

Planning Applications Committee

Section C

13 November 2008

Agenda Number:	C6
Section/Area:	INNER
Ward:	THORPE HAMLET
Officer:	Sarah Platt
Valid Date:	9 October 2008
Application Number:	08/00980/U
Site Address :	58 Prince Of Wales Road Norwich NR1 1LL
Proposal:	Change of use from offices (B1) to taxi private hire on ground and first floor (Sui generis) and offices on second floor (B1).
Applicant:	Mr Mark Streeter
Agent:	Mr Mark Streeter

THE SITE

The application site is a terraced property adjacent to an access lane to the rear of this and the adjacent properties. The adjacent properties at 56 and 60-62 Prince of Wales Road are two late night activity venues: a private karaoke bar and a late licensed bar. The land to the rear is used mainly for parking for all businesses. There are 2 no. allocated parking spaces for this property. To the rear is the site of 60 St Faiths Lane which has been granted approval for use as an Apart Hotel.

The site is within the City Centre Leisure Area and the Late Night Activity Zone and as such Policy AEC1 applies. The site is within the City Centre Conservation Area.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

38 Rose Lane: 08/00610/U – Change of use from B1 Offices to Sui Generis (Taxi Hire Business).

THE PROPOSAL

Change of use from offices (B1) to taxi private hire on ground and first floor (Sui generis) and offices on second floor (B1).

CONSULTATIONS

The application has been advertised on site and in the press and neighbours notified by letter.

3 letters of objection have been received citing the following reasons for objection:

- 1) Parking and highways/traffic volume
- 2) Loss of trade to hackney carriage taxis.

4 letters of support have been received.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant National Plan Policies:

PPS6 – Planning for Town Centres

PPG4 – Industrial & Commercial development of Small Firms

PPG13 – Transport

PPG24 – Planning & Noise

Relevant Regional Plan Policies:

ENV7 – Quality in the Built Environment

Relevant Local Plan Policies:

AEC1 – Major Art & Entertainment Facilities

EP22 – High Standard of Amenity for Residential Occupiers

HBE8 – Development within a Conservation Area

EMP1 – Small scale Business Development

It is considered acceptable to approve this change of use of 58 Prince of Wales Road from offices (B1) to taxi Hire Business (Sui generis) on the ground and first floors and offices (B1) on the second floor. The application stipulates that the main base of the taxi hire company will remain at the Whiffler Road premises and this is where all vehicles will be parked when not in use and where drivers will go for breaks in shifts. A new lease for the Whiffler Road site is about to be signed for the next 12 months and is likely to be on-going in the future.

The main purpose of the 58 Prince of Wales Road site is to provide a city centre, 24 hour surveillance waiting area for customers to ensure their safety and comfort. The premises will also be a radio base for the allocation of jobs. The taxis will only collect people from this location. An automated ticket waiting system will be used with a marshal present on site to escort customers to taxis.

Traffic:

Concern has been raised over the stopping and parking of taxis at this location. There are 2 no. loading bays restricted for the use of hackney carriage taxis between the hours of 21:00 and 04:00. Several concerns have been raised that the addition of another private hire taxi firm will lead to a reduction in business for the hackney carriage taxis. In a Government published document "The Planning System: general Principles" published by the Office of the Deputy prime Minister in 2006 it is stated that the planning system does not exist to protect the private interests of objectors and that it is not normally considered that the financial loss or other loss of neighbouring properties or businesses is considered to be a material planning consideration.

Whilst it is appreciated that this premises are not ideally located for the collection of customers in terms of traffic pulling into the roadside, it is important to consider that there are private taxi hire offices further down the road in a very similar situation and on balance it would be difficult to sustain a refusal for this proposal.

There are alternatives to the private taxis pulling into the lay-bys adjacent to the premises. There is the potential use of Cathedral Street, on which there are limited parking restrictions. There is a pedestrian crossing immediately opposite the premises which could be used by pedestrians in order to access the lay-bys where the private hire taxis can park without restriction. Concern has been raised over the customers safety in the evening when crossing a road which suffers from heavy traffic volumes, again, the marshalling system would enable those customers considered to be "under the influence" to be escorted safely to a waiting taxi.

Additional Considerations:

A similar application was made at 38 Rose Lane. Planning Committee raised several issues over the provision of toilet facilities for customers and the adequate size of the waiting area. These issues have all been addressed in this application.

PPS6 requires that city centres should be accessible by a choice of means of transport and refers to the need to manage the night time economy. The taxi hire base will provide a safe and secure environment for customers to wait in and remove the issues of diminished safety for these people waiting on the roadside.

There will be no detrimental impact on the wider conservation area and the proposal is in accordance with national, regional and saved local policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Standard time limit

Reasons for approval:

The decision to grant planning permission has been taken having regard to national policy PPS6, PPG4, PPG13 and PPG24, policy ENV7 of the East of England Plan (May 2008) and saved policies AEC1, EP22, HBE8 and EMP1 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (Adopted Version November 2004).



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Site Address - 58 Prince of Wales Road

Scale - 1:1000



NORWICH
City Council

DIRECTORATE OF REGENERATION
AND DEVELOPMENT

