DCPL DAVE CARROLL PLANNING LIMITED

Job ref: 268/ Equity2

Design and Access and Planning Statement

Equity House, 128-136 High Street, Edgware HA8 7EL

Construction of rear extension over first, second and third floor levels with an additional set back floor at fourth floor level, to accommodate Class E offices, improvements to fenestration of front façade and 14 car parking spaces, waste and cycle stores at ground floor rear.

October 2021

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1. Introduction

Photo 1 Front of Equity House

Proposals

1.1 This document supports a planning application submission from Pragma Equity Ltd. to the London Borough of Barnet to add a rear extension set over the ground floor on stilts to create a first, second and third floor offices with an additional fourth floor set back level. All the new floor space will be Class E office space.

1.2 At ground floor level 14 Car Parking spaces will be retained (of which two will be disabled spaces). Waste and Cycle stores will be created at the rear of the building. An additional new lift will serve the new proposed offices. There is an existing lift that will serve the newly converted flats. The front entrance to the flats from Edgware Road and the retail units will remain as they are.

1.3 The current Equity House is comprised of a ground floor retail parade of five shops which will remain unaltered. There are three floors of B1 (a)/Class E office space above the retail ground floor which has a Prior Approval 'permission' to convert to 18 studio flats (6 per floor). The current applicant will shortly begin the conversion of the building to deliver the Prior Approval flats which must be completed by September 2022.

1.4 In addition the upper part of the front façade will be updated and the fenestration changed so that the building has a much more vertical rather than its 1980's horizontal emphasis.

1.5 The previous owners secured permission to build three floors of offices over stilts to create 547m2 of B1(a)/E office space at the rear of the building. The residential and office elements were separated by an internal corridor.

1.6 This application adopts a similar approach, building offices at the rear over stilts, however the key difference is that in the application proposals, the undercroft will be slightly lower and each office floor a little lower. This will allow a set back fourth storey to be built that will have no significant impact on views of the building from the Edgware Road.

1.7 The applicant's undertook a pre-application meeting with the Council in July 2021. The proposals at that time were residential led. They comprised of two additional residential floors (fourth and fifth) of 9 flats in total sitting over the Prior Approval flats and the approved rear extension. The Council's Planning officers did not support the proposal with theadditional floors because of the impact on views of the building on Edgware Road and the fact that Equity House was in the middle of the terrace.

Table 1 New Class E Office Proposals

Floor Level	**Floorspace 1 (NIA m2)**	**Floorspace 2 (NIA m2)**	**Total Floorspace NIA (m2)**	**Floorspace (GIA m2)**	**Floorspace GEA(m2)**
1	94	53	147	197.2	
2	94	53	147	197.2	
3	93.7	52.7	146.4	197.2	
4	68.6	55.4	124	176.8	
Total	**350.3**	**214.1**	**564.4**	**768.4**	**845.8**

Photo 2 Equity House (arrowed) an additional floor above Russell House in foreground.

Site and Location

1.8 The application site lies on the east side of the Edgware Road, the A5. The site is opposite the entrance to Canons Drive which provide a green screen to the buildings behind it. Equity House is attached (to the south) to the three Wishes Public House, a pub with two residential stories over and to Russell House at 140 High Street, a three storey flat roofed office development. There is one more three/four storey office development on the other corner of Grove Road. Grove Road provides a vehicular entrance to the application site and provides access to 21 car parking spaces currently available for use by Equity House businesses, at the rear of Equity House.

1.9 The 19/3768/FUL consent allowed for a new three storey office building at the on stilts to maintain ground floor car parking. This application follows this model of development.

1.10 On the eastern side of the application site, two storey semi-detached dwellings predominate but they are separated by the Emmanuel Centre on Grove Road. This is a three storey (in scale) community/religious centre building. This is largely a brick box with very limited fenestration that acts as a barrier between the residential hinterland and the offices and other commercial buildings on the High Street.

Photo 3 -the Emmanuel Centre from manor Park Crescent with Equity House arrowed

1.11 There are five commercial 'shop' units of varying sizes on the ground floor with a front entrance to the existing three storey office building above. The shop units (395m2 GIA) will remain unchanged. Although the building is well glazed on the first and second floor frontages the current top floor has a rather unresolved and weak roof line.

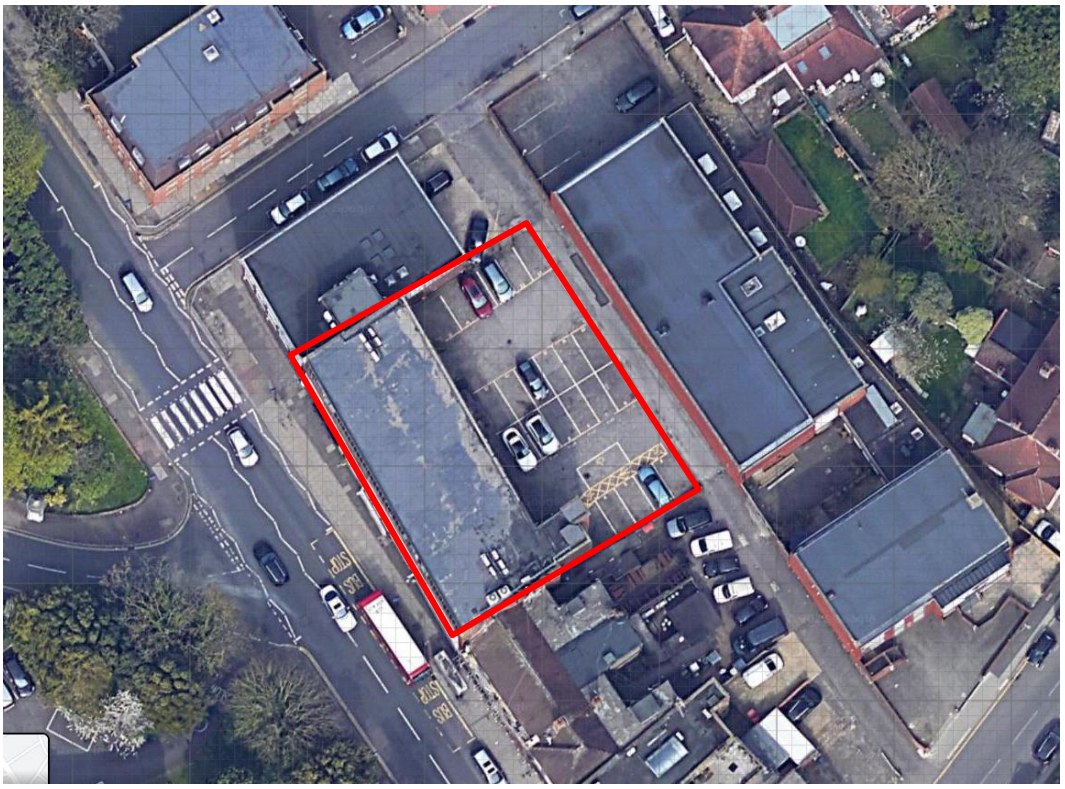


Photo 4 aerial photo of Equity House-red line is approximate

1.12 The site is within the Edgware Town Centre Secondary Shopping Frontage. It is well located for office use, as it is a little over 500m to Edgware underground station and bus station interchange. It has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (see appendix 1) of 6a (measured on a scale from 1 -6b, 6 being the most accessible). The main town Centre shops and local parks are a little over 300m distant from the site.

1.13 The application site is not in an area of flood risk (see Appendix 2).

1.14 The building is not listed nor in a Conservation Area. The site is within an Area of Special Archaeological Interest but the 2019 consented office works were not considered to be of a scale that would result in any significant archaeological impact. As the new office proposals are of a very similar scale, then the same conclusion on archaeological impact can be reached.

2. Recent Planning History

2.1 Previous owners have submitted three Prior Approval applications for a change of use of the upper floors of the existing building from B1a office use into flats. The most recent 'Prior Approval' was in 2019 followed by an application to create new office space at the rear of the building in 2019. Details of these applications are discussed below.

Submission of details of condition 3 (Demolition and construction management plan) pursuant to planning permission 19/3729/PNO dated 09/07/2019

Equity House 128 - 136 High Street Edgware HA8 7EL
Ref. No: 20/6028/CON | Received: Mon 14 Dec 2020 | Validated: Mon 14 Dec 2020 | Status: Withdrawn

Single storey rear extension, extensions to first, second and third floors at rear, to create new office space under Use Class B1, including new lift shaft. Alterations and re-configurations to existing car park, associated bin storage and cycle storage for residential and office use.

