



Town Planning Bureau

Planning Supporting Statement

RE: PLANNING APPLICATION FOR CONVERSION OF THE GROUND FLOOR FROM A2 FINANCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES TO A MIXED-USE A3 / A5 RESTAURANT / TAKE AWAY USE.

SITE: 1 STATION ROAD/22 FRIAR STREET, READING RG1 1LG.

The Barn
43 Oakdene Road
Redhill
Surrey
RH1 6BT
Tel. 01737 390169

1. The Application

This letter is presented in support of a planning application for the proposed development as described above.

This application pack comprises the following documents:

- Existing and proposed drawings (floorplans).
- Site plan.
- Block plan.
- Details of soundproofing.
- Details of air extraction and conditioning measures.

The application is submitted on behalf of The Thackeray Estate ('the Applicants').

We should be grateful if you would consider the matters set out below.

Date: 28th February 2020

Our ref: TPB-483c-ST1

e-mail
info@tpbureau.co.uk

web
www.tpbureau.co.uk

2. The Site

The site comprises a four-storey building at the junction of Station Road and Friar Street, fronting onto Station Road but with a small return frontage on Friar Street.

The application relates to the ground floor of the building, which is a vacant unit formerly occupied by Nationwide Building Society. The upper floors are not subject to this application.

The site is located on a major pedestrian route, with the surrounding area comprising a mix of town centre uses including shops, drinking establishments, banks, coffee shops, betting shops, hotels and other professional services.

The site is located within the Reading Central Area, the Station/River Major Opportunity Area, Primary Shopping Area (primary frontage) and Office Core Area. The site is not a listed building nor is it located within a conservation area.



3. Details of the proposed development

The application proposes:

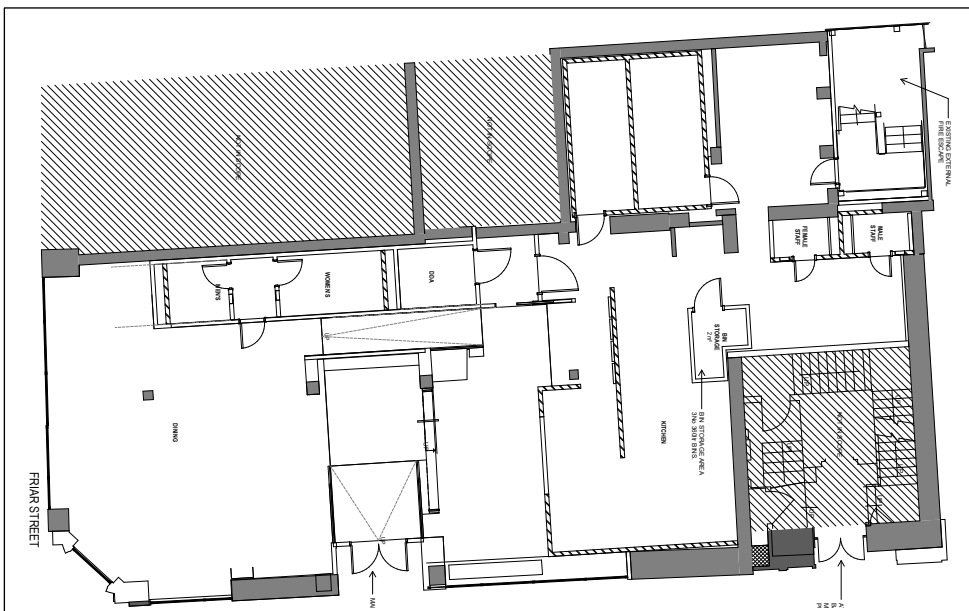
- The change of use of the ground floor unit from Class A2 to a mixed use Class A3/A5 use providing circa 45 customer seating area.
- A new air intake louver window is proposed on the Station Road frontage.
- Two floor mounted external condensers for air handling and ventilation louvers are proposed for the rear elevation - details are shown on the accompanying drawings and technical specifications.
- No other changes are proposed to the exterior of the building by this application.
- Soundproofing will be installed between the ground and first floors to protect the amenities of the future upper floor residential units - details are shown on the accompanying drawings.
- Approximate staff numbers are anticipated to be between 25-40 staff members in total and no more than 10-14 on a single shift.
- Advertisement consent will be applied by way of a separate application.

