

21/05/2019

Design & Access Statement

in support of an Application for the creation of a corner Loggia at first floor level for a proposed Cinema at Broad Street Mall, 47 Oxford Road, Reading, RG1 7QG

Introduction

This application seeks permission for the creation of an open loggia at first floor on the corner of Broad St and Queens Walk at Broad St mall, the purpose of which is to provide the amenity of open space for customers to the cinema to support the foyer lobby function and to open up the corner for visual permeability from the street below

Planning History

Permission was granted for Change of Use from Class A1 to Class D2 for the proposed cinema in, application ref 180823, dated 13/9/18.

Permission was granted for alterations to the external appearance of the ground floor shop fronts and first floor elevation, application ref 181613, dated 2/11/18.

This latter permission was the subject of an application for a Non Material Amendment for changes to the proportion and size of windows, ref 190631 which was granted 15/5/19.

Existing Condition

At the time of making this application construction works are underway to alter the external elevations of the ground floor and first floor in accordance with granted applications listed above. It is anticipated that contracted works will be completed in June 2019.

Proposed Alterations

The current permitted design allows for the opening up of the elevation at first floor on to Oxford Road and on the corner with Queens Walk with large glazed areas to allow daylight into the proposed foyer and views into and out from the new cinema.

The proposal contained within this application is for the opening up of the corner of Oxford Road and Queens Walk and the creation of an external loggia. The external wall is moved to the interior of the proposed loggia with bi-fold or sliding doors to allow cinema customers on to the loggia. The purpose of opening up the corner is threefold

1. to strengthen the visual connection between the new cinema and street below, communicating the new use to potential patrons
2. to be a signifier for patrons seeking access to the cinema, sitting as it does above the new ground floor entrance on the corner
3. to be an additional amenity for patrons to the cinema with access to open air and the visual connections to the public realm below

Design

The openings in the elevations to Oxford Road and Queens Walk to the loggia will be the same size as those defining the window openings in permitted in NMA 190631. The external walls to be formed in the two inside faces of the loggia to the cinema will be formed of a cementitious render self-coloured to match the existing concrete, with metal glazed openings to match the new glazing elsewhere, RAL 9004

The soffit will be natural concrete and the floor formed of concrete paving slabs laid to fall to a new gully outlet. Guarding to the loggia will be at a height of 1400mm above floor level

Customer Access

The loggia will be fully accessible for wheelchairs and prams to the main cinema foyer

Operations

Change of Use Permission 180823 allows for operating hours for the cinema of 10.30-00.00 Monday-Thursday and Bank/Statutory Holidays and 10.30-02.00 Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

The cinema operator proposes to close the loggia at 23.00 every evening.

The maximum capacity of the loggia will be 40 patrons – this will be controlled by staff

There will be no loose furniture on the loggia – the only furniture envisaged will be standing tables to be anchored to the floor.

There will be no PA system active on the loggia except for notification of evacuation in case of fire.

Conclusion

The granted Change of Use permission 180823 for use class D2 will be implemented as a cinema for the Really Local Group. The permission will enable the activation of this important corner of Queens Walk and Oxford Road and form a positive connection with the Octagon Theatre to enhance the quality of the evening economy in the locality and in particular reinforce the ambitions to enhance Queens Walk as a location for dining and cafes. It will be an attractive and affordable amenity for the town as a whole.

The location at first floor is a positive use for a long term vacant retail space. The corner entrance to the cinema forms a strong presence on both Oxford Road and Queens Walk.

Permission 181613 and NMA 190631 to open up the previously blank elevation provides visual activation of the upper storey and visual permeability to and from the new cinema and venue.

Opening up the corner as proposed will further strengthen this connection by forming an inside/outside space to mediate between the public realm below and the cinema above. It will also anchor one end of Queens Walk and strengthen the objective of appropriate animation of the public realm and stimulation of the evening cultural economy in the locality.