

MEMORANDUM

From:	Built Heritage Officer		
Service	Green Infrastructure	App No:	242725
Address:	1-2, Bush Walk, Wokingham, RG40 1AT.		
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.		
Heritage Asset:	- Nos.37-38 Market Place (The Old Bull & Bush, including Nos. 1-10 Bush Walk) – Grade II status listed building, since 1951. - Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area – includes numerous listed buildings, with many being situated around Market Place, with the grade II* listed Town Hall, situated directly opposite site. Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are classed as designated heritage assets under the NPPF (2024) and in the Council's Local Plan policies.		
Site Visit Made:	Yes – previously.		

Summary Of Recommendations

Whilst the majority of the works proposed are from a heritage stance considered in principle to be acceptable, however the intended window vinyls to the Bush Walk elevation are however considered visually detrimental to the listed building's appearance and that of the conservation area in which it lies. As such it is advised that the form of the window vinyls need to be revised.

Furthermore, there presently a degree of ambiguity in terms of element depicted on the proposed floor plan that needs clarification.

Comments On Proposal

Nos. 1-2 Bush Walk, which includes the shop frontage of 37 Market Place, and includes office, staff kitchen, WC, and storage on the first floor (excluding the front portion, which forms part of No.38 Market Place).

The retail property forms part of the historic former Bush Hotel and its stable blocks (Nos.37 Market and Nos.1-10 Bush Walk) that collectively hold grade II listed building status and has been converted into retail units. The property lies with the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area and is situated directly across from the

frontage of the grade II* listed Town Hall, which represents the focal point of the town centre conservation area.

Presently the premises, which was last used for retail, is vacant and has been so for a couple of years now, following Pret stepping back from their proposals occupy the property, having obtained planning permission and listed building consent to do so in May 2020.

The retailer Grape Tree now proposes to undertake works to refit the ground floor retail unit and make a number of internal alterations to partition off the rear half of the ground floor of the premises for storage, along with replacement of the shopfront fascia signage.

The description of proposed works, on the application form stated there are to be no structural alterations to the premises, with 'all listed structures to remain untouched' and that 'no works will be carried out on the upper floor.'

Whilst 'no' has been stated on the application form to the questions of whether 'the proposal include the partial or total demolition of a listed building' and to the whether 'the proposed works include alterations to a listed building?'

The details submitted under this application are from a heritage stance a cause for concern due to a number of seemingly erroneous remarks and drawing details that appear ambiguously unclear on some of the indicated works.

Heritage Statement

Under the NPPF (Dec.2024) paragraph 207 it advises that 'in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected' with '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' with 'the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.'

The heritage assessment that has been submitted, and is produced by the applicant's agent, which other than reproducing the Historic England listing description for 37 Market Place (The Old Bull & Bush, including Nos. 1-10 Bush Walk) that should not be taken to be an assessment of significance being mainly for external identification of the building in question. That said, the description does make limited mention to historic internal elements within this group of historic building.

It is however known from previous visits to this property that there are historic wall timbers, notably on the upper floor where there are historic roof timbers, brick fireplace and in the full height open norther end bay, with the staircase giving access to the upper floor, there are smoke stained timbers and wattle and daub panels.

Given the heritage assessment it consider to be un-necessary focused around the works to redecorate the premises, along with the intention to improve the internal lighting and for new signage. As such, the document has provided little if any meaningful insight with regards to 'the potential impact of the proposal' may have to

the significance of this designated heritage asset.



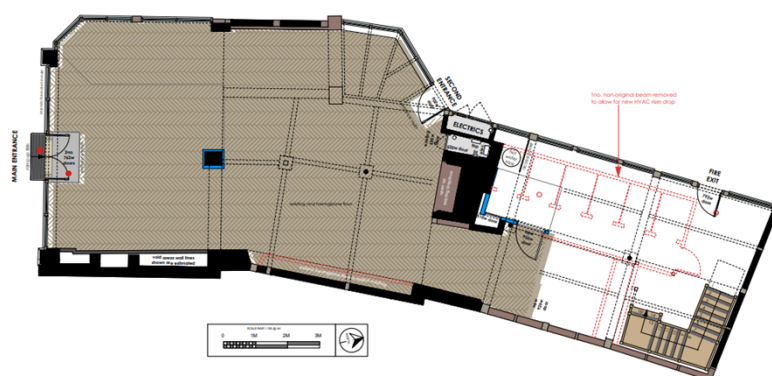
Northern end bay

Existing & Proposed Ground Floor Plans

There are details shown both the existing and proposed drawing for the ground floor of the premises that raise questions.

