

2022/0051/P - BT phone kiosk on footway adjacent to 7
Tavistock Place

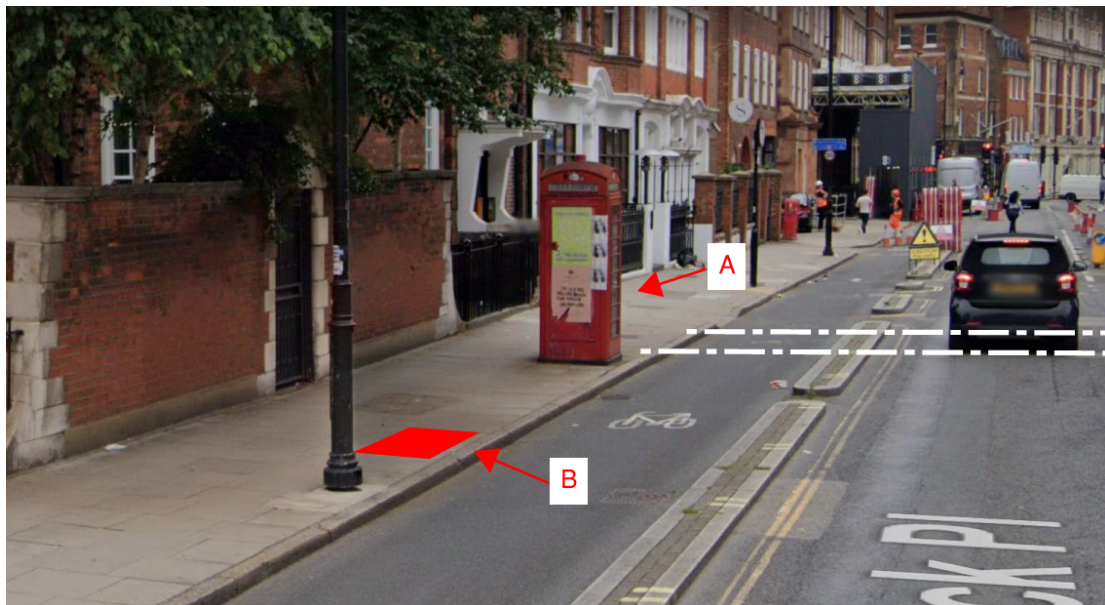


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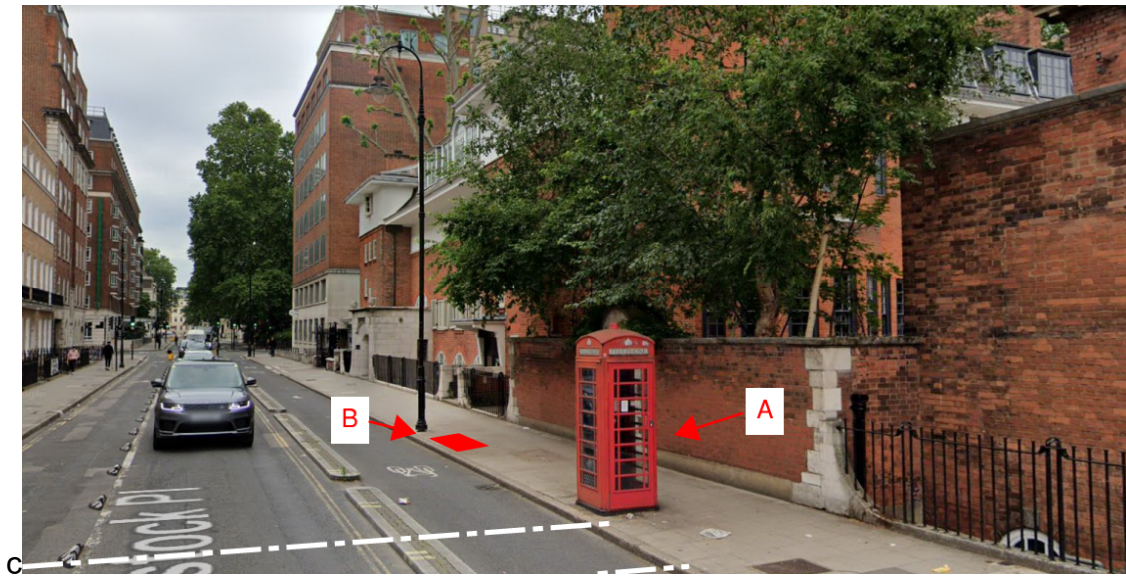
1. view showing new pedestrian crossing: (A) existing BT telephone kiosk and (B) approximate proposed kiosk location



