

**DC/2016/00494**

**CHANGE OF USE OF HOTEL WITH C1 USE TO A1, A2 AND A3 USE ON THE GROUND FLOOR WITH B1 USE TO THE FIRST AND SECOND FLOORS.**

**THE SWAN HOTEL, CROSS STREET, ABERGAVENNY, NP7 5ER**

**RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE**

Case Officer: Andrew Jones

Date Registered: 19/05/2016

## **1.0 APPLICATION DETAILS**

- 1.1 This application relates to the Swan Hotel, which is located at the south east end of Cross Street within the centre of the town of Abergavenny. The building is also Grade II listed and as such the application is considered concurrently with Listed Building Consent DC/2016/00496.
- 1.2 Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the hotel (C1) to A1, A2 or A3 on the ground floor with a B1 use to the first and second floors above. External works include the enlargement of ground floor windows and the removal of the portico to the south east elevation and a number of external pipes. Proposed internal works are under consideration as part of the concurrent Listed Building Consent application.
- 1.3 The application is presented to Planning Committee at the request of the Local Member, Councillor John Prosser.

## **2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

DC/2014/00727 - Smoking hut. Approved on 06/01/2015.

DC/1976/00925 – Alterations. Approved on 10/11/1976.

## **3.0 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES**

### Strategic Policies

S5 – Community and Recreation Facilities

S6 – Retail Hierarchy

S8 - Enterprise and Economy

S11 – Visitor Economy

S12 – Efficient Resource Use and Flood Risk

S13 – Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment

S17 – Place Making and Design

### Development Management Policies

SD3 – Flood Risk

CFR1 - Retention of Existing Community Facilities

DES1 – General Design Considerations

EP1 – Amenity and Environmental Protection

MV1 – Proposed Developments and Highway Considerations

HE1 – Development in Conservation Areas

RET2 – Central Shopping Areas

#### **4.0 REPRESENTATIONS**

##### **4.1 Consultations Replies**

4.1.1 Abergavenny Town Council – have not responded to date.

4.1.2 MCC Highways – Have not responded to date

4.1.3 Dwr Cymru Welsh Water – We would request that if you are minded to grant Planning Consent for the development that the suggested conditions and advisory notes provided are included within the consent to ensure no detriment to existing residents or the environment and to Dwr Cymru Welsh Water's assets.

4.1.4 Planning Policy – Provided the following comments:  
Policy S11 relates to the Visitor Economy, which states in part that development proposals that would result in the unjustified loss of tourism facilities will not be permitted. It does not appear that any information has been submitted within the application in order to justify the loss of tourism use in terms of financial viability, occupancy rates etc.

The benefits of the alternative uses should nevertheless be considered and balanced against the loss of hotel accommodation, the proposal will provide additional Class A uses at ground floor level along with an employment use to the first and second floor which will contribute to the local economy.

The proposal is located within the Central Shopping Area and the addition of A1, A2 and A3 on the ground floor complies with RET2 in principle and assists in supporting the retail hierarchy set out in Policy S6.

The introduction of a B1 use at first and second floor level needs to be considered against Policy S8, which seeks to deliver the Council's vision of sustainable economic growth, while also enabling the continuing development of key economic sectors, including tourism. Support for the proposed B1 use is provided by Policy S9, which seeks to provide a suitable range and choice of sites for business uses such as B1.

The site is located in Zone C2 floodplain, Strategic Policy S12 and supporting development management Policy SD3 relating to Flood Risk are therefore of relevance. The proposed use does not relate to a highly vulnerable use and there is subsequently no conflict with S12 or SD3.

In addition to the above, the site is located within the Abergavenny Conservation Area, Policy HE1 must therefore be referred to. The site is also located in an Area of Special Archaeological Sensitivity, National Planning Policy Guidance set out in Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales therefore applies. General policies DES1 and EP1 should also be taken into consideration.

4.1.5 Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust – Have not responded to date.

