



Officer Report

Application Number:	HGY/2023/2298
Application Type:	Change of use
Address:	88-96 High Road, Wood Green, London, N22 6HE
Proposal:	Change of use of first floor from class E (offices) to College, Class F1 (Non-residential education institute)
Case Officer:	Roland Sheldon
Valid Date:	24/08/2023
Applicant:	Dr Dinesh Bist
Agent:	Mrs GOPI PATEL

RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site contains part of the first floor of a three-storey building that forms part of The Wood Green Shopping Mall. The relevant part of the building has a pedestrian access located on the pedestrianised section of Lymington Avenue. The site is located in the Wood Green Metropolitan Centre and forms part of the Primary Shopping Frontage. The site does not contain a listed building and is not located within a conservation area.

2. THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is for change of use of first floor from class E (offices) to College, Class F1 (Non-residential education institute). The proposal sets out it is intended to use the space to provide a diverse range of higher education courses, ranging from Level 3 (Foundation) to Level 7 (Master's degrees), with a connection with Liverpool Hope University. The courses will offer students courses Foundation (0 year) +3 years Business Management Degree course within the first year, however by the second year it plans to launch the following courses:

- Level 6 – Undergraduate Degrees
- BA- Accounting and Finance and Business Management
- BA- Travel and Tourism Degree
- BSc Mental Health and Well-being
- Law LLB (Hons)
- Level 7- Postgraduate Degrees o MBA- Marketing and Finance
- MSc- Project Management
- MSc Financial Management

3. RELEVANT PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY

Whilst there is a long planning history relating to the building, none of the planning history appears to be relevant/relate to the specific part of the building in question.

4. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal & External Consultees

The following were consulted on the planning application:

- LBH Education: No formal comments were received.
- LBH Transportation: A transport assessment will be required to aid the assessment of the proposal from a highway/transportation perspective.

Local amenity groups

The following local groups/societies made representations:

None

Neighbour Consultation

The application was advertised by way of letters sent to neighbouring properties. The number of representations received from neighbours in response to notification and publicity of the application were as follows:

No of individual responses: 0

Objecting

Support

Neither

The following issues were raised in representations and are addressed further on in this report or below:

None

5. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The key material planning considerations in the determination of the planning application are as follows:

- Principle of development
- Impact on neighbouring amenity and
- Highways and parking

Principle of development

Paragraph 90 of National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (NPPF) sets out that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.

Paragraph 100 sets out that to ensure faster delivery of other public service infrastructure such as further education colleges, hospitals and criminal justice accommodation, local planning authorities should also work proactively and positively with promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to plan for required facilities and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

London Plan policy GG1 sets out those involved in development should provide access to good quality community spaces, services, amenities and infrastructure that accommodate, encourage

and strengthen communities, increasing active participation and social integration, and addressing social isolation.

London Plan policy GG5 sets out those involved in planning and development must seek to ensure that London's economy diversifies and that the benefits of economic success are shared more equitably across London.

Part E of London Plan policy SD6 sets out that the redevelopment, change of use and intensification of identified surplus office space to other uses including housing should be supported, taking into account the impact of office to residential permitted development rights and the need for affordable and suitable business space.

Part D of London Plan policy E1 outlines that the diverse office markets in outer and inner London (outside the areas identified in Part C) should be consolidated and – where viable – extended, focusing new development in town centres and other existing office clusters supported by improvements to walking, cycling and public transport connectivity and capacity.

Local Plan policy SP8 sets out the Borough's forecast demand for B Class floorspace up to 2026, which in part will be achieved by the provision of B1a/b (now Class E (g) (i)(ii) floorspace as part of mixed-use development on suitable sites, including town centre sites.

Local Plan policy SP9 sets out the Council will seek to address unemployment by facilitating training opportunities for the local population, increasing the employment offered in the borough and allocating land for employment purposes. The Council will encourage the provision and growth of education and training facilities within the borough in areas such as Haringey Heartlands and Tottenham Hale and areas of high unemployment.

Local Plan SP16 sets out that the Council will work with its partners to ensure that appropriate improvement and enhancements, and where possible, protection of community facilities and services are provided for Haringey's communities. The Council will work with partners, such as the further education colleges, neighbouring boroughs community/voluntary sector, to ensure that suitable services and facilities for education and training are provided.

Part A of DM policy DM40 sets out that on non-designated employment sites within highly accessible or otherwise sustainable locations, the Council will support proposals for mixed-use, employment-led development where this is necessary to facilitate the renewal and regeneration (including intensification) of existing employment land and floorspace. All proposals for mixed-use development must satisfy the requirements of Policy DM38.A(a-f).

Part A of DM policy DM45 outlines that on non-designated employment sites within highly accessible and sustainable locations, the Council will optimise the use of land and floorspace within town centres by encouraging new mixed use development, including new or re-used space above shops and commercial premises, having regard to:

- a The role and function of the town centre;
- b Impact on town centre vitality and viability;
- c Compatibility of both the proposed and existing neighbouring uses; and
- d Compliance with other policies.

