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CHARTERED TOWN PLANNERS

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PLANNING STATEMENT

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:-

Change of use from Sui Generis car sales to Class E Commercial, Business and Service.

SITE LOCATION:-

Donnington Cars, 37 Erleigh Road, Reading RG1 5NB

PLANS AND DOCUMENTS:-

25.03.01 1:1250/1:100 @ A3 - Composite location, floor plans and elevations.

Planning Statement (this document).

1.00 Considerations

1.01

The site is a 'sui generis' car sales business situated on the northeast side of the junction of Erleigh Road and Donnington Road. Trading under the name Donnington Cars the unit is located within a defined 'Local Centre' (Erleigh Road as defined by policy RL1 of the Local Plan). This comprises a range of shops and other commercial units. The site does not form part of a 'Key Frontage' as defined on the map accompanying the Local Plan (see extract overleaf). Residential units are located on Erleigh Road and more particularly along terraced surrounding streets.



PHOTO 1. The corner site and forecourt car sales area. Photo courtesy of Google.

PRINCIPAL. Anthony J Thorpe BA(Hons) MRTPI Tony Thorpe Associates are recognised by Business Link Berkshire & Wiltshire as Accredited Service Providers.

1.02

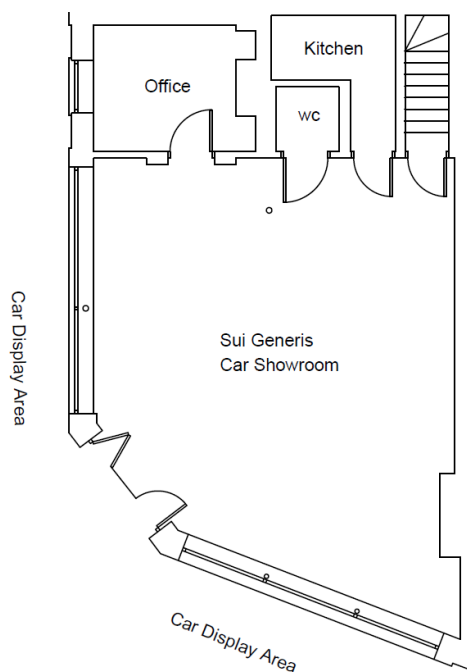
The application site covers the ground floor, basement and private forecourt of 37 Erleigh Road. It does not include the first floor and above which has its own independent access from Donnington Road. Donnington Cars is a 'sui-generis' car sales use that has traded continuously from this site since 1965. The Local Plan at 4.6.16 defines the existing use as an unacceptable 'non-centre use' whereas the current application is for an acceptable 'centre use' which, in broadening the range of local facilities, is regarded as an 'acceptable improvement' by policy RL1.

1.03

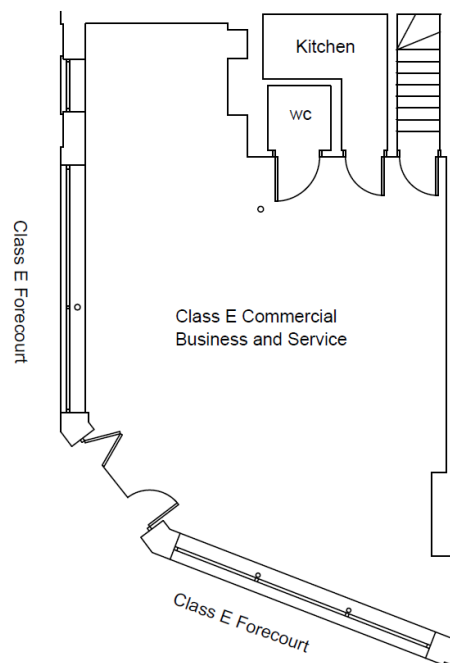
Erleigh Road is a local distributor road that passes through the established residential area and local centre. It is subject to a 20mph speed limit. On street parking is restricted by double yellow lines with parking bays that are controlled by resident permits and limited stay (pay at meter) parking. The highway frontage of the site is used exclusively for the display of cars for sale (see photo 1.) and there is no on-site parking provision for either customers or staff.

1.04

The site is well served by public transport and offers opportunities for customers to travel by non-car modes, in particular on foot from the surrounding dense residential area and via the Erleigh Road cycle route. There are adequate on-street parking controls to ensure that a lack of parking for the development does not have an adverse impact on highway safety. Accordingly the car free nature of the development should be accepted.



Existing Ground Floor



Proposed Ground Floor

Drawing 1. Comparison of existing 'sui generis' car sale use with proposed layout for class E use.

1.05

For the avoidance of doubt the proposed change of use does not involve any changes to the exterior of the building or illumination of advertisements. The established commercial use of the forecourt will continue and if (for example) the unit is let for the sale of food and drink then it is anticipated that tables and chairs may be positioned there in a similar fashion to nearby Café Yolk and the Monkey Lounge.



Local Plan boundary of Erleigh Road Local centre edged in black. 'Key Frontages' in purple line, application site marked by red dot.

1.06

The site does not form part of the 'key frontage' (see above) and taken together with the distinct planning gain derived from the closure of the 'bad neighbour' sui generis car sales use this represents a material planning gain that weighs heavily in favour of an open Class E approval. This also supports the Government objective of a 'permissive' system that provides greater flexibility for adaptation to changing demand within units and greater diversity and flexibility of uses over the course of the day, into the evening and over time to support the recovery of local centres from the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.07

For the above reasons we respectfully request the Council to give favourable consideration to this proposal in the public interest.

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Tony Thorpe BA(Hons) MRTPI DipConsHistEnv(RICS)

AJT/SB/030425