

38/16/0024

TURNING POINT

**Change of use to mixed use, Class D1/B1 for clinic service and administration at 3 Mendip House, High Street, Taunton**

Location: MENDIP HOUSE, HIGH STREET, TAUNTON

Grid Reference: 322719.124259

Full Planning Permission

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## **Recommendation**

**Recommended decision: Conditional Approval**

### **Recommended Condition(s) (if applicable)**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

(A4) Location Plan  
(A4) Site Plan  
(A3) Existing Floor Plans  
(A3) Proposed Floor Plans

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

### **Notes to Applicant**

1. In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework the Council has worked in a positive and pro-active way and has granted planning permission.

## **Proposal**

The proposal comprises the change of use from a office (B1 Use) to a clinic service with ancillary office space (D1). There are no external alterations to the building, with some internal alterations (new partitions and removal of some existing partitions).

## Site Description

The office is sited within a terrace of 6 units with some ground floor and first floor uses including a Solicitor, Photographer and Hair/Beauty Salon. The building is within the Secondary Shopping Area of Taunton town centre, fronting onto a pedestrianised area of the High Street. The building is three storeys in height and was previously occupied by an office.

## Relevant Planning History

None.

## Consultation Responses

*SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP* - See Standing Advice.

*ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT* - None received.

*SCC - NOW HISTORIC ENV SERVICE( AS NOT PART OF SCC 2015)* - None received.

*POLICE* -

From a 'designing out crime' perspective, I would make the following initial observations:-

- Very limited information is provided in the documentation accompanying the plans, however, I note the proposed opening hours, some use as a 'drop in' centre and public access via the front entrance only.
- No external alterations appear to be proposed.
- The Proposed Internal Layout Plan indicates that in the ground floor entrance lobby a new cctv intercom remote and fob access door release will be installed – presumably, this is to control access from outside and monitor persons entering the lobby? I assume this will be monitored from Reception, which is in a good location to monitor the front entrance and waiting area. No information is provided regarding cctv monitoring of the remainder of the building which I feel is important, particularly the waiting area, rear entrance and meeting rooms.
- The plan also indicates new keypad entry to rooms, which is recommended, but does not state what type of access control system is being proposed and what rooms will be included. Besides the rear entrance and ground floor rooms, will first and second floor rooms/offices be included?
- Blinds are proposed for glazing to ensure privacy, which is recommended.
- The front and rear doors and ground floor rear windows should comply with PAS 24:2012 to offer minimum standards of security.

- Is a monitored intruder alarm being installed for use outside normal operating hours.

## **Representations Received**

TWO LETTERS OF OBJECTION FROM WARD COUNCILLORS:-

- Impact on business's in locality.
- Impact on Vivary Park that is used by Families and children in Taunton; main entrance to Park should not be put at jeopardy and ruin facility.
- Inappropriate location close to Open Door and Vivary Park.

ELEVEN LETTERS OF OBJECTION: -

- Wrong place for users of the clinic and needle exchange; inappropriate location in town centre; not in keeping with commercial surroundings.
- Encourage bad and anti-social behaviour.
- Wrong image for heavy traffic to Vivary Park, including time of flower show; impact on tourism.
- Impact on nearby business, including outdoor cafe seating; effect on trade.
- Clients gathering outside.
- Fear of crime.
- Fear of safety and intimidation to children and adults in High Street and entering nearby business's.
- Harm to environment of the High Street.
- Lead to further difficulty letting premises adjoining 3 Mendip House.
- Open Door already in Mount Street has clients gathering outside.
- Concern over future of the High Street.
- Will put people off coming to the High Street.
- Highway safety and danger to road users if assumption that clients of Turning point are also clients at Open Door and will be crossing Upper High Street.

FIVE PETITIONS FROM LOCAL BUSINESSES WITH 110 SIGNATURES FROM CUSTOMERS/STAFF

## **Planning Policy Context**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan for Taunton Deane comprises the Taunton Deane Core Strategy (2012), saved policies of the Taunton Deane Local Plan (2004), the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (2008), Somerset Minerals Local Plan (2015), and Somerset Waste Core Strategy (2013).

Relevant policies of the development plan are listed below. Policies from emerging plans are also listed; these are a material consideration.

DM1 - TD CORE STRATEGY - GENERAL REQUIREMENTS,  
T21 - TDBCLP - Secondary Shopping Areas,

## **Local finance considerations**

### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

None.

### **New Homes Bonus**

None.

## **Determining issues and considerations**

The pertinent issues to consider is whether the proposed use is acceptable in this location having regard to adopted and retained land use policies, and any impact upon amenity that may arise from either the proposed use.

The site is located within the secondary shopping area of Taunton. Here retained Local Plan Policy allows for alternative uses to retail where such would be appropriate and complementary to a town centre location, generate customer activity and retain a commercial frontage to the premises. Whilst there would be little commercial activity from the proposed D1 use, this would not differ to the previous office use of the building. Furthermore, the building has been empty for over 12 months and the proposed use is welcomed over a vacant building. The proposed clinic is considered to be an appropriate use for this location and will generally meet the previously specified policy requirements. There is not currently a proliferation of D1 uses within this area and therefore this additional complimentary use is not considered to undermine the balance of the secondary shopping area.

With regard to amenity, the use within the building is unlikely to result in a nuisance to neighbouring properties. Whilst there are objections raised regarding anti-social behaviour; impact on shops and restaurants; and impact on entrance to Vivary Park; there is nothing to suggest that groups would gather in front of the building. Furthermore, the applicant has stated that users of the clinic will predominately visit by appointment only. There may be some users of the clinic waiting outside within the High Street, though the perceived impact this may have is not considered to be a reason to refuse the application.

Having regard to the above, the proposals are considered to be acceptable and it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

In preparing this report the planning officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

**Contact Officer: Mr D Addicott**