Equity House 128 - 136 High Street Edgware HA8 7EL
Ref. No: 19/3768/FUL | Received: Fri 05 Jul 2019 | Validated: Wed 10 Jul 2019 | Status: Approved subject to conditions

Change of use of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors of the existing building from offices (Use Class B1) to 18 no self contained flats (Use Class C3)

Equity House 128 - 136 High Street Edgware HA8 7EL
Ref. No: 19/3729/PNO | Received: Thu 04 Jul 2019 | Validated: Tue 09 Jul 2019 | Status: Prior Approval Required and Approved

Change of use from Office (Use Class B1) to 18no self-contained flats (Use Class C3)

Equity House 128 - 136 High Street Edgware HA8 7EL
Ref. No: 18/0986/PNO | Received: Mon 12 Feb 2018 | Validated: Mon 19 Feb 2018 | Status: Prior Approval Required and Approved

Change of use from Use Class B1 (office) to Use Class C3 (residential) to provide (18 Unit)

Equity House 128 - 136 High Street Edgware HA8 7EL
Ref. No: 17/7757/PNO | Received: Wed 06 Dec 2017 | Validated: Wed 20 Dec 2017 | Status: Prior Approval Required and Refused

2.2 The upper three office floors have a Prior Approval (19/3729/PNO) on 16 Sept 2019- work has to be completed by 16th Sept 2022. Prior Approval is for 18 studio/one bed flats. A consent was also given (19/3768/FUL) for a rear extension of offices that sat over the car park at the three office levels. This would have created 547m2 of new office space (GIA).

2.3 Photo 5 shows the outline of the rear office extension with the ground floor undercroft stilts.

Photo 5 Ground floor office rear extension on stilts

Photo 6 Three floors of office (blue) against consented Prior Approval residential scheme (green)

2.4 Photo 5 shows the depth of the rear building now consented on the first to third floors and the line of stilts that creates a car parking undercroft. The rear ward extension of the office development is contained largely within the existing staircase on the southern side of the building and the blank flank wall extension of Russell House on the northern edge of Equity House. The Council concluded that the office proposals were not at odds with the current office design and that the rear extension did not prejudice visual or residential amenity.

2.5 The consented office extension proposals reduced the amount of car parking from 21 to 14 spaces but the proposed level of car parking was considered acceptable. This level of car parking is proposed in the new application.

2.6 The Emmanuel Centre is the building that would be most impacted by the proposed office extension but this was recognised to be very limited as the church centre presents a blank flank wall to the office proposals and the windows of the building look into an internal courtyard away south of the application site.

2.7 The Prior Approval residential 'permission' will be started during the passage of this application. The proposed office rear extension has a separate access can be isolated, allowing the office extension to be built at the same time and after the completion of the Prior Approval residential development.

Pre-Application Meeting with the Council

2.8 No formal response has been received from Barnet so I have relied on my notes of the meeting. The key issue raised was the height of the building. The Council officers position was that two additional floors on the building was not appropriate as Equity House was mid terrace and in addition in an area where three to four storeys were more appropriate. In recognition of the office to residential Prior Approval and office rear extension consent, the type of use appeared to be a secondary consideration to the perceived harm, notably the visual impact of the proposed two additional floors.

2.9 Because the Council's planning officer's were likely not to support the two additional floors, the applicant concluded that a mixed scheme of the type promoted at pre-application stage was not viable.

2.10 The application proposal therefore has been revised from that at the pre-application stage. The applicant proposes to complete the Prior Approval flats as 'consented' and then to submit a new application containing a rear office extension similar in scale and kind to the one given approval in 2019 (19/3768/FUL) with the difference that a new set back top floor would be added to the rear office extension.

2.11 Unlike the two full floors proposed in the pre-application submission, the proposed additional office floor sits over the rear 'half' of the building. It is also set down further by small reductions in the rear office extension floor to ceiling heights. This has further reduced the impact of the top floor such that it can only be glimpsed from the sides of the building on the Edgware Road. It is further broken up at the rear by the creation of two rear amenity spaces.

2.12 These changes have significantly reduced the impact of the new top floor such that its visual impact both at the rear and the front of the building are limited or minimal.

2.13 In addition to the extra office space, an extra lift is now proposed to be installed so that both the residential Prior Approval dwellings and the new office floor space can both be served by lift.

2.14 The creation of the office floor space that could provide employment for around 50 people is a significant benefit given the loss of office space to residential uses other recent years.

3 Proposals and Planning Policy

3.1 The section considers how the planning application proposals meets the Council's current planning policies. These are set out principally in Barnet's Core Strategy 2012 and Development Management Policy 2012. This section also considers how the pre-application proposals accord with regional planning policy as set out in the recently Adopted London Plan 2021 and National Planning (NPPF 2021) guidance.

