

W H A L E B A C K

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The Old Bank
257 New Church Road
Hove, BN3 4EE

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Juan Baeza
Team Leader
Planning Department
Arun District Council
Via email: juan.baeza@arun.gov.uk

04 October 2021
Ref: W 2125

Dear Mr Baeza,

Marketing Information
LU/151/21/PL 25 River Road Littlehampton BN17 5BZ

Further to our recent correspondence I write to confirm the marketing attempts in relation to the above site.

In April 2019 the applicant submitted a planning application for the demolition of the existing car garage and the construction of a residential building under application LU/126/19/PL. A marketing report was submitted with the application (Appendix A) from Michael Jones & Company, which concludes that marketing attempts for the continued B2 car garage use were unsuccessful for the following reasons:

- ¿ The building is in a poor state of repair;
- ¿ The cost to bring it in line with modern day standards would be unviable;
- ¿ Advancements in automotive technology requiring special equipment are only available at main dealerships;
- ¿ Lack of visibility and presence- most people are unaware of its location;
- ¿ The residential location of the site is likely to generate noise complaints;
- ¿ The exorbitant rateable value of the property has deterred potential occupiers.

This conclusion was supported by the LPA in the determination of application LU/126/19/PL. The delegated report states:

‘Given the submitted evidence it is considered that it has been satisfactorily demonstrated that the existing property is no longer viable in its current use, and other uses would be acceptable.’

Since the determination of application LU/126/19/PL in September 2019 (which was not objected to in terms of the principle of a change of use), the applicant has been progressing the current application for the conversion to a residential use as a comprehensive redevelopment of the site.

During that time, the factors affecting the viability of the building have not improved from the April 2019 report ' and have in fact worsened ' and it remains untenable for commercial lease. The condition of the (asbestos) roof has continued to deteriorate, is no longer weather-proof and incoming rain has now made the interior of the building unusable and also now a hazard to human health. These physical issues are also notwithstanding the impact of the covid pandemic on commercial tenancies which has significantly weakened the commercial rental market generally.

Given the marketing and commercial viability evidence of the property was accepted in 2019, and no subsequent commercial interest has come forward in the meantime (with worsening economic conditions and worsening physical condition of the building), the applicant can demonstrate conclusively that the property is not viable in its current use.

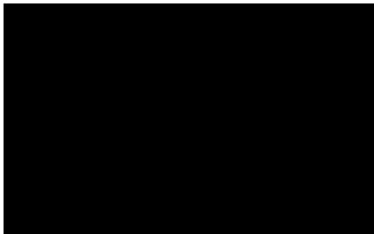
If you would like to discuss any of the above matters in more detail, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Kind Regards,



Gareth Giles FRTPI
Director

W haleback Planning & Design



Without Prejudice

20 March 2019

Dear Lee

Re: 25 River Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5BZ

Further to our recent telephone conversation I write with an update with regard to the marketing of the above mentioned property and outline some background which may be of interest to the local planning authority.

Background

The property was previously run as a garage under the name of A & M Services. The building had been run for many years by two staff members who tried to keep the business going over a short period of time and whilst they would have been keen to purchase the building they could not raise sufficient funds not only to purchase but also to refurbish and therefore the business sadly did not survive. The garage was eventually closed and you purchased the building on 13 February 2018. Michael Jones Commercial received 6 freehold offers through an extensive marketing period of which only 1 was from an existing car garage and that was at a substantially reduced figure and therefore rejected.

Marketing

As you requested we have been trying since the above date to secure a suitable tenant in the hopes of continuing the site as a car workshop however, despite our best efforts a tenant has not been found for the reasons mentioned overleaf. I can confirm that until recently my practice carried out the following in terms of marketing:

Internet – details and photos were uploaded to our website www.michaeljones.co.uk alongside EG Property Link, Rightmove, Zoopla and EACH (Estates Agents Clearing House).

Particulars – full colour particulars were available online and were circulated to a number of applicants. These particulars are enclosed for your records.

Mailing – we have targeted a number of existing garages throughout Sussex, in particular writing to nearby sales dealerships and MOT stations.

