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| PLANNING DEPARTMENT DACORUM DISTRICT COUNCIL | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|------|--|------|-------|------|
| Ref. | | | Ack. | | |
| C.P.O. | D.P. | | W.C. | Admin | File |
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| Received 10 MAR 1983 | | | | | |
| Comments | | | | | |
| Your reference | | | | | |

T H Jennings Ltd
71/72 The Stow
HARLOW
Essex
CM20 3AH

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER**

10 MAR 1983

File Ref.

Refer to C.P.O.

Cleared

Our reference

T/APP/5252/A/82/1156

Date

9 MAR 1983

Gentlemen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971, SECTION 36 AND SCHEDULE 9
APPLICATION NO:- 4/0749/82

1. I refer to your appeal, which I have been appointed to determine, against the decision of the Dacorum District Council to refuse planning permission for the change of use of 5 Henry Wells Square, Grovehill, Hemel Hempstead from laundrette to betting office. I have considered the written representations made by you and by the Council and also those made by the Dacorum Chamber of Trade and Commerce and by interested persons. I inspected the site on 26 January 1983.
2. From my inspection of the site and its surroundings and from the written representations made I am of the opinion that the main consideration in this case is the impact of your proposed change of use on the viability of the Grovehill neighbourhood shopping centre and on the facilities available to local residents.
3. You do not dispute that the premises are in an area allocated for primarily shopping purposes. It appears to me that the policy in the deposited Dacorum District Plan which applies to this shopping centre is Policy 90 which indicates that non-shop uses will normally be accepted provided that there is no general shortage of shops in the area and that the proportion of non-shop uses in the immediate vicinity is not already excessive.
4. The existing Grovehill shopping centre is very small comprising a supermarket, a laundrette (the appeal premises but still in business as a laundrette at the time of my inspection), a greengrocer, a newsagent and a chemist. The Council's figures, which you do not dispute, show that this small shopping centre serves a population of about 8,700 and that in terms of shops per head of population Grovehill is poorly served by comparison with other neighbourhoods in Hemel Hempstead. I note that the Council has recently granted planning permission for a new development, including 6 shops and a betting office, to the north of Henry Wells Square. Work on this has not yet begun but clearly the position will have changed when it is completed; I have, of course, no idea when this will be.
5. It seems to me that such a small shopping centre is particularly vulnerable to the loss of retail units. I accept that a laundrette is not a Class I use but it is my opinion that a laundrette provides the sort of service which is appropriate in a small neighbourhood centre whereas a leisure use, such as a betting office, might be considered something of a luxury. If the laundrette is to go out of business I consider that it should if possible be replaced by a similar domestic type of use or by a shop.
6. As regards Policy 90, the proportion of non-shop uses is not already excessive and would not be increased by your proposal but I do consider there to be a general

shortage of shops in the area at present. In my opinion, therefore, the introduction of a betting office into this neighbourhood centre would detract from its attractiveness as a shopping centre to the detriment of its viability and of the facilities which it provides for local residents.

7. I have studied the other appeal cases to which you have drawn my attention but none of these concerns a New Town neighbourhood shopping centre which, because of the way in which the communities are planned, I consider need special treatment. You also drew my attention to the much larger shopping centre at Shenley Road, Woodhall Farm Estate which I visited in the course of my inspection. It may well be, as you suggest, that this attracts people from Grovehill but it is in a separate neighbourhood and is well over a mile away for many Grovehill residents. I do not consider that it takes the place of the Grovehill neighbourhood shopping centre except perhaps for carborne shoppers.

8. I have taken into account all the other matters raised but see no reason to alter my view of this case.

9. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss your appeal.

I am Gentlemen
Your obedient Servant



P G TYLER OBE
Inspector