

4-4A Kneesworth Street Royston

30th October 2024

OVERVIEW

The property consists of two interconnected buildings, 4 and 4A Kneesworth Street. The ground floor of 4A is currently occupied by the betting shop Coral and is use class Sui Generis. The first floor of 4A has been combined into an open plan space with the first floor of no 4 and both of these are accessed by an internal staircase from the ground floor of no.4. The ground floor of no.4 and the whole combined first floor is currently vacant but was previously used under use class E with offices at ground floor and ancillary office spaces at first floor.

The property sits in Royston Town Centre and Conservation Area but is not part of the prime shopping frontage, and while the property itself is not listed, it is adjacent to no.2 Kneesworth Street, which is a Grade 2 listed building.

We are working with a community banking hub, Cash Access UK, who wish to open a branch in Royston. As a banking hub they have specific requirements in terms of the floorplate and accessibility of their unit (requiring full level access to be DDA compliant) and so we identified the ground floor of no.4 as an appropriate location from which to provide their services and will be submitting additional planning applications for their advertising consents and fit out requirements in the coming weeks. Cash Access UK have no use for the ancillary office space at first floor level and would leave this space vacant and unreachable for the duration of their 10 year tenancy if the development proposed by this application were not to take place. We strongly believe that other retailers would treat this ancillary space in a similar light, as indeed have Coral in the neighbouring building.

This application therefore seeks permission to redevelop the above property by separating the ancillary first floor spaces from the ground floor retail unit by removing the existing staircase, changing the use of the first floor from use class E to use class C3 for use as two studio apartments, and introducing a new front door, entrance corridor and staircase through the front of unit 4A.

As the upper floor was used as ancillary space and not for retail, we do not think that this floor should be counted as under 'employment use' as defined in Local Plan Policy ETC2 or as protected retail space, and therefore change of use should be permitted, especially as this will

bring unused premises back into use, provide new homes in the town centre and enliven the high street.

Our intention is to undertake the works required for the change of use without impacting the operation of the Coral unit.