

**CHANGE OF USE FROM USE CLASS A1 (SHOPS) TO
CLASS A3 (RESTAURANTS AND CAFES),
INSTALLATION OF EXTRACTION AND
VENTILATION SYSTEM, INSTALLATION OF
REPLACEMENT SHOPFRONT, INSTALLATION OF
SIGNAGE TO SHOPFRONT**

PLANNING STATEMENT

80 BROAD STREET, READING

ON BEHALF OF CHOPSTIX RESTAURANTS LTD

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004**

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PLANNING | **DESIGN** | **ENVIRONMENT** | **ECONOMICS**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Chopstix Restaurants Ltd to support a full planning application and advertisement consent for:

Change of use from use class A1 (shops) to class A3 (restaurants and cafes), installation of extraction and ventilation system, installation of replacement shopfront, installation of signage to shopfront

- 1.2 Advertisement consent is sought for a five year period, after which it is intended the advertisements will benefit from deemed consent.

- 1.3 The application is supported by the following documents and plans:

- Planning application form;
- Site location plan;
- Existing internal layout;
- Proposed internal layout;
- Proposed inverted ceiling layout;
- Existing elevations; and
- Proposed elevations.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The site

- 2.1 The application site is 80 Broad Street, Reading, a retail unit with three storeys and a basement, with a gross internal area of 266 sq m.
- 2.2 The unit was last occupied by a coffee shop within Use Class A1 (shops). The unit was vacated in March 2017 and has been on the market since then.
- 2.3 The host building appears to date from the 19th century. The front elevation is finished in cream painted brickwork and is relatively plain in its appearance. The existing shopfront is of a modern design with large glazed areas and pilasters to each side. The fascia board reaches as high as the base of the first floor window cills; this is consistent with those of adjacent retail units to the east of the premises. It is noted that the existing fascia signage was approved by Reading Borough Council in 2016 (application reference 161428); a photograph of this signage is provided at **Appendix 2**.

The surrounding area

- 2.4 Broad Street is one of Reading's principal shopping streets, forming a link between The Oracle and the Broad Street Mall. The western part of Broad Street close to the application site has a range of retailers including national brands such as Next and Clas Ohlson alongside cafes, restaurants and takeaways such as Caffe Nero, Artigiano and KFC. It is noted that there is an office building adjacent to the application site with the upper floors being occupied by a recruitment agency.
- 2.5 80 Broad Street is highly accessible by sustainable modes of transport. Many local bus services call at stops outside Broad Street Mall (150 m away by foot) or Friar Street (250 m away by foot). Public cycle stands are provided along Broad Street and around its junction with St Marys Butts. Car parking is available at the Broad Street Mall or the Oracle. Servicing access is gained from an access and service yard to the rear of the premises, which also serves other nearby retail units.
- 2.6 The premises do not lie within a Conservation Area. There are two listed buildings nearby:

- 67 and 68 Broad Street, opposite the application site approximately 20m away; listed at Grade II this building has an ornate frontage to the upper storeys with modern shopfronts to the ground floor.
- 88 and 89 Broad Street and Congregational Church, on the same side as the application site approximately 50m away; listed at Grade II, the listing description explains that the building is listed for its interior.

2.7 The premises are fall within Environment Agency Flood Zone 1 and are therefore considered to be at low risk of flooding.

3. BACKGROUND

National policy

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out at paragraph 7 the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – which should be enhanced through the planning system.
- 3.2 Chapter 1 of the Framework highlights the role the planning system should play in supporting economic growth. Paragraph 21 notes that local planning authorities should encourage sustainable economic growth, support existing business sectors and plan for new and emerging sectors likely to locate in the area. Priority areas for economic regeneration should be identified.
- 3.3 Chapter 2 of the Framework explains that planning policies should support competitive town centres and their vitality and viability. Paragraph 23 sets out the expectation that local planning authorities should promote customer choice and a diverse retail offer, and provide for a range of town centre uses including retail and leisure uses.
- 3.4 The Framework provides a definition of main town centre uses which includes retail, leisure and entertainment facilities such as restaurants, cinemas, pubs and bars, as well as arts, cultural and tourism development.

Adopted Development Plan

- 3.5 Relevant documents in the adopted Development Plan include the Core Strategy 2008 (updated 2015), the Sites and Detailed Policies 2012, and the Central Area Action Plan 2009.