- Existing Floor Plans

With respect to the existing ground floor plan titled 'Wokingham Existing Shop Layout' (see below) for which there is no an accompanying key to, this drawing appears to show (the red dashed lines) internally partition walls to the rear portion of the premises that had formed changing rooms along the Bush Walk side, and that of a partition walling that divide off the changing room area from the retail space at the back of the premises have been removed including that dividing off the staircase to the end of property from the retail space. Furthermore, it is noted the red text on the drawing, which is arrowed to the seemingly removed partition walling of the former changing rooms states '1 no. non-original beam removed to allow for new HVAC riser drop' walling the plans.

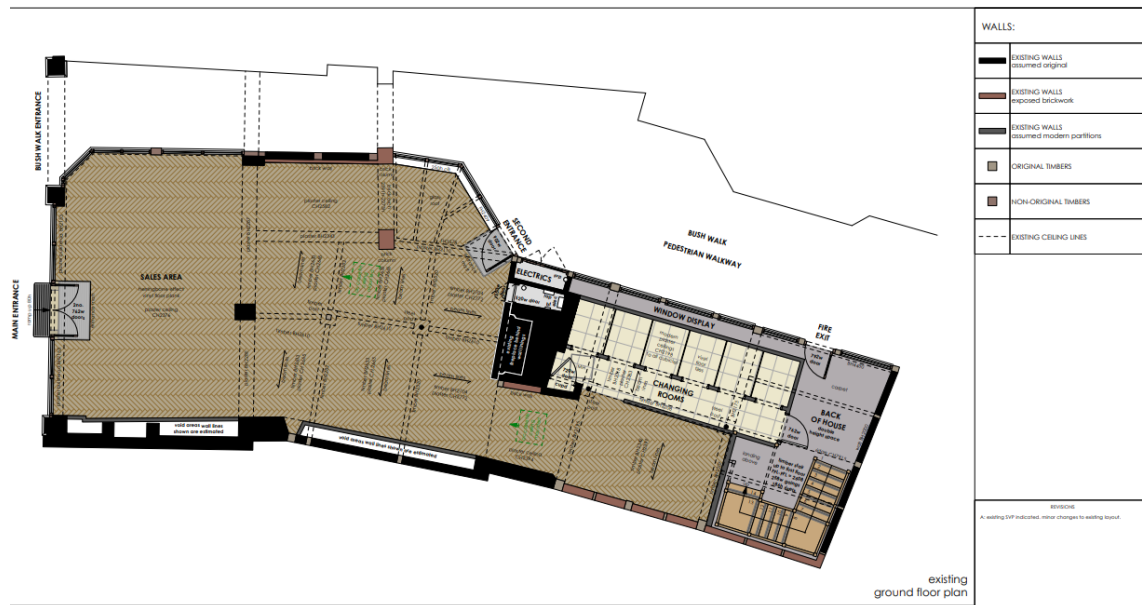


WOKINGHAM EXISTING SHOP LAYOUT

Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but doesn't require to be sent via secure methods.

Public: Information that can be seen and used by everyone inside and outside the Council.

These red-dashed partition walling (and the text about the HVAC riser drop) accord with what Pret had sought under their application 220763 and got consent but subject to a condition (3), which stated that 'no works of demolition and/or stripping out of the property or the implantation of hereby consent works or the implantation of hereby consent works shall be undertaken until.... additional details to the local planning authority and received approval in in writing' a condition that to date has not been formally met. As such, the ground floor as existing would be expected to be that of existing ground floor plan of the Pret application 220763.



Extract from Pret application 220763 - Existing Ground Floor Plan

If it is the case that the internal partition walling has been removed, it has been down without the approved consent, as the required condition of that consent has not been met. As such, whilst previously been considered to be acceptable it would be now necessary to include the removal of the partitions of that consent as part of this current application for proposed internal changes.

With respect to the text referring to the HVAC riser drop that would be through to the first floor it is not clear (as with the dashed red lines) have been erroneously copied across to the existing floor plan for this application from that for Pret. As it is stated on the application form that 'no works will be carried out on the upper floor' it would seem there is the need for clarification as to whether or not there are any alteration works/new services to the first floor. It is thought that the application should have also included a first floor plan in the submission.

