

Julia Mitchell MRTPI
Senior Planning Consultant
Lewis and Co Planning South East Limited
2 Port Hall Road
Brighton BN1 5PD

1st February 2024

Dear Julia,

Re: MARKETING REPORT FOR 52-53 OLD STEINE, BRIGHTON BN1 1NH

I write as requested in support of the planning application BH2023/00018 for a change of use in respect of the above office property.

1. Location

The property is prominently situated on the western side of Old Steine in Brighton city centre. The main A23 joins the A259 and leads north to the A27 and M25. There are regular bus services and Brighton rail station is 16 mins walk (0.7 miles with frequent train services to Gatwick Airport (London Victoria (55 mins journey time) and London Bridge. The Lanes, Brighton Seafront, Royal Pavilion and the Palace Pier are all within a few minutes' walk.

The site falls within the Valley Gardens conservation area. Valley Gardens is the central spine of historic Brighton and is a junction for the three major traffic routes into the town. It includes some of the earliest buildings from Brighton's Regency period.

2. Description

52-53 Old Steine comprises a six storey Grade II listed period building comprising a mix of cellular and open plan offices, meeting rooms and ground floor reception. There is secondary frontage to East Street at the rear of the open plan offices which benefit from a central skylight.

Amenities include air-conditioning, three compartment floor trunking, good natural light, a 4-person passenger lift, LED lighting, fitted kitchens and WCs. There are 10 car parking spaces immediately to the front of the property.

3. Site and Floor Layout

The site entrance is via a side road directly off the A23 northbound carriageway. Access for larger vehicles is not possible due to the Grade II listed external wall, public car parking immediately opposite and the single vehicle lane access.



Directors: Michael Barber FRICS | Wayne Priddle MRICS
33 Queens Road, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 3XB

T 01273 208010 | E info@carrpriddle.co.uk | W carrpriddle.co.uk

VAT 807113266 | Reg Number 04578104

The offices have a particularly complex floor layout comprising the original two Regency era houses arranged over lower ground, ground and two upper floors, plus the rear open plan offices on second, third and fourth floors. The complexity of the floor layout is evident from the attached plans (Appendix 1).

4. Accessibility

The offices were constructed prior to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and therefore do not have any provision for disabled access.

5. Public Transport

Brighton mainline rail station is 16 mins walk (0.7 miles with frequent train services to many destinations including Gatwick Airport (London Victoria (55 mins journey time) and London Bridge.

Old Steine has many bus stops as this city centre location (and proximity to the nearby coach station in Pool Valley) provides an ideal terminus for travellers to Brighton and departing to many destinations (see map Appendix 2).

6. Old Steine Neighbourhood Uses

Old Steine is a mixed-use area with offices, private residential, community, retail, restaurant and leisure uses including Brighton YMCA, Screen and Film School Central, Club Revenge, VIP Pizza, Subway and Sainsbury's Local.

7. Lease

52-53 Old Steine has effectively been vacant since March 2020, the tenant Learning Technologies Plc having vacated due to the Covid pandemic, the lease had been determined by the tenant and expiry on 23rd June 2022. The reason given by the tenant to vacate the property was that the offices are not suitable for the demands of a modern office occupier, citing the floor layout and configuration as the major factors.

8. Marketing Strategy

Carr & Priddle were appointed as sole letting agents on 25th March 2021 and instigated the following marketing strategy:

- a) E-brochure produced 26th March (see Appendix 3) and uploaded to Carr & Priddle website and the following web portals from 29th March:

EGPropertylink - <https://propertylink.estatesgazette.com/property-details/6720001-52-53-old-steine-brighton-bn1-1nh>

Proplis - <https://www.proplis.com/listing/carr-and-priddle-brighton/52-old-steine>

Realla - <https://www.realla.co.uk/details/23836543>

Prime Location - https://www.primelocation.com/to-rent/commercial/details/58192975/?search_identifier=cfb5e9692a759ce0e715434671777cfa

Rightmove - https://www.rightmove.co.uk/properties/108781394#/?channel=COM_LET

Zoopla - <https://www.zoopla.co.uk/to-rent/commercial/details/58192975/>

Nova Loca - <https://www.novaloca.com/retail-premises/to-let/brighton/52-53-old-steine/200044?search=true>

CoStar - <https://listingmanager.costar.com/listing/0WkzPk7WOxnPlepX>

- b) Boards – Two single panel 4' x 3' To Let boards were erected on the property on 17th May 2021 at first floor level on the Old Steine frontage with the wording “Offices To Let”.
- c) Social Media - The offices are on social media including Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.
- d) E-mailing: The e-brochure and covering email targeting 365 companies with 50 or more occupiers located in Sussex, were e-mailed on 9th November 2021. Data sourced from Waltons Direct mailing house at a cost of £850 plus VAT.
- e) E-mailing: 176 office applicants on the Carr & Priddle database were e-mailed with the e-brochure and e-brochure and covering email on the 25th May 2021, 15th September 2021 and 7th December 2021.
- f) Estate Agents Clearing House - The property was uploaded to this website (<https://www.each.co.uk/>) for commercial property agents on 14th April 2021.