Access arrangements: Access to both the ground floor unit and the upper floors would be unchanged.

Parking: There would be no change from the existing situation - no off-street car parking or cycle parking space is provided or capable of being provided.

Waste: storage location and collection strategy - would follow the same pattern as other nearby restaurants, ideally a daily overnight pick up, to be determined in due course.

Deliveries: Overnight deliveries are sought as would not want to have deliveries happening during operating hours since they will have to come in through the front door. Deliveries would take place on average three times per week.



4. Planning history

- 890025/FUL - Alteration, renovation and extension of building
- Permitted 22/03/89.
- 901187/FUL - Alteration, renovation and extension of building
- Permitted 12/09/90.
- 180139/OPA - Change of use of 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors from offices (Class B1(a)) to 11 dwellings (Class C3)
- Prior Approval Notification Approval 23/03/18.
- 191446/OPA - Change of use of 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors of existing building from Class B1(a) (offices) to Class C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise 12 residential units. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.
- Prior approval given 31/10/19.
- 182109/OPA - Change of use of 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors from offices (Class B1(a)) to 15 dwellings (Class C3)
- Prior Approval Notification - Approval 28/01/19.
- 191588/FUL - Erection of 2nd and 3rd floor rear extension to create 3 additional dwellings - under consideration by the Council, yet to be determined.
- 191589/FUL - Installation of windows to rear and erection of front dormer window - under consideration by the Council, yet to be determined.

5. Planning Policy

In preparing this application regard has been had to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Development Plan policies within the adopted Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) Nov 2019

The principal policies relevant include:

- Policy CR7: Primary Frontages in Central Reading.
- Policy CR11: Station/River Major Opportunity Area.
- Policy CC5: Waste minimisation and storage.
- Policy CC8: Safeguarding amenity.
- Policy EN17: Noise generation and equipment.
- Policy TR5: Car and cycle parking.

Account has also been taken of the following guidance:-

- Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

6. Planning Considerations

This planning application seeks the change of use of the ground floor unit, currently vacant, from Class A2 financial and professional services use to a mixed-use in Class A3/ A5 use.

We consider the principle planning matters to be:-

- The principle of the change of use of the ground floor unit.
- Amenity issues.
- Servicing of the unit.

We address them in turn to demonstrate that the scheme complies with development plan policy and guidance.

Principle of the change of use

The site is located in a busy mixed-use town centre location within the Reading Central Area and within a Primary Shopping Area (primary frontage). It is located on a key pedestrian route through the town centre and surrounded by uses including retail, drinking establishments, banks, coffee shops, betting shops, hotels and other professional services.

Policy CR7 of the RBLP states that:-

Uses on the ground floor along the designated primary frontages as shown on the Proposals Map will be within one of the following use classes: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, D1, D2 or related sui generis uses, unless it would be an entrance to upper floors. New developments (or alterations to existing uses) that front onto any of the designated primary frontages will provide an active building frontage with a display window or glazed frontage at ground floor level, in order to contribute to the vibrancy of the town centre, and provide visual interest.

Frontages should be of a high visual quality. Any frontages that have the potential to hinder movement or cause unnecessary safety risk will not be permitted.

The supporting text adds that

“Active frontages at ground floor level are key in creating the impression of a healthy centre, and in ensuring that locations are places that people want to visit and spend time in. On the key streets in the centre, it is vital that new development continues to reflect this, and that it offers visual interest on the frontage even if it is not an A1 retail unit. Ground floor uses on these frontages should be uses that create interest and activity, and typically complement town centre streets. Ensuring that uses contain frontage onto the street is essential in creating safe places and spaces, and making areas feel well-used..... Whilst a wide range of uses, such as housing, are generally appropriate in the centre, the primary frontage should be occupied by those uses that make the greatest contribution to the vibrancy of the centre.”