3.2 The Council have recently produced more up-to-date guidance in its Edgware Growth area SPD.

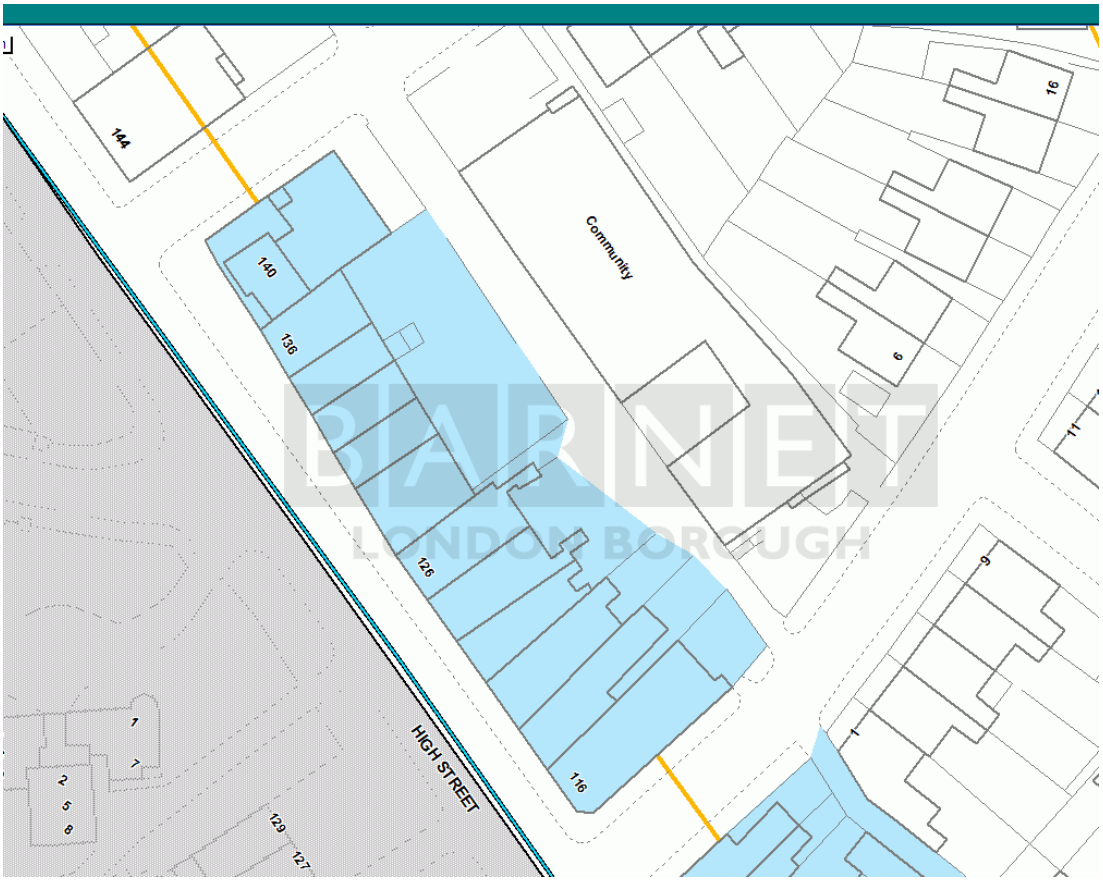


Photo 7 Proposals Map Plan Allocation-Secondary Shopping Frontage

3.3 Barnet's Proposals Map allocates the site as a Secondary Shopping Frontage.

Core Strategy and Development Management policies 2012

3.4 Barnet's Core Strategy Development Plan Document supported the predicted major office growth in Brent Cross and Cricklewood Growth Area, but supported the provision of new office space to meet the needs of businesses in town centres (Policy CS8). Policy DM11 of the Council's Development Management Policies document supported mixed use development in town centres and also the retention and development of new office floor space in town centres (Policy DM14).

3.5 The 2012 Local Plan documents were adopted before the relaxation of the Permitted Development rules on office to residential use which created a significant loss of office space in Barnet.

3.6 Barnet have long supported the growth of office space in town centres and reflecting recent actual losses of office space, the proposals to create new office space should be strongly supported by the Council.

Edgware Growth Area SPD June 2021

3.7 Recent guidance from the Council in the form of the Edgware Growth Area supports both the residential and office growth proposed. The SPD looks to encourage residential development and support for core employment functions is set out in Objective 1 of the Growth Area SPD. Objective 11 supports the provision of local jobs and Principle 7 encourages the provision of employment floor space for businesses, including new office floor space.

3.8 The proposals for new office floor space are therefore aligned with the new Edgware Growth area SPD.

3.9 The recent SPD also encourages the upward expansion of the town centre:

'Edgware Town Centre within Barnet is identified by Barnet's Local Plan as a tall buildings location, meaning there is potential for buildings higher than eight storeys, and for very tall buildings of over 14 storeys, subject to exceptional design quality and demonstrating that the scheme meets criteria such as integrating with the existing urban fabric, and ensuring no adverse microclimate impact relating to wind or daylight.'

