

141 Fortess Road

Tufnell Park

London

NW5 2HR

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Change of use A1 (Funeral directors) to D2 (Personal
Training Studio)



PREPARED BY

Change the Use

FOR

BUBBA London Limited

INTRODUCTION

This planning statement has been prepared on behalf of Bubba London Limited ('the Applicant') in support of an application for Full Planning Permission for a change of use at 141 Fortess Road, Tufnell Park, London, NW5 2HR.

The planning application seeks a change of use from A1 (Funeral directors) to a D2 (Personal Training Studio).

SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The application site is that of the former funeral directors on 141 Fortess Road, an A1 retail unit on the ground floor with residential dwellings on the upper floors. Following the closure of the funeral directors in December 2018, the unit has since been vacant.

The property is located within the jurisdiction of Camden Borough Council, designated within the Tufnell Park Neighbourhood Centre.

Fortess Road is a prominent shopping parade and with a PTAL rating of 5, one of the most accessible areas in London. At the top of the road is Tufnell Park Tube station served by the Northern line providing links into central London. Additionally, the Tufnell Park bus stop can be found adjacent to the application site with frequent services into the local area.

The high street typically consists of a diverse mix of uses with retail outlets, restaurants, take-aways and drinking establishments (A Class uses) on the ground floor of units with residential dwellings on the upper floors.

During the period the application site has been vacant, the unit has been continuously marketed by the letting agents Drivers & Norris being circulated on property portals (Rightmove, Zoopla and the agents own), displaying a 'to let' board at the unit and offering the unit to their extensive database of prospective tenants. Since marketing the property, very little interest has been received for the current use class as the marketing letter shows.

With the site falling within a designated neighbourhood centre, the Council are typically opposed to developments which result in a loss of retail use, particularly if the centre consists of less than 50% retail. Despite this, recent developments have overcome this by demonstrating that their proposals bring positive impacts on the area and provide support to the retail function by attracting people to the area.

One such example of this is the D2 use Yoga Studio, approved at 129 Fortess Road in 2014 (Ref: 2014/2830/P). This change of use was approved due to the demonstration of a lack of A1 interest in the unit and the area (through an extensive marketing campaign), as well as evidence of a minimal impact on neighbouring amenity and the sites accessibility.

PLANNING HISTORY

From information made publicly available, the relevant planning history of the site is detailed below:

Reference	Year	Description	Decision
9100005	1991	Change of use of the ground floor from a retail shop to office and ancillary facilities for the operation of a delivery/courier and messenger car service.	Refused

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The planning application seeks a change of use from A1 (Funeral directors) to a D2 (Personal Training Studio).

The applicant (BUBBA London Limited) will operate from the site under the name Equal Results. The business offers 30-minute total body workouts with a personal trainer to achieve fitness and health goals. There will always be a maximum of 3 personal trainers within the property at any given time with a maximum of 3 customers.

Currently Equal Results operate a successful operation with several studios in the area (Muswell Hill, Crouch End, Hampstead Garden, Alexandra Park and Southgate).

SCALE

The proposed application will alter the scale of the unit which is approximately 56 m² on the ground floor.

LANDSCAPING

The application site topography will remain unchanged with the ground is level throughout the site. There are no trees or other vegetation to be affected by the proposed development.

APPEARANCE

As accompanying drawings identify, minor internal alterations and changes to signage will be introduced to the premises. The proposed changes will be in keeping with the local style, aesthetics and character.

ACCESS

Access to the site will be unaltered, with frontal access for the general staff members and visitors to the studio.

PROPOSED OPENING TIMES

Monday - Friday: 06:00 – 21:00

Saturday: 07:00 – 13:00

Sunday: 07:00 – 13:00

EMPLOYMENT

Full Time Staff: 3

Part Time Staff: 2

NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into effect on 19 February 2019. The document effectively condenses previous planning policy guidance into one document (with the exception of certain Planning Policy Statements).

