

AJ Planning and Development

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PLANNING STATEMENT

**IN SUPPORT OF AN APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE FROM RETAIL TO
FLEXIBLE RETAIL/OFFICE USE (A1 AND A2 USE CLASSES)**

AT

34 CLYTHA PARK ROAD, NEWPORT, NP20 4NZ



PREPARED ON BEHALF OF JFN 1 LTD

MARCH 2025

Director: A.J.Ayles BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

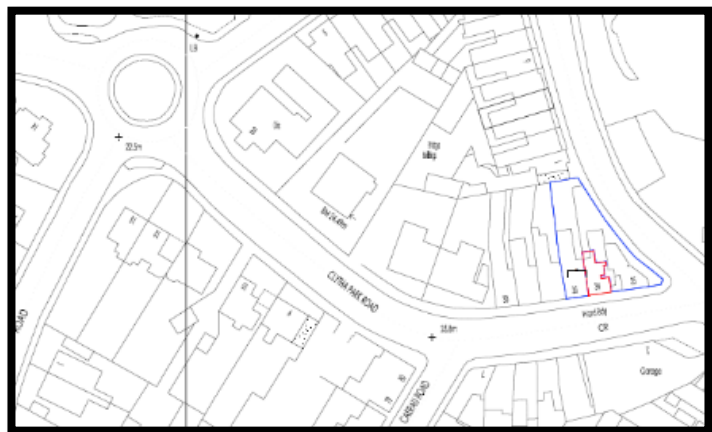
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted on behalf of the applicant in relation to a proposal for the change of use from retail to flexible retail/office use (A1 and A2 Use Classes) for the ground floor unit at 34 Clytha Park Road, Newport, NP20 4NZ.
- 1.2 The Statement provides a site description and reviews development plan policy, concluding that the application proposal should be granted on its planning merits, which would support the vitality and viability of the local centre of which it forms part.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 As shown on the site photograph below, 34 Clytha Park Road is a three-storey end of terraced property with basement level; the upper floor containing flats over the vacant ground/basement floor levels.



Planning History

- 2.2 The subject property has established A1 (retail) use, following the approval by the Council (Planning Application Reference 21/0715) for the change of use from store to retail in the ground floor/basement floor unit; permission was granted on 16th September 2021.
- 2.3 The subject property has been vacant for more than a year, having been in former use as a plant shop, Nettle & Bark (which relocated to Newport Arcade in the city centre). The applicant wishes to provide flexibility of use, similar to their adjoining unit at 33 Clytha Park Road, in providing flexibility of A2 office use. Therefore, the intention is to allow flexible A1/A2 use from the subject property.
- 2.4 Newport Council's Local Development Plan Proposals Map identifies that the application is within 'Local Centre' designation. In terms of heritage considerations, the application site is not within a conservation

area and No. 34 is not a listed building. In review of the Natural Resources Wales Flood Maps for Planning, it is indicated that the subject property is not affected by flooding.

- 2.5 The subject property forms part of a small parade of commercial units located a short distance from Newport City Centre and the train station (to the west). The local centre accommodates a fish and chip shop and takeaways, pharmacy, cafeteria, independent public house, a convenience store with a Tesco's supermarket located to the south side of Clytha Park Road opposite the application site.
- 2.6 The surrounding area is of mixed character comprising of traditional semi-detached, terraced, and flatted development, small offices to the northwest with Newport Civic Centre Office further north.
- 2.7 The area is served by short stay car parking to the main road frontage and at Godfrey Road. There are also two public car parks within the area, one to the north at Faulkner Road (approximately 140 metres away from the application site) and one to the east: Station Approach car park (approximately 250 metres away).
- 2.8 Therefore, the site is within an accessible central location close to Newport city centre and set within the commercial/office area. The ground floor unit and proposal for the addition of office use (flexible A1/A2 uses) would be supportive of the vitality of the area.
- 2.9 The proposal for the addition of office use for this unit would also be supportive of the local centre providing employment opportunities for this vacant unit.

3.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 In presenting the proposal, development plan policy of relevance includes:

National Planning Policy - Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12)

- 3.2 PPW identifies that the planning system manages the development and use of land in the public interest, prioritising long term collective benefit, contributing to improving the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. It is required to reconcile the needs of development and conservation, securing economy, efficiency and amenity in the use of land, ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources and protecting, promoting, conserving and enhancing the built and historic environment. It is informed that "*Sustainable Development*" means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.

- 3.3 National guidance informs that the planning system should create sustainable places which are attractive, sociable, accessible, active, secure, welcoming, healthy, and friendly. Development proposals should create the conditions to bring people together, making them want to live, work and play in areas with a sense of place and well-being, creating prosperity for all.
- 3.4 The development proposal for change of use of the ground/basement floor unit from retail to flexible retail/office use accords with the national planning policy aims, providing flexibility of employment use within the ground/basement floor unit, being supportive of the vitality and viability of the local centre. There are no recognisable adverse impacts presented in consideration of the natural, historic and built environment.
- 3.5 In assessment of the above, the scheme is sustainable development on the following grounds:
- Economic – the proposal will reuse a vacant unit within the local centre creating local jobs and supporting the economy during these challenging economic times. The unit was previously in use for house plant sales; however, despite over 12 months of marketing, limited interest has been shown in a retail A1 use, hence the flexibility of additional A2 use is sought under the application proposal.
 - Social – the reuse of the vacant unit, through a more diverse and flexible A1/A2 use, is supportive of the local centre function.
 - Environmental – there are no recognisable adverse impacts upon the local environment presented. The unit is small in scale and would afford accommodation for either retail or office premises within a highly accessible location for public transport, namely the main line train station and nearby bus stops at Queensway, ensuring that workers have flexibility in travel options to and from their place of work.
- 3.6 In terms of accessibility, in Paragraph 4.1.36 it is established that the availability of public transport is an important part of ensuring a place is sustainable. It enables people to undertake medium and long journeys without being dependent on having access to a car. The planning system should facilitate this by locating development where there is, or can be, good access by public transport. As above, there are two public car parks within a short walk from the application site at Faulkner Road and Station Approach. Furthermore, the site sits within the residential area affording opportunities of work to the local population.
- 3.7 Paragraph 4.3.1 advises that retail and commercial centres are hubs of social and economic activity and the focal point for a diverse range of services which support the needs of local communities. The change of use proposal is supportive of the aim and the applicant's adjoining unit (No.33) has flexible A1 and A2 use.

