

Application Number: FYR14/0053/F

Minor

Parish/Ward: March Town Council/March West Ward

Date Received: 22 January 2013

Expiry Date: 19 March 2013

Agent/Applicant: Mrs C Lilley, Premier Properties Management Ltd

Proposal: Change of use from A1 to A2 use at 31 High Street, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 9JA

Location: 31 High Street, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 9JA

Reason before Committee: This application is before committee as an elected Member has an interest in the site. Should this not have been the case it would have been determined under delegated powers by Officers.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of an existing shop from A1 to A2 use at 31 High Street, March, Cambridgeshire.

The site is located within the Conservation Area of March, in an area designated as being within the Primary Shopping Frontage (PSF).

The key issues to consider are;

- Policy Considerations;
- The impact of the development on the vitality and viability of the town centre;
- Impact on Amenity.

The application is in accordance with sections 2 and 17 of the National Planning Policy Framework and policy CS6 of the emerging Core Strategy. Whilst the proposal does not strictly accord with policy S3 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan, it is considered that on balance, the nature of the use will ensure continued promotion of the viability and vitality of the town centre shopping area and therefore also accords with the NPPF.

In addition the proposal is not anticipated to adversely impact the amenity of neighbouring properties or the area in general and is considered to respect the character and appearance of the area.

The recommendation is to approve the application

2. HISTORY

Of relevance to this proposal is:

2.1 No relevant or recent history

3. **PLANNING POLICIES**

3.1 **National Planning Policy Framework:**

Paragraph 2: Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan.

Paragraph 14: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 17: proactively drive and support sustainable economic development.

3.2 **Emerging Fenland Core Strategy:**

CS16: High Quality Environments

3.3 **Fenland District Wide Local Plan:**

E8: Alteration and Extension to existing buildings

4. **CONSULTATIONS**

4.1 ***Town Council***

Recommend approval

4.2 ***CCC Highways***

No objections.

4.3 ***FDC Environmental Protection FDC Conservation Officer***

No objections

No objections but makes observations in respect of the poor external appearance of the building.

4.4 ***Local Residents***

No comments received within the consultation period.

5. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

5.1 The site is located within the Conservation Area of March, in an area designated as being within the Primary Shopping Frontage (PSF). The shop incorporates approximately 10m of shop front and is set centrally within the March High Street PSF.

6. **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

6.1 The key issues to consider are;

- Policy Considerations;
- The impact of the development on the vitality and viability of the town centre
- Impact on Amenity;

6.2 **Policy Considerations –**

The proposed use is A2 (financial or professional services). The existing permitted use of the unit is A1 retail use. The proposal has been considered in line with the NPPF and existing and emerging local planning policies namely, S3, E8 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan and CS6 and CS16 of the emerging Core Strategy. Paragraph 17 of the NPPF is clear that proposals for sustainable economic development should be supported.

The proposal would generate employment and can be considered as economic development. Section 2 of the NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to promote town centre competitiveness, vibrancy, vitality and viability, including ensuring a viable mix of appropriate uses.

Policy S3 will not normally allow non-retail uses at ground floor level within the Primary Shopping Frontage (PSF) and seeks to ensure that the dominance of non-retail uses is resisted in order to retain the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the town centre. However, S3 will consider an A2 use subject to the proposal retaining the character and attractiveness of the town centre as a whole, its vitality and viability and the suitability of the site for the proposed use.

Policy CS6 of the emerging Core Strategy allows for a flexible mix of uses but makes provision to exercise a degree of control over changes of uses of ground floor units within the PSF. The policy outlines that units within the PSF should be retained *predominantly* for a retail purpose. Furthermore, it is noted that development for a non-retail use at ground floor level within a Primary Retail Frontage will be supported provided that there is no impact on the vitality and viability of the centre as a whole.

Local policies E8 of the Local Plan and CS16 of the emerging Core Strategy seek to ensure that when considering proposals for new development, issues including the scale, style, character, appearance and amenity are taken into consideration.

6.3 Impact on vitality and viability of town centre –

The proposal will see the introduction of a non-retail use into the PSF along High Street, March. The existing retail shop occupying the site is in the process of closing down. The application seeks an A2 permission to allow for an estate agents/ lettings agency.

A mixture of uses exists in the High Street PSF area of March, of which a majority is A1 retail use. In fact approximately 82% of the frontage is taken up with A1 Retail. It is therefore considered that the introduction of an A2 use would not significantly reduce the level of retail use along this area of the PSF and would not adversely affect the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole.

The existing shop front is proposed to be retained thereby making it easier in the future for the premises to revert back to an A1 use should the A2 use cease. Taking account of existing uses on the surrounding shopping frontage, it is considered that the proposal is unlikely to reduce the attractiveness of the PSF to shoppers. In line with policy CS6 of the emerging Core Strategy it is considered that the introduction of the proposed use in this area of the High Street would comply with the requirement to retain a 'predominant' retail use area.