With respect to the proposed floor plans labelled 'Wokingham Proposed Grape Tree Shop Layout' somewhat confusingly the red dashed lines and text referring HVAC riser of the existing are shown. That said it is noted that a superseded copy of the proposed floor plan have the HVAC riser shown in a different location.

Lastly, with respect to the 'Existing Shop Layout' drawing another apparent legacy from the Pret plans is the opening up of the fireplace. At the time of the Pret application there was a stud wall has covered in the fireplace and when last visited last summer was still there albeit an exploratory hole made in the stud wall had

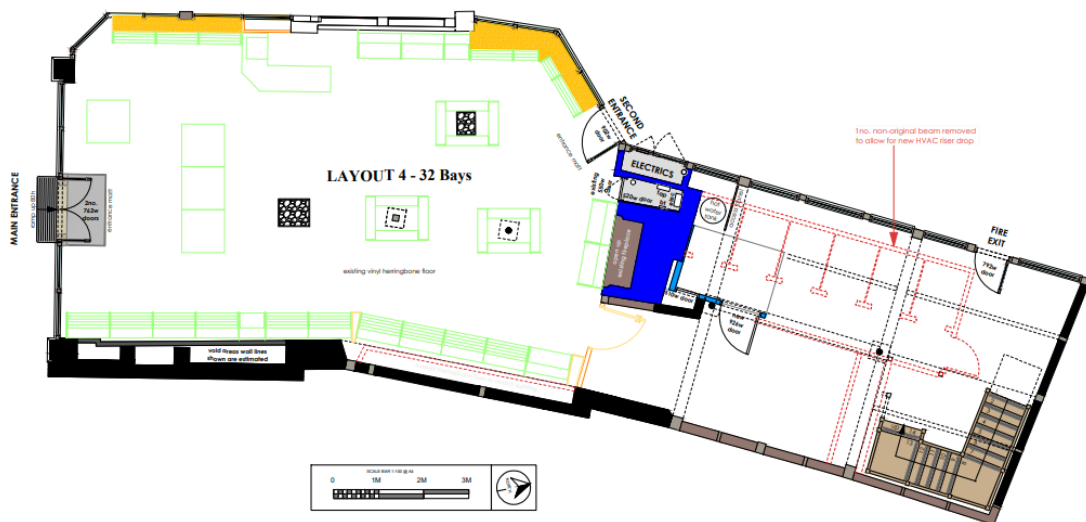
revealed an old cupboard built into the fireplace opening. As with the partition walling these element should still be in place as the condition under the Pret consent has not been approved.



Stud wall covering fireplace (July 2020)

- Proposed Floor Plan

With the proposed ground floor plan, again lacks a key to it to clarify what the different coloured elements represent, including what the blacked lined squares with circles in are meant to represent (believed to represent masonry columns).



WOKINGHAM PROPOSED GRAPE TREE SHOP LAYOUT

The floor plan appears to show a doorway to the rear part of the premises that whilst connected to partition walling extending off the back of the brickwork of the fireplace but with apparently no walling to the hinged side of the doorway. It is understood a new partition wall with a doorway in it, is to be installed beside the brick fireplace, in order to separate the rear portion of the property for storage from the retail element. That said, it is believed the applicant would need to clarify the situation concerning

the doorway to the rear of the fireplace and on the matter of the 'new HVAC riser drop' as the routing of these HVAC facilities have previously proven problematic for Pret. Also, concerning the use of the first floor and any intended alteration to this space needs clarification

Shop Frontage

There is no objection raised to the proposed re-decoration of the Market Place shopfront, which would see the present varnished woodwork being painted. However with respect to the proposed new signage although not necessarily having any objection to the form of the fascia sign, albeit a more traditional approach of a painted signage on a wooden fascia would be more traditionally appropriate, this issue is the size of the new aluminium fascia board. The existing signage panel it is noted projects over the top part of the timber frame to the shop front rather than being sat above the horizontal timber across the top of the shop front as would traditionally be the case and which in doing so delineates the fascia panel from the shop window. A detail that the present fascia board has compromised and which with the proposed new fascia signage panel creates the opportunity to rectify that matter were the new aluminium fascia panel to be narrowed in height to line up with the bottom of the corbel brackets either side of it.

