



Town Planning Bureau

Planning Supporting Statement

RE: RESUBMISSION OF PLANNING PERMISSION REF: 200343 FOR CHANGE OF USE OF GROUND FLOOR AND PART OF THE BASEMENT FLOOR TO MIXED-USE A3 / A5 RESTAURANT / TAKE AWAY USE OF THE GROUND FLOOR AND ANCILLARY SPACE A3 / A5 AT BASEMENT LEVEL & ASSOCIATED WORKS INCLUDING EXTERNAL VENTILATION LOUVRE TO STATION ROAD ELEVATION.

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

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:

- Site plan.
- Block plan.
- Existing and proposed drawings (floorplans).

The application is submitted on behalf of The Thackeray Estate ("the Applicant").

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

Background

Planning permission ref: 200343 was approved 25th May 2020 for:

Change of use of ground floor from A2 Financial & Professional Services to mixed-use A3/A5 Restaurant/Take away use & associated works including external ventilation Louvre to Station Road elevation.

In granting the said application, this forms a substantial material consideration and we do not revisit, therefore, this matter in detail. The principle matter is the changes to:

- Basement level.
- Modest change to the side elevation louver.
- Alteration to the hours of opening.

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Date: 18th June 2020

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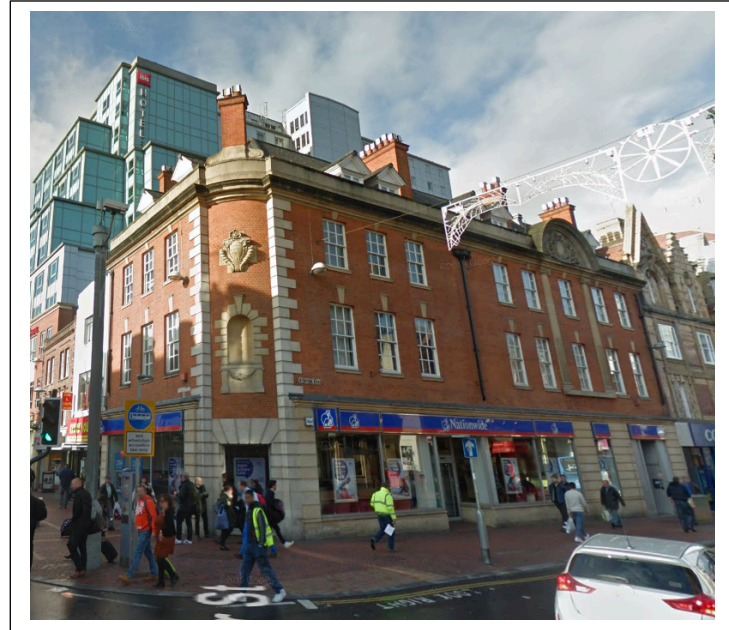
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2. The Site

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 part of the basement 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.