Town centre and retail policies

- 3.6 The adopted Proposals Map shows that the application site lies within the defined Reading Central area. It also lies within the Primary Shopping Area for which policy CS27 “Maintaining the Retail Character of Centres” applies, and an Active Frontage for which policy RC10 applies.
- 3.7 Policy DM4 “Safeguarding Amenity” expects that development will not cause significant detrimental impacts upon residential properties, including in terms of noise and disturbance, lighting, dust and fumes or odour.

Shopfront design

- 3.8 Core Strategy policy CS7 “Design and the Public Realm” sets out the expectation that all development will be of high quality design and should maintain and enhance the character and appearance of its locality. This includes the need to use appropriate architectural detailing and materials, to respond to local character, and to ensure development is visually attractive.
- 3.9 Adopted Policy DM23 “Shopfronts and Cash Machines” sets out the expectation that shopfronts will respect the character of their host building and the wider street in terms of design, colours, materials, lighting and location. Fascia boards should reflect the height of other surrounding fascia boards. Shopfronts should present an active frontage to the street.
- 3.10 Core Strategy policy CS5 “Inclusive Access” requires buildings to provide suitable access into and within buildings for all potential users including disabled people.

Advertisements

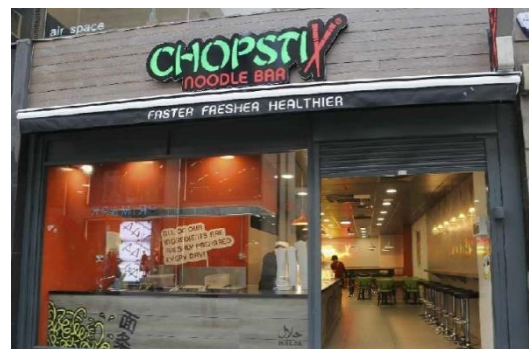
- 3.11 Adopted Policy DM22 “Advertisements” sets out design criteria for proposed advertisements; advertisements are expected to respect the host building and surrounding area, in respect of size, location, design, materials, colour, noise, lettering, text, illumination and luminance. Advertisements should not obstruct architectural features, or detract from highways or public safety.
- 3.12 The supporting text sets out indicative illuminance levels for advertisements; in ‘high district brightness areas’ including the core of the centre of reading, this is 1,000 cd/m².

Historic environment

- 3.13 Policy CS33 “Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment” sets out the requirement that development protects and, where possible, enhances the setting of historic assets including listed buildings. It explains that permission will only be granted where development gives rise to no adverse impacts upon heritage assets.

4. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 Full planning permission is sought for “*Change of use from use class A1 (shops) to class A3 (restaurants and cafes), installation of extraction and ventilation system, installation of replacement shopfront, installation of signage to shopfront*”.
- 4.2 The applicant, Chopstix Restaurants Ltd, has over 70 restaurants across the UK and the Republic of Ireland, either operated directly or by franchisees. Chopstix has grown rapidly in recent years as casual dining has become increasingly popular. Chopstix is currently renovating its existing estate and opening new branches including those in ‘High Street’ locations.
- 4.3 As part of the proposed development, the ground floor will be retained as part of the public area. A food preparation area, display counter and cash desk will be provided to the front of the unit. The rest of the ground floor will provide seating for customers; a total of 48 covers are envisaged. An accessible WC will be provided.
- 4.4 On the first floor, the main kitchen will be provided alongside a storeroom.
- 4.5 No changes are proposed to either the basement which will be used for storage, or to the second floor which will be used for staff welfare. Waste will be stored within the premises in the public area and kitchens as appropriate, and collected in accordance with existing arrangements for commercial premises.
- 4.6 A ventilation and extraction system is proposed, comprising of internal ductwork, fan and filtration, and an external vent. This will serve extraction units to the ground floor food preparation area and the first floor kitchen.
- 4.7 A replacement shopfront will be installed; this will be glazed with a lattice roller shutter to be provided to the doorway (internally mounted). The shopfront will be constructed using coated aluminium which will be hardwearing and easy to maintain.
- 4.8 A replacement fascia board and advertisements will complement the design of the shopfront and the proposed signage. Replacement signage with LED backlighting (brightness levels of 1,000 cd/m²) in coloured Perspex will be provided to the fascia board.



