Supporting Statement

Change of use of front room to hairdressers, 118, High Street, Thurnscoe.

The applicant originally rented 122 High Street, Thurnscoe, and operated from those premises for a period of 3 years. However, serious problems with the building structure and plumbing causing unsatisfactory sewage disposal and damp walls and ceilings, which the landlord was unwilling to rectify, forced him to relocate. He now uses the front room of his two bedroomed ground floor flat. No alterations have been made to the premises. There are relatively large windows to the front and side of this room because it was originally a shop. There is off street parking for up to three cars on the site. It is understood that a complaint has been made that a second hairdressers should not be allowed close to 122 High Street, presumably by the owner of that property. This remains empty, and in any case objections to a development on the grounds of competition have no basis in the planning process.

While the area is allocated as a Housing Policy Area in the Unitary Development Plan, there are several businesses close to the application site. The existing hairdressers is in the same terrace, there is a shop on the corner of Lansdowne Close facing the application site, and a builders yard backing onto the site. Close by on High Street are a public house, printers, repair garage and florist, together with a Working Mens Club. The area is thus one of mixed uses, and High Street is a relatively busy road. For residents in the area the existing level of activity and disturbance is much greater than for a normal housing area. Thus High Street does not have a predominantly residential character.

This is a small, one man business, attracting only one customer at a time. The equipment involved creates little noise, with a hairdryer, hood drier and a radio as background entertainment. No noise impacts on the adjoining residents, and any vehicular traffic is limited. Unlike normal shop uses, there are no delivery vehicles involved, any hairdressing products being collected by the applicant. Moreover, customers do not need a car to carry purchases away. While a change of use to a normal shop could subsequently take place within Class 1 A of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, the applicant would be happy to accept a condition removing this right.

Within No 118 is a second flat at first and second floor levels. The kitchen of this property lies above the applicant's front room.

Operating hours are at present restricted to 9am to 5pm Mondays to Fridays, 9am to 3pm on Saturdays, and with no opening on Sundays. Thus it only operates at times when background noise is normally greatest. The applicant would be happy to accept a condition based on these hours of operation. When considering overall impact and the character of the area it should also be borne in mind that with a corner shop, public house and Working Mens Club close by, evening noise levels are abnormally high for a "residential area".

There is off road parking space for three cars including the applicants, which should be adequate. In any case the same business has been operating from close by, and with no off street parking.

If the Planning Authority are concerned at the possible visual impact of uncontrolled signage, using rights under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, then the applicant would be happy to accept a condition requiring express permission for any signs.

In terms of planning policies, national guidance on small businesses was previously contained in PPG4 paragraph 8, which suggested that special consideration should be given to the needs of small businesses, and that if a small business use is non-conforming, that is not in itself sufficient reason for refusing planning permission. This document has been superseded by PPS4, but the basic principle remains, that except within the Green Belt, non-conformity is not in itself a basis for refusal.

PPG6, relating to town centres and retail developments, notes that it is not the role of the planning system to restrict competition, preserve existing commercial interest or to prevent innovation. Thus any objection on the basis of a possible re-opening of No 122 as a hairdressers should be discounted.

UDP Policy H8 advises that "Other uses will only be permitted where they are compatible with a residential area and other policies of the plan." For the reasons set out above no material harm to residential amenity results from this very small scale development.

Policy ED4 dealing with Economic Development and Residential Amenity, and states that "Proposals for economic development adjoining or close to housing will be assessed with particular regard to the likely impact on residential amenity". None of the various sources of nuisance covered by this policy are generated by this development. On this basis the use would appear to be compatible with a residential area as required by Policy H8.

Policy ES1 dealing with environmental pollution, states that " The council will in particular resist development which is likely to result in housing, schools, hospitals or other sensitive land uses being subjected to excessive levels of air, noise or other pollution." Again, the development causes no excessive noise or other problems covered by this policy.

Turning finally to UDP shopping policies, these follow national guidance that new development should not threaten the viability of existing shopping centres. However, hairdressers are commonly found outside existing shopping centres, meeting localised needs. Policy S6 is therefore considered to be the appropriate shopping policy to judge the development . This states that
"Local shopping facilities, serving day to day needs of an immediate locality will be permitted subject to scale, traffic and environmental considerations."
Moreover, the location of this business outside the nearby local shopping centre would has no material impact the latter's viability.

Conclusion

For the above reasons it is considered that this very small scale development has no material impact on the character of the area or residential amenity. Furthermore it does not conflict with national or local planning policies, and any possible potential to cause harm can be removed by the imposition of appropriate conditions.