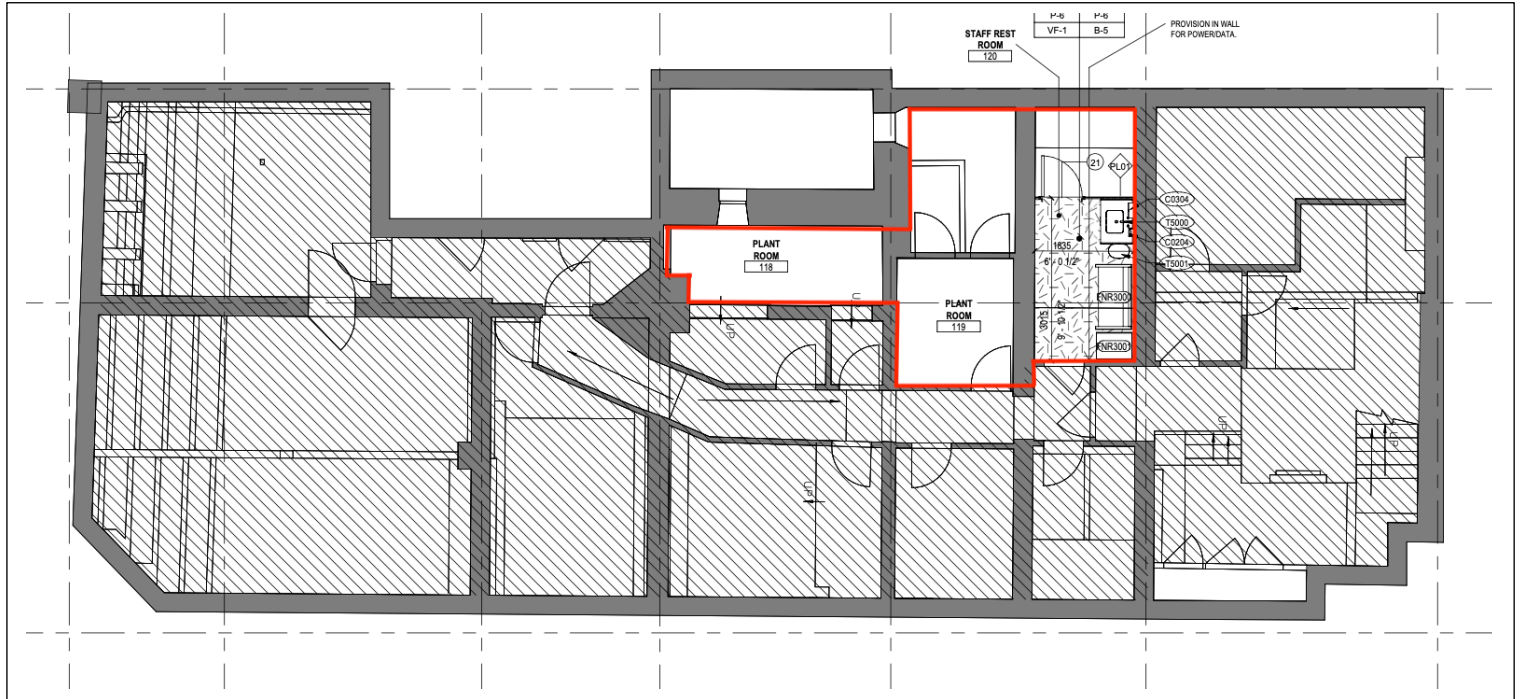


The site is located within the Reading Central Area, the Station/River Major Opportunity Area, Primary Shopping Area (primary frontage) and Office Core Area. The site is not a listed building nor is it located within a conservation area.

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.
- The change of use of part of the basement floor to be used ancillary to the ground floor A3/ A5.
- A new air intake louvre window is proposed on the Station Road frontage and to be increased in size - essential to the operation of the business.
- Two floor mounted external condensers for air handling and ventilation louvres 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.
- Opening of the premises 30 minutes earlier than approved.
- The basement floor would be used as 'Staff Rest Room' to comply with their Inclusive Design principles and as a plant area.



Access arrangements: Access to both the ground floor unit and the upper floors would be unchanged. Access to the basement would be via the communal stair from the ground floor.

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. Relevant Site Planning history

- 200343 - Change of use of ground floor from A2 Financial & Professional Services to mixed- use A3/A5 Restaurant/Take away use & associated works including external ventilation Louvre to Station Road elevation.
- Approved 25/05/2020

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

Planning permission (ref: 200343) permits the change of use of the ground floor and is a substantial material consideration. This application simply seeks to add an additional area of floor space at basement to be used ancillary to the ground floor use, plus a modest change to the side elevation louvers and increase of 30minutes to the opening time.

We therefore consider the principle planning matter to be:-

- The principle of the change of use of the basement floor unit.
- Increased side elevation louver.
- Opening hours to be amended by 30minutes in the morning.

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

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.

Analysis

Ground Floor: having regard to the Officer Report it states, when considering the change of use of the ground floor:

*“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.** 50% of new primary frontages as shown on the Proposals Map should be in A1/A2 use.*

It is considered that the proposed A3 and A5 use to the ground floor of the building would accord with the policies as an A class use would maintain the retail character of the area, albeit a different type of customer interaction to the former A2 use. The unit has been vacant for 2 years after being marketed by national dual agents (Green & Partners and Robinson Webster) with no A1/A2 prospects within these years according to figures provided by the agent. It is considered that this time frame is sufficient to warrant a new use given the absence of a specified time frame within the adopted policies relating to town centre units.

Therefore, it is considered that an A3/A5 use would make a positive contribution to the overall diversity of the centre. In the vicinity are a wide range of uses, with Friar Street having a large number of units contributing to the night time economy (clubs, pubs etc). As such, a restaurant/ takeaway is considered suitably in keeping and a further possible contribution to this economy and will bring a vacant site back into use whilst adding to the vibrancy of the centre.”