2. contextual view looking south-east (prior to introduction of pedestrian crossing): (A) existing BT telephone kiosk (footway adjacent to 9 Tavistock Place) and (B) approximate proposed kiosk location (footway adjacent to 7 Tavistock Place)



3. contextual view looking north-west (prior to introduction of pedestrian crossing):
(A) existing BT telephone kiosk (footway adjacent to 9 Tavistock Place) and (B)
approximate proposed kiosk location (footway adjacent to 7 Tavistock Place)



Delegated Report (Members Briefing)		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	03/03/2022
		n/a		Consultation Expiry Date:	13/03/2022
Officer			Application Number		
Tony Young			2022/0051/P		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
Public footway adjacent to 7 Tavistock Place London WC1H 9SN			Refer to draft decision notice		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		
Proposal					
Re-siting of an existing BT telephone kiosk on public footway adjacent to no. 7 Tavistock Place (following the removal of the same kiosk from the public footway adjacent to no. 9 Tavistock Place).					
Recommendation	Grant Planning Permission				
Application Type:	Full Planning Permission				

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informative:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers & local groups			No. of responses	2	No. of objections	2
Publicity:	Site notice was displayed from 16/02/2022 to 12/03/2022 Press notice was published from 17/02/2022 to 13/03/2022					
Summary of all consultation responses	The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee (BCAAC) objected to the proposal, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>The telephone box, while unlisted, is an important historic street feature. Each of these makes a considerable contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. While these have often been neglected, this should not be used as a reason to allow unorthodox or harmful alterations. Paragraph 196 of the NPPF supports such a view.</i><i>It is unclear from the application why the applicant wishes to remove the box to another location. Such a change would inevitably cause damage to the historic fabric of the telephone box. Alternatively, it may be that the telephone box is not historic or that there is a safe method for its removal, transportation, and re-erection. Either way, it is for the applicant to explain their approach and to prove that their changes do not affect significance or that benefits outweigh harm to significance, as supported by paragraph 194 of the NPPF.</i><i>As such, we consider this application to be inappropriate without further detail, and formally object.</i>					
	<u>No additional response was received from BCAAC following the provision of additional information, including a Road Safety Audit.</u>					
	A local resident in Marchmont Street objected to the proposal, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>"I would prefer that this opportunity is used to remove this redundant kiosk which has obstructed this already too narrow pedestrian route for too long. The kiosk is invariably covered in fly-posters and/or graffiti and the equipment is never working. It is not a listed structure, so can be removed. Its position adjacent to two fine listed buildings and the listed terrace opposite within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area is additional reason for its removal."</i>					
	<u>Additional response dated 21/03/2022 following provision of additional information, including a Road Safety Audit:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>"I have read the documents accompanying your e-mail and fully understand the reasoning behind the proposal. However, I should point out that the kiosk in question is one of a pair which BT installed in the current position many years ago. The second kiosk was subsequently removed by BT, being surplus to their requirements and without any objection from Camden at the time. The remaining kiosk repeatedly attracts graffiti and fly-posting, which remains in place, causing a permanent eyesore. It consequently has no heritage value, whilst reducing the space available to pedestrians on this very busy thoroughfare. It is undoubtedly a redundant eyesore, with no working parts inside. I would ask the Council to reconsider its support for relocating the kiosk in favour of BT's original intention, i.e. to remove it (according to the notes in the attached document)."</i>					

Site Description

The application site comprises an area of footway on the north-west side of Tavistock Place, positioned between Tavistock Square to the west and Herbrand Street to the east. The pavement here measures approximately 3.5m in width and is situated adjacent to a cycle lane and new pedestrian zebra crossing. An existing BT telephone kiosk which is the subject of this application is located towards the kerbside edge and immediately adjacent to the new crossing.

