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Planning Services
London Borough of Camden
5 Pancras Square
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Via Planning Portal

February 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Full planning and listed building consent for change of use from office (Class E (g) (i)) to education (Class F1 (a)) at 1 Southampton Place, Camden, London, WC1A 2DA.

On behalf of the client, Knight Frank Asset Management, please find enclosed an application for full planning and listed planning consent for the change of use from office (Class E (g) (i)) to education (Class F1 (a)) at 1 Southampton Place, Camden, London, WC1A 2DA.

The application comprises the following material, submitted via the Planning Portal (ref: PP-11820564)

- Completed application form;
- A Site Location Plan; and
- Existing and Proposed Floor Plans.

The application fee of £494.20 (including VAT) has been paid upon submission via the Planning Portal.

Background

The Site comprises 1 Southampton Place, which is part of a terrace of townhouses featured with darkened multi-coloured stock brick with a stone band at 1st floor level that date from circa 1758-1763. 1 Southampton Place achieves a height of up to 4 storeys. The property is currently vacant. The surrounding area comprises a range of uses including commercial, education, residential, retail, restaurants. Bloomsbury Square Garden and the British Museum is situated to the northwest of the Site.

The Site falls within the Central Activities Zone (CAZ), the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and is a Grade II* statutorily listed building, as identified by Historic England. The Site has an excellent Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 6b (6b being the best), with Holborn underground station being a 2-minute walk away and multiple bus services available within vicinity of the Site.

Recent planning history of the site includes the following:

- The installation of 9 external LED surface mounted lighting fixtures and 7 polished brass signage plates at the entrances to 1 Southampton Place, 18-23 Southampton Place and 46-47 Bloomsbury Square, with the decision still pending (ref: 2022/3747/A, 2022/3744/L, 2022/2141/P).



- External and internal repair, replacement, cleaning and maintenance at 1 Southampton Place and 18-19 Southampton Place, with the decision still pending (ref: 2022/1811/L).

Older planning history including alterations to the building pre-dates 1992 and is available on the Council's planning register.

The Proposal

The full planning application and listed building consent seeks permission for:

“Change of use from office (Class E (g) (i)) to education (Class F1 (a)).”

Planning permission is sought to accommodate educational use at 1 Southampton Place. As previously stated, the property is currently vacant and CATS Education have signed a lease with Knight Frank Asset Management to occupy the building once planning permission is granted. The permission will provide CATS Education with much needed and required learning space and classrooms. CATS Education also have one of their operators in 2 Southampton Place, which directly neighbours the property.

No external or internal alterations are being proposed to the building as part of this application.

Planning Policy Assessment

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2000 requires that proposal be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The adopted development plan comprises Camden Local Plan (2017), Camden Policies Map (2021), and the London Plan (2021). The Council is in early stages of preparing a new Local Plan, with the consultation of call for sites currently open. Other material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021).

Principle of development

The principle of the change of use from office to education is supported by local policy with Local Plan Policy E1 “Economic development” encouraging the development of Camden’s education sectors and recognising the importance of other employment generating uses such as education. The building is currently vacant and not being efficiently used for office space, with a much greater current need required for educational space. The space is ready to be occupied and utilised by CATS Education once planning permission is granted. Employment, in the form of teaching, will still be retained at the Site and therefore the proposal will not result in a complete loss of employment. Additionally, it should be noted the principle of educational use has already been established at neighbouring 2 Southampton Place, which is also currently occupied by CATS Education.

London Plan Policy S3 “Education and childcare facilities” further supports educational development appreciating its importance, especially within accessible locations, with good PTAL and access by walking and cycling, and next to green spaces where possible. Additionally, paragraph 106 in the NPPF seeks to support an appropriate mix of uses across an area ensuring minimal journey times to educational uses. The Site has an excellent PTAL rating making it very accessible and sustainable to travel to, meeting criteria within the London Plan and NPPF. Bloomsbury Square Garden is also located directly north of the Site providing a green space for students and teachers to break from work.



It should be noted changes of uses from education to offices are being sought at 18-19 Southampton Place, 20-21 Southampton Place and 46-47 Bloomsbury Square, in which this proposal effectively rebalances any perceived loss of educational use within the surrounding area.

Overall, the proposal provides much needed educational space for the CATS Education, which is an appropriate form of development neighbouring 2 Southampton Place. Employment will importantly be retained at the Site in a highly sustainable and accessible location, maintaining the surrounding area's vibrant activity.

Heritage

The Site is a Grade II* listed property within Bloomsbury Conservation Area. This application does not propose external or internal alterations to the property, and it is considered educational use is appropriate within the historic property. Additionally, the proposal is limited to the change of use only and the proposed occupier is under strict orders to protect the historic fabric. Therefore, the heritage status and quality of the building is maintained and protected.

CATS Education have expressed the importance to be located at 1 Southampton Place, which is both desirable and complementary to the look and the feel of their current school at 2 Southampton Place. This application is a key part of their plan to retain the building. Additionally, they will not be adding any signage or branding to the building as their main entrance and reception will continue to be located at 2 Southampton Place. The use of 1 Southampton Place will be exclusively for additional classrooms and some space for faculty.

As such, the proposal is in keeping with London Plan Policy HC1 "Heritage conservation and growth" and Local Plan Policy D1 "Design" and Policy D2 "Heritage", protecting and preserving the elements of historic significance.

Therefore, the property will continue to contribute positively to the historic character of the site and the surrounding conservation area. The proposal is considered to adhere to the legislative requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Conclusion

In keeping with national, regional, and local policy and guidance, the proposed change of use from office to education is considered an appropriate use of the Site, meeting current needs by CATS Education. The proposal maintains employment use at the Site and protects its historic significance.

We trust you have everything required to validate and determine this application within the statutory time frame. Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this application, please do not hesitate to contact myself or my colleague Ross Williamson.

Yours sincerely

Rose Adams
Planner