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HEMEL HEMPSTEAD
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Your reference
RE/AA/753
Our reference
T/APP/5252/A/76/11097/G9
Date
31 MAY 77

Gentlemen

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971, SECTION 36 AND SCHEDULE 9
APPEAL BY SOMERS PRESS LIMITED
APPLICATION NO:- 916/76D

1. I refer to your 'clients' appeal, which I have been appointed to determine, against the decision of the Dacorum District Council to refuse planning permission for single storey side and front extensions to existing printing works at 3 Christchurch Road, Hemel Hempstead.
2. From my inspection of the site and surroundings on 9 May 1977, and from my consideration of the written representations made by you and by the council, including a letter from a neighbour, I am of the opinion that the decision in the appeal rests primarily on whether the proposed extensions and the consolidation of the industrial use would adversely affect the predominantly residential character of Christchurch Road.
3. The appeal site is situated near the western end of Christchurch Road which joins Alexandra Road. To the north of the junction Alexandra Road has commercial and business premises on both sides, including offices which extend along the rear boundary of the appeal site, but Christchurch Road is predominantly residential and is zoned for this purpose in the approved County Development Plan, and in the non-statutory planning document 'Hertfordshire 1981' which the council are now using for development control purposes. It is thus of primary importance that the residential amenities and appearance of the road be maintained.
4. Your clients' proposal involves a quite large extension at the side and a small extension at the front with a fire escape from the first floor. It is also intended to remove the wall along the frontage of the site to allow access to 2 parking spaces, as well as to demolish 2 temporary storage buildings at the rear. The single storey side extension, although quite sizeable is shown as being set well back from the road, and in my view would not adversely affect the street scene provided the frontage of the site remained enclosed and an existing tall tree at the rear of the wall was retained. Even though there would be no way of controlling how the existing building and the extension were actually used, your clients state that it is their intention to use the ground floor of the existing building for storage after relocating the printing presses in the extension. If this were done it would be beneficial to the occupiers of the adjoining dwelling on the eastern side and would not be harmful to the residents on the western side where the house is sufficiently far away not to be dominated by a single storey extension. In these circumstances I do not consider the consolidation of the industrial use resulting from the main part of the proposal (including the demolition

of the temporary sheds at the rear), which does not involve the employment of additional staff, and is a re-organisation rather than a major expansion, would have such a harmful effect on the residential character of Christchurch Road as to necessitate refusing permission.

5. However I do not consider the other parts of the proposal are satisfactory. The present building, being set back from the building line and partially screened by the tree is not very noticeable. The proposed front extension with a balcony above and a fire escape extending out in front of the adjoining house would alter this and, in my view, be detrimental to the visual amenity of this residential road by its obtrusiveness and incongruity. If the wall on the frontage were removed and the tree were felled, the effect would be even more detrimental. I see the advantage of providing 2 parking spaces to reduce the congestion in Christchurch Road, which could be done without causing significant disturbance to the neighbours on the western side, but this would only require the repositioning of the existing gate.

6. I note from the written representations that your clients would be prepared to make alternative access proposals, thus enabling the wall and tree to remain, and it was pointed out to me during the inspection that the fire escape could be positioned at the rear or side. However the application is for detailed planning permission, and I must determine the appeal on the basis of the accompanying plans which form part of it. I accordingly consider it is necessary to refuse permission.

7. I have examined all the other matters raised in the written representations, but there is nothing of the substance needed to affect my decision and for the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss this appeal.

I am Gentlemen
Your obedient Servant



J M DANIEL DFC MBIM
Inspector