

Report to Planning applications committee

Item

12 May 2016

Report of Head of planning services

Subject Application no 16/00408/U - 134 Unthank Road,
Norwich, NR2 2RS

4(e)

Reason for referral Objections

Ward:	Town Close
Case officer	Caroline Dodden - carolinedodden@norwich.gov.uk

Development proposal		
Change of use from Sui Generis to retail (Class A1)/financial and professional services (Class A2).		
Representations		
Object	Comment	Support
9	1	0

Main issues	Key considerations
1 Principle of proposed changes of use	Assessment of proposed uses against development management policies
2 Residential amenity	Assessment of potential impact on residential amenity
Expiry date	18 May 2016
Recommendation	Approve



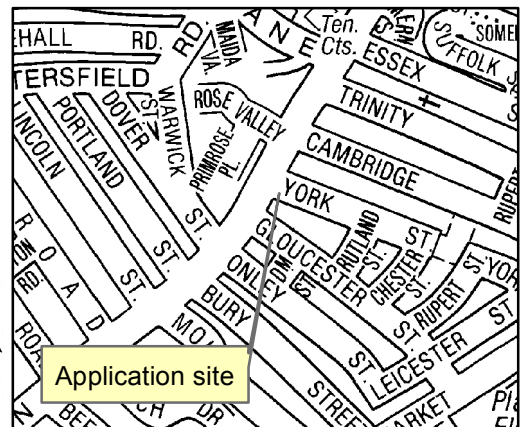
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Planning Application No 16/00408/U
 Site Address 134 Unthank Road

Scale 1:1,000



NORWICH
 City Council
 PLANNING SERVICES



The site and surroundings

1. No.134 Unthank Road is a late 19th century two storey end of terrace property situated on the south-west side of the road, where the ground floor has most recently been used as a laundrette and there are two residential flats above.
2. The property is located on the corner of Unthank Road and Gloucester Street where it adjoins or is close to residential properties to the north-east and south-east. There is a TSB bank located on the opposite corner of Gloucester Street and a number of commercial properties situated on the opposite side of Unthank Road.

Constraints

3. The property falls within an identified local shopping centre.

Relevant planning history

- 4.

Ref	Proposal	Decision	Date
4/1994/0015	Demolish and re-build single storey rear extension	APCON	10/02/1994

The proposal

5. The proposal seeks a flexible planning consent to change the use of the ground floor of the premises, which previously operated as a laundrette (sui generis use), to a retail use (Class A1) or a financial/ professional service (Class A2).

Representations

6. Advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. Nine letters of representation have been received citing the issues as summarised in the table below. All representations are available to view in full at <http://planning.norwich.gov.uk/online-applications/> by entering the application number.

Issues raised	Response
Another financial business or estate agents would not be beneficial to local residents and runs the risk of turning a nationally renowned area into a dull financial street.	Paragraphs 16 - 19
There are already more than enough A2 class businesses on Unthank Road, but another retail use (A1) would be welcomed.	Paragraphs 16 - 19

Issues raised	Response
The street has seen a significant reduction of retail units in the last few years, which supply a variety of amenities to local residents.	Paragraphs 14 - 17
Being a residential occupier adjoining the property, there is concern regarding potential increase in noise disturbance of an A1/A2 use.	Paragraphs 21 - 22
An estate agents would add to parking problems of the overburdened on street parking for residents and customers to other shops, on a busy corner and next to a pedestrian crossing.	Paragraph 24

Comment

7. Norwich Society: We are confused as to the status of this application requesting a number of distinct uses. Needs clarification before consideration.

