

19/06493/FUL

Consultations and Notification Responses

Ward Councillor Preliminary Comments

Councillor L M Clarke OBE – This is an iconic building on the High Street with a lot of history, in the Conservation Area. I believe the suggested change of use is an unacceptable change and should be resisted. If you are minded to approve, please bring to Committee for determination and I request a site visit.

Parish/Town Council Comments/Internal and External Consultees

High Wycombe Town Unparished – Abbey Ward

Conservation Officer

Comments: As noted in the Heritage Statement, this application relates to a Grade II* listed building of very high standing and noted as the finest dwelling in the High Street in the High Wycombe conservation area character appraisal.

The planning report states that the change of use of the ground floor to amusement arcade would not involve any alteration to the interior or exterior of the building, and getting the building back into a sympathetic use is welcome in principle.

However, clarification is required on 3 issues:

- 1) it is not clear what the ground floor structure is and whether the potential number/weight of the gaming machines would impose undue loading.
- 2) Presumably, additional electrics/services would be required to power the machines. It is not clear how or where service runs would be accommodated, and whether this would impact on internal features of interest.
- 3) As a Grade II* building, there are also concerns about character. Brash or gaudy light from the machines being visible in the street would fail to complement its special interest.

A separate application will be required for signage and again, this will also need careful consideration to ensure it is in keeping with the building's architectural significance and traditional materials.

Control of Pollution Environmental Health

Comments: I have no objection to this application.

Representations

None

Other

Letting agent comments: We wanted you to be aware that the property has been vacant since the Alliance & Leicester in 2012.

Our experience of dealing with its letting is that prospective occupiers in A class uses (A1, A2, A3) are limited anyway but the nature of these premises with no retail 'presence', window display or scope for signage (due to its listed status) makes it of even less interest. The long period of vacancy reflects a genuine lack of interest because of these peculiarities of the building.

Class A4 and A5 uses seem to be a non-starter because of the alterations one would need to make them suitable including for cooking and ventilation.

In the current applicants, Future Leisure, we consider we have found a use which is on the one hand sympathetic to the building but which can make a commercial contribution to the High Street and town centre.