

Re: APP/18/00706 - Change of use from a former bank (Class A2) to a hot food takeaway (Class A5) - 39 West St

I am writing on behalf of Havant Civic Society regarding our concerns about this proposed change of use for 39 West Street.

Our initial concern is about the proposed opening hours. Havant Borough Council Planning Policy DM 5 paragraph 6. permits such change of use, as long as "The development would not cause unacceptable disturbance to the occupiers of nearby residential property at times when activity in the immediate vicinity would otherwise be at a relatively quiet level."

Whilst the applicants' Planning Design and Access Statement 6.26 describes the site "as within a busy town centre", this is only really true during the normal working day. Anecdotal evidence suggests that, on a recent Wednesday night at 10 pm., barely a dozen people were visible on the town centre streets and it's doubtful if Friday and Saturday nights are significantly busier. With the exception of Dominos, none of the other major food outlets or pubs in the town centre are open beyond 11pm Sunday to Thursday or midnight on Friday and Saturday. Dominos itself opens until 11.30 pm. Sunday to Thursday and until 12.30 am. on Friday and Saturday. We can see no justification in allowing this proposed unit to open any later than the hours that Dominos are currently allowed. The downside is obvious, Dominos will seek to trade for longer and so may Wetherspoons and others, to the detriment of a greater number of town centre residents.

Also in the Planning Design and Access Statement (6.18 on page 16), the applicants are misleading in stating that the nearest residential units are in Brockhampton Lane. They are in fact directly across West Street, starting at number 70 and residential dwellings continue more or less continuously down both sides of West St to the level crossing gates nearly half a mile away.

Another concern is parking. Planning policy for a unit of this size equates to a requirement of seven spaces. The unit itself has three but the application states that these will be for staff only. There are five short term spaces near to the site referred to in the Planning Design and Access Statement (6.33 on page 19) but during the day these are likely to be in use by the general public and after that, are probably used by local residents for overnight parking. Thus, they are not a reliable source of parking spaces. The nearest truly public parking spaces are in the Bulbeck Road car park; far enough away to deter a number of potential customers and to encourage casual parking on yellow lines, etc. This can already be seen elsewhere in the town, e.g. outside Barclays Bank in East Street and in South Street by people using Lloyds Bank, etc.

A final concern is the litter that is generated by all fast food outlets. Unless Havant Borough Council can afford to increase its budget for street cleaning, then a more creative and proactive approach is required. We understand, that some Local Authorities insist that fast food clear all dropped litter within a specific radius of the outlet, as well as cleaning spillage from grease, milkshakes, etc. Perhaps it is time for Havant to adopt a similar policy.

Alongside these planning concerns is the worry that, another fast food outlet is likely to have a detrimental effect on on the obesity of the local population. This, in turn, will be of concern to local doctor's surgeries that are already severely stretched.

Overall, we believe there are enough issues around this application to justify it going before the Development Committee, not left as a delegated decision by the relevant case officer.

Christopher Evans
Committee Member Planning - Havant Civic Society

Original sent via email at 11:18 on August 6th, 2018