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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 February 2026

by **N Unwin BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Y5420/W/25/3374577**

**Millmead Business Centre, Units 13-14, Mill Mead Road, Tottenham, Haringey, London N17 9QU**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Iglesia de Dios Ministerial de Jesucristo Internacional against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Haringey.
  - The application ref is HGY/2024/3114.
  - The development proposed is: The change of use from a light industrial (use class B2) to a place of worship (use class F1).
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Preliminary Matters

2. Based on the evidence before me, the appeal development has commenced and been completed. I have therefore determined the appeal on this basis.
3. The appellant maintains that part of the use of the development involves a storage and distribution element of items including books, Spanish-language Bibles, and cleaning supplies. Nonetheless, the appellant describes this as ancillary with the primary use of the development a place of worship. A mixed use development is not what is before me. I have therefore determined the appeal on this basis.

### Main Issue

4. The main issues are:
  - the effect of the appeal development on the supply of industrial floorspace within a Strategic Industrial Location; and
  - whether the need for the development outweighs any harm identified in respect of the above issue.

### Reasons

#### *Supply of Industrial Floorspace*

5. The appeal site is located within Millmead Business Centre which is classified as a Strategic Industrial Location (SIL) within Policy E5 of the London Plan – The Spatial Strategy for Greater London (2021) (the London Plan) and Policy SP8 of Haringey's Local Plan Strategic Policies 2013 – 2026 (2013) (the Local Plan). The London Plan defines SILs as industrial, logistics and related capacity for uses that support the functioning of London's economy.

6. Policy E5 of the London Plan says that development proposals within SILs should not compromise the integrity or effectiveness of these locations. The supporting text emphasises the importance of these sites which are critical to the effective functioning of London's economy as they can accommodate activities which can raise tensions with other land uses. This is further supported by Policy SP8 of the Local Plan which seeks to protect the Borough's hierarchy of employment land, specifically safeguarding SILs.
7. Policy E5 of the London Plan goes on to say that development proposals in SILs should be supported where the uses proposed fall within the industrial-type activities set out in Part A of Policy E4 of the London Plan.
8. The development involves the conversion of an industrial unit to a place of worship. The use of the appeal site as a place of worship would not fall into any of the activities within Part A of Policy E4 of the London Plan. It would therefore result in the loss of industrial floorspace within a SIL.
9. The appellant contends that, as the development has already occurred, no industrial land would be lost and no industrial occupiers would be displaced. Whilst the appeal site is currently being utilised as a place of worship, this is not the lawful use and it is removing industrial floor space from a SIL that could be occupied for industrial purposes.
10. Policy E4 of the London Plan requires the retention, enhancement and provision of additional industrial capacity across SILs to be planned, monitored and managed. It goes on to say that any release of industrial land in order to manage issues of long-term vacancy should be facilitated through the processes of industrial intensification, co-location and substitution. There is little before me to suggest that the appeal site has undergone issues with long-term vacancy or that demand cannot support industrial uses in this location.
11. Policy DM37 of the Development Management Development Plan Document (2017) (DPD) recognises that mixed-use development offers an opportunity to provide floorspace for business whilst delivering other uses that support sustainable communities. However, it only supports uses not within use classes B1 to B8 within SILs in exceptional circumstances set out within part B of the policy.
12. Whilst the development may create a level of employment and include an element of ancillary storage and distribution with the appellant describing these deliveries as occasional, its use is that of a place of worship. A mixed-use development does not form part of this appeal. Thus, it would not meet the needs of modern industry or relate to a use that supports its continued function, failing to meet parts B(a) or B(b) of DPD Policy DM37. Further, based on the evidence provided, any employment created by the development appears to be of a relatively minor scale and additional footfall confined to the industrial estate and immediate area. It would therefore not represent strategic economic benefits of a borough or sub-regional scale, failing to meet part B(c) of DPD Policy DM37. As such, the development would not meet any of the exceptional circumstances set out within DPD Policy DM37.
13. Even though the scheme relates to a single unit, its change of use to a place of worship would still result in the loss of industrial floorspace from the SIL, which would conflict with the aims of its designation. It could also lead to a shortage of suitable industrial floorspace capacity going forward. This would therefore

undermine the strategic objectives of the SIL by failing to protect its integrity and effectiveness and ability to support capacity for a variety of SIL-compliant uses.