6.4 Impact on Amenity

In considering policies E8 and CS16 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan and emerging Core Strategy respectively, the introduction of the business is not anticipated to give rise to any amenity problems in terms of noise nuisance, environmental concerns or other adverse impacts.

6.5 Other Matters

During consideration of the scheme it has become apparent that the 'planning unit' has not been fully annotated in the submission; in that the access and parking area to the rear has not been included with in the application site. Whilst this has no implications for the recommendation as made it is considered essential to ensure the decision is robust to seek appropriately amended plans and undertake the necessary consultation/publicity. Rather than delay the application coming before committee Officers will address this in parallel to the committee process and the recommendation will be subject to resolving this issue, which is seen as a matter of detail rather than fundamental to the consideration of the scheme.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The application is in accordance with sections 2 and 17 of the National Planning Policy Framework and generally accords with policy CS6 of the emerging Core Strategy. Whilst the proposal does not strictly accord with policy S3 of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan, it is considered that the nature of the use will ensure continued promotion of the viability and vitality of the town centre shopping area and will not introduce a dominant non-retail use into the locality.

On balance therefore, and taking account of the site, surroundings and the merits of this application, it is considered that the proposal would contribute positively to the vitality and viability of the area and therefore accords with the NPPF, the emerging Core Strategy and elements of the Fenland District Wide Local Plan.

In addition the proposal is not anticipated to adversely impact the amenity of neighbouring properties or the area in general and is considered to respect the character and appearance of the area.

Accordingly, this application is recommended for approval.

8. RECOMMENDATION

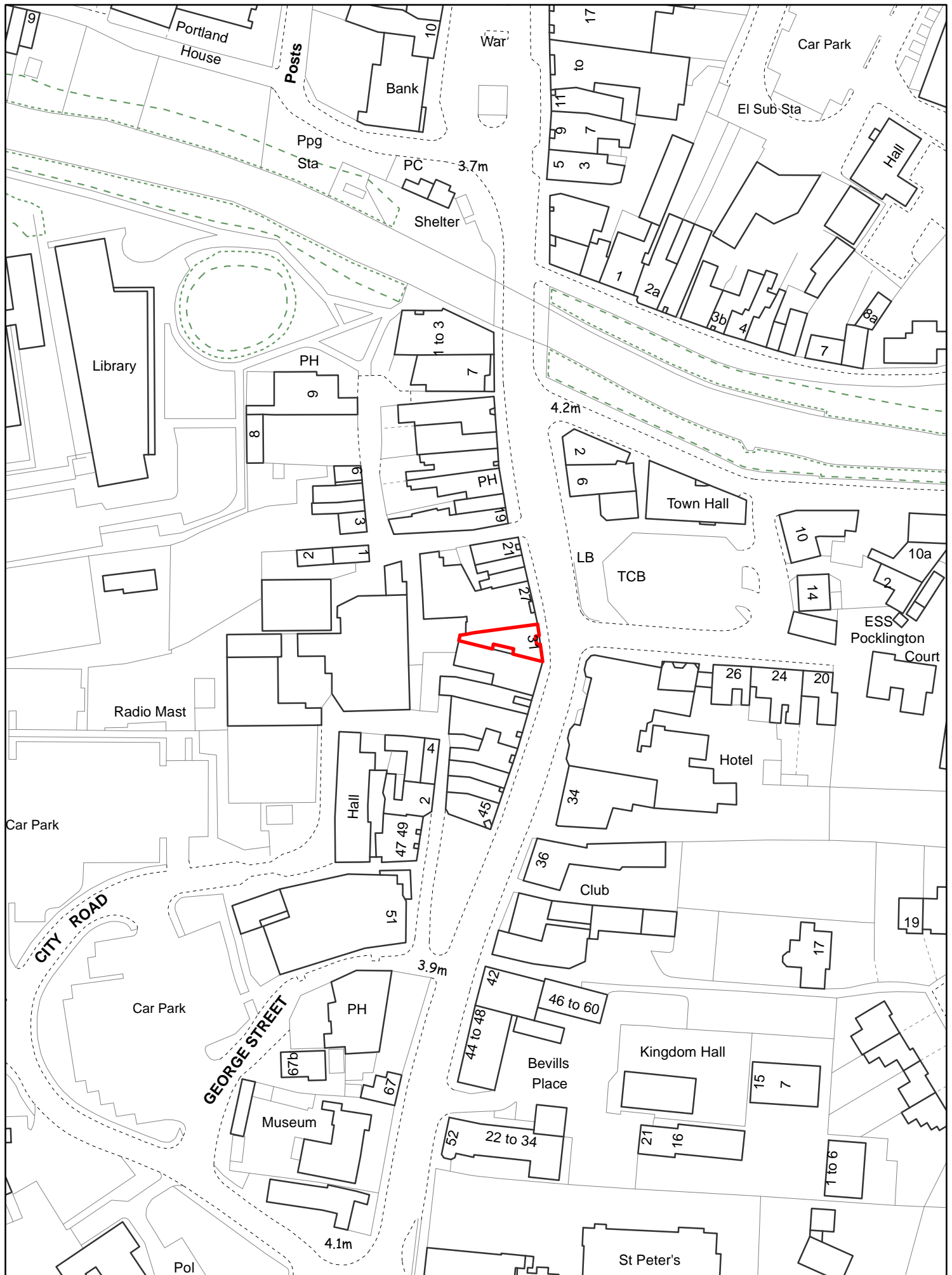
Grant subject to receipt of amended plan detailing the planning unit, expiry of consultations/publicity and the following conditions