Example Chopstix shop front (Oxford Street, London)

5. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of development

- 5.2 Relevant policies for retail in Reading include Policy CS27 which explains that a strong retail character will be retained in the identified centres including Reading Centre, and that significant groupings on non-retail uses in one part of a centre will not be allowed. The supporting text sets a target of 50% A1 uses within local centres although no such target is set for Reading Town Centre. The boundaries for the centre are set out in Central Area Action Plan Policy RC6 and illustrated on the Proposals Map.
- 5.3 Within Reading Town Centre, policy RC10 identifies Active Frontages; the application site forms part of an Active Frontage. Policy RC10 sets a general requirement for the provision of 'active' uses including those in use classes A1-A5 (retail), C1 (hotels), and D1-D2 (non-residential institutions) at ground level. The proposed development, being within Class A3, complies with this and will ensure that an active frontage is maintained in this location. The introduction of a food preparation area and a dining area to the front of the unit will ensure that activity within the premises (such as the preparation of fresh food) can be seen by passers-by.
- 5.4 Drawing the above together it is considered that the proposed change of use will make a strong positive contribution towards the vitality and viability of Broad Street. The proposed restaurant use will attract customers throughout the daytime and into the evening. Display counters, a staffed food preparation area and dining tables will present an attractive and lively frontage to the unit.
- 5.5 It is considered that the introduction of an A3 use at 80 Broad Street will not create a 'significant grouping' of non-retail uses in this location. There is a mix of uses around the application site, including coffee shops, restaurants, retail shops and banks. A desktop study has been undertaken of surrounding ground floor units¹; at present, 74.2% are in A1 use, 9.7% in A2, 12.9% in A3 and 3.2% in A4. The proposed development will result in 71.0% A1 use and 16.1% in A3 use.

¹ See **Appendix 1**

Design

- 5.6 The replacement shopfront is to be modern in its appearance, using hardwearing materials. It has been designed to allow for a staffed fresh food counter and preparation kitchen to be provided to the front of the unit; this is helpful from an operational perspective and brings additional activity to the front of the unit, clearly visible to passers-by to see. A lattice roller shutter with Perspex inserts is to be provided to the front doorway; this is beneficial from a security perspective and is space efficient; the mechanism is to be internally mounted.
- 5.7 It is considered that the shopfront design is appropriate in the context of the surrounding area and the host building and therefore complies with policies CS7 and DM23.

Advertisements

- 5.8 The proposed development incorporates two new advertisements which fall to be considered under detailed policy DM22.
- 5.9 The proposed replacement fascia advertisement is considered appropriate to the surrounding building and its context. It is of an appropriate size, contained entirely within the fascia board area, and is similar in character to that which exists at the premises and other surrounding shopfronts. Brightness levels are limited to 1,000 cd/m² in line with the indicative illumination levels set out at paragraph 10.3.8 of the Sites and Detailed Policies document. As Broad Street is pedestrianised, it is not considered there will be an impact upon highway safety.
- 5.10 A new projecting advertisement is also proposed. This projecting advertisement is not illuminated and is relatively small in scale. As such, it will not be unduly obtrusive in terms of its appearance. It is also not considered to affect highway safety or to affect public safety.
- 5.11 Drawing the above together the proposed advertisements are considered appropriate to their context and in their design and therefore comply with policy DM22.

Accessibility

- 5.12 The proposed development has been designed to ensure that all public areas are fully accessible with a wide door provided to the shopfront, appropriate circulation space, and the provision of an accessible WC. As such, the proposed development is considered to be compliant with Core Strategy policy CS5.

Amenity

- 5.13 The proposed development incorporates measures to minimise environmental and amenity impacts in accordance with policy DM4.

Waste storage and collection

- 5.14 Waste storage is to be provided within the premises, with refuse bins provided to the customer areas and kitchens.
- 5.15 Waste collection will be undertaken in accordance with existing arrangements for commercial premises, with food waste and recycling refuse sacks to be collected outside the premises on a daily basis.

Ventilation and extraction

- 5.16 The proposed ventilation, extraction and filtration equipment are designed to minimise odours arising from cooking on the premises. Fans and filters will be installed internally, with an external vent to be provided to the rear at first floor level. The system will exhaust into the rear service yard.