Accordingly, the principle is acceptable.

Basement Floor: the proposal is for the addition of ancillary space at basement floor can provide a 'Staff Rest Room' to comply with their Inclusive Design principles, as well as ancillary plant area.

Policy CR7 of the RBLP seeks to protect ground floor uses, there is no reference to the basement levels.

In approving planning permission ref: 200343, the principle of the A3/A5 use at ground floor was established and the proposed staff rest room would complement the said use.

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 as they have previously been considered.

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. The basement will be used as a staff room and for plant. The plant is internal so will not generate noise audible outside the site.

Opening Hours

Condition 8 restricts the operational opening hours to:

07:00 - 23:00 (Sunday - Thursday)

07:00 - 00:00 (Friday and Saturday)

This was recommended by the Environmental Health officer, however, as noted this will be subject to a separate licence from the licensing department will be required in order to operate.

The Applicant is seeking to increase these hours to:

06:30 - 23:00 (Sunday - Thursday)

06:30 - 00:00 (Friday and Saturday)

This is an extra 30minutes in the morning period. The simple reason is that the site is on the main route to and from the Reading Train Station. To open 30minutes later is placing them at an operational disadvantage to adjacent users, specifically Café Nero that lays directly opposite the site. This coffee shop opens at 06:30am.

As a further note, McDonald's at 127/129 Friar Street opens at 05:00am.

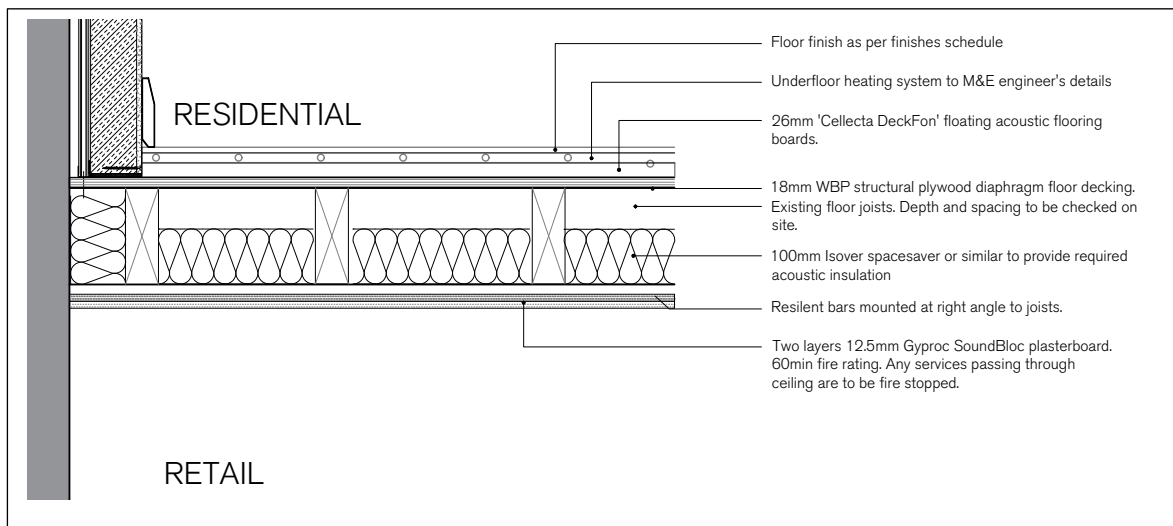
The extra 30minutes is an important matter to consider, this will provide the unit with custom comparable to adjacent premises for 'workers' either catching the train or who have arrived.

Therefore, to restrict the opening hours by 30minutes places the operator at a commercial disadvantage to immediately adjacent businesses.

Noise and Disturbance: externally, the extra activity is not expected to materially change, as persons who venture in are likely to be already passing. Whereas, those entering the premises, the robust sound attenuation proposed, we submit, would ensure that the uppers are not impacted upon.

To put in context, the uppers have consent for residential use, the A3/A5 would be operational prior to the flats being completed. The Applicant will ensure that there is no noise transmission and this will be subject to meeting Building Regulation Requirements to ensure that there would be adequate sound proofing between the ground and first floors (ie. between the restaurant and residential).

