

SECTION '2' – Applications meriting special consideration

Application No : 12/02092/FULL2

Ward:
Copers Cope

Address : 30 High Street Beckenham BR3 1AY

OS Grid Ref: E: 537428 N: 169717

Applicant : Petreno Ltd

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Change of use of first, second and third floors from office (Class B1) to 14 bedroom tourist accommodation on a commercial fee-paying basis (Class C1)

Key designations:

Conservation Area: Beckenham St. Georges

Areas of Archeological Significance

Local Distributor Roads

Proposal

Planning permission is sought to change the use of first, second and third floors from office (Class B1) to 14 bedroom tourist accommodation on a commercial fee-paying basis (Class C1). No on-site car parking or external alterations are proposed. There is a separate pedestrian access for the upper floors accessed via an undercroft to the south of the site.

Initially when the application was submitted it was described as 'the change of use of first, second and third floors from office (Class B1) to Bed and Breakfast (Class C1) providing 14 bedrooms associated with restaurant/café at Nos. 78 – 82 High Street'. However, after consideration the description was revised from bed and breakfast accommodation to tourist accommodation on a commercial fee paying basis (Class C1) as it was not considered that the use at No. 30 could be associated with No. 78 – 82 as this is a separate planning unit at a remote location.

The application documents include a Planning, Design and Access Statement and a Transport Assessment.

Location

The application property is a three storey property with accommodation in the roofspace with an A2 office on the ground floor which appears to be in use as an estate agent's office with the upper floors comprised of 14 rooms which are used as offices.

The application site is located within the Beckenham St. George's Road Conservation Area and within a secondary shopping frontage.

Beckenham St. George's Conservation Area is the historic core of the village and then town of Beckenham. As such, it has been occupied by built development for many centuries. Temporal and spiritual power in the form of the Old Manor, the Rectory and the Church were located there. Appropriately, it still contains the focus of the modern town: the banks, the police station, the Church, the Public Hall and the primary school. It is largely this collection of institutional, civic and community buildings that establish the character of the conservation area.

Beckenham town centre was severely damaged by bombs during World War II. The effects were profound. Several post-war developments occupy bombsites. Sadly, the design of some replacement buildings failed to take sufficient account of the form or historical development of the town. Beckenham Green, immediately to the north of the church, a densely developed area until 1944, is a lasting and now more pleasant reminder of the dramatic way in which bombardment altered the townscape. The town centre now forms part of the main retail area of Beckenham.

Comments from Local Residents

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and representations were received which can be summarised as follows:

- over-development of the site;
- loss of employment opportunities arising from C1 as opposed to existing B1 use;
- insufficient car parking provision to meet requirements of proposed C1 use;
- potential for unauthorised change to C2 in the future.

Comments from Consultees

The Town Centre Development Team stated Beckenham is currently the subject of an urban design evaluation looking at ways to improve the public realm to ensure the town centre continues to be successful. With this in mind, development proposals that look to enhance the residential population within a town centre are seen as potentially beneficial, and can contribute positively to the success of a town, particularly the night time economy.

Therefore, the broad principle of a change of use as described is seen as a suitable use within a town centre location close to the railway/tram station. There are some concerns over the amount of rooms proposed as part of the B&B element. Given the town centre location and the proximity of rail and bus services, a car free development is seen as appropriate subject to agreement by the Highways Division. No evidence has been submitted in terms of long term vacancy of the offices and the proposal would need to satisfy the requirements of EMP3.

The Highways Division state the development is located on the southern side of High Street, Beckenham. High Street, Beckenham (A2015) is a London Distributor Road (LDR).

The Transport Statement has considered the proposed development in terms of sustainable transport provision and the additional parking demand generated by the car parking facilities available within close proximity.

The applicant states that “Guests will be advised of the car parking arrangements during the booking process and will be advised to use public transport or a taxi.”

The site is located in an area with moderate PTAL rate of 4 (on a scale of 1 - 6, where 6 is the most accessible). From a highways perspective it is considered that the development would not have a significant impact on the parking demand and traffic generation within the vicinity, as there are number of public car parks within walking distance of the site and accessibility to public transport is high. The occasional guest who has a car would be able to park within one of the local car parks. The ‘car-free’ development will promote sustainable transport; therefore on balance no objections are raised to the proposal.

The Environmental Health Division raise no objections to the proposal.

From a heritage and urban design perspective as no external alterations are proposed no objections are raised to the proposal.

The Advisory Panel for Conservation Areas raise no objections to the proposal.

The Metropolitan Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor raised no objections subject to the proposal meeting Secure By Design criteria which could be secured by way of a condition.

Planning Considerations

The application falls to be determined in accordance with the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan and the London Plan:

BE1 Design of New Development
BE11 Conservation Areas
EMP3
L11 Tourist Related Development (Changes of Use)
T1 Transport Demand
T3 Parking
London Plan Policy 4.5 London’s Visitor Infrastructure

Planning History

In 1983 under planning ref. 83/00454/ADV, advertisement consent was refused for an internally illuminated fascia sign and projecting box sign.