Policy CR11a sets out that there should be active retail and leisure uses on the ground floor along Friar Street and Station Road.

The proposed food use would meet all these requirements. It is a mixed use in A3/A5 use would be appropriate for this town centre location on a busy and important pedestrian route will provide an active frontage offering visual interest and will help make the centre a safe place where people want to visit and spend time in. The activity it will generate will help add to the vitality and vibrancy of the centre.

Policy CR7 adds that:-

Proposals that would result in the loss of A1 or A2 use such that the proportion of the length of frontage within the street in A1 or A2 use falls below 50% will not be permitted, unless the proposal introduces a use that makes a positive contribution to the overall diversity of the centre.

While the proposal results in the loss of an A2 unit the proposed new mixed use restaurant is a use that would make a positive contribution to the overall diversity of the centre. It will generate activity that will help add to the diversity, vitality and vibrancy of the centre.

Notwithstanding that the use would be one that would make a positive contribution to the overall diversity of the centre, and would therefore comply with the requirements of policy, the proposal would not result in the proportion of the length of frontage within the street in A1 or A2 use falling below 50%. The supporting text, at para 5.3.30 adds that:

“the policy seeks to ensure that a loss of A1 or A2 use is not permitted where it would result in the overall proportion of the length of the frontage falling below 50%. For the purposes of applying this policy, existing frontages will be grouped together into the following streets....Friar Street (North and South);..... Station Road (East and West). The proportion will be calculated on the entire length of the frontage shown on the Proposals Map, even where that frontage does not include a use listed above.”

The site comprises, at ground floor level, a large vacant A2 unit formerly a Nationwide Bank with its main frontage and entrance onto Station Road but with a small return frontage on Friar Street. Given that the largest element as well as the entrance is located on Station Road the unit has been considered as being in this street for the purpose of assessment against the policy.

Station Road has a frontage of approximately 150m (west side up to and including No. 37-41) and 105m (east side), giving a total of 255m. The site's frontage, including the entrance to the upper floors, is approximately 25m. At present A1 and A2 uses account for approximately 62% of the frontage. The proposed change of use would take this down to 52% but this is above the 50% target. In any event, as described above, it is considered that the proposed use is an acceptable use in policy terms as it is an appropriate town centre use that will provide an active frontage offering visual interest and will help make the centre a safe place where people want to visit and spend time in. It would make a positive contribution to the overall diversity of the centre and will generate activity which will help add to the diversity, vitality and vibrancy of the centre.

