

**HERITAGE STATEMENT IN
RESPECT OF A REPLACEMENT SHOP
FRONT**

AT

**17 PEACH STREET, WOKINGHAM
RG40 1XJ**

MLP REF: PS/24/188

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. This statement sets out relevant planning policies and the application of those policies in respect of heritage matters. In so doing the following conclusions are reached:
 - National planning policy sets out that the weight to be afforded to the heritage asset and that the information to be provided should be proportionate to the status of the assets as well as the proposed changes. This has been applied to the development proposal which is relatively minor and has an acceptable effect on heritage, namely the conservation area.
 - The site lies within the Wokingham Town Centre and Langborough Road Conservation Area as identified in the Appraisal Statement.
 - It is shown that the works are of a minor nature and have limited effect on the heritage asset. To the extent that they involve a shop front which by reason of physical deterioration requires replacement is, of itself, a material enhancement to the special character.
 - The Appraisal Statement acknowledges that much of the medieval core of this part of the conservation area has been lost. It is characterised by buildings of varying age which together form central commercial street within the conservation area.
 - The proposal does not alter the principal form of the shop front in terms of openings or the bay structure which currently comprises what may, at one time, have been a modest house. The upper jettied floor and bay remain unchanged and are a feature which receives mention in the Appraisal Statement. Thus whilst a contemporary retailer would prefer limited glazing bars and a plate glass approach, the applicants proposal reflects the conservation area status and in so doing, reflects an approach which manifestly preserves and enhances the special character.

- 1.2. The proposed development meets the objectives of, inter alia, heritage policies and due weight should be afforded to these matters in the determination of this application. In the absence of any other material considerations, the application should be granted.

2.0 Relevant planning history

- 2.1. There have been 3 previous application pertaining to the site. They are:

180615	Advertisement consent. Approved 2.8.2018
000590	Use of premises for hot sale and preparation of hot food. Approved 24.3.2000
171348	Advertisement consent. Refused 3.8.2017

- 2.2. From records made available to us, there have been no applications to replace the shop front.

3.0 Planning policy and its application to the proposals

- 3.1. The site lies within the conservation area and the relevant policies are set out therein. The relevant development plan policies is TB24 which reads:

Policy TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas)

1. Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas are shown on the Policies Map.

2. The Borough Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets in the Borough and their settings by:

- a. Requiring works to or affecting heritage assets or their setting to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building, Conservation Area, monument or park and garden including its setting and views.
- b. Supporting development proposals or other initiatives that will conserve and, where possible, enhance the local character, setting, management and historic significance of designated heritage assets, with particular support for initiatives that would improve any assets that are recognised as being in poor condition or at risk.

3. Proposals for building works shall retain or incorporate existing features or details of historic or architectural significance or design quality into the scheme.

- 3.2. It should be noted that a consultant working for the local authority wrongly identified the application building as being designated as a Building of Traditional Local Character. This has been corrected although it is stated that the building has significance within the conservation area. As such development plan policy TB26 is not relevant.
- 3.3. The Appraisal Statement has limited reference to Peach Street and shops fronts save to say that the objective is to “improve shop fronts along Peach Street”.
- 3.4. The Borough Design Guide (BDG) has detailed reference to shop front design and the relevant aspects are:
 - SH1 – the objective that all shopfronts should demonstrate a high quality of design and detailing.
 - SH2 – retaining the original features of shopfronts in the design of replacements and the use of appropriate materials in conservation areas.
 - SH3 – responding to the design of the building as a whole.
 - SH4 – the design and height, depth and proportions of the fascia should fit into the streetscene
 - SH6 - materials should be compatible with the character of the building
- 3.2. The relevant Framework policies are as follows:
 195. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value⁷⁰. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations⁷¹.
 196. Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:
 - a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
 - d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.
 197. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

200. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
201. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

4.0 The application of planning policies

4.1. The key considerations in the design approach and acknowledgement of the conservation area status are as follows:

- The retention of the existing openings and glazing bars so that they reflect the historic position with a bay window and five separate sections
- The use of traditional materials in the form of painted softwood
- The positive response to the street and retail frontage in a manner which is reflective of the surrounds
- The retention of the jettied bay at first floor level
- The introduction of contemporary detailing within the broad framework of design
- The retention of the fascia and signage zone as existing

4.2. Since the Appraisal was written there has been an extensive redevelopment of Peach Street and views from Market Place. This includes new retail units and contemporary shops fronts as are shown below.





