and supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as design codes. Great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in the area, as long as they fit within the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement

The site lies within Sub-Area 2 of the Conservation Area, this is identified as an area of urban character with a high density of development with sporadic areas of greenery, dominated by long terraces.

Chalcot Road is specified as a 'principal road' with generous width and wide pavements, views from the road to the rear of the terraces with small gardens and trees is also noted as a significant characteristic. Edis Street and Egbert Street are noted as 'secondary roads' that have a distinctly urban character with a high degree of enclosure.

Utopia Village is identified as being a large industrial building which is surrounded by late Victorian terraces.

It is noted within the Statement that Utopia Village is a building that makes a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the area. The application therefore seeks to further enhance this.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the site proposes a visual improvement to the existing building in keeping with its established character and that of the wider site and Conservation Area setting, whilst also ensuring that it is more sustainable and energy efficient allowing the longevity of the building to be secured. The alterations to the building will help enhance the setting of the Conservation Area, and there will be no overshadowing from the roof replacement or overlooking as there are no new windows proposed. The altered window and door openings are all at ground floor level such that no increased overlooking would result whilst the other external alterations would all have no material impact on the overall building envelope such that no additional shading or loss of outlook to neighbouring properties would result either. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with policies C5, A1, D1 and D2 of the Local Plan and national policy set out in the Framework and is therefore commended for approval.

The application is solely for the refurbishment of the building relating to external alterations. No change of use is being applied for.

The fee for this application has been paid online via the Planning Portal.

If there are any queries with regards to this application, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Lydia Prince
Planner