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Mr A J Rowles
Director
Planning Services
Sir Charles Frossard House
La Charroterie
St Peter Port
GY1 1FH

30 July 2020

Dear Mr Rowles

Re: Planning Application

Applicant: Fieldday Developments Limited
Property: Retail Unit 4, Upper Ground Floor, Royal Terrace, Gategny Esplanade
Cadastre: A11120P006
Request: Change of use from retail to Use Class 16

Introduction

Please accept this correspondence as a planning application requesting change of use of retail Unit 4, Upper Ground Floor, Royal Terrace (**Unit 4**) from retail to Use Class 16.

This planning application follows the pre-application enquiry PREA/2020/1008 lodged on 3 March 2020 and to which your Planning Officer Mr Chris Crew responded on behalf of the Authority that a formal planning application may be successful (under the standard caveats).

Background and Policy

Unit 4 was subject to a recent Notification of Grant of Planning Permission on 21 August 2018 under FULL/2018/1646 that permitted, "*Change of use from retail use to office use (Administrative, financial and professional services – Use Class 15)*" (**Approval**).

The Approval refers to Unit 4 as "vacant", and that is correct. The commercial agent Watts & Co. have confirmed that Unit 4 has been vacant since at least 2010 i.e. has had no use for over 10 years.

The Applicant is seeking a similar change of use to the Approval, but only as a formal office under Use Class 16. The policy gateway is Policy MC4(A) which supports proposals for new office development within Main Centres.

In terms of the existing retail use, Policy MC6: Retail in Main Centres provides, *“Beyond the Core Retail Areas, change of use away from retail will be permitted where it supports the objective of ensuring the Main Centres remain attractive focal points for economic and social activity”*.

This change of use meets the scope of that policy as it is an economic enabler where the IDP states that:

- St Peter Port is the primary location for offices within the Island;
- New offices are best located within or around existing office clustered, with good access to supporting services; and
- New office development will be encouraged within the Main Centres where it is possible to meet modern needs.

The outcome would be very similar to the Approval and the other change of use granted under FULL/2017/0601 for the building known as “the Rotunda” and located directly opposite Unit 4. That approval allowed, *“Change of use of ground floor café to Office Use (Use Class 16)”*, on 24 April 2017 and under the IDP.

The Planning Officer’s Report of FULL/2017/0601 concluded;

“The site is within the Main Centre where offices are supported. The loss of a retail unit which has remained vacant since built is acceptable. The proposed use would bring the building into beneficial use and improve the vitality and viability of this area of the Town, in accordance with planning policies designed to encouraged a sustainable mix of diverse activities in the Main Centres. There would be no adverse effect on adjoining property or on the conservation area. Car parking arrangements would be unchanged”.

This is a similar change of use request.

Policy

I have touched upon Policies MC4(A) and MC6 above and they were referred to within the 2 March 2020 pre-application. Unit 4 has sat redundant for over 10 years and that is not considered effective and efficient use of land – which is a fundamental principle of the IDP.

Unit 4 is within the St Peter Port Conservation Area (Annex VII and GP4 of the IDP), but there are no elevational changes proposed. The form and visual aspect of Unit 4 are completely unchanged. I attach a photographic elevational/streetscape survey.

The design (GP8 of the IDP) does not change and utilises all of the existing infrastructure and facilities with no elevational changes which, in turn, respects and retains the character of the local built environment. The south and west elevations are glazed and allow sufficient sunlight and daylight, and also contain ground floor entrance points that are fully disability compliant.

The reuse of Unit 4 after 10 years of vacancy is making best use of a resource with no significant engineering. That reuse is a good design for the purposes of Policy GP8 of the IDP and entwines with Policy GP9 of the IDP as a sustainable form of development in reusing a resource rather than creating a new one.

This change of use works within the current form of Unit 4 (within the larger building) and retains (and improves) the design, including insulation, using the existing drainage systems, maintaining water efficiency, not using new materials, using the existing waste storage and disposal facilities and fuel and power systems, all to meet and exceed the Building (Guernsey) Regulations, 2012.

For the purposes of policies IP7 and IP9 of the IDP, the parking and footfall for Unit 4 use the same Town based resources and amenities as the Approval and FULL/2017/0601. That capacity does not increase and is neutral.

This application does not request any external signage, but the standard signage planning condition is welcome.

If you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Le Gallez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James Le Gallez

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