

PLANNING STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This design and access statement has been prepared to accompany a full planning application for a change of existing Gym Hall at 68-70 Peach Street, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 1XH, into new Grocery collection facility named as "SAFA SUPERSTORE". "The business will be changed from Gym Hall "E(d)" to Grocery Shop "E(a)" and they both falls under the same Use Class Order E. There will be a change in Shop Front and this is applicable to Planning Application."

SITE & SURROUNNDINGS

The site lies in Wokingham Borough Council, at Peach street near the Saxons Court. The site is situated in mixed-use zone having residential and commercial area nearby.

BACKGROUND

Planning application was applied for proposed change of use of pay phone box to ATM and pay phone in front of 68-70 Peach street RG40 1XH in 13/02/2006 and proposal was approved in 04/04/2006. The application reference no. is 062579.

Planning application was applied for advertisement application for new signage, to include 1no. fascia sign, 1 no. hanging sign and 2no. other signage at ground floor shop front of 68-70 Peach street RG40 1XH in 12/05/2015 and proposal was approved in 06/07/2015. The application reference no. is 151159.

Prior Approval submission for proposed change of use of the commercial premises on the first floor to 2 no. dwellings at 68-70 Peach street RG40 1XH in 19/11/2024 and the decision date was in 02/12/2024. But the application was withdrawn. The application reference no. is 242928.

Full application for the proposed installation of 4no. first floor windows at the front of 68-70 Peach street RG40 1XH was applied in 14/01/2025 and the consultation period ends in 13/02/2025. The status of the decision is waiting. The application reference no. is 242941.

USE

The new 'Grocery collection' will be named as "SAFA SUPERSTORE". This grocery contains all the grocery items including cold drinks, meat & poultry items. Liquors items will not be available. The proposed use on this site is for a 'Grocery collection'.

Access to the site will be through the existing access to the store from the Peach Street. The back door of the shop will be used for the delivery.

The Grocery will be open between the hours of 7am-11pm, Monday to Sunday and bank holidays. CCTV will be installed /upgraded to ensure staff and customers using the 'Grocery collection' are monitored.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The London Plan (2021)

Policy E9 Retail, markets and hot food takeaways

- A. A successful, competitive and diverse retail sector, which promotes sustainable access to goods and services for all Londoners, should be supported in line with the wider objectives of this Plan, particularly for town centres (Policy SD6 Town centres and high streets, Policy SD8 Town centre network, Policy SD7 Town centres: development principles and Development Plan Documents and Policy SD9 Town centres: Local partnerships and implementation).
- B. In Development Plans, boroughs should:
 - 1) identify future requirements and locations for new retail development having regard to the town centre policies in this Plan and strategic and local evidence of demand and supply
 - 2) identify areas for consolidation of retail space where this is surplus to requirements
 - 3) set out policies and site allocations to secure an appropriate mix of shops and other commercial units of different sizes, informed by local evidence and town centre strategies. Particular consideration should be given to the contribution large-scale commercial development proposals (containing over 2,500 sq.m. gross A Use Class floorspace) can make to the provision of small shops and other commercial units. Where justified by evidence of local need, policies should secure affordable commercial and shop units.
 - 4) identify areas under-served in local convenience shopping and related services and support additional facilities to serve existing or new residential communities in line with town centre Policy SD7 Town centres: development principles and Development Plan Documents
 - 5) support London's markets in their full variety, including street markets, covered markets, specialist and farmers' markets, complementing other measures to improve their management, enhance their offer and contribute to local identity and the vitality of town centres and the Central Activities Zone
 - 6) manage existing edge-of-centre and out-of-centre retail (and leisure) by encouraging comprehensive redevelopment for a diverse mix of uses in line with Policy SD6 Town centres and high streets, Policy SD8 Town centre network, Policy SD7 Town centres: development principles and Development Plan Documents and Policy SD9 Town centres: Local partnerships and implementation to realise their full potential for housing intensification, reducing car use and dependency, and improving access by walking, cycling and public transport
 - 7) manage clusters of retail and associated uses having regard to their positive and negative impacts on the objectives, policies and priorities of the London Plan including:
 - a) town centre vitality, viability and diversity
 - b) sustainability and accessibility
 - c) place-making or local identity
 - d) community safety or security
 - e) mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- C. Development Plans and development proposals should:
- D. Development proposals containing A5 hot food takeaway uses should not be permitted