- 8.1 **The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.**

Reason - To ensure compliance with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 8.2 **Approved Plans**

Reason - To safeguard the visual amenities of the area.



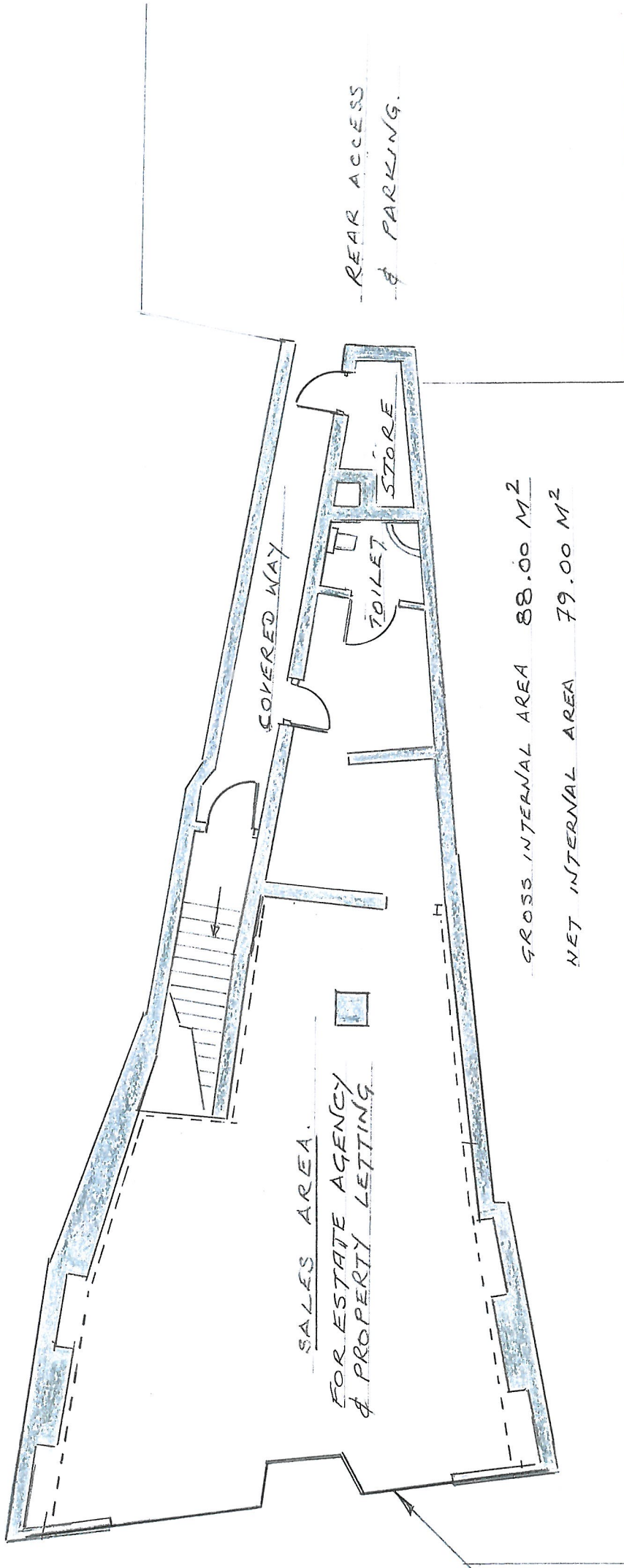
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Scale = 1:1,250



KEY - - - - - WALL LINING



SALES AREA.
FOR ESTATE AGENCY
& PROPERTY LETTING

GROSS INTERNAL AREA 88.00 M²
NET INTERNAL AREA 79.00 M²

REAR ACCESS
& PARKING.

EXISTING SHOPFRONT
RETAINED WITH NO
ALTERATIONS.

TITLE	31 HIGH STREET
SCALE	MARCH PE15 9JA 1:100
DRAWN	11.1.2014 DW.