Marketing Board – a single 4' x 3' advertising board was placed on the property advertising as 'To Let'

Michael Jones & Company Commercial Department
First Floor, Chapelworth House, 22-26 Chapel Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 1BF



General Feedback

The contact we had from a number of car workshops/car sales users was that the building, in its existing form requires significant financial investment in order to bring the property up to modern day standards. For example, you can acquire business premises within the borough at between £6.50 and £7.50 per sq ft which are in substantially better repair than your building and that are cheaper to run both in terms of energy efficiency and in terms of ongoing maintenance. The modern day requirements are for purpose built and modern premises with many car repairs being described as 'clinica'l it would not be economically viable to refurbish River Road. I would note that the rateable value is also high given the property's condition. That coupled with the rent, maintenance, repairs and usual business outgoings make this virtually non viable for any small to medium sized business.

Other feedback included with the advances in technology car owners are now more likely to head back to main dealerships for services and repairs as opposed to small independents and therefore these types of businesses are only sustainable on limited rents and smaller buildings. The feedback has also been that these independent garages require main road frontage to attract new custom and River Road, is as you know, tucked behind residential accommodation with very few little commercial occupiers of note in the surrounding area.

Conclusion

We hope the above demonstrates that active marketing and dialogue with potential occupiers has been vigorous and sustained but that unfortunately on this occasion a new tenant has not been found. Given the above comments and bearing in mind that the property has now sat vacant for well in excess of 12 months it is our thought that consideration must be given to a change of use to residential. Whilst I appreciate that the local authority will not find this ideal I see that no other option that is available at this time.

I would be more than happy to discuss this matter in more depth either by telephone or by writing.

Yours sincerely,



Associate Director
Commercial Department
For and on behalf of Michael Jones & Co Ltd



Car Workshop with Outside Yard / Parking To Let
Suit variety of commercial uses (stpc)
 25 River Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5BZ
Offers Invited

Michael
Jones
 & Company

25 River Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5BZ

Location

The property has dual access via River Road and Terminus Place with both roads feeding directly off the A259 in and out of Littlehampton town centre. The towns main shopping and parking facilities are less than ½ a mile from the property and Littlehampton mainline railway station is situated at the foot of Terminus Place. Littlehampton is a popular seaside town situated approximately 19 miles west of Brighton and approximately 10 miles east of the county town of Chichester. The approximate population of the town is 55,000.

Description

The premises comprise of a car workshop/light industrial property with customer parking located on Terminus Place with further access directly off River Road. Vehicle access is via two sliding doors (9' x 7'6") as well as a pedestrian separate entrance. Internally the premises comprise of a main workshop with additional stores/office/reception and staff facilities. The previous occupiers have also built in two small mezzanine areas providing further storage if required. The premises benefit from concrete floor throughout, three phase electrics, gas fired central heating (not tested), strip lighting, part uPVC single glazed windows, a varying eaves height of 7.5' to 15'. The property requires refurbishment throughout.

Accommodation

The property has the following approximate floor areas:

Reception	14'7 x 6'1	88 sq ft
Office 1	8'9 x 11'3	99 sq ft
Office 2	7'3 x 9'6	70 sq ft
Main Workshop	60'9 x 22'2	1,354 sq ft
Mezzanine Kitchen	6'5 x 12'15	79 sq ft
Mezzanine Storage	9'3 x 9'10	85 sq ft
Total Area		1,775 sq ft

Tenure & Rent

The property is available by way of a new lease with terms to be agreed. Offers are invited on the rent.

Use

We understand the property has consent for a car workshop but interested parties are advised to check with Arun District Council as to any hours of restrictions or indeed use. The building may be suitable for future residential development, subject to gaining the necessary consents.

Business Rates

According to VOA (Valuation Office Agency Website) the subject property has a rateable value of £10,750 and should therefore be eligible for complete rates relief. Interested parties are asked to contact Arun District Councils Business Rates Department directly on 01903 737752.



Legal Fees

Each party to pay their own legal costs

Viewing

Strictly by appointment - Michael Jones Commercial.

All dimensions are approximate and quoted for guidance only. Reference to appliances and/or fixtures does not imply they are necessarily in working order or fit the purpose. Buyers are advised to obtain verification from their solicitors as to the present and intended status of the property and any fixtures and fittings.

Indemnification Act: These particulars are produced in good faith and believed to be correct, however, neither Michael Jones nor their client guarantees their accuracy nor are they intended to form any part of a contract. No person is bound by these particulars without the authority of the property and any fixtures and fittings.

VAT: Under the Finance Act 1999 VAT may be chargeable on the sale and rental of commercial property. Applicants are advised to make their own enquiries to establish whether or not VAT is chargeable prior to entering into an agreement.

Michael
Jones
& Company