



Debbie Radcliffe <debbie@brag.org.uk>

Member enquiry response - MEM17143

Camden Council <no-reply@camden.gov.uk>

Tue, Mar 11, 2025 at 4:27 PM

To: Debbie Radcliffe <debbie@brag.org.uk>

Cc: liam.martin-lane@camden.gov.uk

Ref: MEM17143

Dear Debbie Radcliffe,

This is the response to your enquiry MEM17143

Thank you for your enquiry which has been referred onto me by Cllr Liam Martin-Lane for a response. I am the Team Manager in the Planning Applications team responsible for the Bloomsbury area of Camden and am familiar with this site.

The Containment Levels (Groups 1-4) is a categorisation system for dedicated areas within research laboratories to denote the biological hazard level of the work to be undertaken within those areas and the security and safety precautions that need to be associated with that. Medical and other scientific research falls under the "Class E Use" umbrella, with research and development having its own subdivision E(g)(ii) providing for this use, although with the caveat "except where not suitable in a residential area". A class E planning permission will allow for any subcategory of Class E use to operate unless it has been specifically excluded by a planning condition attached to that permission.

By definition all Class E uses must be suitable to operate in a residential area. That is not to say that there are no potential impacts -e.g. a restaurant is a Class E use but can definitely have undesirable impacts on residential neighbours if the cooking fumes are not dispersed properly or the comings and goings are too late at night but these are capable of being controlled by good management coupled with legislation inside or outside of planning regulations e.g. the licence regime. The same applies in relation to research and development.

Planning permission was granted in May 2023 (ref. 2022/1817/P) for roof extensions with external plant and other alterations to continue the existing commercial use of the building at [105-121 Judd Street](#) (existing Class E). Although a lab-enabled use to fit with Camden's "Knowledge Quarter" was envisaged, it was a speculative scheme and therefore could not be expected to accommodate for all potential scenarios. The identified occupier that has now come forward for the site, LifeArc, has identified further modifications that would be needed to make the building fit for their purposes. This will require a Section 73 planning application which enables 'minor material amendments' to the scheme already granted under planning ref. 2022/1817/P. This has yet to be submitted but is expected fairly soon.

In terms of the Level 2 containment and what the Council's policy is on this, this is not controlled by the Council, but the Health and Safety Executive. Strict regulations on the laboratories and working practices within them are applied in order to ensure any risk to the public is kept to the minimum. It is worth stating that Containment Level 2 is not unusual in Camden. Central London and the borough of Camden already accommodate many secure laboratories in hospitals and university buildings of Level 2 and in some cases higher and they have proven to be very safe.

The visual effects of the additional plant and chimney flues along with any other impacts on the area such as noise and smells, will be assessed in the context of a future planning application

should LifeArc decide to proceed.

Regards

Neil McDonald
Planning Applications Team Manager