The existing kiosk is situated within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Though the kiosk is not listed, it is identified as an element of streetscape interest in Tavistock Place in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (adopted April 2011).

A number of listed buildings are located in Tavistock Place within close proximity to the kiosk. These include the Grade I listed Bloomsbury Hall (nos. 5-7) and Grade II listed Mary Ward Centre (no. 9) which are situated immediately adjacent, and a terrace of Grade II listed houses (nos. 2-14 (even)) located opposite the site.

Relevant History

PS9805080 - Installation of 2 public telephone kiosk. Prior approval agreed by default 07/12/1998

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

London Plan 2021

TfL's Pedestrian Comfort Guidance for London 2010

Camden Local Plan 2017

A1 - Managing the impact of development
C5 - Safety and Security
D1 - Design
D2 - Heritage
G1 - Delivery and location of growth
T1 - Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport

Camden Planning Guidance

CPG Design (January 2021) - chapters 1 (Introduction), 2 (Design excellence), 3 (Heritage) and 7 (Designing safer environments)
CPG Transport 2019 - chapters 7 (Vehicular access and crossovers) and 9 (Pedestrian and cycle movement)
CPG Amenity (January 2021) – chapters 1 (Introduction) and 2 (Overlooking, privacy and outlook)

Camden Streetscape Design Manual

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (adopted April 2011)

Assessment

1. Proposal

- 1.1 Planning permission is sought to re-site an existing BT telephone kiosk which is currently located on an area of footway on the north-west side of Tavistock Place (adjacent to no. 9). The kiosk would be moved approximately 7.2 metres west to a position on the footway adjacent to no. 7 (see Images 1-3 attached to this report).

- 1.2 The proposed relocation of the telephone kiosk is necessary to facilitate the safe use of a new pedestrian zebra crossing which is currently in situ, but not in use, given that the position of the existing kiosk obscures visibility at the crossing and prevents it being used safely. A crossing in this particular location is essential as it provides the safest place for pedestrians and road users to interact and cross the road, particularly when travelling to and from Herbrand Street, which is located opposite the crossing.

Amendments

- 1.3 The proposed location for the kiosk was amended during the course of the application from a position 10 metres to the west of the existing kiosk location to a position approximately 7.2 metres west. The revised position was to ensure that the kiosk is more sympathetically sited in regard to the nearby Grade I listed building at Bloomsbury Hall (nos. 5-7 Tavistock Place) in consideration of the special architectural and historic qualities of the building and setting.

2. Assessment

- 2.1 The principle considerations in the assessment and determination of the application are:
- the design and impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the streetscene and Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and the settings of nearby listed buildings; and
 - the impact of the proposal on public highway and transport; crime and anti-social behaviour; and on neighbouring amenity.

3. Design and heritage

- 3.1 Local Plan Policy D1 (Design) states that the Council will require all developments to be of the highest standard of design and to respect the character, setting, form and scale of neighbouring buildings and its contribution to the public realm.
- 3.2 Local Plan Policy D2 (Heritage) states that the Council will only permit development within conservation areas that preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area and resist development that would cause harm to the significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy supports this when stating through its designation as a conservation area and policies are designed to preserve or enhance the special interest of such an area.
- 3.3 Policies D1 and D2 are supported by Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) Design. In particular, chapter 7 (Designing safer environments) recognises that the siting and appearance of telephone boxes on the public highway have to be carefully considered to prevent harm to the particular character of a conservation area or the setting of a listed building.
- 3.4 Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises the importance of design in managing and improving spaces, including the quality of places. Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) advises that the impact of a proposal should be taken into account to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 3.5 A relocation of the existing BT telephone kiosk is proposed in order to facilitate the safe use of a new pedestrian zebra crossing located immediately west of the junction of Tavistock Place with Herbrand Street. The crossing was installed in this location due to ongoing safety concerns identified along the Tavistock Place corridor and the lack of opportunities for pedestrians to cross the road safely and easily when travelling along Tavistock Place itself, as well as, to and from the junction with Herbrand Street. The location is therefore considered to provide the safest position for pedestrians and road users to interact so as to minimise hazards associated with crossing the road in this locality.
- 3.6 However, an independent Road Safety Audit (Ref: 2000-RSA-04) identified that the location of the existing telephone kiosk might make it difficult for pedestrians to cross safely at this point,

particularly in regard to eastbound cyclists, given that the kiosk is located immediately adjacent to the crossing point on the northern side of Tavistock Place. Therefore, in order to address intervisibility issues and allow the new zebra crossing to be opened and safely used, it is proposed that the existing BT telephone kiosk is moved approximately 7.2 metres further west from its current location on an area of footway adjacent to no. 9 Tavistock Place to a new position on an area of footway adjacent to no. 7 Tavistock Place (see Images 1-3 attached to this report).

- 3.7 While the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee have objected to the removal and re-siting of the phone box, they also recognise that the existing telephone box is an important historic street feature and that each box makes a considerable contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. A local resident expressed a different view in a consultation response stating that the existing kiosk should be removed entirely as it promotes graffiti, obstructs the highway, impacts adversely on the settings of the conservation area and listed buildings, and is redundant (see consultation section above).
- 3.8 Though the existing kiosk is not listed, the model K6 BT red telephone box, designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, is a familiar sight on streets throughout the UK and has some merit in historic terms given the classic design and established position within the streetscape. The Council has no evidence that the existing kiosk is redundant or non-working as suggested. On the contrary, the telephone operator, BT, have confirmed that the kiosk contains small cell communication equipment which forms part of BT's current electronic communications network.
- 3.9 Furthermore, given that the proposal would involve the relocation of an existing kiosk structure of exactly the same size and design, positioned only marginally further along the footway on Tavistock Place (by approximately 7.2 metres), the proposal would not add any additional street clutter and would retain an established and distinctive feature of some merit within the locality. The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (adopted April 2011) identifies the phone kiosk as an element of streetscape interest within Tavistock Place. As such, the proposal would not result in any significant or noticeable difference in the streetscene and would allow a similar contribution to be made to the character and appearance of the conservation area, notwithstanding, from a slightly different position along the footway.
- 3.10 In this regard, while the proposal would result in the kiosk being sited further away from a Grade II listed building (Mary Ward Centre, no. 9 Tavistock Place), it is also noted that it would be situated marginally closer to a Grade I listed building (Bloomsbury Hall, nos. 5-7 Tavistock Place). However, this position would ensure that the kiosk is sympathetically sited away from the main façade of the listed building in a relatively unobtrusive location in front of a section of brick wall which sits between the two listed buildings. As such, the existing full and open views of the Grade I listed building would be retained and continue to allow an undiminished appreciation of its special architectural and historic qualities, as well as, those of other listed buildings located at the Mary Ward Centre and in the terrace opposite. It is noted that the proposed location for the kiosk was amended during the course of the application to take into account the special qualities of the listed buildings.
- 3.11 Overall therefore, the marginally different position would ensure that the same, re-sited kiosk would integrate similarly well within the streetscene in the new location without any significantly noticeable difference, such that, the character and appearance of the conservation area would be preserved. The proposal would also be sympathetic to the special architectural and historic interest of the nearby listed buildings and their settings. As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and would accord with Local Plan Policies D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage) and related guidance in design and heritage terms.
- 3.12 Considerable importance and weight has been attached to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and the settings of any listed buildings, under sections 72 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990) as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act (ERR) 2013.

