



## Report to West Area Planning Committee

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<b>Application Number:</b>	23/07806/R9FUL
<b>Proposal:</b>	Installation of a new shopfront
<b>Site Location:</b>	22 Queens Square High Wycombe Buckinghamshire HP11 2DF
<b>Applicant:</b>	Buckinghamshire Council
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Chris Lamb
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	Abbey
<b>Parish-Town Council:</b>	High Wycombe Town Unparished
<b>Date valid application received:</b>	9th November 2023
<b>EOT determination date:</b>	8th February 2024
<b>Recommendation</b>	Application Permitted

### 1.0 Summary & Recommendation/ Reason for Planning Committee Consideration

- 1.1 Planning permission is sought for the installation of a new shopfront to no. 22 Queens Square, High Wycombe.
- 1.2 The application has been made on behalf of Buckinghamshire Council and has therefore, for reasons of transparency, been called to committee for determination.
- 1.3 It is considered that the application will serve to enhance the function and visual appearance of the existing property, and positively contribute to the improvement of the street scene. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in heritage terms and there are no further concerns with the application.
- 1.4 The application is recommended for approval.

### 2.0 Description of Proposed Development

- 2.1 The application relates to no. 22 Queens Square, a three-storey unlisted property located within the High Wycombe town centre and associated High Wycombe Town Centre Conservation Area. The building, which dates from the 1950's, occupies a corner site with two street elevations, one facing north onto Church Street and the other facing west onto Queens Square.
- 2.2 The application seeks to replace the existing façade of the ground floor retail unit, which appears as tired and unattractive, with a design more in keeping with the

surrounding historic shop fronts and traditional vernacular of the town centre and Conservation Area.

- 2.3 Principally, the proposal would include the removal of the existing external roller shutters and plate glass windows, and the installation of a more traditional-style shop front, including timber panelling and profiling, and glazed picture windows.
- 2.4 The application also proposes to reposition the entrance to the retail unit, in effect 'squaring off' the existing west elevation, enlarging the existing internal floor space.
- 2.5 In anticipation for future shop signage, the application additionally proposes the installation of three LED downlighter fittings, to allow for any said signage to be externally illuminated.
- 2.6 There would be no changes to the first and second floors, which are occupied as residential flats.
- 2.7 The application is accompanied by:
  - a) Design and Access Statement
  - b) Heritage Statement

### 3.0 Relevant Planning History

Reference	Development	Decision	Decision Date
94/05607/FUL	CONSTRUCTION OF NEW SHOPFRONT	PER	30 June 1994
94/05608/LBC	CONSTRUCTION OF NEW SHOPFRONT & INTERNAL ALTERATIONS	NOTRQD	5 May 1994
15/06249/FUL	Change of use of first floor to a 1-bed self-contained flat & second floor to a 2-bed self-contained flat, creation of new entrance at ground floor & insertion of a new shop front with internal alterations	PER	3 July 2015
PI15/02128/ADRC	Application for the approval of details subject to condition 3 (details of balustrade) of planning approval 15/06249/FUL	DACOND	24 December 2015

### 4.0 Policy Considerations and Evaluation

#### Principle and Location of Development

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP1 (Sustainable Development), CP3 (Settlement Strategy), DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation)

DSA: DM1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development)

- 4.1 Minor external alterations in this location would be considered acceptable in principle subject to complying with all other relevant Development Plan policies.

#### **Transport matters and parking**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth), DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation)  
DSA: DM2 (Transport requirements of development sites)

- 4.2 The Council's Highway Authority have been consulted on the proposal and have raised no objections.
- 4.3 It is considered that the proposed light fittings would be appropriately angled and shielded, preventing glare to vehicular highway users. Due to the height of the lighting items and minimal projection, there are additionally no concerns that the fittings would present a highway safety concern with regards to projection over the public highway.
- 4.4 Overall, given the above, it is not considered that the proposal would result in a detrimental impact upon highway safety or operation.

#### **Raising the quality of place making and design**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP9 (Sense of place), DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development), DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality)  
DSA: DM11 (Green networks and infrastructure)

- 4.5 As above, the application seeks to replace the existing façade of the ground floor shop unit with a design more in keeping with the surrounding historic shop fronts and characterful vernacular of the High Street and Conservation Area.
- 4.6 The existing façade appears tired and unattractive, and is of little architectural or historical merit. The proposed shopfront would represent a welcome enhancement, appearing more in harmony with the timber panel shop fronts on surrounding buildings, and more appropriate to the historical context of the Conservation Area.
- 4.7 To this extent, the proposal would improve the visual appearance of the building, whilst the changes to the internal floorspace and replacement entrance door would improve its overall functionality and broaden its scope of potential future occupiers.
- 4.8 Overall, the proposal would represent an enhancement on the existing arrangement, and therefore be of benefit to the character and appearance of the building and wider high street area.

#### **Amenity of existing and future residents**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality)

- 4.9 The proposal is not considered to give rise to any negative impacts to adjoining occupiers. The proposed LED lighting would be concentrated and angled downwards towards the fascia, whereby the windows above at first and second floor would not be unduly impacted.