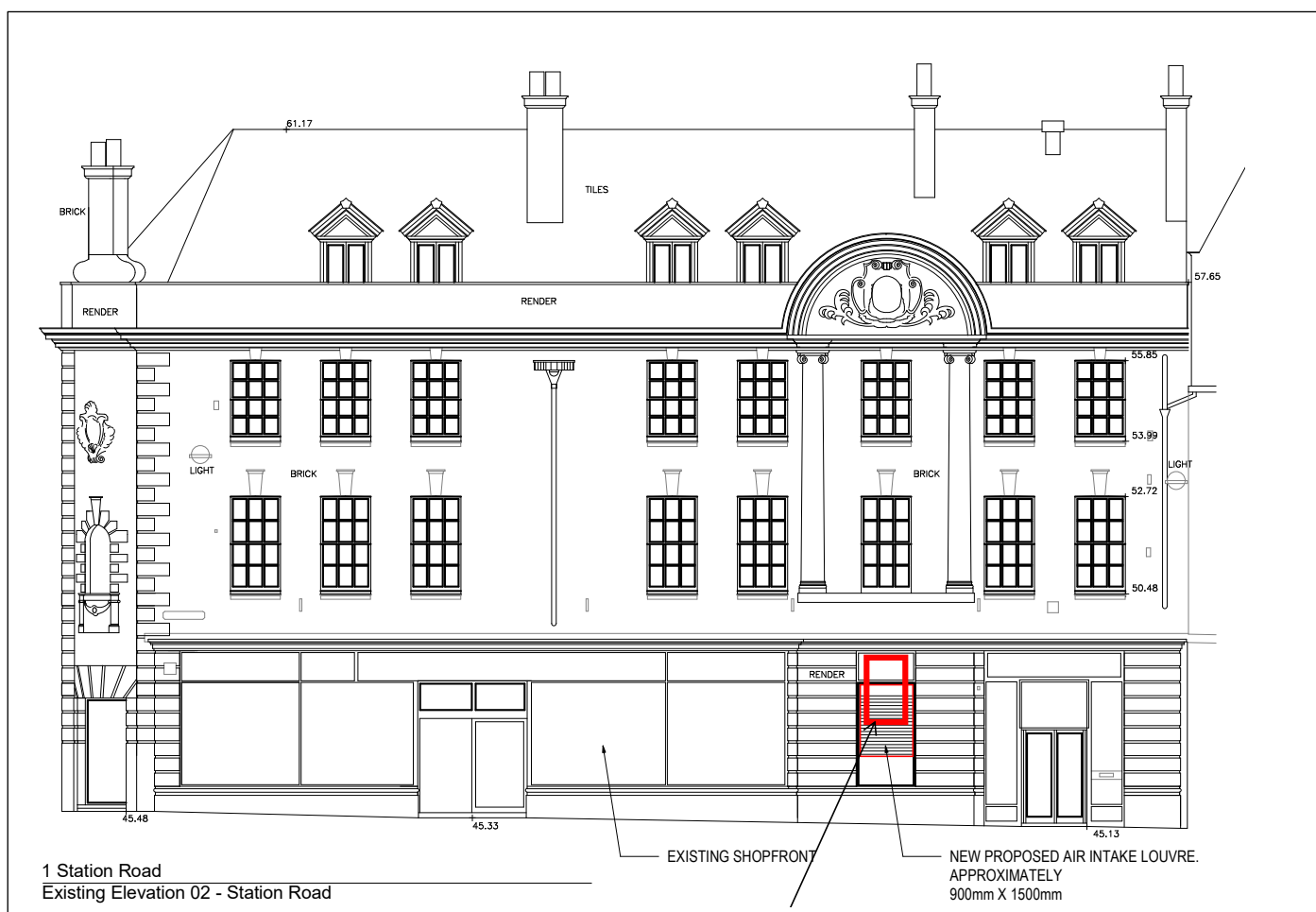
Residential amenity

Policy CC8 of the RBLP requires that development will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties, in terms of privacy and overlooking; access to sunlight and daylight; visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; noise and disturbance; artificial lighting; vibration; dust and fumes; smell; or crime and safety.

It is considered the proposal is acceptable in these terms with respect to the impact on amenity of neighbouring properties. This is an appropriate location within the town centre for a restaurant use and the comings and goings associated with such a use will not have a material impact on the amenities of the area. Soundproofing measures will be installed between the approved residential units on the first floor and the proposed restaurant use on the ground floor in order to mitigate and prevent impacts from noise. Detailed measures are indicated on the drawings and further details can also be subject to agreement by way of conditions.

Noise generating equipment

Policy EN17 of the RBLP states that where noise generating equipment is proposed, the noise source specific level (plant noise level) should be at least 10dBA below the existing background level as measured at the nearest noise sensitive receptor. Details of how this is achieved with respect to the proposed air conditioning units are set out in the accompanying technical information and further details can also be subject to agreement by way of conditions.



Other matters

Parking

Policy TR5 states that development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport. Details are set out in the Parking SPD.

There are no off-street car or cycle parking spaces at present and none are proposed for this change of use proposal due to site constraints. The building largely covers the whole of the site. It is considered that in this highly accessible location to public transport within the town centre the absence of off-street parking is acceptable.

In terms of deliveries and serving, the site will be serviced outside normal business hours, so evenings or early morning. Deliveries would be, on average, three times per week. However, due to the site's town centre location, a delivery and service strategy could be subject to a condition to be agreed in writing.

