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David Peres da Costa
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Camden Town Hall
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3 November 2021

AG/SM – 19/423
BY EMAIL

Dear David,

3-6 SPRING PLACE, KENTISH TOWN – PLANNING APPLICATION 2020/5913/P

Following the submission of formal amendments to the above planning application in August, we have been monitoring the consultation responses uploaded to the Council's online register. We understand that following some recent changes in personnel you will now be dealing with this application again, and you are currently reviewing the information submitted in August. In order to assist the Council in its determination of the application, we hereby provide a response to the comments received and further clarifications on the key points.

a. Response to Consultee Comments

We briefly set out below a summary of the comments received on the planning application since the updated submission in August, and the applicant's response.

Transport

Whilst we have not received any comments from the Highways Officer to date indicating any policy-based concerns which would result in valid grounds for refusal of the application, we note the comments received on the application largely focus on highways related issues. Consequently Vectos have prepared the enclosed Consultation Response Review Note, which includes discussion of:

- The suitability of surrounding roads to carry development traffic
- Traffic impact and congestion on surrounding roads
- Vicinity of schools and safety concerns for pedestrians, particularly school children
- How will the Council enforce the restrictions associated with the proposals

The Vectos note draws on the evidence and discussion of transport matters submitted with the planning application, highlighting that the surrounding roads are suitable for the levels of traffic associated with the new uses proposed (as supported by policy and the Council's evidence base), whilst also noting that the site is an existing employment site (currently benefitting from an unrestricted B2 use).

In relation to trip generation, the assessment included within the Transport Statement confirms that the level of trips associated with the proposed uses would be immaterial, with any increases well within daily fluctuations roads such as these typically experience. Meanwhile all servicing will be carried out on site, and measures proposed in the DSMP would further provide controls over all vehicle movements to and from the site.

Whilst residents have expressed concerns regarding the impact of the proposals on local schools and children, accident data does not indicate any safety issues for roads in this area, and the change of use would not result in a material increase in vehicle movements. Therefore, the existing risk is low and will not increase as a result of the proposals. Notwithstanding, in order to provide additional reassurance to residents SEGRO is committing within the DSMP to restrict servicing vehicles (7.5t - 18t) travelling on Holmes Road between the hours 0800-0945 and 1515-1615 to avoid school times.

The measures set out within the DSMP are enforceable through the use of regular surveys, in accordance with TfL guidance, and restrictions can be imposed via condition as necessary.

Sustainability

Comment

The Council's Sustainability Officer noted the objectives and commitments identified in the Kentish Town Planning Framework, and sought clarification as to how the development would comply with the aspiration set out on page 82 of the Planning Framework that "development will be zero carbon in operation, as assessed via planning policy, and emit no local combustion based pollutants such as vehicle exhaust emissions and combustion-based heating systems (eg. gas boilers and CHP)."

Response

In response, the applicant notes that the Sustainability and Energy Statement submitted in support of the application has been prepared in compliance with the policies outlined within both the Camden Local Plan (2017), and the London Plan (2021), with respect to the refurbishment of an existing non-domestic building.

It is noted that, within the Kentish Town Planning Framework (2020), a commitment for development to be "zero carbon in operation, as assessed via planning policy, and emit no local combustion based pollutants such as vehicle exhaust emissions" is detailed. The submitted Sustainability and Energy Statement details how, when in use, the proposed development will achieve an 82% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions, through energy efficiency measures and the use of renewable technology on-site. Whilst this means that the development will not be "zero carbon in operation", as identified within the Kentish Town Planning Framework, the proposals will meet and exceed the policy requirements for non-domestic refurbishments outlined within both the Camden Local Plan and the London Plan, in achieving a greater than 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions through the use of renewable technology on-site, and in achieving a greater than 35% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions on-site overall. Furthermore, through the provision of photovoltaic (PV) technology, the proposed development will generate carbon-free electricity on-site, meaning it will be effectively carbon neutral in its unoccupied state, through the generation of more electricity than is being consumed. Based on the intended provision of highly efficient systems within the proposed development, it has been designed to allow the operation of the proposals to achieve net-zero carbon, with an opportunity for more carbon-free electricity to be generated on-site than is consumed as well as for a requirement that an incoming occupier utilise a green tariff / energy provider which adopts carbon removals. Finally, it is intended that the proposed development will achieve a BREEAM Excellent rating and an EPC A+ Certification, demonstrating the scheme's commitment to high levels of energy efficiency and other sustainability-related credentials.

In terms of the requirement within the Kentish Town Planning Framework for new development to "emit no local combustion based pollutants such as vehicle exhaust emissions", the submitted Sustainability and Energy Statement notes that, during the operation of the development, there is the potential for air quality impacts as a result of traffic exhaust emissions. However, due to the low number of anticipated trips associated with the proposed development, road traffic exhaust impacts are predicted to be negligible. Further to this, whilst the end occupier of the proposed development is yet to be confirmed, based on the current trend away from petrol and diesel vehicles, it is considered likely that many vehicle trips associated with the proposals will be made using electric vehicles (EVs). EVs have a minimal impact on local air quality, through eliminating the need to burn fossil fuels, the combustion of which is associated with the generation of a range of air pollutants, such as nitrous oxides and sulphurous oxides. Whilst the layout of the scheme that may be adopted by future operators is not currently known, it is intended that the development will be future-proofed to enable a reduction in exhaust-related emissions by providing appropriate EV charging facilities to encourage a switch to

EVs. In addition, it is intended that an electric space and water heating system, such as an air source heat pump (ASHP) or electric boiler, will be provided for the unit as part of the refurbishment work. This will eliminate the need to burn fossil fuels on-site to provide space and water heating, therefore minimising the impact of the proposals on local air quality through the minimisation of the emittance of pollutants associated with the burning of fossil fuels, such as nitrous and sulphurous oxides.

