

SECTION '2' – Applications meriting special consideration

Application No : 13/01917/FULL2

Ward:
Penge And Cator

Address : 208B Kent House Road Beckenham BR3
1JN

OS Grid Ref: E: 536012 N: 170442

Applicant : Mr Eben Hackman

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Change of use to 24 hour mini cab office.

Key designations:

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Birds
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
London City Airport Safeguarding
London City Airport Safeguarding Birds

Proposal

Edencare (the current occupants) will continue to trade from the premises Monday - Friday 9am - 5.30pm. Edencare's Escort and Transport services are available for individuals, carers, airports, schools, the police, charities, local authorities, legal representatives, probation services, court orders and secure units to use on a regular basis. They take referrals from all across the UK. The change to a 24hr mini cab office is required to expand the business which will be operated remotely.

Location

The application site occupies the rear of No. 208 Kent House Rd. No. 208 is a Barbers, No. 208a is a Community Teach Sport Unit & No. 208b (the application site) is occupied by a business called Edencare. The entrance to No. 208b is in the flank elevation of No.208 and fronts a pedestrianised square between Somerville Road and Kent House Road.

Comments from Local Residents

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and a large number of representations, including a petition, were received which can be summarised as follows:

- increased traffic and noise

- parking for the cabs would be very limited
- parking is already a problem in the area
- the junction of the road with Thesiger and Kent House Rd is a very busy one and not a viable option for cabs to park
- the cab office is proposed on a pedestrianised road (Somerville) and would be better suited to a high street or next to a station
- it will have a detrimental affect on the area
- there are no parking spaces for mini cabs, it is a no through road and it is situated on a square, comprising benches and plants (no road).
- the Kent House Tavern lost its licence in part because of anti-social behaviour in a residential area. There won't be such control over a mini cab office so the residents will be at the mercy of unruly/noise/out of control clients.

The Council's Highway Engineer was consulted but raised no objection to the proposal after obtaining satisfactory information from the applicant regarding the arrangements concerning the parking of the minicabs.

Planning Considerations

The proposals falls to be considered primarily with regard to the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan:

- T3 Parking
- T18 Road Safety
- S13 Mini cab and taxi offices
- BE1 Design of New Development

Planning History

Under planning application ref. 99/02177 planning permission was granted for a change of use of part ground floor from retail shop (Class A1) to financial and professional services office (Class A2).

Conclusions

The main issues relating to the application are the impact of the proposal on highway and pedestrian safety and the impact upon the residential amenities of the occupants of nearby residential dwellings.

No.208b Kent House Road is currently occupied by a company called Edens of London Ltd that trade under the title Edencare. The application proposal seeks to change the current use (from B1) to a 24hr mini cab office (sui generis). The applicant has stated that there will not be a booking section within the premises and bookings will only be taken over the telephone, email or online and will allow the existing escort and secure transportation service to be expanded. The premises are expected to continue to be used for administration and controlling of jobs.

It is intended that four mini cabs will be stopping or parking on the following unrestricted public roads close by:

- Theisger Road
- Kent House Road
- Somerville Road
- Lennard Road

The Highways Team was consulted with regards to the application but raised no objection to the proposed scheme.

For the majority of the time (70%) the applicant has further stated that the drivers will not be based on site, they will be at designated locations and jobs and will be dispatched through a sophisticated software system, which reduces congestion within the local area and therefore alleviates parking issues. There will not be a booking section within the premises, booking will be taken over the phone, email or on-line. Regards to the main use of the premises, there will not be more than four cars including staff vehicles at the premises at the same time as jobs will be dispatched remotely.

Whilst the applicant has stated that walk-in passengers will not be accessing the premises, some minicabs (around 30%) are still likely to be parking in surrounding side streets. This activity would be likely to result in some increased noise and disturbance, particularly at night.

A large number of representations have been received from near-by residents with varying concerns namely the increase in parking (which local residents state is already stretched), noise and disturbance (as the proposal is for 24hrs opening) and the potential to have a detrimental impact on the free flow of traffic and highway and pedestrian safety. Minicabs may collect passengers on Kent House Road or other surrounding roads and hold up moving traffic and create a danger for vehicles and pedestrians.

Members will need to weigh up whether the change of use to a 24hr mini cab office would have a detrimental impact on the living conditions of nearby residents through increased noise or disturbance or whether the business which is operated over the telephone, email and online is considered acceptable, given there will be no walk in trade and taxi's (if not on a job) will be parked in nearby side streets which the Highways Department has deemed acceptable.

The application site was visited by the case officer and the aims and objectives of the above policies, national and regional planning guidance, all other material planning considerations including any objections, other representations and relevant planning history on the site were taken into account in the assessment of the proposal.

Having had regard to the above it was considered that the development in the manner proposed is unacceptable in that it would be likely to result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents by reason of increased noise and disturbance

and be likely to have a detrimental impact on the free flow of traffic and on highway and pedestrian safety.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on the file ref. 13/01917 set out in the Planning History section above, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION

Subject to the following conditions:

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

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"This plan is provided to identify the location of the site and should not be used to identify the extent of the application site"

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