where these are within 400 metres walking distance from the entrances and exits of an existing or proposed primary or secondary school. Boroughs that wish to set a locally-determined boundary from schools must ensure this is sufficiently justified. Boroughs should also carefully manage the over-concentration of A5 hot food takeaway uses within town centres and other areas through the use of locally-defined thresholds in Development Plans.

- E. Where development proposals involving A5 hot food takeaway uses are permitted, boroughs should encourage operators to comply with the Healthier Catering Commitment standards. Where justified, boroughs should ensure compliance with the Healthier Catering Commitment through use of a condition.
- F. Development proposals involving the redevelopment of surplus retail space should support other planning objectives and include alternative town centre uses on the ground floor where viable (and in accordance with town centre Policy SD7 Town centres: development principles and Development Plan Documents) and residential development.

- 6.9.1.** A diverse and competitive retail sector that meets the needs of Londoners and visitors to the capital is important. **Retailing is undergoing restructuring** in response to recent trends and future forecasts for consumer expenditure, population growth, technological advances and changes in consumer behaviour, with increasing proportions of spending made via the internet. As a result, retailing has evolved to become multi-channel, with a mix of physical stores, often supported by internet 'click and collect' in store or deliveries to homes, workplaces or pick-up points, and in other cases purely online businesses with no physical stores.
- 6.9.2.** Taking into account projected growth in household, commuter and tourist spending in London, retailers making more efficient use of existing space and special forms of trading (which includes internet-related spend), it is estimated that London could have a baseline **need for additional comparison goods retailing** of around 1.6 million sq.m. over the period 2016-2041, or 1.2 million sq.m. when current schemes in the planning pipeline are taken into account.
- 6.9.3.** In preparing or reviewing Development Plans, boroughs should take into account integrated strategic and local assessments of demand and capacity for both comparison and convenience goods retailing. Boroughs should plan proactively to accommodate that demand and **manage the transition of surplus retail** (including high street frontages, purpose-built shopping centres, malls and retail parks) to other uses in line with this policy and Policy SD6 Town centres and high streets, Policy SD8 Town centre network, Policy SD7 Town centres: development principles and Development Plan Documents, while ensuring sufficient capacity for convenience retail to meet the day-to-day needs of local residents.
- 6.9.4.** **Street markets** in London can play a valuable economic, social and cultural role helping to meet Londoners' varied dietary requirements, extend choice and access to a range of goods, contribute to the vitality and viability of town centres and the character of high streets, and provide opportunities for new businesses to start-up. Several markets are of strategic importance, such as those at Portobello Road, Borough, Columbia Road and Camden for example, and offer significant attractions for Londoners and visitors to the capital. Many markets have a specialist function, serving the shopping and leisure needs of a specific ethnic group, or providing speciality products and services. Whilst the planning system can help support the range of London's markets, broader actions are often required in terms of management and investment. The Mayor has established the London Markets Board to help ensure that markets continue to flourish, support growth in town centres and associated high streets, and remain vibrant attractions for all Londoners and visitors to the capital.
- 6.9.5.** Policy SD6 Town centres and high streets promotes a **diverse range of uses** to

support the vitality and viability of town centres. Some retail and related uses when clustered can support town centres to develop niche or specialist roles and may provide important visitor attractions. Over-concentrations of some uses however, such as betting shops, pawnbrokers, pay-day loan stores, amusement centres and hot food takeaways, can give rise to particular concerns regarding the impact on mental and physical health and wellbeing, amenity, vitality, viability and diversity. The proliferation and concentration of these uses should be carefully managed through Development Plans and planning decisions, particularly in town centres that are within Strategic Areas for Regeneration (see Table A1.1), which tend to have higher numbers of these premises.¹¹⁵ Boroughs may require Health Impact Assessments for particular uses.