- 4.3. This contemporary approach contrasts with some of the shop fronts on the opposite (south) side of Peach Street where the design does not feature and division of the glazed section and is very much of its time. These are shown below.
- 4.4. The design and heritage failure of these are the use of large glazed panels with some limited relief by the setting back of the door ways (BHF) and the use of powder coated aluminium as opposed to painted timber. The detailing of some shopfronts is commendable (Café Nero) whilst others lack an appreciation of the historic context (Happy Snaps).





- 4.5. The approach outlined above is a reflection of time and the desirability of a retailer to secure maximum visibility for their customers. This is disturbed by glazed sections and dividing bars. Plainly the recent development on Peach Street has attended to these commercial requirements whilst allowing for visual interest and context as per the requirements of BDG and TB24 policy objectives.
- 4.6. The application site comprises a traditional approach with use of the bay feature onto the street and a division comprising five separate elements as is shown below. It is painted softwood and through time and lack of judicious maintenance is in need of replacement. The door appears to have been altered through time and now comprises a half glazed design whilst retaining the light above and the signage zone below the upper projecting bay.



- 4.7. In broad terms the proposed change to the shop front and door follow the existing approach with the glazing divisions being reflective of the existing . The material differences are the curved detailing within the framework of the proposed shopfront; and the introduction of a dual glazed door with a dividing element to reflect the original. Importantly the upper curved and numbered feature above the door is retained as this was undoubtedly part of the original building.
- 4.8. It is intended to retain the plinth although this may be replaced as per the existing should on site investigation show that replacement is required. During construction the upper bay and plinth will be supported and retained as existing. These are noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal as being important historic features and fall outside of the applicants demise.
- 4.9. In terms of the approach set out in TB24 and the BDG, the proposal reflects existing character and in so doing preserves the special character of the conservation area. The use of traditional materials, the quality of the design and response to the building as a whole are all aspects which meet the objectives of planning policies. The height, depth, detailing and signage zones are all retained as existing and again reflect the approach of design and conservation/heritage policies.

- 4.10 In carefully retaining this approach, the applicant acknowledges the heritage status of the building and its position in the conservation area. Thus it is a compromise of an ideal commercial approach as set against the importance of preservation and/or enhancement of the identified special character.

5.0 Summary – the impact on heritage

5.1. By way of summary, the following matters are set out:

- The 2023 Framework sets out that the weight to be afforded to the heritage asset and that the information to be provided should be proportionate to the status of the assets.
- The site lies within the Wokingham Town Centre and Langborough Road Conservation Area as identified in the Appraisal Statement.
- It is shown that the works are of a minor nature and have limited effect on the heritage asset. To the extent that they involve a shop front which by reason of physical deterioration requires replacement is, of itself, a material enhancement to the special character.
- The proposal does not alter the principal form of the shop front in terms of openings or the bay structure which currently comprises what may, at one time, have been a modest house. The upper jettied floor and bay remain unchanged and are a feature which receives mention in the Appraisal Statement.
- This approach reflects a compromise for a contemporary retailer who would prefer limited glazing bars and a plate glass approach, whilst respecting the policy approach of the heritage asset. This reflects an approach which manifestly preserves and enhances the special character.
- This information should detail the changes and their effect on the heritage asset. This has been applied to the development proposal which is relatively minor and has a positive effect on heritage whilst providing for a required replacement shop front.

5.2. There is no conflict with relevant national or local planning policy.