9. Quoting Rent & Terms

The offices were marketed on a new lease on terms to be agreed, the rent was not advertised but on application.

The quoting rent is £200,000 per annum exclusive (£16.12 per sq ft). In assessing the current market rental value we have taken into account the following comparable evidence and nearby available offices:

- i) 48 Old Steine comprising offices of 4,472 sq ft sublet September 2019 at a rent of £16.50 per sq ft. The use was D1 as a film school for the British Institute of Modern Music.

- ii) 21-22 Old Steine comprising period offices of 8,502 sq ft let in March 2015 at a rent of £12.35 per sq ft.
- iii) 51 Old Steine comprising offices of 4,114 sq ft let in September 2017 by way of a lease renewal at a rent of £13.36 per sq ft.
- iv) 1-3 Marlborough Place & 119-120 Church Street comprising period offices of 11,391 sq ft let in October 2017 at a rent of about £15.00 per sq ft. The use is D1 for St Giles Language School.
- v) Blenheim House, 56 Old Steine comprising a Grade II listed six storey office building of 6,896 sq ft. Previously quoting £19.00 per sq ft, now £25.00 per sq ft, vacant for over three years.
- vi) One Gloucester Place comprising offices of 6,427 sq ft let in March 2018 at a rent of £19.41 per sq ft. Modern refurbished offices just north of Old Steine.

10. Viewings and Offers.

We have undertaken the following viewings, having received about 25 enquiries to date:

- a) Brighton Film School 29th April 2021. The Film School occupy 48 Old Steine and were looking for expansion space. The configuration of the offices and the cellular maze of rooms to the front of the property is not suitable for this requirement.
- b) The Fold private members club 10th December 2021. Private members club. The property did not meet their requirements in terms of layout and access.
- c) Superjam Education 17th and 21st January 2022 the property was excluded from further consideration due to accessibility and health & safety concerns relating to the spiral staircases.
- d) Store Topia 28th January 2022. Retailer of gadgets, e-games consoles and mobile phone gimballs. Looking to start new serviced offices, but insufficient funding and financial status so this "initial idea" did not progress.
- e) Electric Square. 4th February 2022 online games developer. Configuration of building and found layout confusing. Have taken two floors of grade A offices at Circus Street, Brighton.

Nathan Gouveia, studio head from Electric Square Brighton, said: "We chose The Office at Circus Street because it's a stunning, modern building based in an exciting new part of the city, surrounded by the buzz of creative organisations, matching our bold ambitions for Electric Square to be the global leader in AAA console game development." (The Argus, 26th January).

- f) David Vales. 24th May 2022. Developer proposing to convert the property to Airbnb. Abortive viewing as configuration viewed as not suitable.
- g) Hello Seed 13th September 2022. Marketing and branding agency. The property “does not work for us”. Configuration and layout viewed as convoluted.
- h) Newflex 9th November 2022. Established service office operation on a management agreement basis. The property did not meet their requirements in terms of layout and access.

To date we have received no viable offers to take a lease on the property.

11. Alternative Uses

On the 21st July 2020 the government published The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 which came into force on the 1st September 2020.

Use Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) brings together existing classes A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional services), A3 (restaurants and cafes) and B1 (business) as well as parts of classes D1 (non-residential institutions) and D2 (assembly and leisure) into one single use class to allow for changes of use without the need of planning permission.

Therefore potential occupiers are aware that there is flexibility of use and we did receive enquiries for D1 educational use, notably from SupaJam Education in Music and Media who viewed the property as stated above (10 c), the property was excluded from further consideration due to accessibility.

12. Office Vacancy Rate

It is difficult to assess the current office vacancy rate in Brighton & Hove following the Covid pandemic, which has had a profound effect on office working practices and therefore increasing vacancy rates balanced against a falling demand for office space.

As of August 2021, the office availability in Brighton was 250,000 sq ft, giving a vacancy rate of 5.5%. This is a considerable increase compared with a vacancy rate of 3% in July 2017.

13. Market Summary

Post pandemic and increasingly In the past 12 months the Brighton office sector has seen a pronounced lack of demand for the older cellular office stock against the demand for Brighton as a TMT (technology, media and telecommunications) hub with only the newly developed grade A open plan office developments showing any sustained demand.

This is exemplified by Hyve Managed Hosting and Electric Square following the "flight to quality" trend. Both have taken space at the Circus Street development with Octopus Energy taking 85,000 sq ft of the Edward Street Quarter development.

14.. Listed Building Status

Listed buildings have special architectural or historic interest and are of national importance. In our opinion the change of use would preserve the historic character and features of 52-53 Old Steine.

I trust the above and attached is sufficient for the application but please let me know if you need anything further.

Yours sincerely



Simon Thetford MBA BSc
Head of Agency Services

