

15/02411/FUL

Demolition of existing building & erection of building for retail (Class A1) &/or pet care, treatment and grooming facility (sui generis) with associated car parking, servicing and landscaping DP Furniture Express, Prince Edward Road, Tweedmouth.

CAAG checklist for assessing major applications has been used and discusses the application with reference to the following criteria.

Nature

- Nature of development (restoration? New-build? Demolition? Extension? Change of use etc.,
- Site
- Setting
- Land use

The existing 'art deco' fronted building is not a listed building. The site lies immediately adjacent to the Tweedmouth Conservation Area that extends westwards along the dock/riverside, as well as rise steeply up to the Railway Arc.

The site is situated at the very bottom of the Grade II* listed Mouchel Bridge at an important road junction. All three Bridges spanning the river and connecting Berwick to Tweedmouth and Spittal are statutorily listed buildings.

The site and existing building is low lying, appropriate to the nature and scale of buildings around it, but is situated at an important junction. It is considered by the CAAG to be a 'gateway' site.

The Tweedmouth Conservation Area and buildings immediately around the application site all complement each other in terms of scale, form, mass and associated land uses. They form part of a planned area of growth in the mid 20th century that expanded this settlement with associated housing, trades and businesses. These mixed uses all evolved around the riverside, railway arc and connecting network of roads and bridges.

The Tweedmouth Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy is a useful reference in understanding the conservation context and **overall setting** of the Tweedmouth Conservation Area.

Berwick Character Appraisal is also useful in understanding the importance of the **wider setting**; particularly views into and out of Berwick, noticeably from the listed road bridge and main approaches to the site.

The 3 conservation areas and 3 listed bridges at the mouth of the Tweed form an important **historic context and riverside setting**.

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The CAAG therefore, has assessed the proposals on how the development will affect the 'character and setting' of the listed buildings and conservation areas as a 'material consideration' in the assessment of this application.

The CAAG notes the proposed new use is a commercial use but that it involves the total demolition of the existing building. Whilst the existing building is not listed, the art deco frontage reflects the seaside nature of the town and links to other buildings constructed at the same time (e.g. Spittal pavilion and seaside shelter). The CAAG would like to see the art deco facade retained in any redevelopment proposals.

As no D&A statement has been provided and no information is set out within the application for the CAAG to establish the rationale behind total demolition and the design approach put forward for redevelopment; it has taken it that 'total demolition' of the existing building is the only way to provide this particular land use????

The CAAG therefore, has assessed the re-development proposals using the following criteria:

Spatial Analysis

- Layout
- Grain
- Density

The proposed new building does not follow the building line and street pattern in this area. The existing frontage is curved and follows the road line. Adjacent buildings also reflect the strong pattern of buildings and spaces essentially arranged around this 'gateway junction'.

The orientation of the new building and large 'set back' position within the site does **not** reflect the strongly defined street pattern, building lines, grain and density of adjacent residential/commercial buildings that pan out from this junction.

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Character Analysis

- Form
- Height
- Scale
- Massing

The building is expressed as a large single form: a 2 storey rectangular flat roofed building that is set back from the road junction. It is oppressive, domineering and monumental when sat alongside the semi detached rows of residential buildings and low level buildings at this site. It is an 'industrial scale', form and mass of building in a residential area.

Detail

- Features
- Detailing
- Materials
- Landscaping

The distinct lack of articulation, features and detailing does nothing to alleviate the overall impact of what is a huge bland; flat roofed, flat sided warehouse building – an industrial pre-form box.

The wall to window ratios are inappropriate and the materials, external cladding and treatments reflect nothing of the local vernacular and prevalent materials within the adjacent Conservation Area.

The signage is overly dominant and the 'front entrance' space and area that is within the public realm/highway? is a concern regarding external treatments, hard and soft landscaping (that is more akin to an industrial park) and the potential to 'fill this external space' with cars and clutter (i.e. trolleys, further advertising and larger products/offers placed immediately outside the store entrance).

The combination of which will only add to the inappropriate nature and design of the building and external space that belongs on an industrial estate and not at an historic road junction adjacent to listed buildings and conservation areas.

Conclusion/recommendation.

The CAAG wishes to **object** to the application as presented and considers it is not an appropriate form of development within this particular sensitive location and 'gateway site'.

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The CAAG does not think due consideration has been given to the historic location or conservation area setting of significant listed buildings and spaces (no Design and Access Statement ????) that is a material consideration.

The application should be refused; as it will have a detrimental impact on the character and setting of the Tweedmouth Conservation Area; character and setting of the listed bridges, as well as affect the wider riverside setting and important views from Berwick Conservation Area.