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CHARTERED TOWN PLANNER

Planning Department
Civic Offices
Havant
Hants
PO9 2AX

Monday, 10 October 2016

Dear Sir/Madam:

Re: Change of use of factory to rear of house from the manufacture of fibreglass boats to the storage of concrete cutting equipment.

26 Scratchface Lane, Havant, PO9 3NG

This is a planning application for the change of use of a long-standing factory premises which is in the ownership of the occupiers of 26 Scratchface Lane and is located to the rear of 26-30 Scratchface Lane.

The Historic Use

A pre-application enquiry with the Council revealed that the relevant planning permission for the premises is 28790/1 dated 4th June 1981. Conditions 1 to this permission states:

The premises shall be used only for manufacture of fibre glass boats and for no other purpose whatsoever, (including any other purpose in Class III and IV of the schedule to the Town and Country Planning (use classes) Order 1972).

A further condition [no 2] relates to parking and states:

The area hatched on the plan, shall be used for access and egress purposes only and shall not be used for parking or waiting of cars or for storage purposes at any time.

I can find no hatching on a plan but I assume it relates to the driveway.

There is also no condition on hours of use or working.

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There is also no condition prohibiting outside working. In this regard the Google StreetView photograph is revealing [see below]. It shows a hoist immediately outside the building entrance and on this there is part of a boat shell. It would therefore appear that whilst the various constituent parts of boats were manufactured within the building the actual assembly of boats was undertaken outside – I assume that this has occurred due to the lack of sufficient headroom within the building.



view from street



zoomed version of first photo to show boat on hoist and outside working

The further photographs below show the internal set up within the building when it was actively used for the manufacture of boats



Finally, there is no extraction system for smell or vapours and no noise insulation. In this regard there is no condition on noise levels.

In summary: the factory could be operated separate from the house; could have outside working and inside working at any time of the day. Boats could be collected at any time of the day. The manufacturing process could be smelly and noisy.

These various factors are highly material when considering the merits of any future use.

The Proposed Use

The proposed business that seeks to use the factory is 'Technical Concrete Cutting Ltd' which specialises in concrete drilling, sawing and breaking.

Business that will be occupying the building, will be a concrete cutting company with 10-11 employees. The unit would be used solely for storing the valuable cutting equipment (2000 sq ft is needed for this), which the men collect late afternoon for the next day as they all work off site. No early mornings are envisaged and only occasionally will there be a need to collect equipment on a Saturday. The vans would drive off the highway into the industrial building and unload/load up for the next day.

As indicated above all collections and drop-offs will be undertaken inside the building. There is enough room to take 5-6 vans as only half of the building will be used as storage (estimate on current machinery stored at present premises).

On average there will be a maximum of three vans arriving at any one time. This would generally [95%] be mid / late afternoon. The employees are out on jobs around the country, so it is not envisaged that there will be significant daily movements. The business is not expected to grow significantly either, as it has been at this level for a few years now.

They have in total 10 vans but these would not all arrive at the site every day as some jobs are over weeks.

The applicants have kept a journal of vehicle movements over the last three weeks and they have averaged as follows:

- Monday - average 4 a day
- Tuesday - average 3 a day
- Wednesday - average 4 a day
- Thursday - average 3 a day
- Friday - average 3 a day

Therefore, even allowing for a slight increase in movements it is unlikely that movements will average more than 5 or 6 a day. It is therefore clear that this will not be an intensive use of the premises.

Planning Policy

Policy DM3 seeks to protect existing employment and tourism sites. The policy seeks to avoid the loss of employment land and premises by requiring applicants to demonstrate that either the site is no longer suitable for B use class employment and no other employment use is feasible or that it has been marketed for at least 18 months.

The existing use appears to fall within B2 and the proposed use is within B8 so the premises will remain within a B use class – thus be in full accordance with this policy.

A Balancing Exercise

In order to consider the merits of this proposal – bearing in mind full compliance with Policy DM3 – it is considered necessary to determine the proposed use will give rise to a higher level of activity than the lawful use.

Fundamental to such a consideration must be the terms of the relevant planning permission for the premises. This [as set out earlier] permits the manufacture of fibreglass boats. There is no hours of working condition; no noise limits; no smell controls; no tie-in with the front house; and evidence shows assembly being undertaken outside.

The proposed use will be low key – both in terms of noise generated and traffic movements associated with it. It will be a storage use with collections and drop-off of equipment being undertaken inside the building. It will be operated by the occupiers of the house and a condition tying this can be imposed.

The applicants would rather not have an hours of use condition as experience shows that on rare occasions there will be an emergency whereby cutting equipment will be required immediately.

I consider that the imposition of other conditions would ensure a satisfactory environment for neighbours – particularly taking into account the historic absence of an hours of working condition on the premises.

It is therefore plain beyond peradventure that the proposed use is wholly acceptable – both in terms of planning policy and public amenity.

I therefore consider that planning permission should be forthcoming.

Yours sincerely,



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