

Highway Response

Ref: 24/0862

Date: 14/11/24

PROPOSAL: PROPOSED NEW SHOP FRONT, CONVERSION OF FIRST FLOOR OFFICES AND ROOF SPACES TO CREATE 5 NO. FLATS, CONVERSION OF PART GROUND FLOOR TO PROVIDE A CLASS A3 UNIT, CAR PARK ALTERATIONS AND ASSOCIATED WORKS

SITE: 170 - 172 Commercial Road Newport South Wales NP20 2PL

Case Officer: Catherine Aldous

Highway Officer: Kevin Jackson

Highway recommendation:

Holding objections, pending further information/amendments and conditions.

Highway Comments:

The broad principles of the development raise no objections; however some details need to be addressed. For clarity we have considered each element below separately.

Flats

The flats do not appear to be detailed in terms of bed numbers. It is likely however that sufficient sustainability points to allow for a reduction in parking requirements can be demonstrated. We are therefore content to accept 6 spaces for the five flats irrespective of bedroom numbers.

The peak demand for these would be late evening and early morning which does not clash with the peak retail demand. They should however have electric vehicle charging (EVC) provision, so we would welcome allocated parking. EVC provision should be secured by way of condition.

A waste collection point and bin store are indicated, however there does not seem to be any segregation of residential and commercial streams as would be expected. Furthermore, there is potential to block what would serve as a convenient route for pedestrian and cycle access from the rear (Francis Drive) on collection days.

This could be addressed via a refuse management plan/condition, however we would need to ensure that sufficient space is allocated prior to determination and would therefore seek further detail including detailed setting out of the collection area and a (at least draft) refuse management Plan at this stage.

Covered, secure cycle parking appears to be proposed, but again the detail is lacking. It appears that the space allocated for 5 bikes is little more than 2m wide and may be insufficient spacing for 3 Sheffield racks as required. Quality is as important as quantity to encourage cycle use. Whilst this could be addressed via condition, we would advocate dealing with it now as it may affect the building size.

Retail Unit

Sufficient parking is proposed for the retail unit and includes provision for blue badge owners. Separate cycle storage is proposed but only two spaces are proposed, and the standard requires one per four staff. Additional "long stay" spaces are therefore required.

The short stay cycle provision is acceptable as proposed.

We note that the service yard has two sets of gates proposed. Neither are set back sufficiently to avoid impact on traffic or pedestrians when waiting to enter or even queueing. We would seek confirmation that the gates and fences would remain as mesh, to avoid visibility issues /objections on highway safety grounds.

The footways and crossings around the yard area will have to be rationalised as part of the access works. This will require separate licence from highways and must be undertaken at no cost to the Council. A condition to provide appropriate kerbs and footway levels will be needed.

Setting back of gates could render the service yard useless and there is nowhere for HGVs to wait safely to enter.

As the unit and yard is existing however, we would accept some compromise in terms of provision. To manage the potential impacts, a service management plan should be secured by way of condition. This should ensure queuing is avoided, vehicles enter from Francis Dr (with minimal waiting) and exit right via Albert Street under the supervision of a banksman.

Food Retail

The food retail is small and in an appropriate location/centre. As such it is only required to have parking in the vicinity and could share visitor cycle parking with the retail unit.

It should however have provision for staff cycle parking. This could be joint with the retail unit subject to suitable arrangements.

The key issue for this unit would be servicing. HGVs could theoretically stop outside, but most of the day the parking is over-subscribed. Again, a service management plan may be the most proportionate solution, but we would suggest consideration of shared use of the service yard (with appropriate linkage).

Summary

The proposals raise a number of issues that could result in objections; however, most appear to be easily addressed by design amendments and or conditions. The food element however appears to raise the greatest concerns, with no appropriate provision. We note that the applicant refers to a fall-back position where it is removed from the proposals. This would be an acceptable solution.

At this stage we would offer a holding objection pending further information, amendments and conditions.