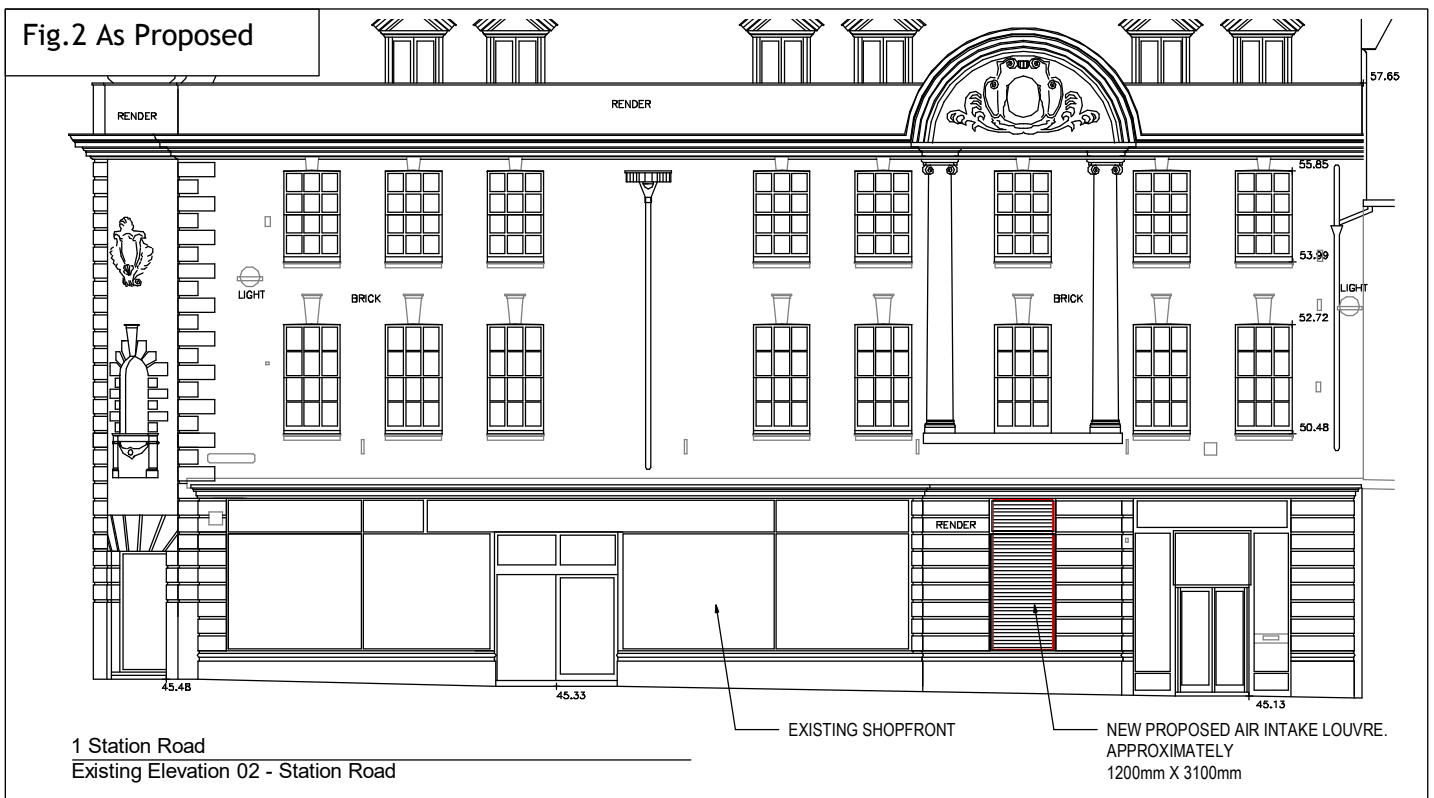
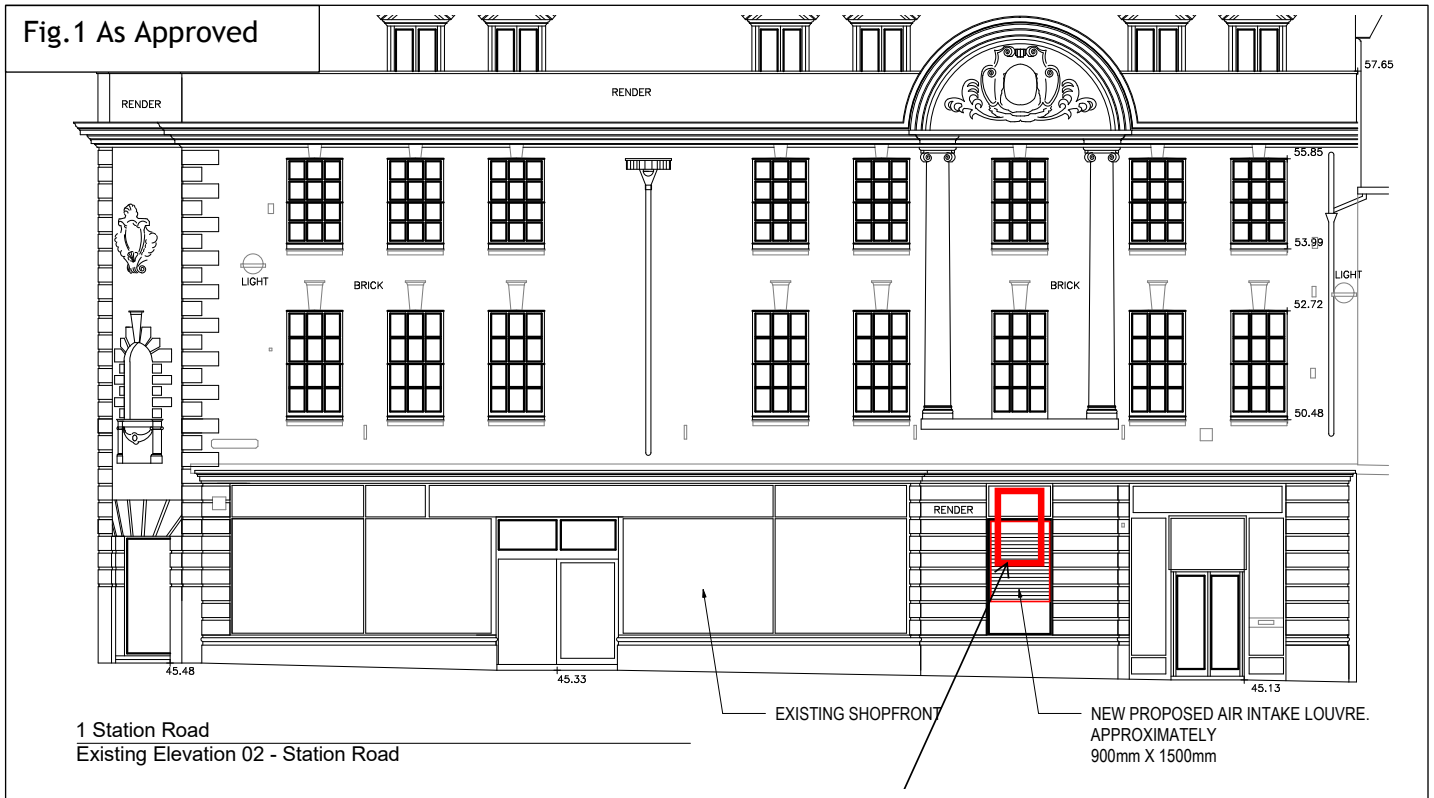
Below a is section of the anticipated sound attenuation between the ground floor and the first floor.