Air quality

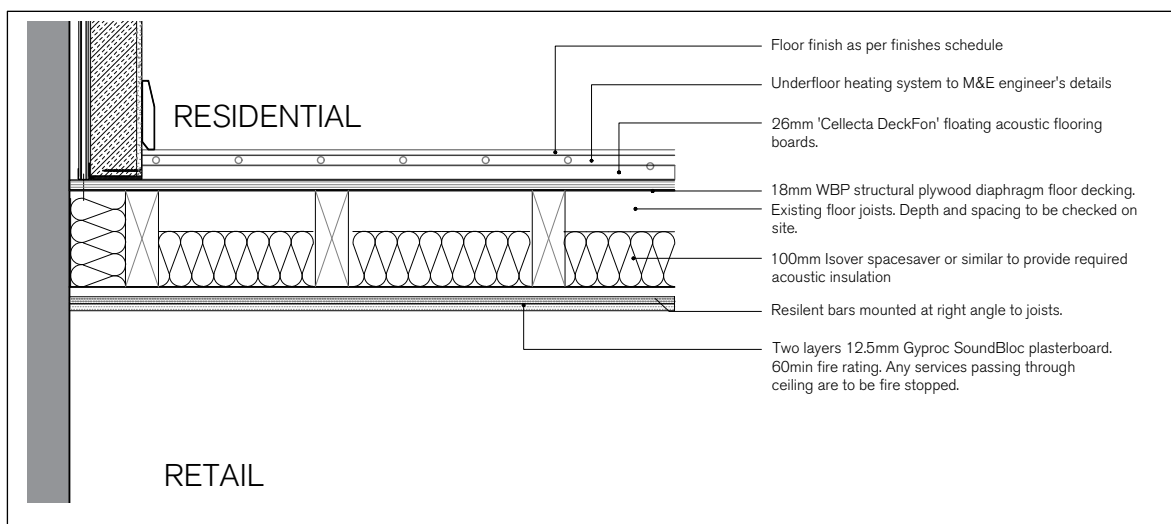
The site is located within an air quality management area. The applicant proposes the installation of an appropriate ventilation system which accompanies this application - Recon air handling. The use of such a system means the need for a traditional flue system is not required. This reduces fumes released, the need for a flue and the noise that can be associated with some flue system. The system proposed accompanies this application.

Waste

A waste storage area is shown, this would as far as possible seek to ensure the majority is sorted and recycled. Waste collection would be consistent with other high street operators, which is anticipated to be a daily collection. The waste storage area would allow 3 x 360l wheelie bins. However, the waste strategy could be subject to a condition to be agreed in writing.

Soundproofing

Below is a section of the sound attenuation between the ground floor and the first floor.



7. Summary and conclusions

- Planning permission is sought for the change of use of this vacant ground floor unit from Class A2 financial and professional services to a mixed use Class A2/A3 restaurant use.
- Only minor external alterations are proposed, largely at the rear to provide for air handling equipment and ventilation.
- A restaurant is an appropriate town centre use that will provide an active frontage offering visual interest and will help make the centre a safe place where people want to visit and spend time in.
- The proposed restaurant would make a positive contribution to the overall diversity of the centre and will generate activity which will help add to the diversity, vitality and vibrancy of the centre.
- A1 and A2 uses will still account for over 50% of the Station Road primary shopping frontage.
- The proposal will not have a material impact on the amenities of the area in this busy town centre location.
- The use will create further employment opportunities for between 25 and 40 people in this sustainable, easily accessible the town centre location.
- Appropriate mitigation measures will protect the amenities of the residents of the proposed upper floor flats of the building.
- In this highly accessible location to public transport within the town centre the absence of off-street parking is acceptable.
- The site can be serviced, consistently with other town centre premises.
- The proposal is considered to be in accordance with relevant development plan policy and guidance.

The policy presumption is in favour of the grant of planning permission and there are no material considerations that outweigh that presumption.

Lead consultant:

Paul S Bottomley BA (Hons) MA MRTPI
Town Planning Bureau