

Development Management
Planning Department
Regeneration & Growth
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The person dealing with this matter is: Ian Smith
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Our reference: 20/01207/PREAPP

Date: 14 October 2020

Mr Ruggles
BY EMAIL/ADDRESS

Dear Mr Ruggles

Re: Change of use from residential (Class C3) to HMO (Class C4) at 118 Northumberland Avenue, Welling, DA16 2PZ

Thank you for engaging with LB Bexley's pre-application service. We hope you have found the process useful in developing your proposals.

I have set out below my comments on the scheme following our meeting on 23/06/2020. For clarity purposes it is Officers understanding that the plans submitted are based on those approved under decision notice 19/02855/FUL which has been implemented and was currently under construction at the time of our meeting.

Land Use / Principle of Development

This proposal seeks the change of use of the existing property from a dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a small HMO (Use Class C4) with 4 or less unrelated individuals living within. Due to the Council adopting an Article 4 directive which prevents permitted development rights being used for this form of development. this type of development requires planning permission and therefore you will need make a formal application to obtain this change of use.

Using the Council's databases there are nine (9) known HMOs within the DA16 postcode, with the nearest HMO to this property being located on Darwin Road, some 0.6 miles from the site. Whilst this is in close proximity to the application site, taking into consideration the number of HMOs within the DA16 postcode, the Council is unlikely to resist the proposed change of use on overconcentration grounds. It is noted that the nearest HMO following that on Darwin Road is on Bellegrove Road, some 0.8 miles away from the application site.

It is likely that the use of this property as an HMO would have a different impact on the area's character compared to its use as a single dwelling, especially as the rooms are typically rented out to unrelated individuals who are likely to have their own routines and independent lifestyles. Given this and taken into account the number of HMOs in the immediate area it is considered that the saturation point for a change to the character of the area has not been reached yet and therefore the Council is unlikely to resist this proposal on impact on the character of the area.

The LPA would also have to be satisfied that activities associated with the proposed HMO would not undermine the character and appearance of the area. This includes ensuring the proposed use would not result in increased on-street parking which would affect the visual amenity of the area and/or highway safety. It is noted that the application site does have a front drive which is large enough to house two off-street parking spaces, however, it will need to be demonstrated that if four occupiers had cars the development would not cause any unacceptable pressures on the highway. It is recommended therefore that a parking survey be submitted to clarify this matter and furthermore that if an application is forthcoming details for the management of parking spaces on the front drive.

Quality of Accommodation

Any proposal would need to comply with the Councils HMO standards, details for which can be found at <https://www.bexley.gov.uk/sites/bexley-cms/files/2018-04/Rent-it-Right-property-and-HMO-standards.pdf>.

The proposed accommodation contained within the proposed building appear to accord with the space standards set out in the above document. You should also have due regard detailed advice regarding the quality of the communal facilities (detailed kitchen and bathroom specifications).

Furthermore, any proposal would also be subject to mandatory licensing and should an application be made and approved, you will need to apply for an HMO licence from the Councils Licensing Team.

Pre-commencement conditions

New Regulations require such conditions to be agreed with the applicant/agent. If that agreement is not forthcoming it may result in the planning permission being refused. As part of a planning application, the Planning Authority will write to requesting agreement to such conditions. It is in your/your client's interests to respond promptly

to that request and it is good practice if pre-commencement conditions can be agreed as early as possible

Making an application

Documents to submit

Should an application be made you are advised to review the Councils validation requirements in order to determine what documents and information is required to be submitted. The Councils validation requirements can be found at <https://www.bexley.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2018-07/Planning-application-requirements.pdf>

Should you wish to make and submit a planning application, the easiest way to make an application is electronically via the Planning Portal Website (www.planningportal.co.uk). This website will allow you to build up your application step by step, so that when you come to submit the application to the Council electronically, it is made valid straight away. As part of any submission you will need to submit both existing and proposed plans, which should be to scale and include a scale bar, plus you will need to submit any other relevant information and this includes what may have been cited above.

Conclusion

I trust the above is helpful and clarifies the position of the Council in relation to this proposal.

This pre-application advice follows an initial officer assessment of the information you have provided. Every formal application is subject to a statutory assessment process and it is only then that a full assessment of all the material planning considerations can be made in the context of relevant development plan policies. Some important considerations may only arise or become apparent during this formal process, which includes consultation with residents and other third parties affected by the development. This officer advice is therefore given for your general guidance in the preparation of a future planning application or proposal. The advice does not prejudice the Council's consideration or decision on any future application that may be submitted.

Thank you for engaging with LB Bexley's pre-application service. We hope you have found the process useful in developing your proposals.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Smith
Principal Planner
Planning Department – Development Management
Growth and Regeneration