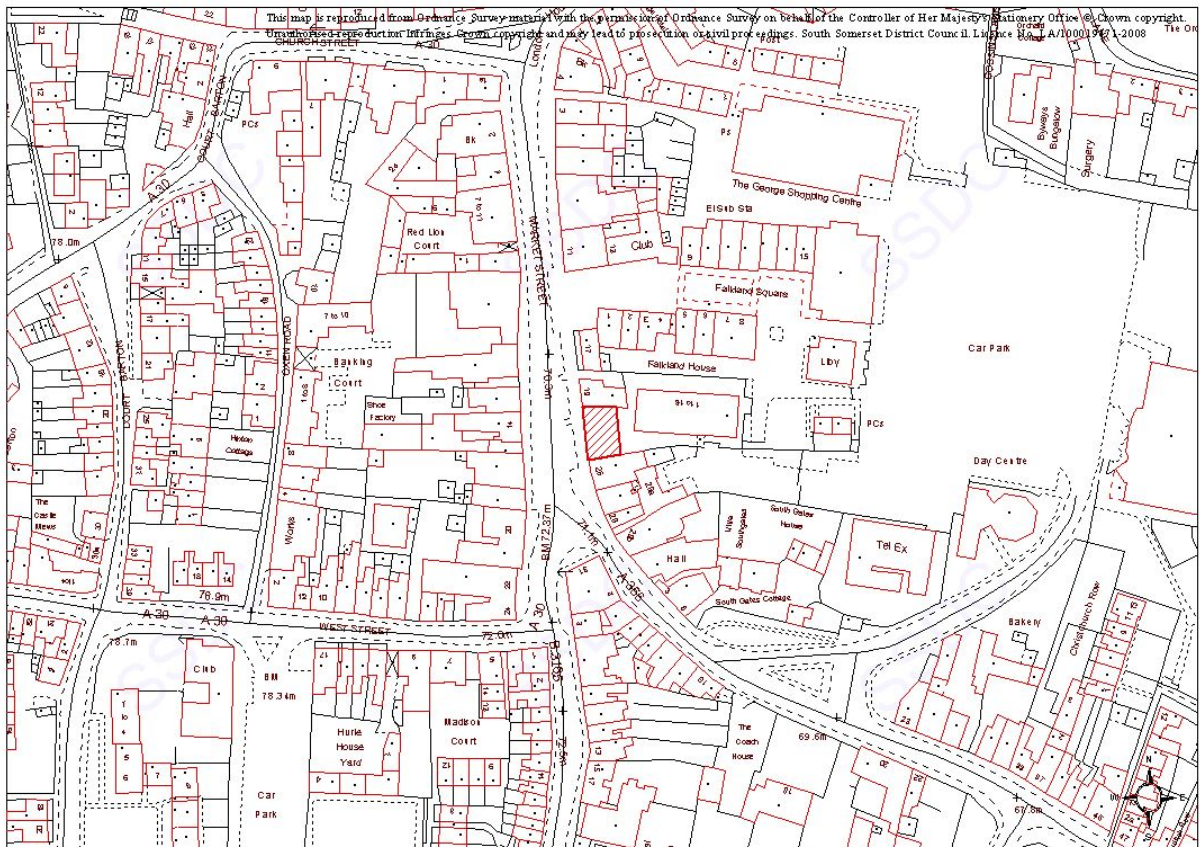


OFFICER: Steven Banks (01935) 462119 [Item 2]
APPL.NO: 08/03061/COU APPLICATION TYPE: Change of Use
PARISH: Crewkerne WARD: CREWKERNE TOWN
DESCRIPTION: The change of use of ground floor shops and first floor offices to dental surgery and dental cosmetic centre (GR 344125/109651)
LOCATION: 21 Market Street Crewkerne Somerset TA18 7JU
APPLICANT: Dr S Davis
AGENT: Mr Robert Fooks 2 Post Office Yard Drimpton Beaminster Dorset DT8 3RR
DATE ACCEPTED: 15 July 2008

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:

This application has come before the Area West Committee meeting as two Ward Members felt that the loss of the retail units on the ground floor should be investigated further. The Area Chair has accepted this application on to the agenda so that the committee can look at the overall situation of retail in the town centre.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL:



This application relates to a grade II listed two storey ham stone and rendered building with a slate roof located off Market Street in Crewkerne.

