

27-28 Windmill Street, Gravesend DA12 1AX

Ground floor Offices

Proposed change of use from an estate agency, Class Ec(ii) to education, Class F1a.

Description

The application is for a change of use of the ground floor which has been used as an estate agent's office for 30 plus years prior to the estate agency closing it's business.

The ground floor is arranged as having two glass shop fronts and staircase rising from roughly the middle of the shop to the upper floors. The property would have been two shops at one time. At the front of the shop the original diving wall has been removed.

There is an enclosed passageway between the walls of the original shops at the rear which leads to a door to the rear car park. The passageway is roofed over with clear Perspex sheeting so providing natural daylight to windows to the left side shop unit.

The upper floors are arranged as office rooms and will remain in office use.

Within the immediate parade of commercial buildings there are a variety of uses, a number of uses including professional services such as estate agents, insurance agents, mortgage agent, accountant and also retail uses such as a cycle shop, furniture store, pharmacy, restaurants and some vacant shops.

Proposal

As well as the change of use to education, the tuition of school aged children and some adults, the other works are as shown on the application plans being to remove some existing walls that divide up the space and to install stud walls in different positions internally to create classroom areas, reception, storage and to form a wc.

In order to ensure there is sufficient means of escape, one of the windows to the left side of the building is proposed to become a doorway that leads to the internal walkway to the rear of the building.

There are no external alterations required other than an application for a business fascia sign which will be submitted separately.

The main times when tutoring will take place are from 4pm to 8pm on weekdays and from 9am to 6pm on Saturdays. No Sunday opening.

Tutoring can be one to one tutoring or up to 7 persons in a classroom at a time. Generally, the length of time for a tutoring session is 1 hour to 1.5 hours.

The children are attending local schools within Gravesham and live in the area of Gravesham. Most will walk to their class or cycle.

To the front of the shop there is a wide forecourt which offers scope to install cycle racking. However, this area is within a Conservation Area and on the opposite side of the road there are 5 cycle hoops installed with the potential to chain up 10 cycles so there is sufficient provision here for the students to secure their cycles if they travel by bike to the class. If it's considered necessary to install secure cycle racking outside the premises using the forecourt, the applicant can do this.

For children arriving by car there are places outside where a car can briefly stop to drop off a child. However, this area is meant to provide a loading and unloading area and some disabled parking bays so on many occasions there will be no room to drop children off. The open-air car park at Lord Street is a short walk away and offers easy access parking and the ability for a car to drive in., drop off a child and drive away. Lessons last for some time, an hour plus so a parent is going to find a parking space rather than wait outside the premises.

The business is very successful and well respected and is growing organically with increasing demand for tuition services. The existing premises is too small to accommodate the increasing student numbers.

Planning

This section of Windmill Street is part of the Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area. There are no external changes proposed by this application so there is no impact on the Conservation Area other than if cycle storage is required.

This area of the town is a secondary shopping and mixed business area. There are no restrictions on changing the use to education.

Design

The alterations proposed are internal and do not affect the exterior of the building. The changes are required to enable the provision of appropriately sized classes and for fire escape reasons.

Access

The location is readily accessible by public transport, bus services run past the front of the property and there are bus stops close by for all bus services in the area that come to the town centre. Most students will walk or cycle to their class as they do at present to the current applicants' premises also within Windmill Street at Paro Tuition, 62 Windmill Street.

The location is readily accessible by public transport.

END