

Supporting Statement

Conversion of existing building into 4 apartments with associated car parking and private amenity area.

Address: 77 Rough Common Road, Canterbury. CT2 9DA.

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Introduction

This application seeks a change of use from the current A1 shop and associated residential accommodation at first floor to residential use providing four self-contained apartments with associated car parking and private amenity space.

The current building comprises of an A1 retail unit at ground floor with associated residential accommodation over and is located on Rough Common Road in a built up location.

The site is not identified as a key shopping area and is not a local centre.

The application site is not within the conservation area.

The application site is not listed.

Rough Common Stores has been facing serious decline since the forced closure of the Post Office in 2017 and the remaining premise is no longer viable as a newsagent.

Planning Policy

Canterbury City Councils **Policy QL3** *Loss of Village and Community Facilities*

The City Council will permit the loss of village and community facilities in the parishes, such as village halls, public houses, shops and post offices to other uses if it can be demonstrated that:

- 1. The use is no longer viable, the business has been actively marketed for 2 years with no genuine interest or there is no longer a continuing demand for the use or facility;*
- 2. There is alternative provision for a similar type of use within an acceptable walking distance; and*
- 3. There would be no detrimental impact on the rural character and community.*

My client can demonstrate a full 2 years of active marketing by Christie Group Plc, which confirms there has been very little interest in the purchase.

Christie Group Plc, offered the store as a vacant shop or as a going concern to ensure that we covered all potential user types. Although many people called for more information about the store, once they have viewed and analysed the financial performance none come forward with an offer for the business or property.

Design / Layout / Appearance / Access:

The application seeks to convert the existing building into 4 apartments with car parking and associated amenity space.

The shop front windows and door configuration will be replaced in a more sympathetic manner to the street scene and existing building.

The existing shop, store and duplex apartment will be subdivided into 4 apartments. No extensions are required.

The existing building will be converted and altered to provide a better use of property.

The appearance has been designed to be in keeping with surrounding properties.

Access will remain as per existing.

Loss of Community Facilities

The property is a privately run newsagents & former Post Office.

The Post Office closed in 2017 when the then owner took the decision that it was not a sustainable business for them to run any longer. The building was marketed as a going concern for the past 24 months without success.

The business, due to its repeated failure, can reasonably be considered to be financially unviable as a retail unit; this is backed up by the lack of interest from potential purchasers to continue this use. This demonstrates there is no need for this commercial use and that it is considered financially unviable as a business proposition.

The proposed change of use for the building preserves the character of the building with no significant alterations to the building and would blend well with the predominantly residential character of the village in this area.

Conclusion

In summary the applicant asserts the following.

In relation to the existing retail, the application proposes the change of use of the existing retail unit into residential. The application site is a detached property with an established flat upon the first floor.

The surrounding locality is residential. The use proposal is therefore not considered to be out of character with the locality.

Due to the change in retail with supermarkets offering bulk and discounted products in addition to general groceries, small shops are no longer commercially viable.

It is therefore requested that planning permission is approved in this instance.