

I am writing on behalf of Havant Civic Society to object to this application.

When the original changes to this building were made (APP/18/00568, APP/18/00787 & APP/18/00784), the address was 40 North Street. That it is now referred to as Northlea, Prince George St, makes us suspicious. Who approved this change? Our belief is that this is a deliberate attempt to muddy the waters regarding the location of the building. At the time of writing, there are no residential properties at ground floor level in North St. When there was last an attempt to create one, in respect of the former Six Bells pub, there were various objections, including from ourselves and Councillor Pike, which in turn led to the application being withdrawn.

The application appears to have been submitted as a change of use under Class G but we feel that there is a case to be made for the building to come under Class M, where such a change of use is not allowed in Conservation Areas.

The planning statement gives no detail about "the continued efforts over 3 years to find a commercial user for the shop units". We have been made aware of at least one offer that was made, although declined. During his communication with the applicant's estate agents, our informant was advised that the auction guide price for unit 1 was £90,000. What is not clear, is whether the units actually went to auction and is a point that HBC should investigate by contacting: Russell.Hartnell-parker@fox-and-sons.co.uk If they didn't, then that is surely one avenue that should have been explored. Furthermore, the market for retail properties will have been decimated by the effects of Covid 19 over the last 18 months, meaning that, in practice, the properties have only effectively had 18 months exposure to a normal market.

We are also critical of the way that these two shop units were created out of the former Trentham Gallery. It can be seen from the Street View image of 2018 below, that the gallery had large plate glass windows to the front and side, ideal for a retail outlet. The reconfiguration completely did away with the large windows on the southern elevation, as well as amending the design of the North St bay window, to produce two units that were more domestic than commercial in appearance and thus lacking appeal as retail units.

Our impression that the applicants were never serious about retaining the ground floor as retail space, is reinforced by this quote from their planning agent in 2019 "Having previously got permission to change the workshop at the rear of this property we have now started on the shops at the front. The first step is to get the upper floor into ancillary use, thus allowing the clients to use Class G to gain two further flats in due course. Planner: Keith Oliver". Source: https://www.tpexpert.org/wpos_portfolio/40-north-street-havant-2/

We would urge that this application be declined.

40 North St
Havant, England



Street View - Jun 2018