Paragraph 4.24 of SPD

3.10 The Council has divided up the Edgware Town Centre into segments as set out in photo 8 below. The Application site is in segment 28.

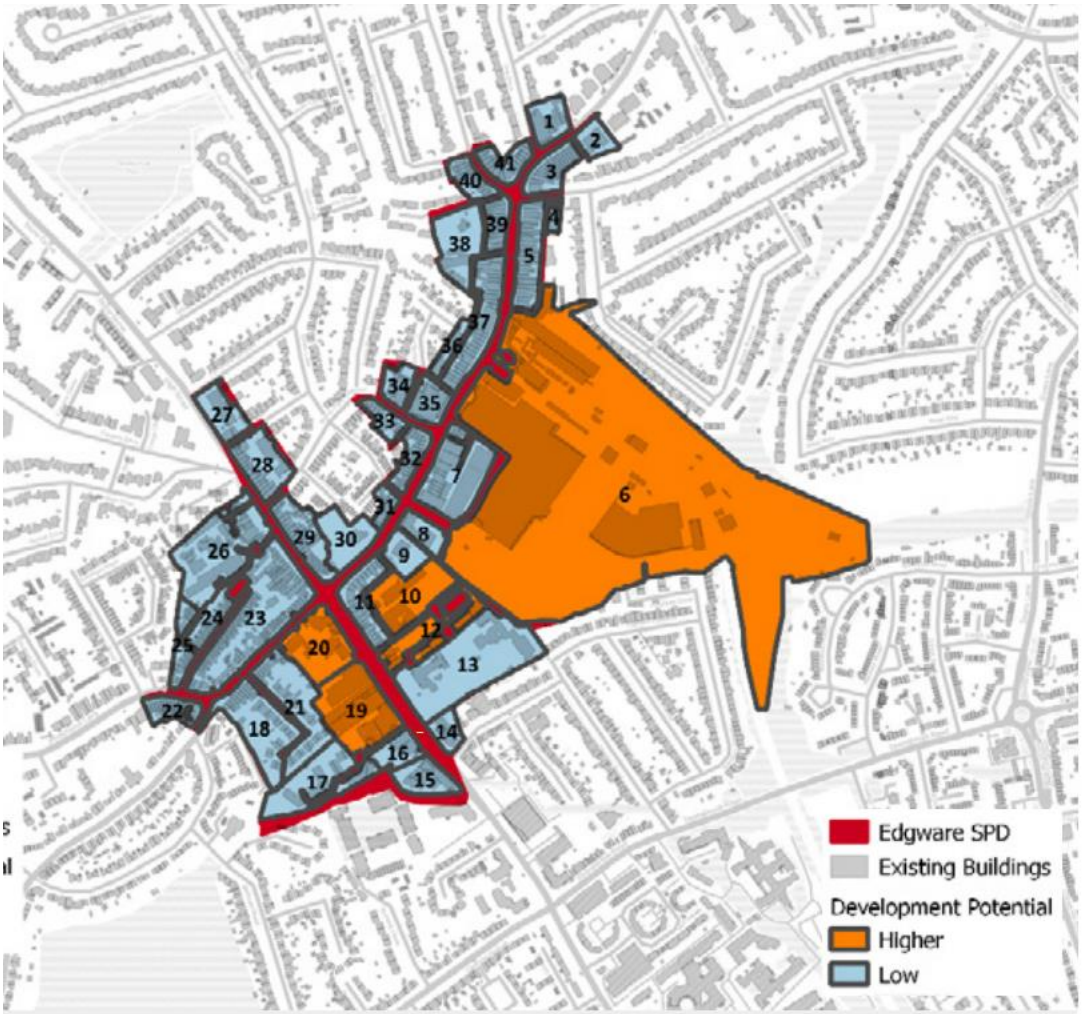


Figure 31 – Assessed Development Potential by Segment

Photo 8 Extract from Edgware Growth area SPD, figure 31

Photo 9 – Figure 36 of Design SPD, indicative storey heights

3.11 The Edgware Growth SPD is accompanied by an SPD Design Guide (June 2021) that gives more site development detail including helpful detailed guidance on the approach to the application site.

