

Westminster House, Kew Road, Richmond, TW9 2ND

Planning Statement Addendum

Introduction

The purpose of this Planning Statement addendum is to provide additional justification for the minor loss of 49.5 sq.m (including circulation space) partly vacant office floorspace as part of a redevelopment proposed at Westminster House, Kew Road, Richmond, TW9 2ND (app ref: 23/3371/FUL), which seeks the following:

“Creation of two additional levels including Class C3 accommodation comprising 7no.units and Class E accommodation for internal access to a communal terrace, conversion and excavation of the existing Class E basement and part conversion of existing floorspace at basement, ground, first, second, and third floor levels to provide internal access and ancillary residential floorspace with external alterations and associated development”

This addendum should be read alongside the Planning and Heritage Statement prepared by Firstplan, dated May 2023.

The site lies within site allocation SA19 ‘Richmond Station’ as well as a Key Office Area.

Justification Statement

The first and third office floors have been vacant for three years, with the second floor soon to be vacant later this year.

The site is situated within allocation ‘SA19 ‘Richmond Station’, whereby residential uses on the upper floors are supported. As such, a minor loss of office floorspace to provide access to upper floor residential uses is inevitable and acceptable if the Council’s policy objectives for SA19 are to be achieved.

Only a minor loss of office floorspace (49.5 sq.m) is proposed, with 7.7 sq.m of this floorspace being office circulation and ancillary space rather than the areas of the floor plate where desks can be laid out and work undertaken. In total only 41.8 sq.m of non-circulation space will be lost. This negligible loss in non-circulation floorspace accounts for only circa 3% of the existing office floorspace across the building. A total of 1,293 sq.m of office floor space is to be retained and upgraded as part of the proposals.

The office space on the first and third floors has remained vacant for three years without proving attractive to the market. The second floor is to be vacant by the end of this year. The result is that no jobs will be lost through the redevelopment proposals. Conversely, the proposals seek to deliver much-needed investment in the borough’s office stock, which will allow the modernisation of the existing office space and increase the prospects of attracting tenants to the building. It is also a material consideration that the creation of a gym at basement level will create circa 10 new jobs, which will assist in offsetting the minor floorspace loss.

The reorganisation of the floorspace is required as part of the modernisation and efficiency plans rather than a simple change of use to residential floorspace. For example, the stairs and lift at the northern end of the building will provide a secondary escape from the office floors. The secondary access will enhance the offices from an accessibility perspective and increase its attractiveness to prospective tenants. The third-floor plantroom will be shared between the office and residential uses. The third-floor plantroom is the location of the life safety UPS and batteries for the new evacuation lift and smoke extract systems. This plant room has been located nearer the roof fans and lift motor room for both fire safety integrity of the supply cabling and engineering benefits in terms of efficiencies through minimising losses, as the plant is closer to the load.

With respect to sustainability and energy improvements for the offices, new heat pumps are planned and shown on the rooftop. These heat pumps are highly efficient compared to the existing, dated, roof plant they replace, are smaller and

use more environmentally friendly refrigerants. Energy costs for the office tenants will be reduced and aligned to best in class, bettering the existing energy costs.

In addition, as well as upgrading services, further improvements to the office floorspace as a result of the proposals are as follows:

- The new terrace at 26.2 sq.m will provide a communal external amenity area for the future office occupiers, to be used by employees, which will enhance the existing officer accommodation on site by providing a dedicated amenity area.
- New windows throughout, improving the internal outlook (through the loss of intrusive secondary glazing) and the thermal envelope.
- Improved and safer escape facilities, with the introduction of the evacuation lift and smoke-vented lobbies at both ends of the floorplates.
- A much more desirable and impressive address achieved through the external improvements and aesthetic uplifts.

Overall, the proposed enhancements to the existing vacant office space will improve and modernise the building, increasing the likelihood of new tenants relocating to Richmond town centre. This aligns with the aims and objectives of London Plan Policy E1, adopted Local Plan Policy LP40 and emerging Local Plan Policy LP21, all of which support investment, improvements and enhancements to office floorspace.

Ref: 22208/TW/AL