The wider complex in which the floorspace forms part of comprises of a variety of uses across Class E and Sui Generis classes, predominantly retail but also office space, a gym and cinema. According to the submitted planning statement, the first-floor space in question was previously used by the Mayor's office for policing as an office for back-of-house functions within Class E,

before the office was vacated in December 2023. The proposal is to occupy this space for use as a higher education and training facility.

Since this point, it is understood that Belmont College has occupied the building. As such, the 1,270m² of office space has been lost. In support of the application, the applicant has submitted an Economic Benefits Statement produced by Turley Economics. The statement indicates that 40 full time direct jobs would be created for London residents by the change of use, with educational opportunities for up to 400 students, comprising of school leavers through to adults. The submitted Planning Statement outlines that once in full occupation, the use is expected to support up between 55-75 staff in a variety of roles, including teaching administration and back of house staff.

No details have been provided with regards to the number of employees the existing office space could generate, or how many employees were employed during its last use, but given its open plan format of 1,270m², it is envisaged that the existing use as office space would provide a significantly higher number of employment opportunities if fully occupied.

According to the submitted Planning Statement, the landlord used letting agents to market the offices from January 2023, advertising the floorspace internally and via an advertisement on Wood Green High Road, before the applicant signed a lease to let the space in August 2023. This would not be considered to constitute either a substantial duration or sufficiently extensive marketing campaign to seek to re-occupy the office floorspace.

Notwithstanding this, it is acknowledged that the proposed use as a higher education facility will equip students with skills and qualifications that will aid their prospects of employment and scope to earn higher wages, which in turn could result in higher disposable income capacity that could have a net benefit for the local economy within Haringey as well as the wider London area. The location of the site within the heart of Wood Green Metropolitan Town Centre is considered to be perfect for an educational facility of this nature, given its excellent public transport accessibility and access to wider commercial services.

Taking the above into consideration, whilst insufficient marketing has been provided, and there would not likely be an equivalent level of jobs created initially in comparison to its existing use as an office facility, the socio-economic benefits of the introduction of the proposed higher education facility are considered to provide balance to the loss of direct employment space. The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

The permission shall be limited to a personal consent to Belmont College to act as service provider for the educational facility, in the interests of ensuring that the premises does not alter its educational offer to one that would conflict with the Council's own education provision within the borough.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

London Plan Policy D6 outlines that design must not be detrimental to the amenity of surrounding housing, in specific stating that proposals should provide sufficient daylight and sunlight to surrounding housing that is appropriate for its context, while also minimising overshadowing.

DPD Policy DM1 'Delivering High Quality Design' states that development proposals must ensure a high standard of privacy and amenity for a development's users and neighbours. Specifically, proposals are required to provide appropriate sunlight, daylight and aspects to adjacent buildings and land, and to provide an appropriate amount of privacy to neighbouring properties to avoid overlooking and loss of privacy and detriment to the amenity of neighbouring residents.

London Plan policy D14 (Noise) outlines that proposals should manage matters of noise in order to reduce, manage and mitigate noise to improve health and quality of life.

The proposal is to convert office space into a non-residential educational facility. The proposal does not involve any extension or alteration to the building that are material to amenity impact considerations. The premises is located within a busy town centre location in which it is to be expected that there is a high level of background noise throughout the day. The proposed change of use itself does not give rise to concerns about noise or general disturbance and would not be subject to high levels of operation during anti-social hours, with comings and goings from the building likely to happen during working day hours. The proposal does not give rise to any unacceptable impact on neighbouring amenity and is acceptable with regards to amenity impact considerations.

Highways and parking

The NPPF (Para. 114) makes clear that in assessing applications, decision makers should ensure that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes have been taken up and that the design of streets and other transport elements reflects national guidance (including the National Design Guide).

London Plan Policy T1 sets a strategic target of 80% of all trips in London to be by foot, cycle, or public transport by 2041 and requires all development to make the most effective use of land. Policy T5 encourages cycling and sets out cycle parking standards and Policies T6 and T6.1 to T6.5 set out car parking standards.

Other key relevant London Plan policies include Policy T2 – which sets out a ‘healthy streets’ approach to new development and requires proposals to demonstrate how it will deliver improvements that support the 10 Healthy Street Indicators and Policy T7 – which makes clear that development should facilitate safe, clean and efficient deliveries and servicing and requires Construction Logistics Plans and Delivery and servicing Plans.

Policy SP7 states that the Council aims to tackle climate change, improve local place shaping and public realm, and environmental and transport quality and safety by promoting public transport, walking, and cycling and seeking to locate major trip generating developments in locations with good access to public transport. This approach is continued in DM Policies DM31 and DM32.

DM Policy (2017) DM32 states that the Council will support proposals for new development with limited or no on-site parking where there are alternative and accessible means of transport available, public transport accessibility is at least 4 as defined in the Public Transport Accessibility Index, a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) exists or will be provided prior to the occupation of the development parking is provided for disabled people; and parking is designated for occupiers of developments specified as car-capped.