'8.8 Modern buildings of a larger scale and massing are present on both sides along the southern part of the A5/ High Street corridor; these may offer opportunities for careful intensification. In all cases the relationship of the building with the street should be improved and the design should make a positive contribution to the location. Figure 34 Buildings on the A5/ High Street

8.9 The north eastern frontages (Segments 27, 28, 29) are low to medium rise buildings and include a mix of mid-20th Century and more modern eras. There is potential for careful and sensitive intensification which is appropriate to neighbouring properties and maintains or improves the appearance of the frontages.'

Para 8.8. to 8.9 of Edgware SPD Design Guide

3.12 The proposals for new office space is strongly supported at all levels of policy making. The proposed additional office floor is an example of careful intensification which Barnet's latest planning SPD guidance supports.

Planning Benefits

3.13 There are particular benefits of this office extension proposal notably providing new office floor space in an area where a significant amount of office floor space has been lost. The proposal is to construct 560 m2 of office space (net) (768m2 Gross Internal area). The CAG London Employment Site database Report 2017 demonstrated that in the office sector since 1977, floorspace per worker fell from 18m to 10m2 per worker in 2013, largely as a result of digitisation. The proposed floor space will provide employment for 56 office workers on average. Accepting that Covid may have changed the downward trend in worker per office floorspace ratio, even a lower estimate of workers per floorspace would provide significant planning benefit through additional employment floor space.

4. Design and Access Statement

4.1 Limited changes are proposed to the front elevation but with significant remodelling on the rear elevation. On the front elevation the proposal is to remove the large floor to ceiling top floor windows and to insert new aluminium windows with a standing seam metal roof. This is intended to give the top floor a much more justified top and help emphasise the verticality rather than the horizontality of the building.

4.2 The shops and the front shop facades will remain unaltered.

4.3 The rear extension to create the office floorspace will be contained within the brick access tower and the blank flank wall of Russell House (see photo 10). In this way there will be extremely limited impacts on its Edgware Road neighbours in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight reduction. This was also the conclusion of the Council in the previous application for the rear office extension (Planning Reference 19/3768/FUL).

4.4 The rear extension will be clad in red brick to match the existing, with dark grey aluminium windows . The full glazed rear third floor will be replaced by a stronger roof line with a metal standing seam top, that also helps to create a greater vertical emphasis of the building at the rear.

4.5 The proposed additional floor of office accommodation is set back and is also mitigated by the reduction in floor to ceiling heights so that it cannot be seen from key views on the Edgware Road. This is a careful and sensitive intensification as supported by the Edgware Growth SPD and the accompanying Design Guide. The fourth floor roof will be clad in a metal cladding system in a neutral colour that has limited visual impact.

Photo 10 Rear of Equity House

Photo 11 view pf application site from Emmanuel Centre on Grove Road

4.6 The view of the additional floor is limited. The proposed floor cannot be seen from Edgware Road aside from a narrow glimpse of the side of the new roof. The Emmanuel Centre (see photo 4, 11 and 12) blocks views of the existing building from the residential area behind it. The centre will also block views of the proposed fourth floor extension. The only view of the new fourth floor will be a very limited view close to the entrance of the Emmanuel Centre and the rear access road to Equity House (photo 11).

Photo 12 The large flank wall of the Emmanuel Centre screens the application building from houses behind

Photo 13 No view of Equity House from most of Grove Road

4.7 Photo 13 demonstrates that there are no significant views of the additional proposed floor at equity House in the rest of Grove Road and a limited view from Manor Park Crescent (photo 14) and that is only at the entrance to the rear service road at the opposite end from Grove Road at Manor Park Crescent..

Photo 14 View of rear of Equity House from Manor Park Crescent

4.8 Development Management policy DM01 protects Barnet's character and amenity. It is my view that the proposed changes to the frontage of the building will enhance its character and the set backs proposed will allow the additional floor without making the new floors top heavy or particularly visible.

Car Parking

4.9 There are 21 existing car parking spaces with 9 spaces being lost to accommodate the new office extension, leaving 14 car parking spaces available. 7 spaces are allocated to the ground floor retail businesses and 7 for the new office rear extension. 2 Electric Car charging points will be included but the point will be able to serve several parking bays.

4.10 In the previous application for the rear office extension for a similar quantum of floorspace, the proposed similar car parking space numbers and allocation to different uses was considered acceptable

Photo 15 undercroft car parking is a feature of neighbouring office block

4.11 Some of the car parking provision will be in the new office undercroft. Neighbouring building, Russell House already has this form of car parking (see photo 15).

Cycling and Waste Bins

4.12 20 cycle parking spaces are required for the residential conversion and 6 cycles for the for the office extension. This meets London Plan cycle parking standards.

