



GERALDEVE

Development Management
Camden Council
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square
London
WC1H 9JE

72 Welbeck Street, London W1G 0AY

FAO David Fowler

Our ref: LJW/LDA/AMU/ACS/U00115766

Your ref: PP-11267079

25 May 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Application for Full Planning Permission
O2 Centre, Finchley Road, London

We write on behalf of our client, LS (Finchley Road) Limited ('the Applicant'), to submit an application for full planning permission for artwork proposals to the Finchley Road front elevation and forecourt of the O2 Centre, Finchley Road, London ('the Site'):

"Installation of 5 x printed artwork vinyl wraps to external columns, installation of 1 x noticeboard containing associated printed artwork, installation of wrapping to external planters, the installation of a painted forecourt surface and associated works."

Site Context

The Site is located on Finchley Road and comprises the O2 Centre, which is arranged over three floors and contains a cinema, a mix of retail units, restaurants and cafes, a health club, a community room and a supermarket. The Site sits within the jurisdiction of the London Borough of Camden ('LBC').

The Site is not listed and is not located within a Conservation Area. The O2 Centre frontage is designated as a Secondary Retail Frontage within the Finchley Road / Swiss Cottage Town Centre. The surrounding area is mixed use in character.

The Site benefits from excellent public transport links and has a Public Transport Accessibility Level of 6a. Finchley Road Station is approximately 100m to the south east and West Hampstead Station and Overground Station are approximately 400m to the west of the Site.

Planning History

On 13 September 1996 (ref. 9501238R2) an application for planning permission was granted for:

"Redevelopment of land to the rear of 241-279 Finchley Road by the erection of a 3-storey development comprising a mix of retail, leisure, and restaurant use and a Sainsbury's food store fronting Finchley Road,

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and by the erection of a non-food retail store to the rear, together with the formation of a new access road and traffic light-controlled junction with Finchley Road and the provision of a surface level car park for 561 cars.”

This planning permission relates to the existing O2 Centre and the Homebase store to the rear of the site. Since the construction of the O2 Centre, a number of applications have been submitted to the Council for works to the O2 Centre. The applications have included alterations to the internal layout and include the creation of mezzanine floors to accommodate further retail provision.

On 10 February 2022, application reference 2022/0528/P was submitted to LBC. The planning application has now been validated and proposes “**detailed planning permission for Development Plots N3-E, N4, and N5 including demolition of existing above ground structures and associated works, and for residential development (Class C3) and commercial, business and service (Class E) uses in Development Plot N3-E, residential development (Class C3) and local community (Class F2) and commercial, business and service (Class E) uses in Development Plot N4, and residential development (Use Class C3) and commercial, business and service uses (Class E) uses in Development Plot N5 together with all landscaping, public realm, cycle parking and disabled car parking, highway works and infrastructure within and associated with those Development Plots. Outline planning permission for Development Plots N1, N2, N3, N6, N7, S1 and S8 including the demolition of all existing structures and redevelopment to include residential development (Class C3) commercial, business and service uses (Class E), sui generis leisure uses (including cinema and drinking establishments) together with all landscaping, public realm, cycle parking and disabled car parking, highway works and infrastructure within and associated with those Development Plots”**. The application is still within its determination period.

Proposals

This application seeks planning permission for the installation of a series of artwork pieces on the Finchley Road front elevation of the O2 Centre.

As detailed within the drawing pack submitted alongside this application, the artwork proposals include:

- The installation of printed vinyl artwork on five external columns;
- The installation of a wooden framed noticeboard with printed vinyl artwork;
- The external planter boxes to be wrapped with a mirrored finish material; and
- The front forecourt floor to be painted in a design to match the vinyl artwork.

For the avoidance of doubt, the proposals also include the installation of printed vinyl artwork to windows. Given this installation would be made internally, we have not included within this request for planning permission.

All of the vinyl wraps and associated installed artwork will be contributing to a display of ongoing youth engagement work which is run within the O2 Centre Building. The vinyl and paint artwork will be applied on the building’s surface and no additional construction is proposed to facilitate its installation. The artwork seeks to improve the public realm and present the work the youth programme is undertaking as well as present the current proposals for the O2 Centre.

There are a total of five existing columns on the forecourt and it is proposed that each will be wrapped in a printed vinyl. In addition, it is proposed that the existing planter boxes on the forecourt will be wrapped in a mirror finish material and that a wooden framed noticeboard will be installed on the front façade of the existing O2 Centre Building. It should be noted that the columns and planters are owned and operated by the Applicant.

Furthermore, the proposals include displaying a painted forecourt surface which will match the vinyl artwork. The forecourt ground surface will be painted in heavy duty and thermoplastic paint. It is perhaps relevant to highlight that the O2 Centre forecourt is privately owned by the Applicant.

Dimensions, details and visuals of the proposed series of artwork can be found in the drawings pack submitted alongside this application.

Planning Policy Framework

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for the site comprises:

- The London Plan 2021; and
- LBC's Development Plan which consists of the Local Plan (2017), Policies Map, Site Allocation Document (2013) and various Area Plans.

The Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) on Artworks, Statues and Memorials is also a material consideration.

Planning Considerations

Planning Policy

Policy D1 of Camden's Local Plan sets out the Council seeks to secure high quality design in development. The policy highlights that the Council will support development for artwork where they protect and enhance the local character and historic environment and contribute to a harmonious and balanced landscape design.