There is no off-street parking provision within the site itself, but the site is located within a location with excellent public transport accessibility (PTAL) of 6a. There are two large car parks in the Shopping City complex that offer approximately 1,200 car parking spaces. It is envisaged that most journeys to the site will be made via public transport.

The submitted framework travel plan indicates that the proposed college will have a maximum of 400 students enrolled at the college, with a maximum of 200 students in the building at any given time of the day, and 8 teaching/10 administrative staff on site at any given time. A hybrid teaching method is proposed, with most teaching undertaken online, with students on-site for a maximum of five hours on one day of the week.

London Plan standards for cycle parking are set out in policy T5:

Universities and colleges:

Long-stay: 1 space per 4 FTE staff + 1 space per 20 FTE students

Short-stay: 1 space per 7 FTE students

Based on the maximum occupancy figures outlined above, the development would require 20 cycle spaces for long-stay students, 4.5 spaces for staff, and 29 spaces for short-stay visitors, equating to 33.5 spaces in total.

The submitted travel plan indicates that there are eight cycle stands within the building that the site benefits from, accessed from Noel Park Road. Following amendments, a secure cycle store for 20 spaces would be provided to the rear of the site accessed off Noel Park Road. In addition, there are 8 existing cycle stands for staff, that exist on the first-floor balcony area of the site that can be accessed via the stairs or via the internal service corridor and lift.

This would provide a total of 28 cycle spaces for students. Whilst this is marginally below the minimum standards within the London Plan, taking into account existing on-street cycle parking provision, and the fact that it is unlikely that the building will be regularly occupied at the maximum capacity, on balance, this provision would be acceptable. A condition shall be imposed on the development that requires the cycle storage to be installed in accordance with the approved plans within 2 months of the date of consent, given that the educational use of the premises has already commenced.

Limited details have been provided with regards to delivery and servicing arrangements for the college, other than mention in the short transport statement that allocated space is already provided for servicing and delivery. Given that the previous use as offices is likely to have a similar level of demand for deliveries and servicing in the wider complex, it is not envisaged that further details of the provision shall be required. As a commercial premises, it will be necessary for the operator of the college to make arrangements for a private waste operative to provide waste collections.

A framework travel plan has been submitted that sets out the aims and objectives that will be used to help reduce car usage (particularly single occupancy journeys) by encouraging the increase in use of staff/students of public transport, walking and cycling. A condition will be imposed on the development that requires the submission of a post-occupation travel one year after the date of planning consent. This travel plan will be required to satisfactorily demonstrate it meets the aims and objectives of the framework travel plan, with the overall aim to reduce car usage and encourage sustainable forms of transport to and from the site.

Subject to compliance with the travel plan and cycle parking conditions, the proposal would be acceptable with regards to highways and parking considerations.

6. CONCLUSION

The socio-economic benefits of the introduction of the proposed higher education facility are considered to provide balance to the loss of direct employment space. Subject to compliance with conditions, the proposal would be in general compliance with the NPPF, London Plan and policies within the Local Plan /Development Management DPD.

7. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT planning permission subject to the following conditions:

Conditions:

- 1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun no later than three years from the date of this decision notice, failing which the permission shall be of no effect.

Reason: This condition is imposed by virtue of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to prevent the accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans and drawings listed in this decision notice, other than where those details are altered pursuant to the conditions of this planning permission.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 Within 2 months of the date of this decision notice, the 20 secure cycle parking spaces in a double-height lockable caged enclosure as shown in approved document P100 A (Service Yard 3 Alterations) shall be installed in accordance with the approved details. Such spaces shall be retained thereafter for this use only.

Reason: To promote sustainable modes of transport in accordance with policy T5 of the London Plan 2021 and Policy SP7 of the Haringey Local Plan 2017.

- 4 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, or any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order, the premises shall be used as a higher education facility F1(a) as set out in the plans and information hereby approved only, and shall not be used for any other purpose unless approval is obtained to a variation of this condition through the submission of a planning application.

Reason: In order to restrict the use of the premises to one compatible with the surrounding area because other uses within the same Use Class or another Use Class are not necessarily considered to be acceptable consistent with Policy DM1 of The Development Management DPD 2017.

- 5 One year from the date of this consent of the approved development, a post-occupation travel plan shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority that will satisfactorily meet the aims and objectives as stated in the approved document 'Framework Travel Plan by Transport Planning Associates June 2024.'

The college shall operate the premises in accordance with the details subsequently approved by the Local Planning Authority thereafter.

Reason: To promote sustainable transport and to reduce the potential for additional on street parking stress as a result of the development, consistent with Policies SP0, SP4 and SP7 of the Haringey Local Plan 2017.

6. The non-residential education and training facility (Use Class F1) hereby approved shall solely be operated by 'Bellmont College' as the service provider, and by no other service provider unless approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of ensuring that the premises does not alter its educational offer to one that would conflict with the Council's own education provision within the borough, consistent with policy SP16 of the Haringey Local Plan (2017).