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**Alfa Laval, Great West Road, Brentford, TW8 9AX**

Prior notification for change of use from basement to 13<sup>th</sup> floor from offices (Class B1a) to residential use (Class C3) to include a total of 190 self-contained dwellings.

**Ref.: PAC/2019/3005**

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**Comments from Brentford Voice**

**Summary**

**Prior approval should be refused for this proposal on the grounds of possible site contamination and traffic and highways issues.** (see paras. 1 – 3 below)

**There may be other reasons why this proposal should be refused.** (paras. 3 - 7)

**The application for prior approval makes no reference to the intended use(s) of the curtilage of the building.** (para. 8 – 9)

**The location of the building would not usually be acceptable for residential use but it has been a blot on the townscape for about 22 years. The submission of a full planning application would provide the opportunity to require a range of community, infrastructure, and environmental benefits.** (paras. 11 – 14)

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**We ask you to take account of the following comments in considering this planning application:**

- 1 We understand that this site was not included within the Article 4 Direction which came into effect in January 2018. At that time that there was no good reason to believe that Hyundai would not proceed with the implementation of their planning permission for a flagship car showroom.
- 2 We believe that the following issues should be taken into account in determining applications for prior approval from offices to residential.

**Flooding**

We accept that this is very unlikely to be an issue in this case and this is confirmed by the Environment Agency's note that accompanies the application.

**Site Contamination**

We recall that at the time of the submission of the application (P/2011/1133) for the Hyundai showroom there was a mention of possible asbestos contamination. The report on contamination that accompanied that planning application should be reviewed and re-submitted.

**Prior approval should not be given on the grounds of possible site contamination.**

### **Traffic and Highways**

From the limited plans that accompany the application it may be that a very limited amount of parking (perhaps 26 spaces) will be provided on the ground floor. There will be serious traffic and highway issues arising from the provision of 190 flats. These issues include impact on the local road network including junctions, access and egress to and from the site, and inadequate off street parking.

We are concerned about the traffic generation from the site and its impact on the junction with the A4. Again, it is unclear from the plans but it appears that vehicle access to and from the development may be via the entrance to the adjacent Premier Inn car park.

Our understanding is that if prior approval was given then residents within the development may not be able to receive parking permits because it appears that the site itself does not lie within a CPZ. This may nevertheless place intolerable additional pressures on very limited on-street parking e.g. through overnight parking. We trust that the department responsible for the issue of parking permits would not simply add the address of this site to the adjacent CPZ. Extension of the CPZ to include the eastern side of Brook Lane North would be required.

### **Prior approval should not be given on the grounds of traffic generation and the implications for local parking and the highway network.**

- 3 In the event that these considerations are insufficient to require the submission of a full planning application there may be other arguments that can be brought into play.

#### **The building is no longer in use for offices.**

- 4 The commencement of development on the site (part demolition, ground works etc.) may mean that the change of use to car showroom etc. has already taken place. The material operations involved would certainly have had the effect of keeping alive the original permission.
- 5 It is possible that “prior approval’ permitted development rights do not apply to developments that have already commenced. A High Court decision in 2017 may be of some relevance in this case. A summary of this case is available [here](#). (*Winters v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor. 2017*)

#### **The site was not previously entirely in office use.**

- 6 The committee report that considered the original planning permission (P/2011/1133) for conversion of the tower to the Hyundai showroom noted that the building had then been

vacant since about 1997. It also noted that the building originally accommodated a range of uses: 7,107 sq. m. of offices, 2,806 sq. m. of industrial use, and 1,533 sq. m. of warehousing. This may have referred partly to one of the other buildings on the site but it appears that the reference is to the building currently under consideration. We have no evidence but perhaps the previous industrial use fell within use class B1(C).

- 7 This may mean that prior approval is not appropriate for a building that was not previously used entirely for offices.

#### **The curtilage of the site**

- 8 The curtilage of the tower includes a substantial area of land that may be at least equivalent to the footprint of the building itself. The application for prior approval gives no information on the proposed use(s) of the curtilage.
- 9 There is a clear need to give full consideration to appropriate use(s) for the curtilage of the building.

#### **The Draft GWC Local Plan**

- 10 It is unfortunate that this is one of the very few buildings in the GWC that is not specifically mentioned in the Plan nor in the Site Allocations (Volume 4). This site, in the central part of the GWC, is in a part of the A4/M4 corridor that suffers greatly from poor air quality, high levels of noise, and a particularly poor public realm.

#### **Conclusion**

- 11 The building as it stands today has been an eyesore for over 20 years for those living in both its immediate vicinity and in the wider area to the north and south in Brentford. It also detracts from the urban landscape of Brentford as seen by those travelling along the A4 and M4.
- 12 In this particular case, if good reason can be found to require a full planning application, it may be pragmatic to accept the residential use of the building and to seek appropriate uses for the curtilage of the building.
- 13 The development should be conditioned to ensure more acceptable features such as:
  - business use in the elevation facing the A4/M4 corridor
  - a high standard of finishing to the building
  - the highest standards of mitigation for noise and air quality problems
  - an acceptable level of parking provision within the development

- no advertisement displays on the exterior of the development
- an acceptable range of housing unit sizes
- provision for a substantial amount of truly affordable housing

14 Section 106 obligations could require money for local parks, restrictions on off street parking, the introduction of a CPZ along the eastern side of Brook Lane North, contributions to a carbon offset fund, money for greening the Great West Corridor etc.