4.13 The 18 flats require 1800litres of Euro bins for Non recyclable waste and 1800 litres for recycling. In addition the offices require 4 1100l bins for recycling and 2 x 1100l bins for waste. These are provided.

4.14 The Existing waste bins for the retail units are located in or near to the current position close to the rear of the building.

Access

4.15 A new residential lift is proposed from the rear of the car park to serve the office floors. The offices have a proposed new lift that will be wheelchair accessible to all office floors of the building. The former office lift will be given over to residential use.

Conclusions on design

4.16 This is a significant improvement in accessibility over the current situation creating an additional new lift in the building.

4.17 The New Office development proposals assist in improving the look of the building, notably its verticality. It does not create any degree of overlooking or overshadowing to neighbouring buildings.

4.18 It is hard to see the additional floor from the Edgware Road and the view of the rear extension is very limited.

4.19 A similar quantum of car parking has been proposed as was approved for a similar quantum of proposed floor space in the 2019 consent.

4.20 Sufficient waste and bicycle storage is created to meet standards

4.21 The facing materials proposed match the existing materials.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The proposal have the planning benefit of creating floorspace for approximately 50 workers and to provide new office space in an area where much floor space has been lost though permitted development.

5.2 Both Barnet's Core Strategy and Development Management Plan support new office growth in town centres. The new Edgware Town Centre SPD guidance supports additional office development on the application site.

5.3 The proposals do not create amenity problems for local residential neighbours, in terms of daylight/sunlight, overlooking or noise.

5.4 The rear extension office proposals have been approved recently in similar form.

5.5 The new front and rear facades create a better vertical rhythm along the street, more in character with neighbouring buildings. The set back additional storey is barely visible from the Edgware Road and is not visible from the residential side streets save for at the access road entry to the rear of the development.

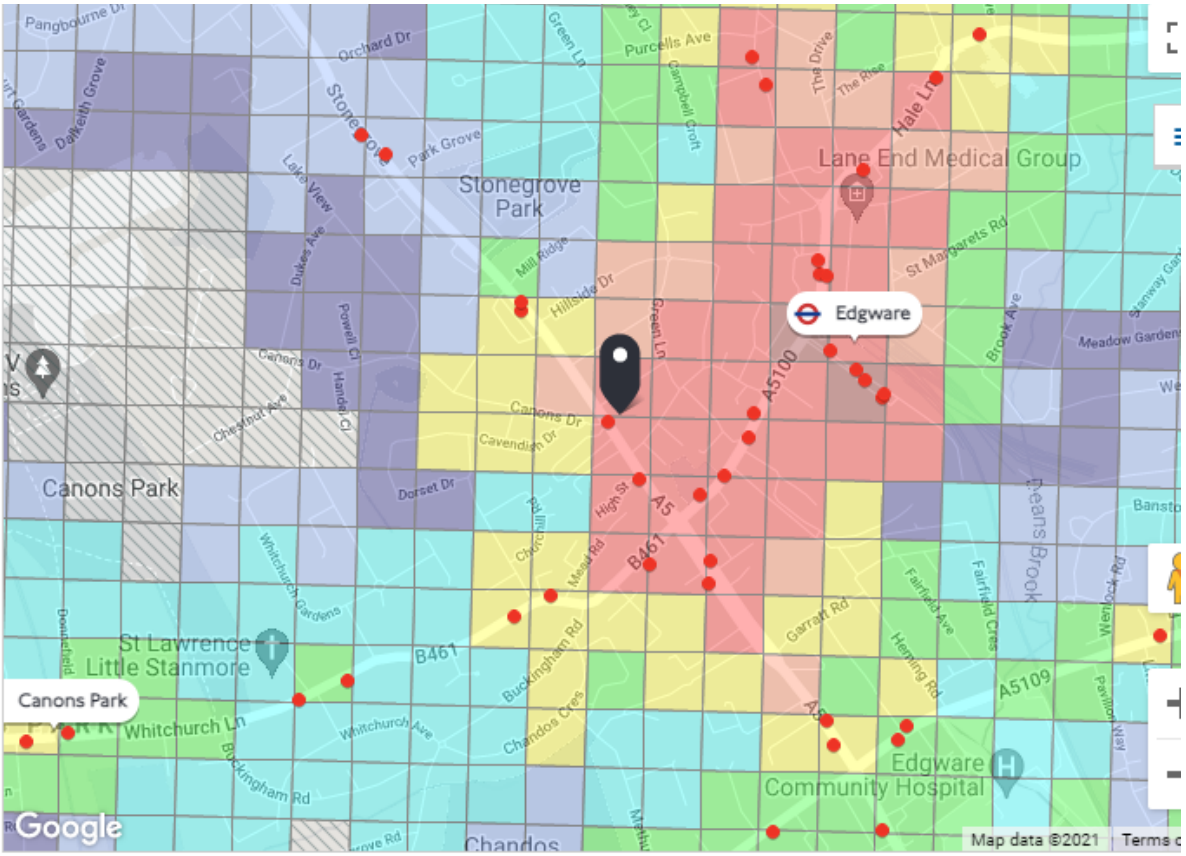
5.6 The new lifts create better access to both the residential and office elements of the block.

