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PLANNING APPLICATION

BY

██████████ STONE

RELATING TO
220 BLACKFEN ROAD
SIDCUP
KENT DA15 8PT

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

JULY 2021

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. We have been instructed by Mr P. Stone or Premier Autocentres to prepare and submit an application for full planning permission for the reconfiguration and upgrading of existing premises at 220 Blackfen Road, Sidcup, KENT DA15 8PT. The plans would involve reconfiguring the ground floor premises to enable a commercial (Class E) unit to be provided at the front of the property along with ground floor office space to the rear. The disused building to the rear of the property would also be upgraded and converted to provide a storage area for the ground floor retail/commercial space.
- 1.2. At first floor level, the existing area currently used as ancillary office space associated with Premier Autocentres (that would be transferred downstairs), is proposed to be converted to enable a two-bedroom, three-person apartment to be introduced utilising the existing balcony to the rear. The plans show the provision of bin and cycle storage to the rear of the premises for both the commercial uses at ground floor level and the residential above.
- 1.3. The application has been prepared having regard to all relevant planning policy including that contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) , the Bexley Unitary Development Plan (saved policies) (2004),the Council's Core Strategy Document (Feb 2012) and The London Plan (2021).

2. THE APPLICATION SITE

- 2.1. The application property comprises a two-storey property of semi-detached design that is owned and occupied by Premier Autocentres which runs the car dealership immediately to the west of the site.
- 2.2. The property has been occupied by Premier Autocentres for many years providing an ancillary part shop/parts store at ground floor level with ancillary office accommodation above. However, the space needs upgrading and investment and has not been used as efficiently as it could be. The application herewith submitted is borne from a desire to make the most efficient use of the commercial premises at ground floor level whilst providing residential use above that would be in keeping with adjacent properties that are similarly in residential use at first floor level.
- 2.3. The site is located on the southern side of Blackfen Road which is a local distributor road and is currently served by three parking spaces in front of the building between the property and the highway.
- 2.4. The Bexley Unitary Development Plan defines the site as being within a District centre boundary with the ground floor premises allocated as a non-core shopping frontage.
- 2.5. In terms of planning history relating to the shop, permission was granted in 1977 under reference 77/00188 for the change of use of part of the shop area to form office accommodation and permission was granted in 1983 under reference 83/00458/FUL – change of use of first floor residential accommodation to provide additional office space.
- 2.6. In terms of the garage storage area to the rear, this was granted approval in 1979 under reference 79/00233/FUL.

- 2.7. In terms of relevant recent planning history within the parade, many existing residential properties have been altered and extended in the recent past, this has included the provision of dormer windows etc. In terms of No. 222 Blackfen Road, planning permission was granted on the 4th of January 2018 (17/02609/FUL) for the change of use of the ground floor premises from retail (Class A1) to enable 1 x one bedroom flat to be introduced (Class C3 Use). In granting planning permission for this application, the Council accepted that the premises had been vacant/unused for a period of time and there was a limited chance of them being occupied for commercial use moving forward.

3. THE PROPOSALS

- 3.1. The application seeks full planning permission for the reconfiguration of the existing premises.
- 3.2. The proposed changes would see the existing commercial space at ground floor level reconfigured enabling a retail/commercial space to be retained at the front of the property (Class E Use), with ground floor office space provided to the rear. This would continue to provide ancillary offices associated for Premier Autos.
- 3.3. To the rear, the existing single storey outbuilding is to be upgraded and used to provide an ancillary storage area for the shop and the courtyard space will also provide an area for cycle storage and bin storage associated with the ground floor premises.
- 3.4. The reconfiguration of the space would achieve a more efficient ground floor layout for both commercial and office use would enable the first-floor space to be converted to provide a two-bedroom, three-person dwelling with associated balcony/amenity space to the rear.
- 3.5. The plans provided demonstrate that the dwelling would have total internal area of 60 m² that would be appropriate for a one storey, two-bedroom, three-person unit.
- 3.6. The main bedroom would be 13.3 m² and would exceed the 11.5 m² requirement for a double bedroom. The second single bedroom would be 10 m² which would exceed the minimum requirement of 7.5 m² for a single bedroom.
- 3.7. The plans illustrate that all habitable rooms would be affordable an acceptable degree of outlook either to the front or to the rear of the property and the balcony space which currently exists would incorporate the provision of a privacy screen in order to ensure that no overlooking to the adjacent property at No. 222 would be caused by the use of this space. The balcony area would provide an appropriate outdoor space in accordance with the London Plan Design Guidance standards concerning amenity space provision for new residential properties.

- 3.8. In addition, the plans illustrate that the storage building to the rear of the premises at ground floor level would be upgraded also provide a secure area for residential storage for the apartment above as well as the space for the storage of bins and cycles.
- 3.9. As per the current situation, three parking spaces in front of the premises are to be retained. One of these spaces will be used for the residential property and two would be available for staff and customers associated with the commercial premises at ground floor level.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 4.1. The thrust of the NPPF seeks to encourage sustainable development, the most efficient use of land and an increase in housing supply across the county.
- 4.2. Section 5 concerns the delivery of the sufficient supplies of homes and encourages new development in sustainable and accessible locations to reduce car dependency.
- 4.3. Paragraph 68 of this document notes that small sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirements of an area and are often built out relatively quickly.
- 4.4. Section 6 concerns the desire to build a strong, competitive economy and specifies that policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity.
- 4.5. In relation to commercial areas and town centres, Section 7 encourages local centres to meet anticipated needs for retail, leisure, office, and other main town centres uses. It also recognises that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres is preserved.