Side Elevation Louvers

The side louver will provide an essential air intake into the kitchen of the proposed business. In granting planning permission, the Council supported the provision of the louver, however, at detailed design an increase of size is required to allow sufficient air into the premises the business to operate and function.

For a comparison, we refer readers to the drawings below, the louver as approved is 900mm by 1500mm whereas the proposed amendment increases the louver to 1200 by 3100mm. with the smaller louver the kitchen would not be able to gain sufficient air intake into the kitchen.



Accordingly, this application seeks to make a modest change to the scheme to allow that will not materially alter nor harm the appearance of the building within the street scene.

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 sites 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.

7. Summary and conclusions

- In approving planning permission ref: 200343, the principle of the A3/A5 use at ground floor was established.
- This amended application seeks to incorporate the basement floor to provide a staff room and plant area to be used ancillary to the recently approved ground floor unit mixed use Class A2/A3 restaurant use.
- The change of use would comply with Policy CR7 as the change of use relates to accommodation at basement level, which will compliment the ground floor use that will retain an active frontage.
- The altered louver is essential to the operational requirements of the site as fresh air needs to be drawn into the premises and would not materially alter the appearance of the building over what has been approved.
- The increased hours of opening by only 30minutes in the morning would allow the operator to open at a consistent time to adjacent use and not be a commercial disadvantage.

- The proposal will not have a material impact on the amenities of the area in this busy town centre location.
- 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:

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Town Planning Bureau