5.7 The materials chosen fit in with the existing building and with other materials in buildings close by.

5.8 For the reasons set out above and following NPPF 2021 guidance on sustainable development, this application should be approved.

David Carroll M.Sc. MRTPI
Dave Carroll Planning Limited
October 2021

APPENDIX 1 PTAL MAP



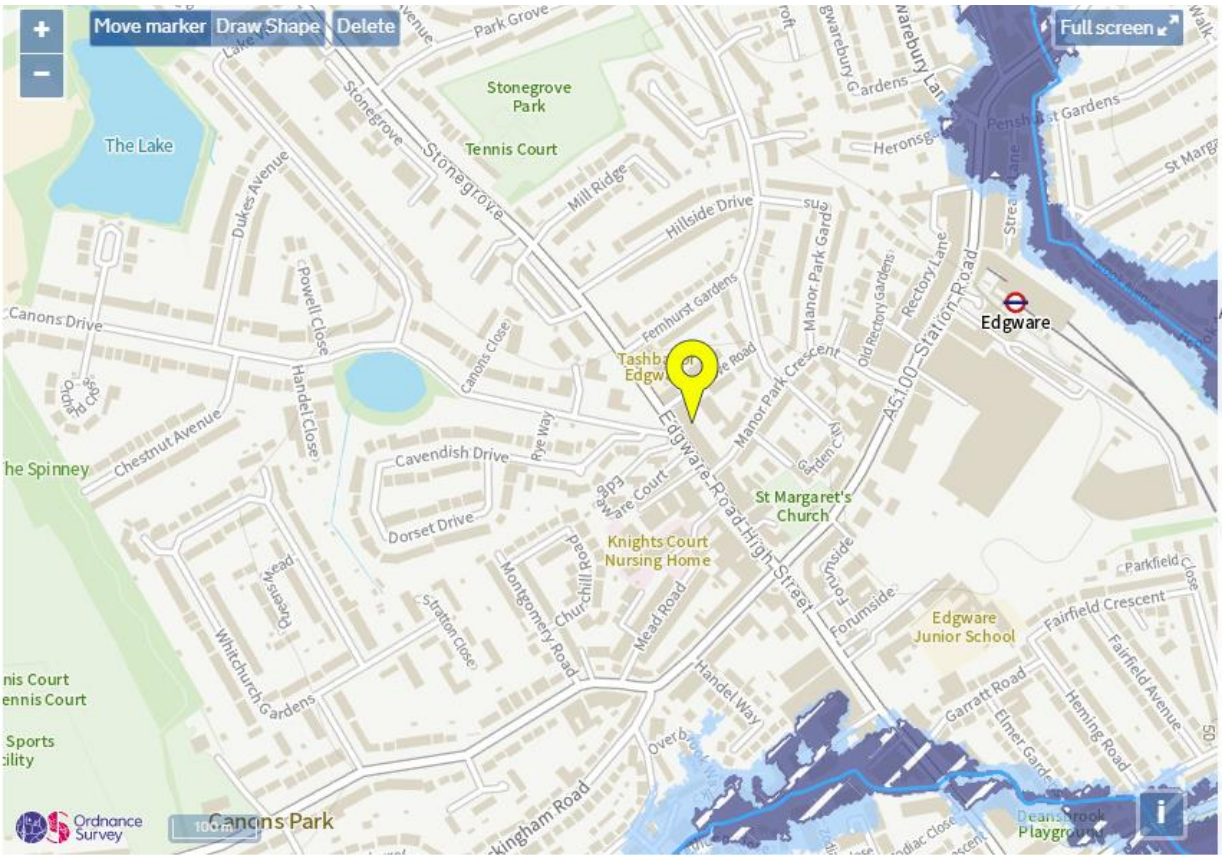
You can click anywhere on the map to change the selected location.

PTAL output for Base Year

6a

Site is in PTAL 6a, Excellent public transport accessibility

APPENDIX 2 - FLOOD RISK MAP



Show flood zones

Site is in Flood Zone 1-No significant risk of flooding