Development Management - Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1671/21 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: Shop 1, Inglecroft Court, Cokeham Road, Sompting, BN15 0AN

Proposal: Change of use from Class E to dog grooming salon (Sui Generis)

Date of site visit: Assessment has been assisted using the Applicants plans; Earthlight mapping; and Google 3D of the site

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Site and Surroundings:

The application site is within a Local Shopping Parade, and is located on the south side of Cokeham Road. The building is a three storey building with retail/commercial on the ground floor and residential on the upper floors. The three storey building continues out from the rear in an reverse 'L' shape; with the whole of the upper floors of the property containing some 15 flats. The ground floor has a pharmacy occupying 2no. units to the east of shop 1. Shop 1 is currently vacant but was formerly a photographers establishment.

In the next section of commercial uses to the east the fascia signs identify the uses as an Indian takeaway; hairdresser; beauty shop/tanning studio; grocery supermarket; and a big local community skills etc., some of which may now be vacant.

The area of the locality is, in the main, residential with bungalows opposite, two storey housing nearby, and flats within the three storey blocks.

Proposal:

The proposal seeks permission for a change of use from Class E to a dog grooming salon (Sui generis).

Consultations:

Environmental Health Public Health: No adverse comments

Environmental Health Private Sector Housing: No comment

WSCC Highways: It does not seem that any off street car parking provision is provided for the benefit of the unit. However, it would be considered that the existing flexible E class use could generate similar parking demand to that of a dog grooming salon, and therefore difficult to substantiate that there will be any net impact towards available on street parking availability.

On balance the LHA does not consider that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in severe cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the NPPF (par 111), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

Planning Policy:

Policy 27 states: '…where proposals would result in there no longer being a predominant shopping use, this will only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that retail is no longer a viable use in that unit, particularly where it has remained vacant for a long period (normally a minimum of one year) and that reasonable attempts have been made to market it for retail purposes.'

I don't have the info in front of me to tell if this proposal would result in there no longer being a predominant shopping use, but if so, the vacancy/viability issue is an important point. Having said that, we may need to take a view on the time periods/extent of marketing etc. given the pandemic.

Representations: Sompting Parish Council: No objections

Support letters from 2 Pratton Ave; 37 The Lawns; 8 Boxgrove Close

- I consider a dog grooming as appropriate activity for this location
- This is a great idea for the space and would support a local person work locally
- Business has successfully run for some years in converted garage
- There has been no noise or nuisance to her neighbours
- The premises seem to be ideal for the purpose

Relevant History: None

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policy 1, 15, 27
National Planning Policy Framework 2021

Planning Assessment

Policy 27 of the Adur Local Plan states that:

"*In the areas designated as local shopping parades, shopping and other town centre uses will be supported at ground floor level but a predominant shopping use (as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended) on ground floor premises will be retained. Where proposals would result in there no longer being a predominant shopping use, this will only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that retail is no longer a viable use in that unit, particularly where it has remained vacant for a long period (normally a minimum of one year) and that reasonable attempts have been made to market it for retail purposes*."

The proposal comprises a change of use of an existing commercial premises. The relevant issues are the effects on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers and the effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The proposed use as a dog groomers will attract visiting members of the public, plus the fact that there will be a degree of retail within the unit selling items related to dogs, such as dog food and treats, and the applicant is looking to expand her stock with the selling of dog collars and leads, brushes and combs; shampoos etc. a shopfront display will be retained therefore.

The proposed layout of the unit identifies 3no. associated uses within the layout, with the dog washing area at the rear; the central area being the grooming area; and the front area being the retail space.

The planning history of the shop has shown offices; mobility products and retail. With the last use being Photographic, which may well have had persons having their photograph taken in the unit, plus likely commissions for weddings etc. Thereby not a clear retail use. Therefore the change of use to a dog grooming salon would be comparable to the previous use in some respects and would not result in the loss of a retail use.

There are no objections from Environmental Health; from the Parish Council; or from in the area neighbouring properties. In terms of access to the property, it can be accessed by public transport; car or walking, and therefore would be an appropriate use within this location. The use is thereby considered acceptable in this location.

Finally, given the Pandemic situation of this time, currently being in existence in this Country for some 18months, the Government are of the view that Planning Authorities should be endeavouring to assist the growth of businesses wherever they can.

It is considered that the dog grooming use would be an acceptable use within this parade as it would attract visiting members of the public and would provide a degree of retail use. It is on a bus route and would be accessible by pedestrians. It would not harm the function of this local parade.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Approved Plans
2. Standard time limit

Informatives:-

1. Approved following amendment

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: Eve Hearsey Date: 24.11.2021

Authorised by: Peter Barnett Date: 24 November 2021