



MAPLE
— PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT LTD

Planning Services
Wokingham Borough Council
Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1BN

05/11/25

Ref: 345

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Proposed replacement shopfront.
No. 1 Maiden Lane Centre, Lower Earley, RG6 3HD.**

Enclosed herewith is a planning application for the replacement of the shopfront at No. 1 Maiden Lane Centre.

The application property is a relatively modern, two storey building, of red brick construction and with a concrete tiled roof. It forms part of the Maiden Lane Centre, which is allocated in the Wokingham Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014 as a 'Local Centre'.

The Maiden Lane Centre was granted outline planning permission 1979, under reference 01945, with subsequent reserved matters approvals in 1981 (15505) and 1986 (25165). Those permissions conveyed consent for a mixture of shop units, office suites and residential.

The ground floor unit at No. 1 was the subject of a grant of planning permission in 2012 (2012/2238) for a change of use from D1 to A1 (now Use Class E).

The existing shopfront at No. 1 is beginning to become outdated, and is in need of replacement in order that continued, long term occupation can be secured. The shopfront as proposed is a simple double-glazed unit, mounted in a black metal frame.

Section 38(6) of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the policies of the relevant development plan documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this case, the most relevant constituent of the adopted development plan is the Wokingham Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014. Policy TB17 of that Local Plan relates to the defined Local Centres, and it states that:

'Proposals that retain and enhance the provision of day to day shopping in local centres will be supported.'

The proposed replacement shopfront achieves this goal. It enhances the day-to-day shopping in a local centre by making the unit more attractive to potential occupants. It therefore ensures the viability (and vitality) of the commercial use in the longer term.

In design terms, it is pertinent to have regard to the Wokingham Design Guide 2012.

Section 7.8 of the Design Guide specifically addresses the issue of shopfronts. The relevant quotes from that section are included as follows:

'A number of centres are associated with twentieth century large- scale development, such as at Lower Earley.'

'It is important that shopfront design responds to the design of the building as a whole, but also the wider street scene.'

'Shopfront proposals should respond positively to the scale, rhythms and architectural character of the building into which they are fitted. The appropriate design approach will vary according to the architectural character of the building.'

'The height of the shop window and of the fascia should relate to the storey heights and proportions of the elevation as a whole. The scale of the fascia, in particular its height, should relate to the proportions of the building as a whole.'

'In Conservation Areas, traditional materials and finishes, such as painted timber, glass, cast iron and render should be used, as they are still the most commonly used materials for good shopfronts. Plastics are not considered to be appropriate. In other locations, a wider range of more contemporary materials may be used, such as steel or aluminium, provided they are of high quality and the design approach relates to the architectural character of the building.'

(our underlining)

In this case, the shop unit is part of a modern centre, which is unconstrained by heritage issues (i.e. it is not a conservation area). The shopfront as proposed responds positively to the architectural character of the building, and the centre within which it sits.

A simple, elegant, black metal framed shopfront is entirely appropriate to the physical context in this particular case.

For the reasons explored above, it is clear that the proposal is fully compliant with planning policy and that it is acceptable in all other respects. As such, it is hoped that a grant of planning permission will be forthcoming in due course.

In the meantime, it is hoped that sufficient information has been provided in order that the application can be registered. However, if you should require any additional information then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

Paul Webster MRTPI
DIRECTOR