##### **4.2 Neighbour Notification**

No objections have been received following the consultation exercise.

##### **4.3 Local Member Representations**

Councillor John Prosser – Request that this application is considered by full committee as it will impact on accommodation levels in Abergavenny.

## **5.0 EVALUATION**

### **5.1 Principle of Development**

5.1.1 The proposed change of use would see the loss of 11 hotel rooms with none to be retained. Strategic Policy S11 *Visitor Economy* which states in part that proposals that result in the unjustified loss of tourism facilities will not be permitted. In response to this no information has been provided in support of the application in order to justify the loss of tourism use, for example financial viability or occupancy rates.

5.1.2 However, the loss of the hotel accommodation needs to be balanced with the economic benefits of the proposed alternative uses. The proposal would provide additional Class A uses to the ground floor with additional employment use (B1) to be delivered to the upper floors. The site is located within the Central Shopping Area (CSA) as designated by Policy RET2 of the LDP, this would support the Class A uses proposed and would assist in supporting the retail hierarchy detailed within Policy S6 *Retail Hierarchy*.

5.1.3 As detailed in paragraph 5.1.2 the proposal seeks to introduce a B1 (Office not within A2) use to the upper floors. Policy S8 *Enterprise and Economy* seeks to enable the delivery of the Council's vision of sustainable economic growth through the development of key economic sectors, including tourism. However, whilst a tourism use is to be lost, Policy S9 *Employment Sites Provision* does provide support for the B1 use by seeking to provide a range and choice of business sites (including B1).

5.1.4 It is therefore considered on balance that whilst the loss of 11 hotel rooms is unfortunate, the proposed change of use would nevertheless provide economic benefit to the local area. Projected figures within the application detail that employment places within site would increase from 9 to 26 as a result of the proposed change of use. The retail use is fully in accordance with relevant LDP policies and as such the change of use is considered to be acceptable in principle.

### **5.2. Access, Parking and Traffic**

5.2.1 The premises currently provides 13 car parking spaces and 1 space for a light goods vehicle, the change of use would retain these existing levels. Whilst it is anticipated that the change of use would increase staff levels and potentially footfall through the building, the site is located immediately adjacent to the Swan Meadow Car Park and Abergavenny Bus Station. As such it is considered that the change of use would not cause any issues relating to parking and could comfortably cater for any additional traffic.

### **5.3 Flooding**

5.3.1 The planning application proposes to change the building to a less vulnerable use (retail) from a highly vulnerable use (hotel). The proposal falls within Zone C2 of the Development Advice Map (DAM) contained in TAN15. Therefore a Flood Consequences Assessment (FCA) has not been considered necessary for the purposes of determining the planning application.

#### 5.4 Visual Impact

- 5.4.1 The most notable external alteration to the building would be the loss of the portico to the south east elevation of the building. Photographic evidence has been provided which illustrates that this is not an original feature and as such its loss has been agreed by the Council's Heritage Officer. Similarly the alterations to the ground floor windows, that also form part of the concurrent LBC, are considered to safeguard the character and appearance of the Grade II listed building and wider Conservation Area.

#### 5.5 Residential Amenity

- 5.5.1 Given the existing hotel use, it is not considered that the change of use at ground floor level to Classes A1 to A3 would be harmful to the residential amenity of any neighbouring properties, including Pegasus Court opposite. The suggested opening hours are considered to be acceptable give the town centre location and can be managed via planning condition.

### 6.0 **RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE**

#### Conditions:

1	This development shall be begun within 5 years from the date of this permission.
2	The development shall be carried out in accordance with the list of approved plans set out in the table below.
3	No surface water and/or land drainage shall be allowed to connect directly or indirectly with the public sewerage network.
4	The premises shall not be used for the approved B1, A1 and A2 purposes outside the following times 08:30-17:30 Monday to Friday, the approved A3 use shall not use outside the following times 08:00-23:00 Monday to Saturday and 08:00-22:00 on Sundays.

#### Informatives:

None.