This planning application relates to the change of use of the ground floor shops (A1 use) and first floor offices (B1 use) to a dental surgery and cosmetic dental centre (D1 use).

The historic fabric of the listed building will not be altered.

HISTORY:

01/00017/COU - Use of retail shop as solicitors office - Refused at Committee 06/03/2001

POLICY:

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Relevant Development Plan Documents:

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan
Policy 49 - Transport Requirements of New Development

South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006)

ST5 - General Principles of Development

ST6 - The Quality of Development

EH1 - Conservation Areas

EH3 - Change of Use of Listed Buildings and Alterations to Listed Buildings

EH5 - Development Proposals Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building

MC4 - Other Uses in Town Centres

CONSULTATIONS:

Town/Parish Council:

Recommend refusal due to the loss of three retail units in the primary shopping area. The council considered that the dental practice could be located elsewhere on Market Street. The council also anticipate a greater demand for shops as soon as Waitrose opens.

Economic Development:

On the understanding that one of the retail premises was occupied by a solicitors practice and that the other unit is currently vacant the introduction of the dentist's surgery is favoured. Extant vacant premises in the town should provide an opportunity for other entrepreneurs who wish to commence retailing in Crewkerne.

County Highways:

No observations.

Area Engineer:

No comment.

REPRESENTATIONS:

25 neighbours were consulted and none responded.

CONSIDERATIONS:

The key consideration with this application is the location of the proposal and the impact on the town centre.

The Town Council recommend that the application should be refused due to the loss of three retail units in the primary shopping area. They further stated that the dental practice could be located elsewhere on Market Street and that a greater demand for shops might occur as soon as Waitrose opens. There is evidence of three retail units on the ground floor level. However, the difference between two and three units does not affect the economic development unit's response. The loss of three retail units in this location would not significantly affect the viability of the town centre and there are sufficient vacant premises to cater for any demand. Locating the proposal in a different location on Market Street would

not make any real difference unless it was located within the primary shopping frontage where the proposal would be less suitable. Any greater demand for shops following the opening of Waitrose could be catered for by the extant supply of vacant retail premises.

The site is within the town centres primary shopping area, but is not classed as a primary shopping frontage. Policy MC4 (Other Uses in Town Centres) states;

"The provision of a variety of uses and activities in town centres is important in maintaining their vitality and viability. Shopping is the main use but other business uses such as banks, building societies, estate agents, pubs/restaurants and clubs can add to the vitality and viability by providing services that can be combined with shopping. Similarly, community facilities providing medical, educational, arts and leisure services also enhance a centre's attractiveness.

Policy MC4, therefore, promotes a flexible approach to town centre uses outside primary shopping frontages. Non-retail uses will be supported provided that they do not result in new concentrations of such uses where the cumulative effects can cause local problems and harm the centre."

The non-residential institution accords with policy MC4 where the proposed use is within the primary shopping area but does not fall within a primary shopping frontage and will not create a concentration of non retail uses where the cumulative impact would be harmful to the vitality and viability of the centre.

The proposed site is a sustainable location for a dental facility due to public transport links. The site provides a typical location for a dental practice where members of the public can easily and sustainably reach the service.

The Economic Development Officer supports the application because a much needed health facility will be provided for the town. Visits to the dentist often result in visits to retail premises, which provides much needed revenue. On balance the economic development unit support the replacement of the two retail units with a dental practice. This support would apply to the loss of three units on the basis that one of the two units has previously been divided into two. The town has an acceptable supply of vacant premises for those in need of a retail unit and therefore the loss incurred by this application will not have any significant effect in terms of the loss of retail units. In addition to the above, professional employment will be created and patients using the facility will probably use the extant facilities in the town centre and therefore support the local economy.

The Highways Officer did not have any observations to make and therefore there are no highways concerns.

The historic fabric of the listed building will not be altered and therefore listed building consent is not required.

The proposal is consequently recommended for approval due to the above considerations.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve.

JUSTIFICATION:

The proposed change of use does not adversely affect the visual or residential amenity, preserves the character of the Conservation Area, does not adversely affect the character or setting of a Listed Building and the D1 Class Use will not create a concentration of such uses where the cumulative impact would be harmful to the vitality and viability of the town centre in accordance with the aims and objectives of Policies ST5, ST6, EH1, EH3, EH5 and MC4 of the South Somerset Local Plan (adopted April 2006) and Policies STR1 and 9 of the Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review (adopted 2000).

Application Permitted with Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To accord with the provisions of section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
