

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	242725
Site Address:	1-2, Bush Walk, Wokingham, Wokingham, RG40 1AT
Expiry Date:	11 March 2025
Advert Publication Date:	19 November 2024
Site Notice Date:	22/11/2024
Site Visit Date:	28/01/2025
Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent to include: refitting of existing shopfittings and floor coverings, repair of existing walls, erection of stud wall at rear of the shop to provide storage, repair and repainting of timber shopfront, installation of new non- illuminated sign to the front fascia, covering of side windows with vinyl product displays, alterations to existing internal lighting.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Grade II Listed buildings.
- Wokingham Town Conservation Area.

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets (where site is within a Conservation Area)

PLANNING HISTORY

The site has an extensive planning history, including recent applications for advertisements, shopfront alterations, and works related to the Listed Building outlined below.

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
213709	Pre-application advice for the proposed installation of signage (consisting of 1 no. illuminated halo fascia, 1 no. externally illuminated projecting sign, manifestation strip (vinyls) across shopfront and 2 no. internally illuminated roundel signs) and a first floor louvre, plus internal and external alterations and associated works to the listed building.	Replied, 12/01/2022
220762	Application for advertisement consent for the installation of 1no.shop front non-illuminated fascia sign, 2no. internally illuminated roundel	Approved, 31/05/2022

	signs.	
220763	Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed Internal alterations to the ground/first floor and alterations to the fenestration.	Approved, 31/05/2022
242957	Application for advertisement consent for the proposed installation of 1 no. non-illuminated fascia sign and 18 no. window vinyls.	Approved, 06/03/2025

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WBC Conservation	No objections.
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REPRESENTATIONS

29 Rectory Road, GU14 7BU - 'I don't believe this application, if approved, will bring benefits to Wokingham. Wokingham already has four good quality health shops in the town centre, and it is unlikely that it could support another health shop. If approved, it is likely to result in shop closures and consequently will result in some existing shop staff being made redundant.' *Officer comment - Concerns regarding the potential impact on existing businesses and employment are not material planning considerations for this application, which relates specifically to internal alterations and changes to the shop signage of a listed building.*

The Wokingham Town Council P&T Committee - The Committee support this application.

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

Nos. 1-2 Bush Walk, including the shopfront of 37 Market Place, forms part of the Grade II listed former Bush Hotel and stable blocks. The property is located within the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area, directly opposite the Grade II* listed Town Hall.

The proposal complies in terms of:

Impact on heritage asset:



Appraisal:

The application seeks listed building consent for internal alterations to refit the ground-floor retail unit, introduce a new partition wall to create a rear storage area, and update the shopfront signage.

The Council's Built Heritage Officer has assessed this application, and their comments are outlined below.

Internal alterations

The Council's Built Heritage Officer initially raised concerns regarding inaccuracies and ambiguities in the submitted heritage assessment and floor plans. The plans

failed to clearly depict existing partition walls and previous alterations, including the removal of internal walls under prior consent that had not been fully discharged. The proposed HVAC riser also required further clarification. Additionally, the ground-floor fireplace, currently enclosed by a stud wall, contains built-in cupboards that may hold historic significance, and their removal could be unacceptable.

Following discussions with the agent and the submission of revised shop floor plans on 30/01/2025 and 27/02/2025, the identified concerns have been addressed. The most recently submitted ground floor plan now more accurately depicts the existing stud wall enclosing the front of the fireplace and correctly illustrates the new partition wall, which extends from the stud wall rather than the historic timber post to divide the retail frontage from the rear storage area.

The previously submitted plan (AVH/Woking/02, dated 30/01/2025) had proposed the partition wall extending from the historic timber post at the corner of the chimney breast. The Council's Built Heritage Officer considers the revised approach to be a better heritage solution, as it avoids potential harm to the historic fabric.

Furthermore, with the updated details on covering the damp and friable brickwork to the side of the chimney breast, the Built Heritage Officer confirms that the condition previously recommended in comments dated 27/02/2025 is no longer necessary.

Shop Frontage

The Built Heritage Officer raises no objection to the proposed re-decoration of the Market Place shopfront, which would see the present varnished woodwork being painted

With respect to the proposed fascia sign, whilst the Built Heritage Officer raises no objection to the new fascia sign in principle, a more traditional approach, such as painted signage on a wooden fascia, would be preferable. The primary concern is the size of the new aluminium fascia board, as the existing signage currently extends over the top of the timber frame rather than being positioned above the horizontal timber, which traditionally delineates the fascia panel from the shop window. This arrangement has compromised the historic detailing of the building. The proposed fascia signage presents an opportunity to rectify this by reducing the height of the aluminium panel to align with the bottom of the corbel brackets on either side.

Regarding the window vinyl's, the Built Heritage Officer acknowledges that window graphics are a common feature of Grape Tree stores, including those within historic buildings. However, Nos. 1–2 Bush Walk is a unique case, as it is a listed building in a prominent location within the Town Centre Conservation Area. Historically, the building featured solid infill walling rather than the extensive glazing present today. Given these factors, the initially proposed window vinyl's, due to their quantity and design, were considered visually intrusive and overly dominant, conflicting with the building's traditional character and having a detrimental impact on both the designated heritage asset and the wider conservation area.

In response to these concerns, a revised scheme for the window vinyl was submitted by the agent on 05/02/2025. The updated design applies vinyl's to the inside face of the glazing on the Bush Walk and Market Place elevations, incorporating alterations

that reduce brightness and visual dominance. These changes reflect the feedback provided during on-site discussions and result in a more balanced, sympathetic design that better respects the character of the listed building and its historic setting.

With regard to the fascia signage, the agent has confirmed that the proposal remains unchanged. Following an on-site review of the existing fascia panel by the Built Heritage Officer, it is considered that the proposed new signage does not raise any heritage objections.

Overall, the amendments made in response to the Built Heritage Officer's concerns have resulted in a revised scheme that is now considered more appropriate for the listed building and its setting within the conservation area. The updated window vinyl's achieve a more harmonious balance, while the fascia signage remains acceptable from a heritage perspective. To ensure that the vinyl's remain suitable for the building and its surroundings, it is recommended that a condition be applied to control any future alterations or replacements.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Approval
Date:	7 March 2025
Earliest date for decision:	14 February 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>MC</i>
Date:	11.03.2025