

HOLLAND ALEXANDER

Re: Submission to accompany planning application in respect of 1a Chapel Street, Bognor Regis, West Sussex – Formally Steyne Street, Bognor Regis.

The property has been known since 1984, although the premises originally traded as traditional cobblers, mending high-class leather shoes. The viability of this Street was effectively destroyed when planning permission under BR4486030-PL-JF reflectively obliterated the upper part of the Street. Instead of being a useful through road it eventually became a dead end. The immediate surrounding area was also known to the undersigned when Westside Merchants were trading on the corner of Steyne Street and West Street, now known as Seaward Court comprising approximately 65 residential flats. Former commercial activity of Westside Merchants would have helped the premises in terms of trading, as it would provide a footfall. The Hotel at the bottom of the road formally known as the Steyne House Hotel i.e. 10 West Street also ceased trading a number of years ago and subsequently is now a series of bed sits occupied mostly by students. Immediate surrounding areas has seen many changes over the year, known personally to the undersigned as the proprietor of the business formally Roberts & Abrahams 1960 to 1984 and subsequently Holland & Holland Estate Agents trading at 30 West Street until 2001.

Over the years all small shops have closed and a brief history maybe summarised below.

1a Steyne Street, now known as 1a Chapel Street, stopped trading as it was not viable to continue to do so and at that time approximately 10 years ago the property attracted no interest what so ever in terms of letting, only parties enquiry to purchase. Two significant enquiries from the owners of 10 West Street and 12 West Street who wished to develop out there properties at the time but no satisfactory price was agreed. Subsequently the premises has been laying dormant attracting vandals and was boarded up some few years ago in order to keep out squatters who also gained access. The property now stands semi derelict beside a council owned car park which serves a series of residences built by the local authority approximately 25 years or so ago.

Many years ago West Street, I understand, was part of an original high Street in pre Hotham days but since the centre of the town became more identifiable trade around the immediate areas survived but gradually declined. Starting at number 1 and walking down the Street a brief summary of the change of properties is as follows:

1 West Street originally known as West End and the 'Dinky Do Diner' was a thriving café that ceased trading some years ago and is now a small block of flats. Subsequently the premises beside which included a small sweet shop and Elficks the Pork Butchers closed in the late 80's and consent was given for residential in all cases. A firm of Chartered Surveyors existed for several years and currently now trades as a nail bar. Its financial viability is difficult to assess. This would include the old Goodwood House and the residential apartments above.



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10 & 12 West Street formally traded as a small seaside Hotel but become non viable with the change in holiday climate and the only way to gain a reasonable sale price was to apply for planning consent to turn them into residential apartments of which they still remain today.

On the top of the Steyne and on the corner of West Street was an old dress agency which ceased trading in 1980's and I understand a firm of Estate Agents, which ceased trading in the 60's.

The only sustainable and commercially viable block consist of 7, 9 & 11 West Street which comprises a café which has recently expanded into the adjoining premises, and a firm of Bookies which would probably survive anywhere. The small shop premises in between, although difficult to let had a very high turn over of tenants, thus it is not viable for landlords to sustain them. To lower the liability they apply or eventually apply for residential planning on the entire block or the ones that are difficult to let.

15 West Street which is the small shop that has remained empty for many years. This is probably too small to be commercially viable for any business.

19 West Street traded with a sole proprietor as a shop but eventually ceased trading and is now residential. Similarly next door 21 traded as a sweet shop till 1987 but again competition from the centre of town and out of town caused it to become unviable and is presently a house.

Across the road 24 West Street was an off licence for many years owned by a local family and changed hands in various trades. Lastly, trading as a tackle shop until recently but we believe ultimately proved unsustainable.

28 West Street, perhaps the most important anchor tenant, was trading as a Post Office until it lost its licence in late 1980's, the effect was a death penalty for the rest of the Street.

30 West Street traded as a firm of Surveyors and Agents commencing in 1960's to finally close in 2001 with the general deterioration of trading conditions in the immediate street area.

32 West Street survives several years as a music shop and then a hairdressers and finally became unsustainable and vacant. By chance Chichester Christian Care, a local charity seeking premises took 30 & 32 West Street. This has been used as a drop in centre, until the present time.

Across the road 23 West Street has sustained as a Fish & Chip shop business for many years and currently has to trade until 3pm on the latter parts of the week and weekends, in order to earn sufficient money to survive.

31 West Street traded as a café business for many years but finally ceased trading and has been converted into flats. 29 West Street continues as an open all hours type A1 user having to sustain long hours and 7 days a week opening in order to be viable.

For many years a large premises 35, 37 & 39 formally known as the Book Shop and Alexander Automatics lay empty and seriously deteriorated for many years and after intervention of the Council the then freeholder finally sold and it is now a block of flats.

33 West Street was a well known Butcher but finally on retirement was unable to sell after 2 years marketing, therefore applied for consent to live on the premises and as far as we are aware currently lives there today.

41 West Street was for some years a fresh Fruit & Veg Shop finally closed through lack of trade and became unsustainable and currently is a flat development. The Tyre discount premises originally trading as a garage now trading a discount tyre and battery shop continues to thrive.

43 West Street continues to trade as a shop selling European foods and stays open all hours and is open 7 days a week in order to be viable.

Finally 55 & 57 West Street former Hotel became bankrupt some years ago and was finally sold with building consent to turn into flats and trade as an investment property to this day.

The last and significant property of West Street and the corner of the Seafront i.e. The Royal Norfolk Hotel continues to thrive in the hands of a charitably organisation and again this had sustained some development of outbuildings in order to make total viability of the site.

The case for sustainability of 1a Chapel Street is virtually non-existent and whether the property was marketed for 10 days or 10 months, it would not find a trading tenant or occupier. Since the majority of the properties in that area have eventually come to residential, there is little prospect of 1a Chapel Street doing anything other than the same.

For the record we would inform the relevant parties that in spite of several attempts over the years to sell this property it has only been of interest to those seeking to purchase premises and getting planning consent to turn it in to a residence. Currently the sustained period of marketing commenced on 1st July 2007 and has been continuously offered since that time including circulation to list of prospective applicants and frequent newspaper advertisements and an excess of 20 or so accompanied viewings. Not one enquiry was interested in letting.

Yours sincerely

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