

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Park

App Ref: 240618/FUL

Address: 101 Wokingham Road, Reading, RG6 1LH

Proposals: Proposed use of ground floor as a cake shop within Class E

Case Officer: Sian Hickey

Date received (valid from): 13 May 2024 **Target Decision date:** 8 July 2024

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises of an existing ground floor office unit on the north-eastern side of Wokingham Road. The unit forms part of a two-storey building within a row of terraces. The site forms part of a Major Local Centre under Policy RL1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The surrounding area is a mix of retail and hot food takeaway units on ground floors with residential above. Alfred Sutton Primary School is located directly across the road from the application site. The property is not listed nor in a conservation area. The application site is within the Air Quality Management Area.

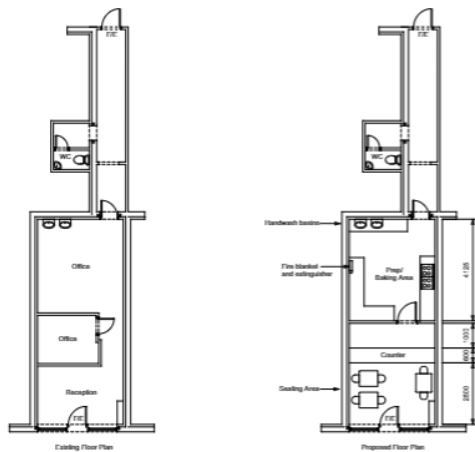
Site visit date: 18/06/2024

Site visit photo:



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the use of the ground floor of 101 Wokingham Road as a cake shop Class E(b). No external changes are proposed as part of this application, any new signage associated with the proposal would require a separate application for advertisement consent. This application is limited to the assessment of the proposed use only.



Plans considered:

Location Plan

Block Plan

Drawing No. 24/3078/01 Rev A - Existing and Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations

As received 13th May 2024

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

0000005232 - CONVERSION OF PART OF HOUSE INTO SHOP - Granted 16/08/1957

0000010189 - USE OF PART AS LADIES HAIRDRESSING SALON - Granted 18/01/1963

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

Flat A, 101 Wokingham Road, Reading, RG6 1LH

99 Wokingham Road, Reading, RG6 1LH

103a Wokingham Road, Reading, RG6 1LH

36 Norris Road, Reading, RG6 1NJ

38 Norris Road, Reading, RG6 1NJ

A site notice was also displayed at the front of the property.

Letters of representation have been received as follows: **None**

RBC Environmental Health

No objections

RBC Transport

This application is for the proposed change of use of the ground floor from office use to a cake shop (Class E(b)).

The site is located in the Wokingham Road local centre (as defined in the Local Plan) providing a mixed range of shops and takeaway units. The site fronts onto the A329 Wokingham Road which is the main transport corridor between central Reading and the east.

The A329 Oxford Road has parking restrictions preventing on-street parking and forms part of the Red Route 'no stopping' corridor.

Policy TR5 states that development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport. There is currently no car parking provision associated with the site and no parking is to be provided as part of this change of use. Any demand for parking would need to be met by on-street pay & display parking spaces. Any overflow in parking would not affect flow of traffic on the classified road network given the parking regulations within the vicinity of the site.

In transport terms, it is considered that the proposed change of use will have a negligible impact in terms of Transport. Therefore, there are no transport objections to this application.

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.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC7 - Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8 - Safeguarding Amenity

Policy EN15 - Air Quality

Policy EN17 - Noise Generating Equipment

Policy EM1 - Provision of Employment

Policy EM4 - Maintaining a variety of premises

Policy OU5 - Shopfronts and Cash Machines

Policy TR3 - Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters

Policy RL3 - Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres

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6. APPRAISAL

The main issues to be considered are:

- a) Principle of development
- b) Design and impact on the character of the area
- c) Impact on amenity
- d) Parking
- e) Environmental matters

a) Principle of development

In principle, the use of the unit as a cake shop is considered acceptable subject to relevant policy considerations.

The applicant claims that the last use of unit is as offices. The existing ground floor currently has a reception, separate office, open plan office space, WC and access out to the rear of the property.

Since 2020 both offices and a cake shop would fall with Use Class E. Having reviewed historic Google streetview it would appear that the current use commenced in 2021/22 following the 2020 changes to the Use Classes Order. The very original approved use for the premises was as a ladies hairdressers (permission ref: 0000010189 - 1963).

Notwithstanding that the proposed use would be a permitted use, for completeness the proposal has been reviewed within the context of adopted local policy. The proposal site is within a 'Key Frontages' area of Reading. Therefore the use class of the property should be one of the 'Centre Uses' as listed in policy RL3. Retail units and Takeaway units are listed along with Cafes and restaurants.

The proposed cake shop would fall within Use Class E(b) which is defined as *sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises*.

Policy RL3 states:

a) Within the Key Frontages, development involving a net loss of A1 retail or A2 financial and professional to other 'centre uses' will only be permitted where:

▫ There would be no more than 3 consecutive units which are not in A1 or A2 retail use;

COMPLIES

▫ The proportion of the total length of the Key Frontage within the centre that is in A1 or A2 use would exceed 50%. **NO INCREASE**

b) Within district, major local and local centres, development will be permitted provided that:

▫ There would be no more than 2 consecutive A5 takeaways, and no more than 30% of the length of the Key Frontage would be in takeaway use **NO INCREASE**

▫ There would be no net loss of 'centre uses' for 'non-centre uses' at the ground floor (apart from entrances to upper floors) except in exceptional circumstances. **COMPLIES**

c) Within and adjacent to district, major local and local centres, all new development should provide some 'centre uses' at the ground floor, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would not be possible or appropriate. **COMPLIES**

d) Where the Key Frontages within a centre as identified on the Proposals Map are proposed to significantly change, or have already significantly changed, as a result of redevelopment, meaning that criteria a) and b) cannot be applied, proposals should ensure that a strong retail character is retained within the ground floor of the centre, and that ground floor concentrations of consecutive units not in A1 or A2 use, in particular A5 takeaways, are avoided. **N/A**

The proposal therefore is in compliance with the requirements of policy RL3 and as such it is considered acceptable.

b) Design and impact on the character of the area

Policy CC7 states *"all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located."*

The proposal is for a change of use only. The proposal does not include any alterations to the existing shop front or the existing entrance door. Therefore, the proposal does not cause any harm to the existing external appearance of the property. The proposed use would not conflict with the other existing uses and it is not considered likely to harm the character of the street.

c) Impact on amenity

Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) states that *"Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties."*

The site is located within a mixed use area of residential and commercial. It is not considered that the proposed change of use would cause any significant additional harm to neighbouring properties in terms of privacy and overlooking, access to sunlight/daylight, harm to outlook, crime and safety.

The application form states that the hours of opening would be 9am until 8pm which is considered reasonable. It is not considered necessary in this instance to impose an hours of use condition, owing to the nature of the proposed use being unlikely to require this being controlled.

d) Parking

There are no parking spaces allocated to the premises and customers would need rely on local parking facilities or walk/cycle to the site. There is also a bus stop within walking distance to the site. In view of this, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of transport matters and confirmed by RBC Transport Department.

e) Environmental matters

No external plant such as air conditioning is proposed as part of this application. There are no concerns in terms of environmental matters and the Environmental Health team have no objections in relation to this proposed change of use.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed change of use has been assessed against the relevant policies and is considered acceptable.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

Conditions:

Time Limit

Approved Plans