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TRAPP PROPERTIES LTD

CONVERSION OF HUNTS COURT TO A WINE BAR, RESTAURANT AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF 3 FLATS AND 4 MAISONETTES AT HUNTS COURT, CORPORATION STREET, TAUNTON

322586/124471

FULL

PROPOSAL

Hunts Court is an imposing listed building in Corporation Street and is a significant landmark in terms of the street scene. The building was commissioned in the early twentieth century by Taunton Art School and has a number of large internal spaces. The building was passed to Somerset County Council in the seventies and has been used as offices for the last 30 years. During this time numerous alterations, additions and modifications have been carried out to the interior of the building which have detracted from its character and appearance. Since the County Council sold the building it has remained empty, although permission for conversion to five flats and five maisonettes was granted in January 2005. The building has since been sold to the current applicants.

The intention with the current application is a mixed use development that will secure the restoration of the building and will allow public access to the lower two floors in commercial use as a wine bar and restaurant on the main ground floor. The upper two floors would be used for residential purposes with subdivision to four maisonettes and three flats designed as loft style apartments taking advantage of the large windows.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

COUNTY HIGHWAY AUTHORITY no objection. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY due to the location and the associated level of flood risk, our comments should be applied directly by your Authority using the standing advice we have provided.

DRAINAGE OFFICER no objections subject to the Environment Agency's approval of the Flood Risk Assessment.

POLICY CONTEXT

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policies STR1 – Sustainable Development, STR4 – Development in Towns, Policy 9 – The Built Historic Environment, Policy 11 – Areas of High Archaeological Potential.

Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1- General Requirements, S2 – Design, H2 – Housing in Settlements, C4 – Open Space Requirements, M4 – Parking, EN14 – Conservation Areas, EN16 – Setting of Listed Buildings, EN17 - Alteration of Listed

Buildings, EN23 – Areas of High Archaeological Potential, EN28 – Flood Risk, T22 – Diversity in the Town Centre.

ASSESSMENT

The proposal is for a mixed use development within a highly sustainable town centre location where car free development for residential use is considered acceptable. The residential use on the upper floors is one that is considered to comply with policy H2 of the Local Plan and the commercial use on the lower floors is also considered to be in keeping with policy for providing diversity in the town centre.

Policy C4 requires adequate play and open space provision for developments of six units or more. Where this cannot be provided on site a monetary contribution is required through a Section 106 Agreement. This application will require such a contribution and this is reflected in the recommendation.

The main issue with the proposal is the changes proposed to the listed building and the impact on its historic character. The main changes involve a new stair and dumbwaiter from the lower ground floor to the ground floor, a new external door on the side elevation to give access to the new flats, a new platform and disabled lift in the same area and an alteration to the roof to provide a flat section between the ridges to accommodate bedrooms for the maisonettes. The proposals allow for the restoration and reinstatement of a number of internal features such as timber panelling, glazed brickwork, original rooflights and decorative mouldings, coving and cornices.

Previous permission for the conversion of the building to ten residential units has been granted and the current scheme is considered to be an equally if not more appropriate use. The associated alterations to the listed building are also considered to better preserve the character of the building. They will secure a stable investment to secure the habitation, continuous use and public access to the building which will allow for its constant maintenance and repair.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to a Section 106 for the provision of off site play and recreation provision the Development Control Manager in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair be authorised to determine and permission be GRANTED subject to conditions of time limit, materials, archaeological programme of works and notes re LB consent, section 106, disabled access and Wessex Water infrastructure.

In the event of the Section 106 not being signed by 13th August, 2006 the Development Control Manager in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair be authorised to determine and permission be REFUSED as contrary to Taunton Deane Local Plan Policy C4 or GRANT permission with an additional condition requiring the applicant to enter a Section 106 prior to commencement of development.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION:- The scheme represents a suitable redevelopment of this town centre site in accordance with Taunton Deane Local Plan policies S2, H2, C4, EN14, EN16 and EN17 and guidance on PPG15 and material considerations do not indicate otherwise.

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

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NOTES: