

DP4003

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Dear Sir/Madam,

UNITS 36 AND 37 DUSSELDORF WAY, BROAD STREET MALL, READING, RG1 7QE

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION FOR AMALGAMATION OF RETAIL UNITS AND CHANGE OF USE; ASSOCIATED SHOPFRONT WORKS AND MINOR EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS

On behalf of our client, Inception (Reading) Sarl (c/o Moorgarth Group Limited), we are pleased to enclose a full planning application at the above site for:

“Amalgamation of Units 36 and 37 (Class A1) and change of use to form a flexible retail/restaurant/bar unit (Class A1/A3/A4); associated replacement shopfront works and associated external alterations on Dusseldorf Way and South Court frontages.”

Application Submission

The application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (ref. PP-07560125) and comprises the following documents:

- Completed Planning Application Form and Ownership Certificates;
- Cover Letter (this letter); and
- Location Plans, Site Plan and Existing & Proposed Drawings Prepared by Corstorphine + Wright Architects.

A Community Infrastructure Levy Form is also included, and the requisite planning consent application fee has been paid electronically.

The Site and Context

The application site comprises Units 36 (Poundland) and 37 (former Stacks Home Furnishings) which are located on the south side of Broad Street Mall fronting Dusseldorf Way and South Court. The existing Unit 36 (1,014 sqm GIA) is arranged over basement and ground floors with frontage to Dusseldorf Way and South Court. Unit 37 (422 sqm GIA) is arranged over basement and ground floor with a frontage to South Court only. Unit 37 is now vacant and was formerly occupied by Stacks Home Furnishings (Class A1 retail use). Unit 36 is currently occupied by Poundland (Class A1 retail use), however will become



vacant imminently as Poundland are in the process of fitting out a new unit within the northern end of Broad Street Mall, fronting Oxford Road.

While the Application Site forms part of the wider Broad Street Mall development currently under consideration by Reading Borough Council, the proposed works are consistent/compatible with the masterplan proposals and will form part of immediate short term works which would remain in-situ until the masterplan comes forward.

From a planning policy perspective, the Site is located within the Reading Central Area, Central Core, Primary Shopping Area and Office Core, as well as the West Side Major Opportunity Area. The Site is not within a Conservation Area, however, the Site is immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area. There are a number of listed buildings and monuments located within close proximity to the Site, including: Church of St. Mary (Grade I listed); 55 and 55A St Mary's Butts (Grade II listed); and Jubilee Cross (Grade II listed). The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low risk).

The Proposed Development

The planning application proposes the amalgamation of Units 36 and 37 to form a larger footprint flexible retail/restaurant/bar unit at ground floor, whilst retaining the existing basement for retail storage, staff amenity and back of house purposes. The amalgamation and change of use will enable this large unit to be repurposed providing a new retail/restaurant/bar demise to meet anticipated market demand and avoid prolonged periods of vacancy.

The newly extended retail/restaurant/bar unit will comprise 1,170 sqm (GIA) floorspace at ground floor and 321 sqm (GIA) at basement. The proposal results in a small 55 sqm (GIA) uplift in floorspace as a result of the efficiencies achieved through amalgamation.

The proposals can be summarised as follows:

Shopfronts and external alterations – associated with the newly created unit, shopfront replacements, new entrances and much improved external cladding as shown on the submitted drawings is proposed and will wrap around the site from Dusseldorf Way to South Court. The works will provide a consistent high quality appearance and much improved streetscape, maximising active frontages, together with fascia signage zones and awnings for prospective tenants (subject to separate advertisement consent, as may be required).

Waste and servicing will be centralised in accordance with existing procedures at Broad Street Mall, access via the basement.

Planning Assessment

Land Use and Unit Amalgamation

In considering land use changes within the context of an existing town centre, it is relevant to note the National Planning Policy Framework for 'main town centre uses':

'Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).'



The draft Reading Local Plan is consistent with this definition, itself identifying ‘Centre Uses’ which include retail, restaurants and drinking establishments.

It is clear that the proposed flexible A1/A3/A4 use is inherently appropriate for this established town centre location and will contribute towards maintaining and enhancing its vitality, viability and competitiveness.

The table below summarises the existing and proposed floorspace (GIA), split by use class.

	Existing (sqm)	Proposed (sqm)	Change +/- (sqm)
Retail (A1)	1,436	-	-1,436
Retail/Restaurant/Bar (A1/A3/A4)	-	1,491	+1,491
Total	1,436	1,491	+55

The proposed unit is sought as flexible retail/restaurant/bar to assist marketing in a challenging retail environment. Clearly all are appropriate uses for this town centre location, and are located in a non-designated frontage so no planning issues arise in respect of the A3/A4 use, given these uses will complement the existing experience and longer term vision for Dusseldorf Way, anchored by the Hexagon theatre to the west. Should the unit be occupied for Class A3/A4 use, then any details required in respect of ventilation or odour extraction can be addressed by planning condition.

Overall, the principle of development is clearly acceptable to enable the repurposing and reutilisation of retail units within the town centre. Planning policy and decisions should foster and support town centre vitality and viability, which in this case means the amalgamation and change of use to suit anticipated market demand. All of the land uses proposed are appropriate for the town centre and the frontages to Dusseldorf Way will be activated.

In our view the proposals clearly comply with national policy and guidance in respect of town centre and retail planning, whilst also complying with relevant policies in Reading’s adopted development plan and the well advanced draft Local Plan (specifically policies RL1 and RL2).

Design & Appearance

The proposed design and appearance of the new shopfront, unit entrances and cladding are considered wholly appropriate for this town centre location. The proposals will provide an improved outward facing appearance to this part of Broad Street Mall, complementing recent internal refurbishment within the Mall itself. The shopfronts have been design in line with the recently submitted Broad Street Mall masterplan application and the new entrances will achieve level access.

The proposals will activate the maximum extent of Dusseldorf Way and South Court frontage. The large bifold doors will achieve active frontages and surveillance, whilst the tenant fascia signage zones are of suitable size and proportion.

Transport, Servicing and Waste

The Site is located in a sustainable location, accessible by a range of public transport modes, and benefits from existing car park provision at Broad Street Mall to suit all customer preferences. Servicing of the unit will be consistent with previous arrangements for Poundland and Stacks Home Furnishings, insofar as all servicing will take place from the basement, with the centralised basement refuse management area being utilised. Vehicular servicing movements will therefore be via the basement access (as per the existing situation) and have no impact on the public highway).



Concluding Remarks

We trust that you have sufficient information to determine this application within the statutory timescales. If you have any queries in respect of the submission please do not hesitate to contact Mark Knibbs or Chris Beard at this office.

Yours faithfully,



DP9 Ltd