

## 2. SUMMARY

The application site is a detached three storey building forming part of the Westminster Kingsway College complex in Soho, with a frontage to Peter Street. It was formerly the college caretaker's house but has been vacant for more than 20 years. The college has stated, however, that they have plans to extend the main college building by demolishing and redeveloping the application site and they therefore do not support the current application, which is made by a separate local community group. This local group has no legal interest in the site, and the college, which owns the site, has stated that regardless of the outcome of the current application they are not intending to lease the site to the applicant.

The proposals are for a local community group to use the building as an art gallery primarily for local artists and the local community with an ancillary licensed café in the basement, which the applicant states is necessary to financially support the free-admission gallery use. The normal opening hours would be 11.00-midnight Monday to Saturday and 11.00-23.00hrs on Sundays, but the applicant states that later opening hours would be required for occasional events such as private review launches.

The key issues for consideration are:

- The loss of educational floorspace.
- The provision of a new community facility.
- The inclusion of a licensed café in the proposals given that the site is located within the West End Stress Area.

Normally a new community facility would be supported under local planning policies, but not in this case as it would result in the loss of educational floorspace which is protected. Although the proposed café element would be licensed it is considered that if planning permission is granted this could have been adequately controlled through conditions to ensure there would be no unreasonable impact on residential amenity or the West End Stress Area.

## 3. CONSULTATIONS

### SOHO SOCIETY

Objects to the licensed café.

### CLEANSING MANAGER

Waste storage facilities would need to be provided.

### WESTMINSTER KINGSWAY COLLEGE

Does not support the proposals as the college proposes to demolish and redevelop the application site in order to extend the main college building.

### ADJOINING OWNERS/OCCUPIERS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

No. Consulted: 25; Total No. of Replies: 2.

One letter of support from the applicant in his capacity as a local resident and one letter from another local resident who would support the proposal only if restricted to a daytime use.

## 4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 4.1 The Application Site

The application site is a detached three storey building located at the western end of Peter Street close to where it terminates at the Brewer Street multi-storey car park. It is set within, and forms part of, the site of Westminster Kingsway College, in a complex of buildings that were built for educational purposes and have always remained in such use. The application site is currently vacant, as it has been for more than 20 years when its use as accommodation for the 'school keeper' (i.e. caretaker) ceased. Although no Lawful Development Certificate