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From: Caroline Goldsack [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 September 2016 15:12
To: Phillips, Kate
Subject: Concerns re Application Ref 2016/1355/P - 82 Heath Street
Importance: High

Dear Kate

I am writing further to our conversation regarding Application Ref 2016/1355/P – 82 Heath Street.

1. I represent the Hampstead Village Business Improvement District (BID), which is currently in formation following a ballot of 243 local businesses in Hampstead Village www.hampsteadvillagelondon.com/BID. The BID aims to improve the collective trading environment for all businesses in Hampstead, working in coordination with Camden Council.
2. The matter of the planning application for 82 Heath Street was brought to our attention yesterday, 5 September 2016.
3. We are concerned about the plans to change the usage of 82 Heath Street from Class A1 (retail use) to Class D1 (to provide additional space for use by Heathside Preparatory School).
4. This is one of the oldest, aesthetically attractive and architecturally interesting retail premises in Hampstead Village.
5. This application has been made at an early stage before the BID has had the opportunity to consider the commercial retail future of upper Heath Street. The shops on this road have been suffering many years of adverse trading conditions brought about by a variety of factors including the heavy volume of traffic flowing along Heath Street and a lack of footfall, partly on account of the dearth of retail attractions for shoppers higher up the hill.

6. Nevertheless there are a number of successful retail units and as a BID it is important for us that occupancy by commercial businesses is encouraged in this part of Heath Street.
7. Our concern at this time is that if this permission is granted, the shopping provision will be further reduced on a part of Heath Street which is already suffering from retail premises closures. This will make the remaining units less commercially attractive to retailers.
8. The school already occupies the ground floor premises at 76 Heath Street. Whilst the planning application 2014/5596/L (granted) included plans for a new retail unit (Class A1) with school premises to the rear, the premises does not appear to be being used for retail purposes at all. The shop front windows are opaque, with roller blinds installed.
9. We are concerned that any successful application may pave the way for similar steps to be taken with 82 Heath Street, leading to the loss of another shop on this stretch of the road. Any further reduction in the number of retail outlets will greatly reduce the viability of upper Heath Street as a shopping street.
10. We have been informed unofficially that a garden shop is proposed for part of the ground floor at 82 Heath Street. This is not evidence that the retail unit size will be viable in the longer term. If the unit is not viable this will also affect the surrounding retail premises, as a widening gap between retail units is likely further to reduce footfall.
11. Hampstead Village BID intends to obtain professional advice on, and research into, the future of the retail viability of upper Heath Street and will share this information with Camden Council in order to assist the Planning Department and Committee in making future decisions regarding this area.
12. We would therefore ask you to delay making a decision about approving change of use until this research has taken place. Whilst the school is part of the business community and falls within the BID area, as a BID we are very concerned about trading issues on Heath Street and need to ensure that the business prospects of other businesses in the area are not adversely affected by the school's plans.
13. We also raise the observation that Heath Street is ill-suited to the additional vehicle and pedestrian traffic associated with the school run. It is a narrow street with heavy traffic flow, narrow pavements and no parking provision. There are significant congestion and road safety issues at school drop-off and pick-up times.
14. We ask you to the planning application to your Members and Committee to ensure that a properly informed decision is made on the proposed change of use.

I would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of this communication.

With kind regards

Caroline

Caroline Goldsack
Hampstead Village BID