BEXLEY UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SAVED POLICIES)

- 4.6. Policy ENV39 concerns the built environment and requires all development to be compatible with surrounding area. It also seeks for new development to not cause an unreasonable impact on the surrounding area. In addition, the policy specifies that adequate provision should be made for vehicle parking in accordance with the Council's standards.
- 4.7. Section 6 of the UDP concerns housing and outlines the Council's commitment to increasing housing supply. It states that residential development should be compatible

with the character and appearance of the area in which it is located. Policy H3 states that any residential proposals should incorporate space around the building and be compatible with the surrounding area and that an appropriate living environment should be provided for all new residential properties.

- 4.8. Policy H6 specifies that residential development should normally provide adequate useable on-site amenity space and Policy H7 requires for all new residential development to be afforded an acceptable level of privacy and outlook.
- 4.9. In terms of employment uses, Policy E1 states that proposals for commercial uses will be permitted where there is no unacceptable impact on the amenity of occupants of residential areas or neighbouring properties or whether the development is satisfactory in terms of design, scale, and layout.
- 4.10. In relation to commercial ground floor premises, Policy SH05 refers to non-core shopping frontages and states that the Council will resist the change of use of shops (Use Class A1 (Now Class E)) at ground floor level where these would harm the character, viability, and vitality of the centre.

BEXLEY CORE STRATEGY (2012)

- 4.11. Policies CS12 & CS13 concern Bexley's future economic contribution and access to jobs. These policies seek to encourage the most efficient use of Bexley's land ensuring the balance between the needs of business and industry and other land uses that are integral to building sustainable communities with this including housing.
- 4.12. The Council will support development proposals that intensify land uses, including office of a commercial development particularly in sustainable parts of the Borough.
- 4.13. Policy CS14 focuses on town and local centre vitality and viability. The policy seeks to promote a diversification in the mix of uses including retail employment and residential.

THE LONDON PLAN (2021)

- 4.14. The London Plan also outlines the Mayors commitment to increasing housing delivery across the capital whilst also seeking to grow the capital's strong economy.
- 4.15. In relation to housing development, the London Borough of Bexley is required to provide an additional 3,050 new homes between 2020 – 2029, in relation to small sites below 0.25 hectares in size.
- 4.16. In terms of housing, quality and standards, Policy D6 requires for two-bedroom, three person dwellings to be approximately 61 m² in size. In this case, the first-floor dwelling will be 60 m² (a shortfall of 1 m²). The internal size is appropriate given the generous layout that is achieved. The single bedroom would exceed the requirement of 7.5 m² as set out within this policy and the double bedroom would exceed the requirement of 11.5 m². In addition, all habitable rooms would be afforded a generous degree of outlook and the apartment would be dual aspect.
- 4.17. In relation to amenity space, the London Plan Design Guide specifies that a minimum of 5 m² of outdoor amenity space should be provided where a one bedroom, two-person dwelling is proposed and an additional 1 m² should be achieved where there is an increase in the number of bed spaces within a unit. The outdoor balcony area would exceed this requirement and would incorporate a privacy screen between the site and the adjacent property in order to ensure that no unacceptable harm to the amenity and privacy of neighbours is caused and to ensure that the balcony space is also afforded an acceptable degree of privacy.

5. PLANNING MERITS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. The application seeks to upgrade and enhance the current premises that are presently occupied for purposes ancillary to Premier Autocentres. At ground floor level, the space is used as a parts shop with storage area and at first floor level, the space has previously been used to provide offices associated with the Premier Autocentre to the west.
- 5.2. The plans would see the ground floor space reconfigured and the store to the rear of the premises upgraded to enable the ground floor space to be used more efficiently to provide a retail space (Class E Use) at the front of the premises. The retention of the retail area would accord with the terms of Bexley UDP Policy which seeks to retain ground floor use in retail use with the unit defined as being part of the secondary shopping parade in this part of Blackfen Road.
- 5.3. There will be ancillary office space provided in association with this and the current offices at first floor level would be 'decanted' into the ground floor space ensuring there would be no loss of office use, or employment.
- 5.4. The rear storage building that is currently unused will be upgraded and this would provide a storage area for the shop ensuring the retail space is provided with an acceptable degree of ancillary storage.
- 5.5. The reconfiguration of space at ground floor level and the upgrading of the building to the rear bringing this back into active use will enable the first-floor space to be converted to provide a two-bedroom, three-person dwelling.
- 5.6. The plans provided demonstrate the overall dwelling size would comply with the London Plan standards as would the individual room sizes would be achieved. The dwelling would be afforded an acceptable degree of outlook to the front and rear and would be served by its own entrance to the side of the premises at ground floor level as well as its own residential storage area to the rear for bin and cycle storage and its own allocated parking space.
- 5.7. The property is currently served by a balcony area at first floor level at present. This would provide an acceptable balcony to serve the first floor flat. The plans would

incorporate the provision of a privacy screen in association with this balcony in order to ensure that no unacceptable overlooking to surrounding properties would be caused. The provision of the privacy could adequately be secured by a suitable planning condition.

- 5.8. The application would involve an efficient use of land and buildings maximising how this space can would used and providing a mixed use of development in accordance with the thrust of National, London Plan and Local Plan policies.
- 5.9. Taking these material considerations into account, the application accords with the terms of relevant planning policy. There would be no loss of any existing 'uses' on the site and the proposals would upgrade and make the most efficient use of the property to enable the existing uses to be retained. The development would also provide an additional unit of residential accommodation to contribute towards the Council's housing target set out within the London Plan.
- 5.10. It is therefore requested for full planning permission to be granted.