At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development as stated in Section 2's Achieving sustainable Development. Paragraph 7 states:

'The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'

The NPPF explains in paragraph 8 that achieving sustainable development is possible through three overarching objectives:

- *'An economic objective - to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy*
- *A social objective - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities*
- *An environmental objective - to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment'*

Section 12 on achieving well-designed places states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should ensure that developments:

- *'will function well and add to the overall quality of the area*
- *are sympathetic to local character and history*
- *establish or maintain a strong sense of place*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development*
- *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users'*

Local Planning Policies

The Camden Local Plan (2017) sets out the Council's policies regarding planning and building developments. The following relevant policies apply to the proposed development:

- Policy G1: Delivery and location of growth
- Policy C1: Health and wellbeing
- Policy E1: Economic development
- Policy A1: Managing the impact of development
- Policy D1: Design
- Policy D3: Shopfronts
- Policy D4: Advertisements
- TC1: Quantity and location of retail development
- TC2: Camden's centres and other shopping areas

London Plan

The council's local development documents have to be 'in general conformity' with the London Plan, which is also legally part of the development plan that has to be taken into account when planning decisions are taken in any part of London, unless there are planning reasons why it should not.

The London Plan (2016) comprises of the following relevant policies:

- Policy 2.9: Inner London
- Policy 2.15: Town Centres
- Policy 3.9: Sports Facilities
- Policy 4.1: Developing London's Economy
- Policy 4.7: Retail and Town Centre Development

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The NPPF emphasises that the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be at the heart of plan-making and decision-taking which means that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole. Significant weight should be placed on developments such as this which bring economic investment and regeneration.

The proposed change of use would wholly support the aims of the NPPF by investing in the local economy, bringing development that improves the economic and social conditions in the area.

The same guidelines sought by the national standards are seen through local policy and the London Plan. Under the Camden Local Plan (2017), Policy E1 sees the emphasis on economic development, with a focus on supporting businesses of all sizes, to create a successful and inclusive economy. The London Plan's Policy 2.9 aims to enhance and sustain economic growth across inner London to improve the quality of life of those living, working, studying or visiting there.

Policy G1 states the need for this economic growth to deliver the jobs, infrastructure and facilities to meet the needs of those who live and work in the borough. The Council will expect a provision of mix uses where appropriate to facilitate this. The London plan's Policy 4.1 equally stresses the significance of a diverse economy across London.

The Council also state a focus on health and wellbeing with encouragement towards facilities that support health, social and cultural wellbeing to contribute towards healthier communities (Policy C1). This same focus is matched within the London Plan's Policy 3.9 with the Mayor aiming to increase access to physical activity across London.

With regards to the designation of the site within a Neighbourhood Centre, Policies TC1 and TC2 maintain the criteria of these sites. Both policies see that an appropriate provision of retail remains in these centres to ensure that no harm is caused to the function and character of the centre. The Council will aim to promote and enhance these centres to serve the needs of those who benefit from them.

The level of retail within the Tufnell Park Neighbourhood Centre is currently low, with several vacant units along the high street. These vacant units bring a negative aesthetic to the neighbourhood and reduce the appeal of the area. Recent developments within the centre such as the yoga and Crossfit studio have diversified the area bringing vibrancy and a greater appeal. The proposed change of use is in keeping with this mix and helps revitalise the high street by bringing a vacant unit into gainful use.

The design of developments and in particular, shopfronts are addressed in Policies D1 and D3. The Council will expect high quality design that respects local context and character and with regards to shopfronts must be appropriate to the surroundings with concern of material use, design and the existing building profile. The proposed developments seeks to only make minor alterations to the interior of the building (removal of internal walls) and will also introduce new signage.

Changes to signage must equally follow the same criteria as stated under Policy D4. The proposed changes have ensured to preserve the character and amenity of the area, respecting their setting and being of appropriate design, scale and detailing.

The proposed development is seen to be appropriate for the area and will not negatively affect neighbouring amenity as laid out in Policy A1. This Policy sees that amenity is protected with appropriate measures in place to minimise impacts. The only concern the proposed development may have brought would be through noise and vibration.

These are expected to be minimal with the unit operating with a maximum of 3 customers at any one time (similar numbers to retail in the area), additionally the hours of operation limit the possibility of noise disturbance on the residential dwellings on the upper floors in the mornings and evenings. Finally, the high accessibility of the site means it is unlikely that customers would travel to the site via private car, limiting the possibility of traffic generation and associated parking issues.

CONCLUSION

With the above & accompanying information, it is respectfully requested that this application for planning permission for change of use to D2 be approved.

It is deemed that this change of use does not affect the surrounding area adversely, and should be viewed as a positive development for the local community.

The proposals are in line with the NPPF, London Plan and local policy. Therefore, we look forward to validation of the application and approval from the council.