

PA21/02017

Change of use of ground floor from retail to residential and associated works. Post office 2 The Quay Portscatho TR2 5HF

Due to the restrictions placed on the Council as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, this response represents the opinion of members of Gerrans Parish Council identified through a consultation process and will be ratified at the next appropriate meeting of the Council.

Gerrans Parish Council has voted to oppose this application. There were no votes in support.

Facilities.

CLP policy 4 says loss of provision will only be acceptable where proposals show there is no need for the facility or service, where it is not viable or where adequate facilities or services exist elsewhere locally.

RNDP policy SF1 says proposals which will result in loss of services or facilities will only be supported where they are to be replaced with services or facilities of an equal or higher quality economic viability and value to the community on the same site or an equally suitable or more suitable site within the parish.

Although the post office has been relocated, the shop originally supplied many other goods: gifts and souvenirs, fishing rods and bait, beach equipment including wetsuits and many other items. It also had a thriving ice-cream parlour. These services have by no means been replaced elsewhere in the village.

The applicant implies that the old post office is not ideally situated to provide these facilities, not being in the heart of the village. In fact, its position on the Quay, along with Tatams, Spindrifft, the Harbour Gallery, the Sea Garden and the Harbour Club, all on the South West Coast Path and less than five minutes' walking distance from each other, is an ideal position for a thriving commercial outlet, as witnessed by the success of these other retail premises. The old post office is immediately adjacent to the harbour and Tatams Beach and so ideally positioned to take advantage of the tourist trade.

Loss of business space

CLP policy 5, referenced by the inspector responsible for dismissing the appeal. He states: "proposals that would result in loss of business space must demonstrate there is not market demand through active and continued marketing for at least a period of 9 months."

In the planning statement the applicant maintains that although the property was appropriately marketed for the required period, *"...buyers have been put off by the anticipated costs associated with creating acceptable commercial space as against anticipated returns"*

However, these returns are dependent on the level of the original asking price. Comparable properties cited in the Supporting Statement to justify a price level of £450,000 were either considerably larger, in much better condition or situated in larger urban centres, and so in

fact not comparable. Even so there were still 12 viewings and two offers made which the applicants deemed too low. This in no way demonstrates that there is no market for a retail outlet in this location, but simply that the asking price was too high. Genuinely similar commercial properties have been marketed for around half the asking price requested for the post office.

Gerrans Parish Council has further evidence of the demand for commercial outlets in the village in that a number of new businesses have recently approached the Council and the Memorial Hall, wanting to use their car parks for business purposes.

Village character.

RNDP policy CV1 states that proposals should contribute to and enhance the character of the village, there should be no adverse impacts on the amenity of local residents, and there should be no adverse impacts on those services and facilities that support the vitality and viability of community life.

Portscatho is a thriving community in which its retail facilities play a key part in maintaining the character of the village. This cannot be replaced by a private residential property. The former post office offered a range of services apart from the post office which were valued by the community. This application would preclude any future replacement and redevelopment with an outlet of similar benefit.

Character and appearance of the proposed building

The application details would appear to show that alterations to the building itself are relatively minor. We consider that any replacement cladding should be painted in a pale colour, in keeping with other buildings in the conservation area.

Important dates

We are submitting this objection by 15th April as requested by the Planning Officer. However, no yellow notice has so far been displayed at the property, so parishioners have not had the usual opportunity to consider the application and submit any views they might have to the Parish Council. We have raised this matter with the Planning Department and would ask that the yellow notice is displayed as soon as possible. Should any residents approach us with their views within the subsequent three-week notice period, we may submit additional comments. We understand that a yellow notice, followed by three weeks for public comments, is mandatory for an application within the conservation area.