Local Plan Policy A1 sets out the Council seeks to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours and will seek to ensure the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours is protected.

Policy C5 of Camden's Local Plan states that the Council will require developments to demonstrate that they have incorporated design principles which contribute to community safety and security.

The Artworks, Statues and Memorials CPG also makes reference to the fact that new artworks will only be permitted where they preserve and enhance the character of the local area, historic environment and heritage assets.

Assessment

The proposed development has been designed using the winning design from the 2-3 Degrees Youth Engagement Programme's O2 Centre Entrance Co-Design Project. The purpose of the artwork installation is

to publicise and raise awareness to the 2-3 Degrees Youth Engagement Programme, their O2 Centre Entrance Co-Design Project and the current O2 Centre proposals.

The Applicant partnered with youth engagement organisation 2-3 Degrees over 8 months from September 2021 to deliver a dedicated youth engagement programme with local people aged 13-18. The programme has focussed on gathering the input of the young participants on future development proposals at the O2 Centre site, alongside strengthening their personal development and leadership skills. As such, the participants have been able to see how their influence and ideas have had a direct impact on the submitted planning application for the O2 Centre site.

The project was undertaken as part of the Redesign Camden: O2 Centre programme for the improvement of the Finchley Road entrance of the shopping centre. The project has utilised over 20 volunteers primarily from Landsec, landscape architects EAST and the London Wildlife Trust to understand the young peoples' priorities for the landscaped open spaces within the submitted O2 Centre Planning Application. Together the volunteers and participants were split into four groups and asked to design a change to the O2 Centre entrance to the following brief:

- Make the entrance more vibrant and appealing to the local community, encouraging people into use the O2 Centre;
- Make the design interesting and playful, with an element that people can pause and engage with; and
- Use this design to signpost the future change proposed to the O2 Centre and allow the community to stay up to date with the development proposals and activities.

The four groups then presented their ideas back to the other groups prior to a vote deciding on the winning design.

The winning design incorporates a stencilled trail of plants and flowers on the floor and winding up the columns. A map and information about the plant species are included on the noticeboard feature, to allow people to pause and learn before identifying the species within the space. Noticeboards and QR codes are displayed on the entrance elevation to ensure local people can access information about the current O2 Centre and the redevelopment plans.

The group wanted to use green, natural and plant forms in order to make the entrance more vibrant and welcoming, evoking a sense of being in nature rather than the current concrete area. The design incorporates the floor, columns and planters to create the illusion of walking through a more natural landscaped space.

The group chose to base their design around nature and green space to highlight the future change proposed to the O2 Centre site, with the submitted planning application for the site incorporating significant new green spaces, and to communicate this change to the local community.

The proposals seek to enhance the entrance of the O2 Centre whilst displaying the good work of the Youth Engagement Programme. It is considered that the size, scale and design of the proposed artwork will represent interesting and high-quality installations that will engage both local residents and visitors around the O2 Centre. The proposals would not cause any harm to the amenity of nearby commercial uses or residential properties. As such, the proposals are in accordance with policies D1 and A1 of the Camden Local Plan.

The forecourt ground surface will be painted in heavy duty and thermoplastic paint. The paint type has been selected as it is designed specifically for this purpose, is waterproof and it can be removed without causing damage to the underlying surface. No illumination is proposed, and the proposals will not provide a street clutter appearance on Finchley Road. The artwork has been strategically positioned far enough back to not hinder pedestrian movement and to utilise the frontages of the existing O2 Centre. As such, the proposals would be in accordance with Camden Local Plan Policy C5.

The artwork is funded by the Applicant and represents a redecoration of existing structural and non-structural elements and as such, as with the remainder of the shopping centre demise, will be the responsibility of Landsec, particularly the Centre Director and associated team. The ongoing management and maintenance including cleaning, Health & Safety monitoring and repairs will be the responsibility of the Landsec Centre Director and associated team.

It is considered that the installation of the artwork would be compliant with design policies set out by the Council and would assist participants of the 2-3 Degrees Youth Engagement Programme to display their work on the proposed development at the O2 Centre and to publicise the O2 proposals to the local community. It is also considered that the management of the artwork is suitable and appropriate for the scale and type of artwork.

Scope of Application

In accordance with LBC's requirements, the following documents have been submitted as part of this planning application:

- Covering letter, prepared by Gerald Eve LLP;
- Site Location Form, prepared by EAST;
- CIL Form, prepared by Gerald Eve LLP; and
- Drawings Pack, prepared by East:
 - Existing Entrance Plan;
 - Existing Entrance Elevation;
 - Existing Entrance Wall Elevation;
 - Proposed Entrance Plan;
 - Proposed Entrance Elevation;
 - Proposed Entrance Wall Elevation; and
 - Proposed Stencils Plan.

Conclusion

The proposed artwork displays would provide benefits to the host building to assist in publicising and raising awareness to the Youth Engagement Programme which is run at the O2 Centre and to the submitted planning proposals. The proposals will contribute to creating an attractive frontage to Finchley Road, whilst respecting neighbouring amenities.

We look forward to receiving confirmation of receipt and validation of this application. Please do not hesitate to contact Luke Davies [REDACTED] or Anna Murray [REDACTED] of this office should you have any queries.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted signature]

Gerald Eve LLP
Luke Davies

[Redacted contact information]