

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL



Application Ref No. 4/0882/91

Ellis & Hancock  
60 Alexandra Road  
Hemel Hempstead  
Herts

Ken A Phillips  
97 High Road  
Bushey Heath  
Herts  
WD2 1EL

DEVELOPMENT ADDRESS AND DESCRIPTION  
=====

60 Alexandra Road, Hemel Hempstead,

CONVERSION OF BASEMENT TO OFFICES

Your application for *full planning permission* dated 24.06.1991 and received on 25.06.1991 has been *REFUSED*, for the reasons set out on the attached sheet(s).

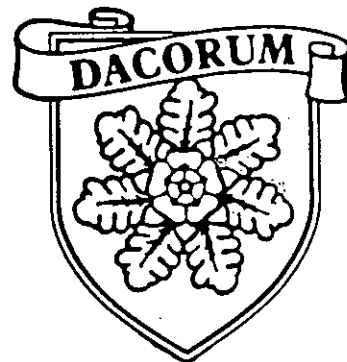
Director of Planning

Date of Decision: 15.08.1991

(ENC Reasons and Notes)

REASONS FOR REFUSAL  
OF APPLICATION: 4/0882/91

Date of Decision: 15.08.1991



In the absence of a detailed car parking layout the local planning authority is not satisfied that there is adequate vehicle parking within the curtilage of the site to meet the standard adopted by this Council in order to serve the existing and proposed office accommodation.



Planning Inspectorate  
Department of the Environment

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GTN 1374

Ref Ack.

DoP T.C.P.M. D.P. D.C. B.C. Admin. File

Ellis & Hancock  
24 Station Road  
WATFORD  
Herts  
WD1 1ER

Received

27 FEB 1992

Comments

Your reference

JFH

Our reference

T/APP/A1910/A/91/194443/P2

Date

26 FEB 1992

Gentlemen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990, SECTION 78 AND SCHEDULE 6  
APPLICATION NO: 4/0882/91

1. I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine your appeal. This appeal is against the decision of the Dacorum Borough Council to refuse planning permission for the conversion of storage areas in the basement to offices and the insertion of new windows in the front and rear elevations at 60 Alexandra Road, Hemel Hempstead. I have considered the written representations made by you and by the Council. I inspected the site on 23 January 1992.

2. From my inspection of the site and its surroundings and from consideration of all the representations made, I consider the main issue in this case to be the effect of car parking associated with the proposed offices on highway safety and convenience in the area.

3. The ground, first and second floors of this 3-storey building are used as offices as a result of planning permissions granted in 1959, 1968 and 1976. I noted on site that the basement is currently used in connection with the offices; it contains kitchen and toilet facilities and is used to store files, although not in an intensive manner. The insertion of the windows would allow 2 of the basement rooms to be used as offices. I note that the windows themselves are not objected to by the planning authority and in my opinion their appearance would be acceptable.

4. The building is in a mainly residential area not far from the town centre. Policy 53 of the adopted Dacorum District Plan seeks to restrict new office development, including changes of use, to the commercial area of the town centre, with the aim of controlling the total growth of offices in the District and minimising their impact on other land uses. However, in this instance, the proposed conversion would take place within a building already used almost entirely for offices. It would bring into more intensive use an under-used part of the building and, in my view, would have virtually no effect on neighbouring land uses. In these circumstances, I do not consider that the scheme would conflict with the aims of policy 53.

5. Policy 26 of the approved Hertfordshire County Structure Plan encourages the development of premises for small firms whilst Planning Policy Guidance Note 4 (PPG4) stresses the need to adopt a positive



approach towards industrial and commercial development and small firms and, in paragraph 11, indicates that full use should be made of existing premises in urban areas. It seems to me that the proposed conversion would simply involve a reorganisation of accommodation within the building, which would allow it to be used more efficiently and would assist with the expansion of your firm. In my view it would accord with the advice in PPG4 and with the Structure Plan. I consider that these are all significant advantages which carry considerable weight.

6. During my inspection I saw a great deal of kerbside parking in Alexandra Road and the other residential streets near the town centre. I can therefore appreciate the Council's desire to avoid development which would exacerbate the situation. The Structure Plan, the adopted Local Plan and the Dacorum Borough Local Plan, which is at the stage of a deposit draft and in my view carries some weight, all contain policies designed to ensure that sufficient parking space is provided in new development; policy 54 of the latter states that new development proposals will be expected to meet the Council's standards for parking provision.

7. However, in the appeal scheme the additional office floorspace would amount to only about 40 sq m. The rest of the basement would remain as kitchen and stores, as at present. Applying the Council's standard of one space per 25 sq m to the new offices would give a theoretical parking requirement of less than 2 spaces. There is a reasonably large car park at the rear of the building which appears to me to be of long standing, and although there is disagreement as to whether the entire car park has planning permission, the Council do not argue that they would seek to reduce its area. I appreciate that only about 12 cars could be parked if it were used strictly in accordance with the Council's guidelines on car parking layouts, but from my observations, and from the submitted evidence, I consider that with tighter parking it could realistically accommodate 16 to 18 cars. I am convinced that the available space would be ample to cater for the very small increase in parking which could arise from this scheme. Manoeuvring space would no doubt be less than that envisaged in the Council's standards, and the layout might cause more turning and reversing, but I consider that this would be confined to the site. In any case, I consider it unlikely that there would be any conflict with other vehicles using Fernville Lane, the very quiet road which gives access to the car park.

8. Thus, although the Council's guidelines on car park layout might not be met, I consider that the scheme would not give rise to danger to other road users, or inconvenience, through additional on-street parking, and would not conflict with the objectives of the development plan policies which seek to avoid such difficulties. On the other hand, as I have indicated, I consider that there are strong arguments in favour of the proposal. For these reasons, I consider that your appeal should be allowed.

9. The Council refer to a considerable number of other schemes for which planning permission has been refused, in some cases on appeal. I have taken note of these; they clearly demonstrate the strength of the Council's commitment to avoid additional highway hazards and inconvenience in this area and elsewhere. However, I consider that

the appeal proposal is different in character from these other schemes. Each proposal must, of course, be considered on its merits, and I consider that these other cases carry little weight in relation to this appeal.

10. The Council suggest a condition requiring the permanent provision of a car park at the site. However, given the very small amount of additional parking likely to arise from the appeal scheme, I consider such a condition unnecessary.

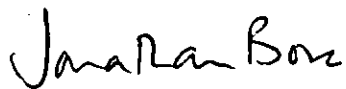
11. I have considered all the other matters raised in the written representations but do not find them to be of such weight as to alter the balance of my conclusions.

12. For the above reasons and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby allow this appeal and grant planning permission for the conversion of storage areas in the basement to offices together with the insertion of new windows in the front and rear elevations, at 60 Alexandra Road, Hemel Hempstead, in accordance with the terms of the application (No. 4/0882/91) dated 24 June 1991 and the plans submitted therewith, subject to the condition that the development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this letter.

13. The developer's attention is drawn to the enclosed note relating to the requirements of The Buildings (Disabled People) Regulations 1987.

14. This letter does not convey any approval or consent which may be required under any enactment, byelaw, order or regulation other than Section 57 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

I am Gentlemen  
Your obedient Servant



JONATHAN L BORE BA DipUD MRTPI  
Inspector

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