In 1983 under planning ref. 83/01602/ADVILL, permission was granted for an internally illuminated fascia sign.

In 1990 under planning ref. 90/02168/FUL, permission was granted for a shopfront.

Conclusions

The main issues relating to the application are the effect that it would have on the character of the area and the impact that it would have on the amenities of the occupants of surrounding residential properties.

The proposed use as a tourist accommodation is broadly supported in strategic policy terms. The London Plan seeks to achieve an additional 40,000 net additional hotel bedrooms by 2031, which should be located appropriately, focussed in town centres where there is good public transport access to central London and international and national transport termini. The site has a high PTAL rating, and central London and is easily accessible by train from Beckenham Junction railway station, which is a short walk from the site. From central London a range of international and national transport termini are easily accessible.

At a local level, the Unitary Development Plan provides that applications for changes of use to hotels, guesthouses and boarding-houses will only be permitted where the use is compatible with the character of the area and will not give rise to unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance to occupiers of nearby properties, and the existing floor space of the property is greater than 170sq.m. In this case, the site is located within Beckenham town centre which is mixed in character, with many late night uses in the vicinity including bars and restaurants, and the floorspace of the building exceeds the minimum specified within the policy (approximately 240 sq m). The proposed use would therefore be compatible with the area, and is not considered to result in a significant level of noise and disturbance or impact significantly on the amenities of adjoining properties.

All rooms would be in excess of 12 sq m which is considered to provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation for future customers. In addition, no technical objections were raised from an environmental health perspective.

No changes are proposed to the commercial unit on the ground floor and as such the proposal is not anticipated to detrimentally affect the vitality and viability of the shopping frontage.

The proposal would involve the loss of office space and as such Policy EMP3 is a key consideration in the determination of this application, it states:

The conversion or redevelopment of offices for other uses will be permitted only where:

- (i) it can be demonstrated that there is no local shortage of office floorspace and there is evidence of long term vacancy despite marketing of the premises; and
- (ii) there is no likely loss of employment resulting from the proposal.

The accompanying Design and Access Statement states "the upper floors of the building have a lawful B1 office use, but are currently vacant and have not been let and used for the lawful purpose since 2009, but has been marketed widely first by Mosely and recently Smith Gore have been instructed in relation to the marketing

of the property. There has not been any interest in the occupation of the offices for such purposes”.

In addition, the Design and Access Statement argues that there is a substantial amount of vacant office space, of comparable size to the application site, being marketed in the Beckenham area at present. The evidence provided demonstrates that enquiries were made with the South London Business (a commercial property search service) on 27th June 2012 which indicates that there are 12 alternate office premises between 35 sq m – 901 sq m (the application site is approximately 240 sq m). In terms of the potential loss of employment the Design and Access Statement argues that given the premises have not been used as offices since 2009 no loss of employment would result. However, to accord with Policy EMP3 evidence of the marketing of the premises should be submitted as part of the application, this has been requested from the applicant and will be reported verbally. If this information is not received Members may wish to consider this element of the application.

Regarding the impact to conditions of road safety and car parking in the area, Members will note that no car parking is proposed on the site. In view of the high PTAL rating and the accessibility to public car parks in the vicinity however, it is not considered that a significant impact on the highway network would arise.

On balance, Members may agree that the proposal is compliant with policy and that planning permission should be granted.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on file ref. 12/02092, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1 ACA01 Commencement of development within 3 yrs
 ACA01R A01 Reason 3 years

- 2 ACK01 Compliance with submitted plan

Reason: In order to comply with Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

- 3 ACI21 Secured By Design
 ACI21R I21 reason

- 4 The first, second and third floors of No. 30 High Street Beckenham shall be used for tourist accommodation on a commercial fee-paying basis and for no other purpose without the prior approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order that the situation can be reconsidered in the light of the circumstances at that time in the interest of the amenities of the area.

Reasons for granting permission:

In granting permission the Local Planning Authority had regard to the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan and the London Plan:

BE1 Design of New Development
BE11 Conservation Areas
EMP3
L11 Tourist Related Development (Changes of Use)
T1 Transport Demand
T3 Parking
London Plan Policy 4.5 London's Visitor Infrastructure

The development is considered to be satisfactory in relation to the following:

- (a) the appearance of the development in the street scene
- (b) the relationship of the development to adjacent properties
- (c) the town centre location of the site
- (d) the high PTAL rating and availability of public parking in the area
- (c) the character of the development in the surrounding area
- (d) the impact on the amenities of the occupiers of adjacent and nearby properties
- (g) the conservation policies of the Unitary Development Plan

and having regard to all other matters raised.

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