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From: alan.story@hertfordshire.gov.uk
Sent: 23 May 2018 10:28
To: Planning
Subject: Planning application 6/2018/1067/PN11 - Fountain House

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Response to Planning application from Hertfordshire County Council (T and CP GDP Order 2015)

District ref: 6/2018/1067/PN11

HCC ref: WH/132/2018

HCC received: 08/05/2018

Area manager: James Dale

Case officer: Alan Story

Location

Fountain House
1-7 Howardsgate
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 6AL

Application type

Prior Approval

Proposal

Prior approval for change of use from offices B1(a) to dwellinghouses (C3) to include the creation of 18 apartments

Decision

Notice is given under article 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission.

Comments

Fountain House is located in the centre of Welwyn Garden City. Property fronts eastern side of Parkway, and is bounded to the south by Howardsgate (north). Vehicle access to the site is via Wigmores North. Vehicle access is to a private service yard associated with all adjacent buildings, however no details are known over rights in this area. Application red line suggests no area in this location is in the exclusive ownership of the development site.

All properties provide commercial use at ground (shops / pubs / restaurants). Howards Gate is one of the main shopping parades in the town centre. The application represents a prior approval application and therefore the County Council, as Highway Authority are required to comment on whether the proposals would represent a material increase or change in the character of traffic.

Parkway is a local distributor, with Howardsgate and Wigmores north being local access roads. All roads are subject to road speed limit of 30mph. All roads locally are subject to one way restrictions, with on-street

parking permitted in marked bays subject to enforcement Monday to Saturday 8am – 6pm, with use of bays subject to maximum time periods and no return periods.

The application relates to class B1 offices at first and second floors, to provide residential accommodation. The area affected is circa 900m² across the two floors. Proposals shall create 18 dwellings. Residential pedestrian access is provided from Parkway.

The Highway Authority is acceptant that a change of use from office to residential results in a reduction in overall vehicle trips associated with the enjoyment of the property, and in particular such trips occurring within the peak hour. Office accommodation to the scale proposed can accommodate a greater number of persons per m² than would be associated with the residential use, and particularly in the peaks would generate significantly more vehicle movements than the limited number of residential properties.

It is necessary to highlight that proximity to the Howard Centre ensures the development enjoys extremely close proximity to both main local bus interchange facilities as well as to mainline rail services, and also is located within an area enjoying shops / services that shall all be immediately accessible by non-car modes. Ground Floor Plan (existing) identify parking bays within the service yard, but it is not clear whether any are associated with the floors of the property affected by these proposals. The proposals would not be likely to impact on the ability for commercial properties to be serviced from the rear, but clearly shall rely on private control of parking in this area, but on-street parking restrictions would serve to ensure that no unsafe, or inconsiderate parking on highway would be likely, however the Highway Authority do recognise that the issue of parking is for the LPA to agree and that, in particular, beyond hours of enforcement of the local controlled parking restrictions, any potential ownership of vehicles shall result in competition for on-street parking spaces. Such matters may affect night time economy but the Highway Authority does not consider it would have a material impact on highway capacity or safety.

The application should be aware that they will be responsible for providing bins clear of the public highway and that it is an offence to obstruct the public highway with such articles. It is not unreasonable to expect bins to be stored in the service yard to the rear, however observed that waste and recycling arisings from residential properties may be greater than that associated with commercial (office) use, and therefore the views of the LPAs waste management team should be sought. They shall also have a view on whether any existing commercial bin store may be shared by residential.

No cycle parking is provided which is unfortunate, however such a matter is not considered sufficient for the Highway Authority to present an objection.

Access to the service yard for refuse / emergency vehicles would be no different to existing and it is accepted that there is no evidence that undercroft access presents any obstacle to access.

On behalf of the Highway Authority no objection is presented in respect of this application.

It is also considered expedient to include observation in respect of associated application 6/2018/1057/FULL which provides for the construction of a dormer roof formation to accommodate an additional storey at third floor level, providing nine flats (7 x 1 bedroom and 2 x self-contained studio flats), including a rear lift tower, ground floor entrance lobby, and external services serving the new floor.

The additional 9 dwellings comprising the new floor – would bring total level of accommodation to 27. It remains that the Highway Authority would remain satisfied that the overall level of trips associated with the use of the site shall not increase against that already potentially generated by the current use. Comments in respect of the impact on parking locally remain as above. This application provides for a refuse store – it is unclear whether it shall also provide for the 18 dwellings created under the PN application. Cycle stores are provided for the 9 new dwellings, and best endeavours are recommended to encourage the developer to provide additional capacity within this cycle store (through use of stacking or vertical cycle stands) to provide some capacity for the 18 dwellings created through the change of use.

Alan Story

Date 23/05/2018

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