Based on the above, the proposed development is demonstrated to be fully in compliance with the policy requirements set out within both the Camden Local Plan and the London Plan for non-domestic refurbishments. It is also demonstrated that, as required by the commitment highlighted within the Kentish Town Planning Framework, the proposed development will achieve a very high level of carbon dioxide emissions reductions, generating carbon-free electricity on-site that will mean the proposals are net-zero carbon when unoccupied and potentially when in operation, and will have a negligible impact on the level of local air pollution.

Impact on Residential Amenity

Comments

Comments submitted in response to the latest scheme reiterate concerns by some respondents that the proposed uses would have an impact on residential amenity, in terms of additional traffic and pollution. Whilst the comments do not include any detailed assessment of the impact on residential amenity, there is a general assumption within some of the responses that this is not a suitable location for an employment use.

Response

Notwithstanding the fact that the site currently benefits from a B2 use, as discussed above the site is considered suitable for a flexible Class B2/B8/E (light industrial) use given the proposals will not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the local highway network, and noting that the site is located within an area including a mix of different uses.

In addition, the application is supported by a Noise Impact Assessment, which indicates that noise breakout from the unit and noise associated with vehicular movements would be classified as 'No Observed Effect Level' based on the Council's guidance. Considering the more sensitive quieter hours of the day, the assessment also confirms that noise impacts would be negligible.

In relation to air quality, the Air Quality Assessment submitted in support of the planning application demonstrates that the air quality impacts of the proposals would be negligible.

Consequently the evidence submitted with the planning application confirms that there would be no undue adverse impacts on the residential amenity of local residents, and the proposals would be compliant with relevant requirements and policy.

Overall Suitability for Potential B8 Use

There is a general assumption underlying many of the consultation comments that the application site is not suitable for a B8 use. In this regard, the submitted information explains how a B8 use would function (including how an efficient, modern last-mile operation might occupy the unit). This emphasises that it would be a well organised operation and given the nature and scale of the unit, any last-mile operation would not involve significant HGV traffic or impacts more associated with large distribution units. The technical assessments submitted with the application explain how there would be no undue adverse impacts resulting from an anticipated B8 use, and as discussed in the submission documents, there would be no conflict with relevant policy.

The site was most recently used for B2 purposes, and there are no restrictions on the current operation of the unit for a B2 use. SEGRO is currently seeking to widen the permitted use of the unit to maximise the prospects of identifying a tenant and bringing this site back into productive use, thereby supporting the significant investment required to bring this building up to a modern, energy efficient standard. The proposed widening of the employment use would thus result in benefits whilst not having a materially

greater effect (and in general, resulting in an improvement) in terms of key issues such as highways, sustainability and residential amenity, compared to the current options available to SEGRO under the existing B2 use.

The site has been vacant for a number of years following the previous owner's proposals to redevelop the site for a significantly taller, office-led scheme, which was ultimately not implemented due to viability issues and a lack of demand for office space. More recently, SEGRO has had to pause its planned investment and discussions with potential occupiers have stalled given the delays to securing planning permission for the current proposals.

The proposed widening of the use classes for this building and associated refurbishment would not result in any unduly adverse impacts, as evidenced by the supporting documents (with various restrictions identified that could be enforced if considered necessary to guarantee this). The proposals would bring an existing and much needed employment site back into productive use, and would not conflict with any relevant policies. Accordingly, we consider that the proposals are entirely appropriate and would result in significant benefits for the locality and the wider Borough.

b. Next Steps

As mentioned in recent correspondence, we are conscious that the original determination date for this application was due in April 2021, according to the dates published on the Council's website. We understand that officers are now reviewing the information submitted in August, and we look forward to receiving an update on the timescales the Council is working to for determination of the application.

In the meantime, the applicant hereby agrees to an extension of time for determination of the application until **30th November 2021**, to enable the Council to assess the latest information. SEGRO would be pleased to discuss the potential to agree a further extension if required, following an update on the relevant timescales officers are now working to.

We should be grateful for the Council's feedback on this application prior to its determination, and SEGRO are keen to work positively and proactively with the Council to clarify any points or address any residual concerns as needed. As you are aware, SEGRO has engaged extensively with the local community and key stakeholders, with numerous meetings, information leaflets and discussions throughout the application process, and will continue to address any outstanding questions or concerns raised.

We look forward to hearing from you regarding the Council's assessment of the proposals and next steps.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Gale
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

cc. Stephen Burke, LB Camden Highways
Bethany Cullen, LB Camden