Opening hours

- 5.17 The proposed development is anticipated to be open from 9.00am to 10.00pm Monday to Sunday. This is consistent with the opening times of a number of premises around the application site and is considered appropriate for its town centre context.

Historic environment

- 5.18 The proposed development is not considered to adversely affect the setting of nearby listed buildings. External changes will be limited to the replacement of the

existing shopfront with a new one of similar design, and the installation of replacement signage of a similar scale and character to that previously installed. As such, the setting of the listed buildings will be preserved and the proposed development complies with Core Strategy policy CS33.

- 5.19 It is noted that heritage issues were explored in the Officers' Report for application 161428 in 2016; it was concluded that the proposals for that scheme were acceptable in the context of the nearby listed buildings.

Conclusion

- 5.20 Our assessment demonstrates that:

- the proposed development complies with all relevant Development Plan policies;
- the proposed replacement shopfront and advertisement are suitable in its context;
- the proposed development will not alter the setting of nearby listed buildings; and
- there are no adverse amenity impacts which cannot be mitigated.

- 5.21 Bringing a vacant unit back into use will secure economic and social benefits by supporting the vitality and viability of Broad Street. The proposed development will also support employment associated with the eventual occupier's business. The proposed development will also contribute towards improving the appearance of the site and its immediate environment by replacing a dated shopfront and signage with a modern equivalent.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Full planning permission and advertisement consent is sought for:

Change of use from use class A1 (shops) to class A3 (restaurants and cafes), installation of extraction and ventilation system, installation of replacement shopfront, installation of signage to shopfront.

6.2 The proposed change of use will support the vitality and viability of the primary shopping area by bringing an empty unit back into use as a restaurant, whilst maintaining an active frontage. The proposed use is recognised in national policy as a main town centre use and is therefore appropriate for its location.

6.3 The design of the replacement shopfront and advertisements are consistent with the character of the host building and surrounding area. Amenity issues such as ventilation, extraction and refuse collection can be satisfactorily addressed.

6.4 The proposed change of use therefore complies with all relevant adopted Development Plan policies. In accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Framework it is respectfully requested that permission should be granted without delay.

Appendix 1

Desktop survey of use classes in proximity to the application site

Address	Occupier	Use class
68 St Marys Butts	Caffe Nero	A3
75 Broad Street	Cancer Research UK	A1
80 Broad Street	<i>Application site</i>	
81 Broad Street	Artigiano	A4
82 Broad Street	Vacant unit	A1
84 Broad Street	Footasulym	A1
85 Broad Street	Millets	A1
86 Broad Street	Shoezone	A1
87 Broad Street	Brother 2 Brother	A1
88 Broad Street	EE	A1
89 Broad Street	Accessorize	A1
89a Broad Street	Waterstones	A1
90-93 Broad Street	Sports Direct	A1
90-93 Broad Street	Barclays	A2
94 Broad Street	Wolf Street Food	A3
95 Broad Street	Ann Summers	A1
96 Broad Street	Cath Kidston	A1
50 Broad Street	Hotter Shoes	A1
51 Broad Street	H&M	A1
52 Broad Street	JD	A1
53 Broad Street	River Island	A1
54 Broad Street	Schuh	A1
55-59 Broad Street	Superdrug	A1
55-59 Broad Street	Next	A1
60 Broad Street	Pret a Manger	A3
61-64 Broad Street	Clas Ohlson	A1
65-67 Broad Street	Halifax	A2
68 Broad Street	Belleza Beauty	A1
70-71 Broad Street	Boots Opticians	A1
72 Broad Street	Currency Exchange	A1
73 Broad Street	KFC	A3

Total units in **A1** use or vacant: **23**, or 74.2%

Total units in **A2** use: **2**, or 6.5%

Total units in **A3** use: **4**, or 12.9%

Total units in **A4** use: **1**, or 3.2%

The study is based on information on Google Maps dated November 2016. The study includes thirty-one units and includes the south side of Broad Street from Caffé Nero at 68 St Marys Butts to Cath Kidston at 96 Broad Street, and the north side of Broad Street from KFC at 73 Broad Street to Hotter Shoes at 50 Broad Street.

Coffee shops have been assumed to operate within mixed A1/A3 use and counted as A3 for the purposes of this table.

Appendix 2

Photograph of existing signage

Image source – Google Street View