Assessment of planning considerations

Relevant development plan policies

8. **Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk adopted March 2011 amendments adopted Jan. 2014 (JCS)**
- JCS1 Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets
 - JCS12 The remainder of the Norwich urban area including the fringe parishes
 - JCS19 The hierarchy of centres
 - JCS20 Implementation
9. **Norwich Development Management Policies Local Plan adopted Dec. 2014 (DM Plan)**
- DM1 Achieving and delivering sustainable development
 - DM2 Ensuring satisfactory living and working conditions
 - DM21 Protecting and supporting district and local centres

Other material considerations

10. **Relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework March 2012 (NPPF):**
- NPPF0 Achieving sustainable development
 - NPPF1 Building a strong, competitive economy

Case Assessment

11. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate

otherwise. Relevant development plan policies are detailed above. Material considerations include policies in the National Planning Framework (NPPF), the Councils standing duties, other policy documents and guidance detailed above and any other matters referred to specifically in the assessment below. The following paragraphs provide an assessment of the main planning issues in this case against relevant policies and material considerations.

Main issue 1: Principle of development

12. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – DM21, NPPF paragraph 23.
13. Policy DM21 sets out the key principles of managing uses within identified district and local shopping centres. In summary, a number of uses, including main town centre uses, are permitted where they would accord with certain criteria to ensure that a proposed use:
 - would be consistent with the scale and function of the centre;
 - would not be harmful to the vitality, viability and diversity of services in the centre;
 - would not have a harmful impact on residential amenity, traffic or the environment which could not be overcome by the imposition of conditions;
 - would provide a community benefit or address an identified deficiency in provision in the area.
14. No.134 Unthank Road falls within the Unthank Road local shopping centre, which is made up of 44 units. Of these units there are 20 retail uses (Class A1), 6 financial/professional service uses (Class A2), 2 cafes/restaurants (Class A3), 3 pubs/bars (Class A4), 4 hot food takeaways (Class A5) and 7 other uses (such as a health clinic and a laundrette).
15. Looking at the principle of a retail use (Class A1) first, it is clear that policy DM21 encourages such uses. By their operational nature, retail uses can successfully co-exist adjacent to residential uses. Given that the current proportion of retail uses is approximately 48% (below the threshold of 50% set out in policy DM21), a further retail (A1) use would increase the proportion to 50%, in accordance with the policy.
16. It is considered that a proposed change of use of the ground floor of the property to a financial/professional service (Class A2) would also successfully operate well alongside the residential flats above and next door. In addition, such a change of use would not cause the proportion of retail uses (Class A1) to reduce as the property was last operated as a laundrette – a non-retail (A1) use.
17. There are 6 existing A2 uses out of the 42 units, which proportionately equates to about 14% of the group. This is a reasonably low amount within the overall shopping group and as such, it is considered that an additional A2 use would not be harmful to the vitality, viability and diversity of services in the centre.
18. Objectors have commented that there is already an over-supply of estate agents within the identified local centre. According to our records, 5 of the existing A2 uses are estate/letting agents, which as a proportion accounts for 12% of the uses. The proposal does not seek a specific end user, but clearly there is the potential for a

further estate agent to occupy the property under this proposal. However, in terms of planning policy, it is not considered justifiable or reasonable to prevent a specific use within a wider use class in this way.

19. Given the above, it is considered that the principle of an A2 use at the application premises is considered to be acceptable.

Main issue 2: Amenity

20. Key policies and NPPF paragraphs – DM2, DM11, NPPF paragraphs 9 and 17.
21. An adjoining resident has expressed concern regarding noise disturbance from a potential retail use (Class A1) or financial/professional service (Class A2). By their very nature, retail and financial/ professional service uses can successfully operate alongside most residential uses, as they do not require intrusive plant and machinery or need to open until late in the evening.
22. In addition, given the former use of the premises as a laundrette it is considered that, in comparison, retail or financial/professional service uses are unlikely to create more noise disturbance, as there would not be the same need for machinery as the former use. As such, it is considered that the proposal would not have a significant detrimental impact on the residential amenity of the adjoining or nearby residents, by way of noise disturbance.

Compliance with other relevant development plan policies

23. A number of development plan policies include key targets for matters such as parking provision and energy efficiency. The table below indicates the outcome of the officer assessment in relation to these matters.

