

JUSTIFICATION FOR LOSS OF D1 USE

LOWER GROUND FLOOR

HAVELL HOUSE, 62-66 QUEENS ROAD, READING RG1 4AZ

INTRODUCTION

The application is for the change of use of a D1 opticians facility.

Policy OU1 NEW AND EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES states the following:

Proposals involving the redevelopment of existing community facilities for non-community uses will not be permitted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there is no longer a need to retain that facility.

This report seeks to demonstrate that there is no longer a need to retain this facility due to the alternative provision available in terms of other businesses providing the same services as well as the available vacant units the existing facility could relocate to.

CURRENT USE

The current facility is run by Optical Express Ltd in D1 use and is used as an Opticians and Optometrists. Under Reading Planning Policy, this is considered to be a Community Use.

The facility is located in the centre of Reading. This central, sustainable location means that the services are accessible to people in Reading itself as well as the surrounding areas.

They provide the following services/facilities:

- Laser Eye surgery consultaion
- Eye examination - private
- Contact Lens fitting
- Contact lens aftercare
- laser eye surgery procedures
- Private cataract consultation
- Dry Eye assessment
- Glaucoma Assessment
- Karatoconus Assessment

Further details have been provided in the Hicks Baker letter dated 23rd August and previously submitted.

ALTERNATIVE FACILITIES PROVIDING SIMILAR SERVICES

The report by Hicks Baker identified there are 16 companies within a 5 miles radius - and therefore serving a similar catchment - that provide opticians services in the central Reading area including 3 companies that provide a comparable range of services to Optical Express.

Nine of the facilities identified are also in the RG1 postcode area and two of those providing a similar range of services,

AVAILABLE VACANT BUILDINGS FOR D1 USE.

The following link is for 4 buildings in the centre of Reading which are currently being marketed as D1 Healthcare use.

https://propertylink.estatesgazette.com/healthcare-for-rent/reading-berkshire?Qq6qTPL5fpEbZm2cbO8YOUdpx10AF=Reading%2C+Berkshire&filters%5Bradius%5D=5&filters%5Bto_let_price%5D%5Bcurrency%5D=gbp&filters%5Bto_let_price%5D%5Bfrom%5D=&filters%5Bto_let_price%5D%5Bsize_modifier%5D=sqft&filters%5Bto_let_price%5D%5Bto%5D=&search=Reading%2C+Berkshire&sort_direction=desc&sort_field=created_at&view=grid

The current facility occupies a net internal floor area of 175m² (1800sq.ft).

Summary of Alternative Properties

- Bowman House in Bridge St, RG1 has 1765sq.ft
It is described as Healthcare/Office and a 'high street' location.
- 31 Castle Street, RG1 has 2032sq.ft
The details state it is for D1 use
- 8 Cholsey House RG30 is 2011sq.ft
Also identified as for D1 use.
- Unit 3, The Point RG6 has 3100sq.ft
It is marketed as suitable for Healthcare Use.

This demonstrates that there are currently four properties in the area, two of which are in the RG1 postcode area which are of a suitable use and of a comparable size to the existing facility. One would even provide an opportunity for expansion.

CONCLUSIONS

The existing facility is one of nine in the RG1 post code. Comparable services are provided by three operators, two of which are also located within the RG1 area.

There are four currently available properties of a similar or larger size on the market for rent. Two of which are also in the same postcode area.

The above demonstrates that due to the range of existing alternative businesses providing a similar range of services in combination with the range of vacant buildings currently available to rent on the market that there is no longer a need to retain this facility and that Policy OU1 is satisfied.