



MAPLE
— PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT LTD

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

18/08/26

Ref: 345

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Proposed change of use to dog grooming salon.
No. 3 Maiden Lane Centre, Lower Earley, RG6 3HD.**

Enclosed herewith is a planning application for the change of use of the ground floor of No. 3 Maiden Lane Centre, to a dog grooming salon.

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. 3 was the subject of a grant of planning permission in 2010 (2010/1008) for a change of use from A1 to an A2 estate agent (now Use Class E).

Description of Proposal

The proposal entails change of use to a dog grooming salon, offering professional grooming services for all breeds and sizes.

The services on offer will include full grooming packages, puppy introductions, nail clipping, de-shedding, ear cleaning, and breed-specific styling.

The proposed hours of opening will be 9am–6pm, seven days per week. The business will provide employment for up to 4 people, depending on the trading day.

Noise levels will be minimal, and typically limited to the sound of hairdryers, normal conversation, and occasional small noises from dogs. Apart from the fragrance of dog shampoo, no other noticeable smells will be produced.

Planning Policy Context

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.'

Use Class A1 (Shops), whether within Local Centres or in individual neighbourhood or village shops, shall be retained unless it can be demonstrated that:

- Alternative day-to-day shopping facilities are available within reasonable walking distance from the existing retail use*
- The existing retail use is no longer viable.'*

In respect of the latter part of the foregoing policy, it is important to reiterate that the lawful use of No. 3 is as an estate agent i.e. not as an A1(shop). The existing use is not therefore afforded any policy protections.

Regard must also be had to Government guidance as laid out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the current version of which was published in August 2026.

Policy E2 of the NPPF states that, to support business growth, substantial weight should be given to:

"The economic benefits of proposals for commercial development which allow businesses to invest, expand and/or adapt; especially where this would support the economic vision and strategy for the area"

Policy TC2 of the NPPF advises that:

'In considering proposals for development in town centres, substantial weight should be given to the benefits of:

- a) Supporting the overall vitality and viability of the centre, including where this can be achieved through the diversification of uses, intensification and provision of residential accommodation (provided this would not conflict with policies in the development plan for specific locations); and*

- b) Improving or retaining access to local shops and other facilities which provide day-to-day services for the local community.'*

Supporting Information

As indicated above, the development plan possesses primacy in the determination of planning applications. Put simply, proposals must be determined primarily by reference to policy.

In this regard, the existing lawful use of the application property is A2 (as was) / E (currently). It is not a retail unit that is afforded any protection by virtue of Policy TB17.

Conversely, the proposal will introduce a new town centre appropriate use to the Maiden Lane Centre. It will enhance the day-to-day facilities on offer within the defined local centre. It will support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

The proposal will clearly contribute towards a positive approach to the growth, management and adaptation of Maiden Lane Centre.

In light of the foregoing, the proposed use is plainly acceptable in principle. It will install a new use for this unit, while increasing the range of what the local centre offers.

As such, the proposed change of use is to be welcomed.

Turning to the more general development management considerations, the proposed use is not a significant noise generator. In any event, the proposed opening hours are limited to daytime operations, and the application site is located within a wider parade of commercial uses.

Against this backdrop, the proposal will not cause material harm to residential amenity.

In terms of access to and from the site (for both customers and employees) there is ample existing vehicular parking available at the Maiden Lane Centre.

For the reasons explored above, it is clear that the proposed change of use 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, I hope that sufficient information has been provided in order to allow the application to be registered. However, if you should require any additional information then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Paul Webster MRTPI
DIRECTOR