

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT - Application No: 190325/FUL

Address: 68 Broad Street Reading

Proposal: Proposed change of use from Sui Generis (Beauty Salon) to flexible A3, A5 use

Case officer: Anthony Scholes

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to a Grade II Listed mid-terrace three storey building on the North side of Broad Street. The existing building contains a Sui Generis (beauty salon) at ground floor with additional treatment rooms above. The site is located within the Reading Central Area, Central Core, Primary Shopping Area and within an existing designated Active Frontage.

Proposal:

Planning Permission is sought for the proposed change of use of the ground, first and second floors of the building to a flexible A3, A5 use. Listed building consent does not form part of this proposal. No external or internal alterations to the building are proposed.

The ground floor retail unit was vacant from March 2015 to December 2015 and was approved for a change of use to its current use in December 2015.

Relevant Planning History:

151657/FUL - Change of use from A1 to Sui Generis (Beauty Salon). Granted

151888/LBC - Repairs to the roofs, rainwater goods and brickwork to return the property to a watertight condition - Under Consideration

141166/LBC & 141167/ADV - Proposed fascia sign - Withdrawn

121273 /LBC & 121274/ADV - Installation of front fascia sign and trough light above shop front - Granted

110414/FUL & 110415/LBC - Removal of existing glass metal frame and installation of 4 no. polycarbonate roof lights, new lead flashing to roof, demolition of gable wall and replacement doors and windows to rear elevation. (part-retrospective) - Granted

021261/ADV - Replace existing fascia and projecting sign (amended description to exclude banner sign) - Granted

910563/ADV - New fascia sign and replace panels to the existing projecting box sign - Granted

Consultation Responses:

Environmental Protection: No objections.

Transport: No objections.

Properties at 65-67, 70, 70-72, 73-74, 80 and 81 Broad Street and 18, 19, 20 and 21 West Street were notified and a site notice was displayed. No representations have been received.

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy (2008, altered 2015)

CS7 Design and the Public Realm,
CS26 Hierarchy of Centres,
CS27 Maintaining the Retail Character of Centres,
CS33 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP) (2009)

RC5 Design in the Centre,
RC6 Definition of the Centre
RC10 Active frontages

Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, altered 2015)

SD1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development,
DM4 Safeguarding Amenity
DM12 Access, Traffic and Highway-related Matters

Appraisal

Principle

Policy CS26 seeks to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the central locations, which can include widening the range of use available. Policy CS27 also seeks to maintain a strong retail character to such locations by preventing significant groupings of non-retail uses in one part of the centre. Policy RC6 also seeks to promote retail development whilst supporting other town centre uses within the wider Central Core area.

Within an existing active frontage Policy RC10 seeks that uses should be within either A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, D1, D2 or related sui generis uses with frontages being of high visual quality.

The adjoined unit to the east (no.s 65-67) is in A2 use (Building Society) whilst the adjoined unit to the west (no.s 70-71) is in A1 use (Opticians). Within an existing active frontage the proposed flexible A3, A5 use would accord with the defined uses under Policy RC10. The proposal does not seek any external alterations to the building and the existing large glazed frontage would be retained as an active frontage to the street, although prior to any change of use, it is likely that external alterations will be required. As such, a full application and LBC application will have to accompany these changes.

It is considered that the proposed flexible A3, A5 to the ground, first and second floors of the building would accord with the policies, and an A class use would maintain the retail character of the area. As the current use of the building is Sui Generis (beauty salon) the change of use would not harm the existing mix of uses within the area.

Furthermore, because a flexible change of use is sought, the existing or future occupants could revert back to A1, or A2 retail use at any time without the need to seek planning permission. In light of the economic circumstances facing many high streets like Broad Street and the need for Councils to be more flexible, there is no reason to restrict such flexibility, as the proposal remains appropriate in the circumstances and compliant with the overall objectives of Policy RC10.

The GPDO (2015) as amended would allow a change of use from A5 to C3 and B1(a) under the 2019 No.907 (to be in force 25 May 2019). Although these permitted development rights would apply, they would not be applicable to the premises in question as it is a listed building. Additionally, the GPDO requires prior approval from the local planning authority, requiring an assessment as to whether it would be undesirable for the building

to change to the above mentioned uses. As such, it is not considered necessary to consider removal of permitted development rights in this instance.

A flexible use would also support the objectives of the 2019 NPPF in placing significant weight on the need to support economic growth through the planning system, and the need to support the viability and vitality of high streets. The principle of development is therefore accepted.

The proposed change of use is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policies CS26 and CS27 of the Reading Core Strategy (2008, altered 2015) and RC6 and RC10 of the RCAAP (2009).

Listed Building

The proposal does not seek any external alterations to the property, nor are any internal alterations proposed. As such, the proposal in its current form will not affect the character, appearance, or fabric of the listed building.

Character of the surrounding area

The proposal does not seek any external alterations to the building and is not considered to result in any harm to the visual amenities of the surrounding area in accordance with Policy RC5 of the RCAAP (2009) and Policy CS7 of the Reading Core Strategy (2008, 2015).

Amenity

The applicant has not provided details of any plant (vent/flue) equipment that would no doubt be necessary for A3, or A5 uses, as such, a number of conditions would need to be imposed to ensure that future equipment is suitable and will not have an adverse impact on the amenity of nearby occupiers/ residents.

The Council's Environmental Protection Officer has raised no objection to the proposed development which is considered to be in accordance with Policy CS34 of the Reading Core Strategy (2008, altered 2015) and Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012).

Transport

The site is located within Zone 1 of the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD in an area consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments, with limited residential. This area is well served by rail and bus links and also contains the largest proportion of public car parking spaces. There are no requirements for car parking in this zone as any demand for parking will be met by the town centre public car parks. The proposal is not considered to have any detrimental transport impacts.

Other matters

The Council's Licensing Officer have objected to the proposal's intended A5 use due to the site being within the cumulative impact zone and the need to prevent antisocial behaviour. As such, it is unlikely that a license would be issued for the use of the premise as an A5 use. However, as this is controlled under a separate legislation outside of the planning system, it would not be reasonable for the Local planning Authority to preclude any such A5 use until full details of the licence sought were received. It is therefore the responsibility and discretion of Council licensing officers to consider any such request separately to this planning application based on particular licence conditions sought by the intended occupier.

An informative is recommended to advise that that any alterations to the shop front or signage would require separation planning permission, advertisement consent and listed building consent.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposal is acceptable for the reasons set out in this report.

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT Planning Permission