Window Vinyls

From a heritage stance whilst not necessarily objecting to the principle of window vinyls being placed on the inside of the Bush Walk windows however the intended design, given the number of windows the vinyls are to be considered visually jarring and somewhat brash being at odds with the character of this traditional building, to the extent it is believed to have a detrimental visual impact on the appearance of this designated heritage asset and in so doing that of the conservation area too.

It is advised that simple frosted transfers be applied to the Bush Walk windows would be more appropriate in this situation. This is not to say that a limited number of the windows towards the Market Place frontage could not have vinyl transfers on them. Alternatively consideration be given to creating a partition across the inside of the windows instead with the potential to display products although Built Heritage would however push back on any proposals on the use of the window side of the partition walling being used for posters, adverts, and such like.

It is noted that the glazed roof on the Bush Walk side of the premises (labelled 05 on the proposed elevation drawing) would appear to be in such a poor condition such that it would be likely to need to be replaced, which was something that Pret had been in discussion about. The applicant is advised as the replacement of this glazed roof element does not form part of this current application that a new application for listed building consent would be required should it the replacement of this glazed roof prove necessary.

In summary, whilst based on the submitted details the proposals are from a heritage stance considered to largely be acceptable there are however elements which need to be clarified and/or amended and found to be acceptable before Built Heritage would be in a position to recommend approval.

Conditions	
1	1. The first condition is that the system must be in a state of equilibrium.
2	2. The second condition is that the system must be in a state of equilibrium.
3	3. The third condition is that the system must be in a state of equilibrium.
4	4. The fourth condition is that the system must be in a state of equilibrium.
5	5. The fifth condition is that the system must be in a state of equilibrium.
6	6. The sixth condition is that the system must be in a state of equilibrium.
7	7. The seventh condition is that the system must be in a state of equilibrium.
8	8. The eighth condition is that the system must be in a state of equilibrium.
9	9. The ninth condition is that the system must be in a state of equilibrium.
10	10. The tenth condition is that the system must be in a state of equilibrium.

To be advised once acceptable clarification with respect to the proposed plans and the window vinyls has been provided.

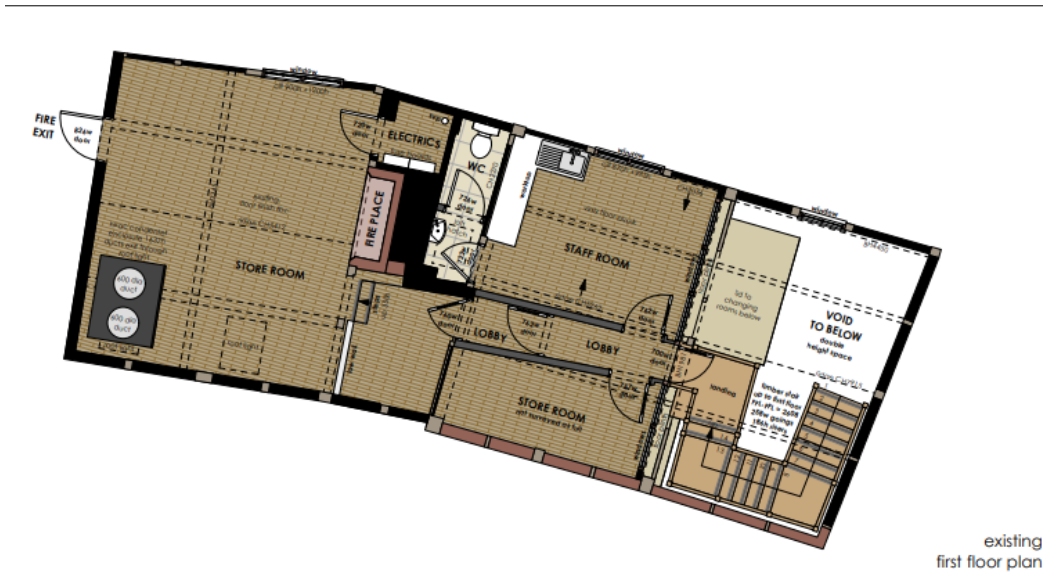
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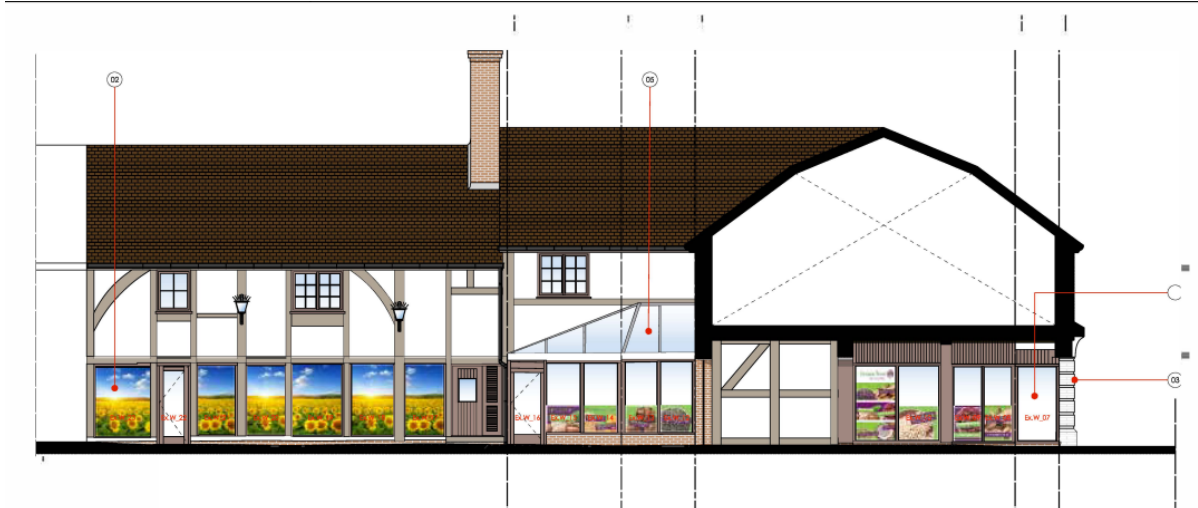
Signed:

