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PLANNING DEPARTMENT
16 JUL 2015

Your Ref:
14th July 2015

Tel:
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Gibson Kyne Shop, Garrison Lane, St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly

Proposed Conversion of two shops into one with ancillary accommodation

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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Details of Proposal

Originally this was one large shop which was converted into two in the late 1980's. Permission was subsequently given to convert the first floor for the owner's use in 1992.

Recently tourist numbers have substantially reduced and although one of the present shops had various uses, it has been empty for a full tourist season. Whoever has leased in recent years has not been able to make it financially viable as the Island obviously has many more retail outlets than are now required or sustainable.

For the above reasons the owners would like to revert the premises back to one shop. This would be similar to the original as it will occupy the whole frontage. The proposal would also provide the owners with a much needed opportunity to remodel and re-design the shop and provide storage, office and ancillary accommodation. This in turn would allow them to increase the size of their lounge to what was originally proposed in 1992.

Existing Use

The ground floor is two shops plus a store and WC facilities.

In recent years due to a recession and various other more economically attractive holiday destinations there has been a large decline in visitor numbers. In addition many additional retail outlets in the form of craft workshops etc have been approved by the Council and three new shops have actually been constructed under the Councils 'Porthcressa Improvement Scheme'. Retail sales are also allowed in the Councils Tourist Information centre and a new building (yet to be opened) has been erected on the Porth Mellon Industrial estate which appears to have numerous sections to be let for

possibly even more workshops which could have retail outlets .There is also retail space in the new Quay Development which will have a significant adverse effect on the shops of Hugh Town especially from the cruise ship market.

Obviously, any increase in retail outlets reduces the income of existing premises and causes some to close due to the fact that the occupier can no longer make a living.

The impact of the business rate valuation of 2010 is a major factor as well with the rates for these premises rising by 50% at a time when the recession was in full swing.

As you are no doubt aware, this vacant shop has been used as a hairdressers, a deli/café, a health food shop and an off licence ! The last three businesses failed to produce sufficient income and whilst the owners business is still open, the additional income from the now empty shop was vital and the current burden of the business rate on an empty premises makes the current situation untenable in the long term.

The vacant premises has been advertised since the beginning of the year and whilst the owners have been flexible in the rent and the terms offered, there has been no serious interest and they are now forced to explore alternative options . Remodelling the shop and improving the display frontage would entice more customers and greatly help the commercial viability of the business and help them to continue to trade

Proposed Alterations to Exterior

The proposals will only require minor alterations to the exterior of the building mainly at the rear. This rear elevation faces a short 'service' road which is not used by the general public.

The only alteration to the front elevation is the provision of a short pitched, slate covered roof over the shop façade. We feel this will be a great improvement to the overall appearance of the building.

Built Environment

The shop is in mid terrace of a row of other shops all with living accommodation at first floor level. This is probably one of the busiest shopping areas of St Mary's which makes it even more perplexing that the existing premises cannot be let. Other buildings close at hand include residential dwellings, offices, a bank, guest houses and hotels.

Materials

The new windows on the rear elevation are to be white UPVC to match existing and the short roof section on the front is to be covered with traditional natural slate

Sustainability

Environmental sustainability is fundamental to the objectives of Central Government and the Local Authority. The new partitions will be constructed to the highest energy conservation standards and will be built in excess of Building Regulation standards with regard to thermal insulation and fire resistant.

All other services are in existence so there will be no additional loads put upon the existing infrastructure.

Impact on Neighbours

There should be no impact whatsoever on any neighbours.

Access

The pedestrian access door will be removed and all access will be through the remaining door which at the present time simply provided access to the owner's accommodation. There are no other alterations to access doors.

T J Hiron, MRICS