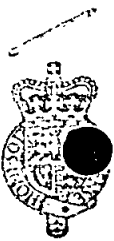


L12/12X/A. 20/16/7
Rec No. 1330
ALLOWED



Department of the Environment and
Department of Transport

Common Services

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17 NOV 1983
CAMDEN

Chief Solicitor and Legal Adviser
British Railways Board
Melbury House
Melbury Terrace
LONDON
NW1 6JU

Your reference

PLAN.83/22 and 23/DBC

Our reference

PLAN.83/1304 and 1305/PEI

CAMDEN
LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN
19 NOV 1983
DNY/TH

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACTS
11 JAN 1984
RECOMMENDATION AGREED
ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL

Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971, SECTION 36 AND SCHEDULE 9
APPLICATION NOS:- L12/12X/A/34917 AND L12/12X/A/34916

1. I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine your appeals. These appeals are against the decisions of the Camden London Borough Council to refuse planning permission for changes of use from shop units to offices at:

- i. No 2 unit block C-D, and
- ii. Block B,

Euston Square Development, Euston Station. I have considered the written representations made by you and by the council and I inspected the site of the second appeal on 24 October 1983. Your representations dated 16 August 1983 stated that the Board wished to withdraw the first appeal, and I do not intend to take any further action in respect to it.

2. I consider the main issue in the remaining appeal in respect of Block B to be the effect of its use as offices on the council's policies regarding shops and offices in this area.

3. The development plan for Camden comprises the Greater London Development Plan approved in 1976, and a district plan for Camden which became operative in 1979. The council have indicated that the proposed development would be contrary to local plan policies concerned with restraint of office development and with retention of shopping uses. The council are further developing their local plan policies and intend to incorporate them in a reviewed version of the plan.

4. Under the above policies no increase in office space is permissible in the area north of Euston Road, except in selected locations, eg Kings Cross, and in support of less profitable activities and services. The council envisage no special planning advantage arising through a grant of planning permission in this case. For retailing policy purposes the site falls within the central area, and the effect is to protect existing shopping uses in the interests of consumer needs and of retailers, especially where facilities for residents or workers would be seriously diminished.

5. The council have submitted that this unit of substantial ground floor area is in a prominent position reasonably conducive to retail trading success, and that such use would enhance the surroundings. They would not be averse, however, to certain non-retail uses appropriate to a shopping centre being established here.

6. You have made representations to the effect that the main pedestrian flows to from Euston Station avoid the location of Unit B. The cost of fitting it out would be high, and servicing difficult. The unit has never been used. Efforts to let it as a shop or for a range of non-retail uses have been unsuccessful, and it has lain vacant since completion some 5 years ago. Outside the central area defined for purposes of the council's policies on retailing, inability to let is a factor to be taken into consideration; it should be taken into consideration in these unusual circumstances. The boarded-up unit presents a dismal appearance and the stage has been reached when it must be let, or permanently sealed up in a more attractive manner. In your submission its use as an office would be beneficial to the appearance of Euston Square.

7. I have seen that Unit B comprises about half the ground floor of an office tower block, the other half providing a reception area for the offices above. This tower block is itself part of a larger complex. In all, provision has been made there for some 405,000 sq ft of office space, and 9,000 sq ft of shopping, all in the general area of the station approach. The unit is not small, being about 30 m long and 10 to 12 m deep. However, in the office context it is relatively small. The ground floor of the station frontage itself is well occupied, uses including inquiry office, stationers, bank premises, food and drink outlets, hair-dressers, and an electrical goods shop. Efforts to let ground floor units away from this frontage appear to have been largely unsuccessful.

8. The circumstances of the proposal are not such that it can be accorded support in terms of the local plan policies. There is no evidence that it would contribute to the special economic and employment role of the borough, bring community benefits, or conform to other defined criteria. The circumstances are however unusual. The unit is not within a shopping centre as such. The proposal would not result in diminution of local shopping facilities - it has never been used as a shop, and is not in a position which would make it attractive in supplying the needs of local residents. The change in use would not be detrimental to the council's underlying objectives of retaining housing and less commercially profitable land uses. There could well be environmental benefit in bringing the unit into office use, although establishment of retail use, or sealing up the unit in an attractive way, might be equally beneficial in this respect.

9. In the individual circumstances I cannot take the view that the project would be detrimental to general application of the council's policies, and it may appropriately be regarded as an exceptional case. I can identify no harmful effect likely to follow from a grant of planning permission which would justify dismissing the appeal. I have taken into account all other points raised in the written representations but none has sufficient weight to change my decision.

10. For the above reasons, and in exercise of powers transferred to me, I hereby allow this appeal and grant planning permission for change of use of shop unit within Block B of Euston Square Development, Euston Station to offices, in accordance with the terms of the application (No L12/12X/A/34916) dated 13 September 1982 and the plans submitted therewith, subject to the condition that the development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than 5 years from the date of this letter.

11. The developer's attention is drawn to the enclosed note relating to the requirements of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.

1 This letter does not convey any approval or consent which may be required under any enactment, byelaw, order or regulation other than section 23 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

I am Gentlemen
Your obedient Servant

E. K. Seymour

E K SEYMOUR BA MRTPI
Inspector

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LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACTS
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