

MEMORANDUM

From:	Built Heritage Officer		
Service	Green Infrastructure	App No:	242137
Address:	17 Peach Street, RG40 1XJ		
Proposal:	Full application for the proposed installation of a replacement front bay window.		
Heritage Asset:	17 Peach Street – NDHA Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area Listed building along with conservation areas are classed as designated heritage assets under the NPPF (2023) and in the Council's Local Plan policies.		
Site Visit Made:	No		

Summary Of Recommendations

Objection

Comments On Proposal

The application proposes the replacement of a bay window and front door to no. 17 Peach Steet, a 19th century townhouse, located within the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area. By virtue of its age, architectural and historic interest, as well as the positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area, no. 17 Peach Street is considered a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA).

Further to the submission of the heritage statement, the following comments are made:

The principle of the replacement of the existing shopfront is considered acceptable given the relatively poor standard of construction, 20th century origin and extant condition. However, the proposed replacement's design is not acceptable and introduces a divergent, unusual design with the elongated oval form. This pattern seeks to conflict with the existing form and appearance and that of the identified and accepted traditional style of shopfronts in the town. It is possible a design with just a top arch – as to reflect the fanlight over the entrance door may be acceptable (as to replicate an authentic 19th century detail), but the as-proposed appearance would seek to add an unusual element to the streetscene and dilute the historic interest of the building and wider Conservation Area.

Whilst the principle of the replacement of the shopfront is acceptable, the principle of replacing the door is not. This is a 19th century door and positively contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, as well as the host, through the architectural detailing and historic character. No clear and convincing justification has been put forward for its loss. As with the shopfront, the unusual elongated oval design as proposed for the replacement door is not acceptable and fails to reflect the architectural interest of the building and historic streetscape.

As the Borough's Design Guide states: *"They (shopfronts) represent the most visually prominent parts of buildings in centres, as many shoppers do not look up above shopfront level. Their design therefore plays a key role in setting a perception of quality of environment in the shopper's mind."*

And that:

"People come into close contact with shopfronts, when shopping, window shopping or just walking along the street, so the detailed design is also important to the quality of environment."

And importantly:

"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. Where a shop is within a listed building or in a Conservation Area the shopfront will need to be particularly sensitively designed."

As such, the as proposed alterations would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the identified heritage assets arising through the unsympathetic architectural form and detailing and loss of historic fabric and detailing. No public benefits have been identified that would outweigh this harm (Section 16, NPPF).

Through the loss of historic fabric and interest and unsympathetic architectural form and detailing, the proposed alterations would fail preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Wokingham Town Centre Conservation Area (S72, P(LBCA)A 90).

Given the identified harm, the proposed development would conflict with Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy and Policy TB24 of the Managing Development Delivery local plan. The proposals would also conflict with Principles SH1-6 of the Borough Design Guide.

As such, an objection is raised against the application. Substantial amendments in line with the above commentary or complete withdrawal is advised. If not forthcoming, refusal is recommended.

Conditions

N/A

Date:	09/10/2024	Signed:	Roderick McDonald Built Heritage Officer
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