

Appendix 1.

Notice of Review. 21/00793/FUL

43, High Street, Hawick TD9 9BU

Given the present facilities available at the premises – kitchen, shower, toilet etc. we do not believe that granting this application would in anyway impact adversely on the viability of any retail/commercial unit. The application asks for permission to change the use of otherwise un-used ground floor space to provide sleeping accommodation and improved bathroom facilities. It also provides for bringing into use a derelict ground/basement level room that has been unused for many years where the original earthen floor remains. We do not consider that this room comes within the scope of Policies ED3 and PMD2 particularly in view of its general derelict state.

The way that retailing has developed over event years, particularly with the emergence of the internet, has significantly changed the economy in general and led to an increase in High Street business closures. Many of these closures have been of major companies: Debenhams, Gap, John Lewis, House of Fraser and countless others. It is clear that new thinking is required on how best to utilise existing shop and commercial premises and the trend is clearly towards more mixed use: cafes, shops, restaurants, residential, services, forming cohesive social communities and maintaining the vitality and viability of town centres. It provides for small, startup businesses to establish themselves at a relatively low cost to stimulate local demand, and through the internet, reach customers for their goods and services far beyond their local area.

It is agreed that existing provisions under Policies ED3 and PMD2, applications for change the status of commercial/residential premises would not normally be approved but we live in a rapidly changing business circumstances, accelerated by the COVID pandemic and think that an abnormal decision to approve the application is justified.

The applicant identified a need for their service in early 2018 and tested the market by renting premises. They decided to cement their commitment to Hawick by purchasing adjacent premises when they became available in late 2019. It is to further cement that commitment that the applicant these additional facilities for visiting staff and management in Hawick in their existing premises.

We think it is worth pointing out that since the applicant established their business in 2019, another competing business has noted Cleo's and established itself on the opposite side of the High Street in Hawick and the applicants former premises at 41, High Street are now occupied by a podiatrist – a similar business.

Where there were 3 vacant premises, there are now 3 thriving businesses.