4. Public highway and transport

- 4.1 Local Plan Policy A1 (Managing the impact of development) states that the Council will expect works affecting the highway network to consider highway safety, with a focus on vulnerable road users, including the provision of adequate sightlines for vehicles, and that development should address the needs of vulnerable or disabled users.
- 4.2 Camden's Streetscape Design Manual – section 3.01 footway width states the following:
- 'Clear footway' is not the distance from kerb to boundary wall, but the unobstructed pathway width within the footway;
 - 1.8 metres – minimum width needed for two adults passing;
 - 3 metres – minimum width for busy pedestrian street though greater widths are usually required;
- 4.3 Local Plan Policy T1 (Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport) states that in order to promote walking in the borough and improve the pedestrian environment, the Council will seek to ensure that developments improve the pedestrian environment by supporting high quality improvement works, and make improvements to the pedestrian environment including the provision of high quality safe road crossings where needed, seating, signage and landscaping.
- 4.4 Paragraph 9.7 of CPG Transport seeks improvements to streets and spaces to ensure good quality access and circulation arrangements for all. This should ensure the safety of vulnerable road users, including children, elderly people and people with mobility difficulties, sight impairments, and other disabilities; maximising pedestrian and cycle accessibility and minimising journey times making sites 'permeable'; making it easy to cross where vulnerable road users interact with motor vehicles; and providing a high quality environment in terms of appearance, design and construction, considering Conservation Areas and other heritage assets.
- 4.5 The application site comprises an area of footway on the north-west side of Tavistock Place, positioned between Tavistock Square to the west and Herbrand Street to the east. The pavement here measures approximately 3.5m in width and is situated adjacent to a cycle lane and a new pedestrian zebra crossing. The existing kiosk reduces the clear footway to approximately 2.1 metres at this point on the pavement given the kiosk dimensions and kerbside offset, which is just above the minimum unobstructed width recommended for two adults passing given the typical level of footfall in this locality (1.8 metres - section 3.01 of 'Camden's Streetscape Design Manual').
- 4.6 While it is acknowledged that the pavement width would be similarly narrow at the proposed location and the amount of useable, unobstructed footway would be reduced to the same degree as the existing kiosk position, this new location would not worsen the existing situation on the public highway. It would also have the additional public benefit associated with the kiosk's re-siting by removing a physical and visual obstruction positioned in close proximity to the new zebra crossing which currently restricts visibility and clear sightlines for pedestrians and road users, so providing a safe place for pedestrians to cross the road.
- 4.7 Therefore, though the proposal would reintroduce a similar level of street clutter marginally further along the footway, on balance, the public benefit through improved pedestrian amenity, comfort and safety associated with re-siting the kiosk and use of the new zebra crossing, as well as, the promotion of walking as an alternative to motorised transport, are considered to outweigh any limited detrimental impacts in terms of street clutter. As such, the proposal would, on balance, be in accordance with Local Plan Policies A1 (Managing the impact of development) and T1 (Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport) and the above related guidance in highway safety terms.

5. Crime and anti-social behaviour

- 5.1 Local Plan Policy C5 (Safety and security), supported by Paragraph 7.38 of CPG (Design), requires development to contribute to community safety and security. In particular, Paragraph 4.89 states that *'Careful consideration needs to be given to the design and location of any street*

furniture or equipment in order to ensure that they do not obscure public views or create spaces that would encourage anti-social behaviour’.

5.2 In regards to community safety, it is noted that telephone kiosks and other street furniture can be focal points for anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime, such as, introducing the potential for graffiti. However, given that the proposal involves the re-siting of an existing kiosk, it is considered unlikely to promote any additional opportunities or change to any ASB and crime in the locality, and as such, accords with Local Plan Policy C5 (Safety and security) and Camden Design Guidance in this regard.

6. Amenity

6.1 Local Plan Policy A1 (Managing the impact of development), supported by CPG Amenity, seeks to protect the amenity of Camden’s residents by ensuring the impact of development is fully considered and by only granting permission to development that would not harm the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbouring residents.

6.2 The proposed re-siting of the kiosk does not result in any material change to the use of this section of pavement given the presence of an existing kiosk and marginal alteration in distance for the relocated structure. As such, the proposal would not introduce any additional harm to neighbouring amenity in terms of loss of privacy, increased noise, disturbance or footfall activity, and accords with Camden Local Plan Policy A1 (Managing the Impact of Development) and relevant Camden Planning Guidance in amenity terms.