6.9.6. Obesity is one of the greatest health challenges facing the capital. In London 38 per cent of Year 6 pupils (10 to 11 year-olds) are overweight or obese – higher than any other region in England. Children living in the most deprived areas of London are twice as likely to be obese as children living in the least deprived areas.¹¹⁶ The creation of a **healthy food environment**, including access to fresh food, is therefore important. The number of hot food takeaways in London has been steadily rising, with London boroughs having some of the highest densities of hot food takeaways in England. More deprived areas commonly have a higher density of hot food takeaways than other areas

6.9.7. **Hot food takeaways** generally sell food that is high in calories, fat, salt and sugar, and low in fibre, fruit and vegetables. There is evidence that regular consumption of energy-dense food from hot food takeaways is associated with weight gain, and that takeaway food is appealing to children. It is recognised that the causes of obesity are complex and the result of a number of factors, and that a broad package of measures is required to reduce childhood obesity within London. A wide range of health experts recommend restricting the proliferation of hot food takeaways, particularly around schools, in order to help create a healthier food environment. Boroughs wishing to set a locally-determined boundary from schools should justify this using evidence provided by public health leads. Shift and night-time workers also find it particularly difficult to access healthy food due to the limited options available to them at night time.

6.9.8. The **Healthier Catering Commitment** is a scheme that helps food businesses in London to provide healthier food to their customers. The scheme promotes a reduction in the consumption of fat, salt and sugar, and an increase in access to fruit and vegetables. This can also help ensure there are healthier food options available for night workers.

6.9.9. Commercial activity provides opportunities for micro, small and medium sized enterprises to establish and contribute to the diversity of town centres. Independent businesses, including shops, cafés and restaurants, play an important role in supporting the vitality and vibrancy of town centres and local communities, and many operate from smaller premises. In parts of London, **small shops and other A Class uses suitable for occupation by SMEs** may be in short supply and affordability can be a key concern. Larger developments that include a significant amount of commercial floor space can contribute to the diversity, vitality and vibrancy of town centres by providing a range of unit sizes that includes smaller premises. The High Streets for All report found that almost 70 per cent of small businesses consider rent unaffordable¹¹⁹ with average retail rents increasing 4 per cent per annum over the period 2009 to 2016. Where there is local evidence of need, Development Plans should require affordable commercial and shop units (secured through planning conditions or planning obligations as appropriate).

Amount

The total proposed area to be used for the operation is 359.5m² as shown on the site plan. There will be some internal changes which will not affect the strength and structure of the building. There will be change in the shop front.

PARKING

Car parking spaces for 30 mins available in front of the shop and public car parking area, Easthampstead Road (East) Car Park available nearby the shop at walking distance.

WASTE

The waste bins will be inside the building which has easy access to road at the back part of the building. Waste bin will be collected from the back part of the building.

SITE LAYOUT & PROPOSAL

The location of the proposed operation is situated thus to ensure the customer has a direct route from the highway into the provided parking location and ease of exit on to the highway once more.

There will be some internal changes, change in the shop front. The main door will be replaced by electric automatic sliding door which will go back 2metres from the existing part. The existing door is at left side but the proposed door will be at right side. The front part of the shop will be used for fruit and vegetables display. Bright white led lights and electric rolling shutter will be proposed at the front of the shop. The changes in the floor plan will not affect the structural part of the building.