Keith Frost
Built Heritage Officer

Built Heritage Officer



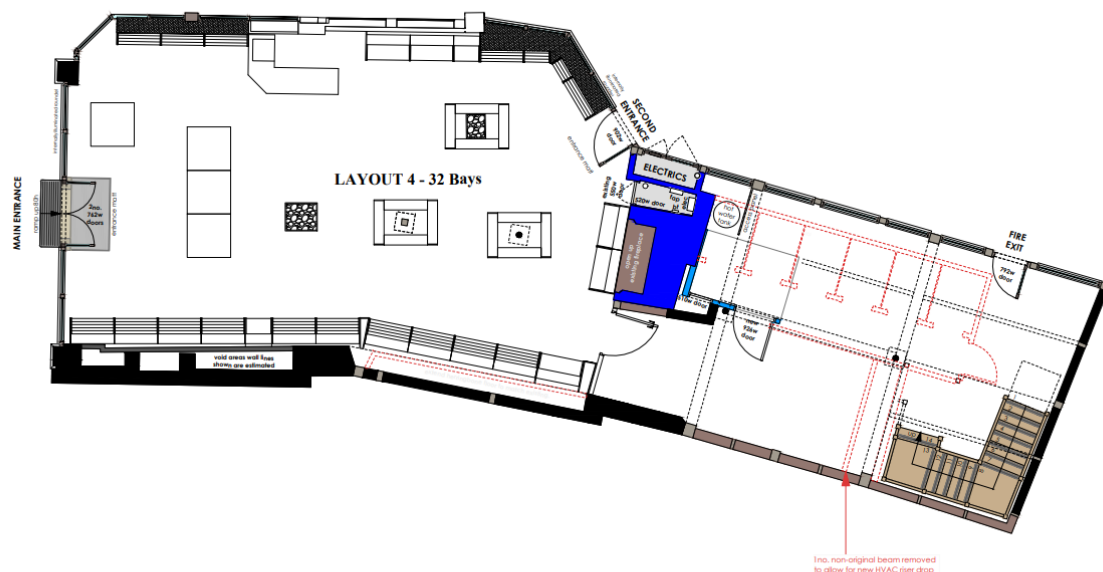
Existing First Floor Plan (Pret application 220763)



Bush Walk Elevation as proposed.

Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but doesn't require to be sent via secure methods.

Public: Information that can be seen and used by everyone inside and outside the Council.



PROPOSED SHOP LAYOUT

Superseded Proposed Ground floor plan that refers to a different beam to be removed for HVAC riser drop.

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