- 3.8 The proposal is compatible with Paragraph 4.3.2 of PPW which states that “Retail and commercial centres should be identified in development plans and include established city, town, district, local, village and neighbourhood centres, which provide a range of shopping, commercial and leisure opportunities as well as places of employment, education, civic identity and social interaction. Opportunities to live in these centres, combined with their good public transport links, make them the most sustainable places”. The application proposal allows flexibility of the ground/basement floor unit for mixed retail/office uses (A1/A2 use classes).

Newport Local Development Plan

- 3.9 The LDP sets out strategic policy aims and objectives and more localised policies for consideration of development proposals. In terms of sustainable development and economy these include:
- Objective 1 ‘Sustainable Use of Land’ which seeks to ensure that all development makes the most efficient use of natural resources by seeking to locate development in the most sustainable locations, minimise the impact on the environment and make a positive contribution to local communities. The small scale proposal for change of use is four square with these aims.
 - Policy SP1 ‘Sustainability’ which requires development proposals to make a positive contribution to sustainable development by concentrating development in sustainable locations, including empty properties. As above, the established unit lies within the local centre boundary within this highly accessible urban location on the doorstep of Newport train station and the city centre.
 - Policy SP18 ‘Urban Regeneration’ which favours urban proposals which assist in meeting regeneration goals, particularly where they are supportive of business opportunities within the urban area (criteria ii). As noted, following the previous tenants relocate to the city centre, the unit has remained empty for in excess of 12 months. Interest has been shown for A2 office use and in applying for flexible A1/A2 use, this would enhance the applicant’s ability to establish a new tenant. This is firmly in the wider interest of strengthening the local centre offer.
 - Policy GP2 ‘General Development Principles’ sets criteria against which development proposals will be permitted. This includes ensuring development does not have a significant impact on local amenity, consideration of local character and inclusive design. No external operations to the subject property are proposed.
 - Policy GP4 ‘Highways and Accessibility’ which requires all new development that is to be visited by people to be accessible in

minimising transport impacts. As established, the application site is within a highly accessible location, benefitting from the presence of public transport hubs, i.e. train station and bus station.

- 3.10 Further to the above, LDP Policy R9 '*Change of use to non-retail uses inside local centres*' identifies that, in local centres, activities in use classes A2 (financial and professional services) will be permitted where i) the concentration of such uses at ground floor level would not prejudice the viability of the centre's retailing role; ii) there will be no unacceptable adverse effects on the local highway network; iii) there would be no unacceptable affect on the local residential amenities or the general character of the area in terms of noise and disturbance or extra traffic generated.
- 3.11 In assessment of development plan policy, the following points are established:
- The change of use proposal retains the authorised retail use whilst offering flexibility of A2 use, this is consistent with the neighbouring ground floor use at No.33;
 - The A2 use would present no disturbance to neighbours in terms of odour, noise and emissions;
 - There are no recognisable adverse highway impacts with the local centre area afforded accessibility to main public transport hubs within the adjacent city centre area to the east; and
 - The development proposal for change of use from retail to mixed retail/office use is supportive of the vitality and viability of the local centre, providing employment opportunities to the local population in an accessible location.
- 3.12 Planning Policy Wales further acknowledges that A2 uses (financial and professional services) can assist in providing an appropriate mix of uses in centres which is important to the vitality and viability of a centre and to its usefulness to the population it serves. The applicant's promotion of flexible A1/A2 use for the subject will contribute to achieving the national planning policy aims and objectives accordingly.

4.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The application seeks planning permission for change of use from retail to flexible retail/office use (A1 and A2 Use Classes) for the ground/basement floor unit at 34 Clytha Park Road, Newport, NP20 4NZ.
- 4.2 The subject property has been vacant in excess of a year, having been in former use as a plant shop (which located to Newport Arcade in the city centre). The applicant wishes to provide flexibility of use (A1/A2) in

order to enhance the attractiveness of rental to a wider range of potential tenants.

- 4.3 Newport Council's Local Development Plan Proposals Map identifies that the application site is within a designated 'Local Centre'. The small-scale proposal is supportive of the development plan policy aims and objectives which promotes the vitality and viability of these areas.
- 4.4 There are no recognisable adverse impacts on the local environment, local highways network and/or any neighbouring land use. In terms of accessibility, future employees and visitors are not reliant on private transport, observing that Newport train station and the city centre bus station are both on the doorstep of the application site.
- 4.5 Therefore, it is considered that the application accords with the development plan including the policy aims and objectives of LDP Policy R9 and Planning Policy Wales. The Council is requested to approve the change of use application to allow flexible A1 and A2 use in relation to the ground/basement floor unit at 34 Clytha Park Road without delay.