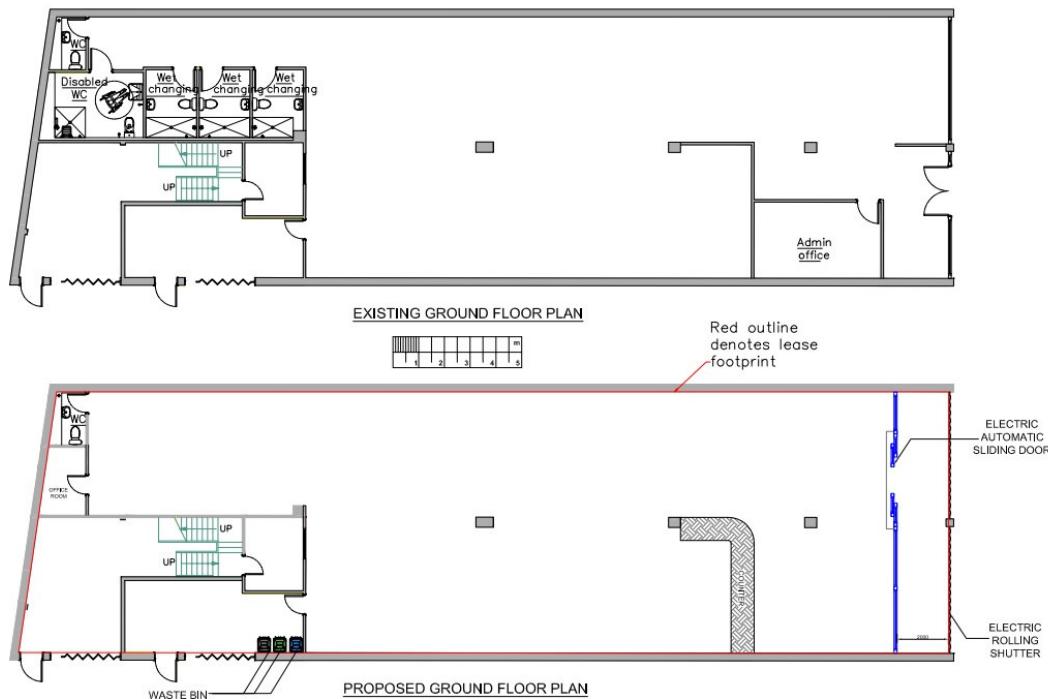


Fig: Floor Plan

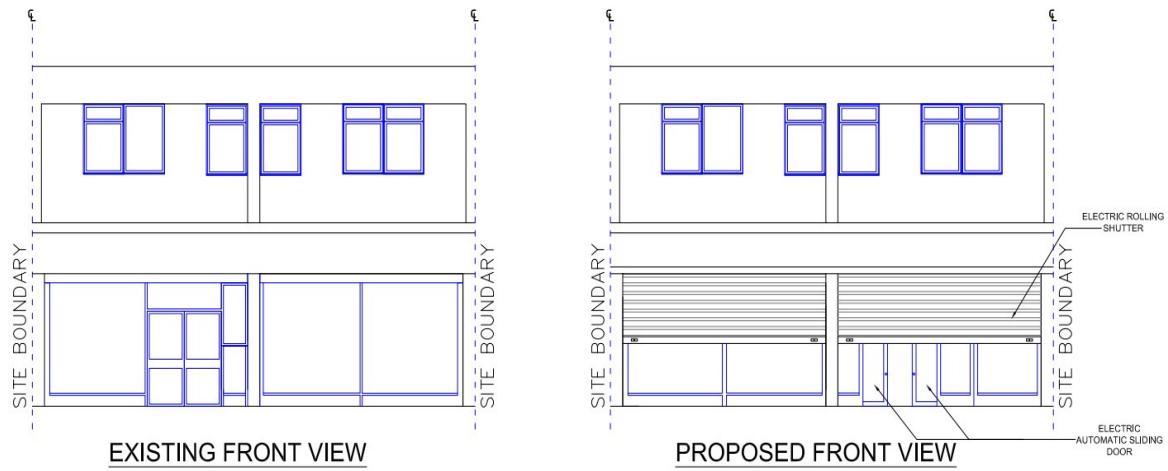


Fig: Front Elevation

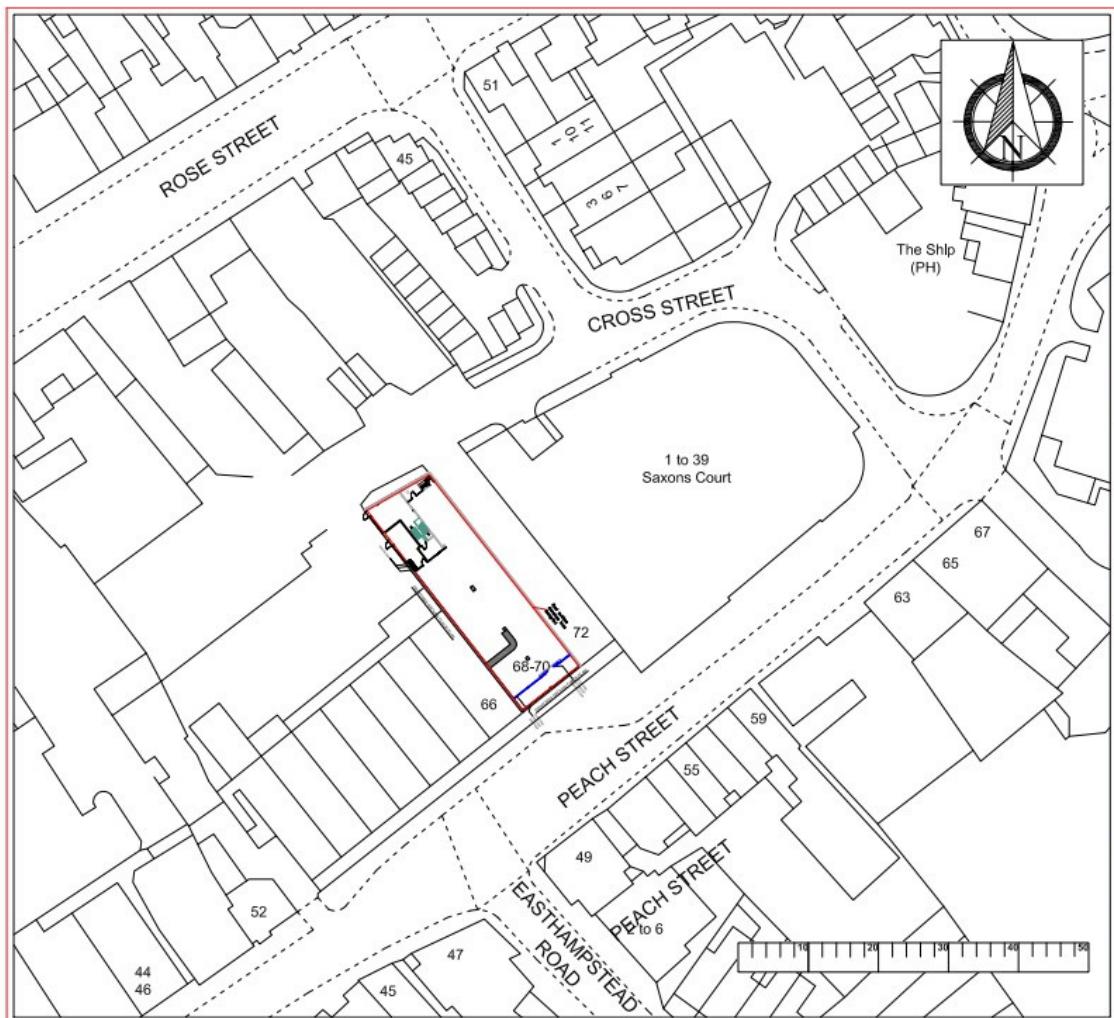


Fig: Block Plan

LANDSCAPING

There is to be no impact on the existing landscaping on the site.

APPEARANCE

The design principle behind this application is to create a professionally operated, compact and customer friendly grocery store.

CONCLUSION

The operation is considerate to the site's neighbours, environment, customers and staff alike. The operation will have minimal impact on the existing site and will be compliant with planning policy. Therefore Client would be appreciative if planning permission were to be granted.

Grocery collection
Design and Access Statement