7. Recommendation

7.1 It is therefore recommended, on balance, that planning permission be granted.

DISCLAIMER

The decision to refer an application to Planning Committee lies with the Director of Regeneration and Planning. Following the Members Briefing panel on Monday 4th April 2022, nominated members will advise whether they consider this application should be reported to the Planning Committee. For further information, please go to www.camden.gov.uk and search for ‘Members Briefing’.

Application ref: 2022/0051/P
Contact: Tony Young
Tel: 020 7974 2687
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Date: 29 March 2022

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EC3R 5AQ

DRAFT

Dear Sir/Madam

DECISION

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Full Planning Permission Granted

Address:

**Public footway adjacent to
7 Tavistock Place
London
WC1H 9SN**

DECISION

Proposal:

Re-siting of an existing BT telephone kiosk on public footway adjacent to no. 7 Tavistock Place (following the removal of the same kiosk from the public footway adjacent to no. 9 Tavistock Place).

Drawing Nos: Site and location plans (ref. KC-02073801395-CL); T4 (Standard K6 Kiosk); Proposed detail design GA drawing (1:50 and unscaled road layouts) dated February 2022; Road Safety Audit from Capital Traffic (ref. 2000-RSA-04 rev A) dated February 2021.

The Council has considered your application and decided to grant permission subject to the following condition(s):

Condition(s) and Reason(s):

- 1 The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the end of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site and location plans (ref. KC-02073801395-CL); T4 (Standard K6 Kiosk); Proposed detail design GA drawing (1:50 and unscaled road layouts) dated February 2022; Road Safety Audit from Capital Traffic (ref. 2000-RSA-04 rev A) dated February 2021.

Reason:

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.

- 3 All new external work, and works of making good, shall be carried out to match the existing adjacent work as closely as possible in materials and detailed execution, unless otherwise specified in the approved application.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the public highway and the character of the immediate area in accordance with the requirements of policies D1 and D2 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

Informative(s):

- 1 The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted for the re-siting of an existing telephone kiosk only as shown on the approved drawings and documents, and does not grant approval for new or additional telephone kiosk(s) at either the existing or proposed locations shown, nor at any other site location.
- 2 You are reminded of the need to ensure that any apparatus or structure approved as part of this decision shall be removed as soon as reasonably practicable after it is no longer required for electronic communications purposes, in accordance with condition A.2(2) of Part 16 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).
- 3 Your proposals may be subject to control under the Building Regulations and/or the London Buildings Acts that cover aspects including fire and emergency escape, access and facilities for people with disabilities and sound insulation between dwellings. You are advised to consult the Council's Building Control Service, Camden Town Hall, Judd St, Kings Cross, London NW1 2QS (tel: 020-7974 6941).
- 4 This approval does not authorise the use of the public highway. Any requirement to use the public highway, such as for hoardings, temporary road closures and suspension of parking bays, will be subject to approval of relevant licence from the Council's Streetworks Authorisations & Compliance Team, 5 Pancras Square c/o Town Hall, Judd Street London WC1H 9JE (Tel. No 020 7974 4444). Licences and authorisations need to be sought in advance of proposed works. Where development is subject to a Construction Management Plan (through a requirement in a S106 agreement), no licence or authorisation will be granted until the Construction Management Plan is approved by the Council.
- 5 All works should be conducted in accordance with the Camden Minimum Requirements - a copy is available on the Council's website (search for 'Camden Minimum Requirements' at www.camden.gov.uk) or contact the Council's Noise and Licensing Enforcement Team, 5 Pancras Square c/o Town Hall, Judd Street London WC1H 9JE (Tel. No. 020 7974 4444)

Noise from demolition and construction works is subject to control under the Control of Pollution Act 1974. You must carry out any building works that can be heard at the boundary of the site only between 08.00 and 18.00 hours Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 13.00 on Saturday and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays. You must secure the approval of the Council's Noise and Licensing Enforcement Team prior to undertaking such activities outside these hours.

In dealing with the application, the Council has sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way in accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

You can find advice about your rights of appeal at:

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/appeals/guidance/guidancecontent>

Yours faithfully

Chief Planning Officer

DRAFT

DECISION