14. Policy SP16 of the Local Plan and DPD Policies DM2 and DM49 which when read together, are broadly supportive of community facilities including places of worship. Nonetheless, this does not outweigh the harm caused by the loss of industrial floorspace within a SIL.
15. Consequently, I conclude that the appeal site would not be a suitable location for the development, with regard to the development plan policies concerning SILs. The development would conflict with Policies E4 and E5 of the London Plan, Policy SP8 of the Local Plan, and Policy DM37 of the DPD. Together these seek to secure a strong economy and protect the Borough's employment sites, including SILs.

#### *Need for the development*

16. The appeal development comprises a place of worship for a Spanish-speaking Neo-Pentecostal community. I have therefore had due regard to Article 9, 11, and 14 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (Human Rights) which provide for religious freedom, freedom of assembly and association, and the prohibition of discrimination. I have also had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010 to which religion or belief, race, age, and disability are relevant protected characteristics and apply. These rights are engaged in reaching my decision which includes having due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not. However, these are qualified rights, and interference may be justified where in the public interest. The concept of proportionality is crucial.
17. The church congregation currently comprises approximately 150 to 200 attendees on week days and 250 to 300 on Sunday. The appellant references the growth of the congregation and issues with previous venue capacity and availability. They go on to refer to other unsuitable venues such as a smaller venue of a much lower capacity and one approximately a 20 minute walk away. The appellant maintains that there is no venue within 1 kilometre that offers services in Spanish or aligns with Neo-Pentecostal practices. The appellant contends that the appeal site provides the required capacity and daily operational needs within a location accessible to the Spanish-speaking Neo-Pentecostal community, including their disabled, elderly and child attendees who may have additional access needs.
18. Whilst the appellant asserts that they have actively explored other opportunities within the area, I have been provided with limited details of alternative locations and why they were deemed unsuitable. Further, I have no substantiated evidence before me to indicate that the development would be the only way for the required facilities to be provided within the area.
19. Therefore, mindful that I have found that the appeal site would not be a suitable location for the development, I am satisfied that the legitimate policy aim to protect against the loss of industrial uses within SILs can only be safeguarded by a dismissal. PSED or Human Rights considerations do not lead me to an alternative view in this case. Moreover, following careful consideration of the duty to advance equality of opportunity, I am satisfied that the impact of dismissing this appeal would be necessary, justified, and proportionate.

## **Other Matters**

20. The appellant may have been led to believe the appeal site benefited from permission to be used as a place of worship and invested resources into the property. Regardless of the appellant's intent, this does not justify the above identified harm.
21. The appeal site is not located within a Conservation Area, neither is the property listed. However, these are neutral factors and do not weigh in favour of the development.
22. There is limited evidence before me that the development would result in an improvement to the safety of the industrial estate, nor that the development generates economic or employment benefits beyond that of an industrial use. Further, whilst recognising the potential social benefits of the appeal scheme, including providing a place for volunteering opportunities, there is no substantive evidence before me that there is a shortfall of such facilities in the local area. These combined carry limited weight and do not outweigh the above identified harm.
23. A temporary permission would not prevent the harm caused by the loss of the industrial floorspace within a SIL.
24. I note the additional transport information submitted by the appellant. The appeal site is located within an accessible location with good public transport links. Further, the Council have not raised highway safety as a reason for refusal and I have no substantiated evidence to lead me to an alternative view in this regard.

## **Conclusion**

25. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, the development does not accord with the development plan when read as a whole. Material considerations do not indicate a decision should be taken other than in accordance with the development plan. Accordingly, the appeal should be dismissed.

*N Unwin*

INSPECTOR