Requirement	Relevant policy	Compliance
Cycle storage	DM31	No – limited external space
Car parking provision	DM31	Yes – two existing parking spaces on front forecourt
Refuse Storage	DM31	Yes – to be located adjacent to south-west elevation
Energy efficiency	JCS 1 & 3 DM3	Not applicable
Water efficiency	JCS 1 & 3	Not applicable
Sustainable urban drainage	DM3/5	Not applicable

Other Matters

24. The existing shop unit has used the front forecourt area for two parking spaces. It is considered that the proposed uses are unlikely to attract a higher degree of on

street parking in comparison to the former laundrette use. In addition, this parking arrangement is quite common for commercial premises within this shopping group and its continuance is considered to be acceptable.

Equalities and diversity issues

25. There are no significant equality or diversity issues.

Local finance considerations

26. Under Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the council is required when determining planning applications to have regard to any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application. Local finance considerations are defined as a government grant or the Community Infrastructure Levy.

27. Whether or not a local finance consideration is material to a particular decision will depend on whether it could help to make the development acceptable in planning terms. It would not be appropriate to make a decision on the potential for the development to raise money for a local authority.

28. In this case local finance considerations are not considered to be material to the case.

Conclusion

29. The development is in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan, and it has been concluded that there are no material considerations that indicate it should be determined otherwise.

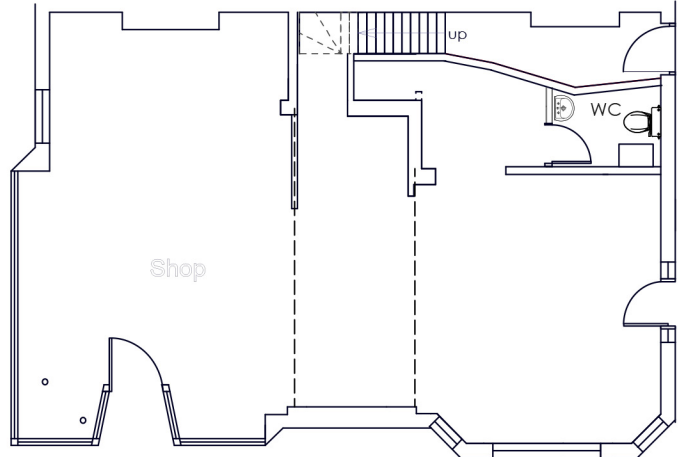
Recommendation

To approve application no. 16/00408/U - 134 Unthank Road Norwich NR2 2RS and grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard time limit;
2. In accordance with plans.

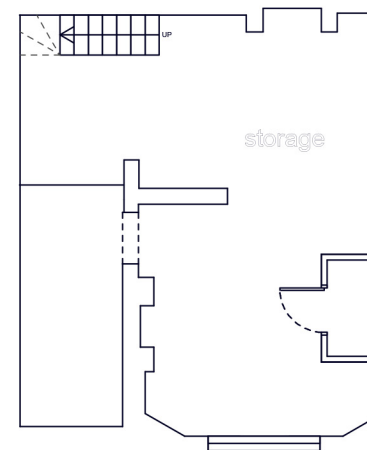
Article 35(2) statement

The local planning authority in making its decision has had due regard to paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework as well as the development plan, national planning policy and other material considerations and has approved the application subject to appropriate conditions and for the reasons outlined in the officer report.



ENTRANCE TO EXISTING FLATS
ABOVE

Ground Floor : Existing & Proposed



Basement : Existing & Proposed

Revisions.

Project: 134 UNTHANK ROAD, NORWICH NR2 2RS	Drawing: EXISTING & PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS		mcarthur tring architects llp 121 BER STREET . NORWICH . NR1 3EY telephone 01603 766 750 http://www.mcarthurtring.co.uk mail@mcarthurtring.co.uk
Client: P. Alcock	Scale: 1:100 @ A3	Drg no: 15/268 : P01	