#### **Flooding and drainage**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM39 (Managing Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Systems)

- 4.10 The site falls within Flood Zones 2.

4.11 Given the nature of the proposal (a replacement fascia) and that it makes no alterations/additions to the existing areas of hardstanding or overall footprint of the building, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in any increase in flood risk beyond the existing arrangement. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in this regard.

### **Ecology**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development)

DSA: DM13 (Conservation and enhancement of sites, habitats and species of biodiversity and geodiversity importance), DM14 (Biodiversity in development)

4.12 Policy DM34 requires all development to protect and enhance both biodiversity and green infrastructure features and networks both on and off site for the lifetime of the development.

4.13 No assessment has been provided with this proposal. In this instance, given the nature of the proposal there would be no impact on site biodiversity and enhancement is not considered proportionate.

### **Historic environment (or Conservation Area or Listed Building Issues)**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP9 (Sense of place), CP11 (Historic Environment), DM20 (Matters to be determined in accordance with the NPPF), DM31 (Development Affecting the Historic Environment)

4.14 No. 22 Queens Square is an unlisted building, located within the High Wycombe Town Centre Conservation Area. The property contributes to the setting of several nearby Grade II Listed Buildings, including 109 Queens Square, 3 and 4 Queens Square, and 20 Queens Square.

4.15 As described above, the proposed development is considered to represent a visual enhancement in appearance terms, replacing the existing unattractive fascia with a shop front which is of a much more traditional and high-quality appearance. The removal of the external roller shutter, considered inappropriate for a conservation area, would be welcomed, whilst the timber panelling/detailing would be more reflective of surrounding properties and the historic aesthetic of the surrounding area.

4.16 The use of external lighting for signage, as proposed here, is considered appropriate and would discourage the use of internally-illuminated signs, which are largely unfavourable within the Conservation Area.

4.17 Overall, the proposed development is considered to be a welcome addition which would positively impact upon the setting of the above-mentioned listed buildings and wider Conservation Area more generally.

4.18 It is noted that the Conservation Officer has requested that details of the paint colours and signage be submitted for approval from the Local Planning Authority. It is however considered that the proposed colour, RAL5023 "Beyond Blue" (identified in the submitted design and access statement), would be acceptable, whilst no signage details are proposed as part of the application. The applicant should though be reminded, via an informative, that any future signage/advertisements for when the unit is re-let, would require separate advertisement consent.

## **5.0 Weighing and balancing of issues / Overall Assessment**

- 5.1 This section brings together the assessment that has so far been set out in order to weigh and balance relevant planning considerations in order to reach a conclusion on the application.
- 5.2 In determining the planning application, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, Section 143 of the Localism Act amends Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act relating to the determination of planning applications and states that in dealing with planning applications, the authority shall have regard to:
  - a. Provision of the development plan insofar as they are material,
  - b. Any local finance considerations, so far as they are material to the application (such as CIL if applicable), and,
  - c. Any other material considerations
- 5.3 As set out above it is considered that the proposed development would accord with the development plan policies.
- 5.4 Local Planning Authorities, when making decisions of a strategic nature, must have due regard, through the Equalities Act, to reducing the inequalities which may result from socio-economic disadvantage. In this instance, it is not considered that this proposal would disadvantage any sector of society to a harmful extent.

## **6.0 Working with the applicant / agent**

- 6.1 In accordance with paragraphs 38 and 39 of the NPPF, Buckinghamshire Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals and is focused on seeking solutions where possible and appropriate. Buckinghamshire Council work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application. In this instance the application was acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required.

## **7.0 Recommendation**

### **7.1 Application Permitted**

Subject to the following conditions and reasons:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.  
Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As amended).
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be built and retained in accordance with the details contained in the planning application hereby approved and plan numbers 22QS-01 and BC1, unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise first agrees in writing.  
Reason: In the interest of proper planning and to ensure a satisfactory development of the site.

- 3 The materials used for the development shall be of those specified in accordance with the details submitted within the supporting documentation and plans, unless otherwise stated or agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
Reason: To secure a satisfactory external appearance.

Informative(s)

- 1 In accordance with paragraphs 38 and 39 of the NPPF, Buckinghamshire Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals and is focused on seeking solutions where possible and appropriate. Buckinghamshire Council work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application. In this instance the application was acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required.
- 2 The applicant is reminded that, should signage/advertisements be required for the unit upon completion of the development, these will require separate advertisement consent.

## **APPENDIX A: Consultation Responses and Representations**

### Councillor Comments

No comments received.

### Parish/Town Council Comments

High Wycombe Town Unparished

### Consultation Responses:

#### **Conservation and Listed Buildings Officer:**

No Objections.

The application building is an unlisted retail property dating from the 1950's located in the Queens square area of High Wycombe town centre and falls within the Wycombe Town Conservation area. The property contributes to the setting of several nearby grade II listed buildings including: 109 Queens Square, 3 and 4 Queens Square, 20 Queens Square.

The application seeks to replace the existing facade with a design more in keeping with the surrounding historic shop fronts and characterful vernacular of the conservation area.

The proposed design features traditional timber panelling and profiling, glazed picture windows and the removal of the roller shutter. The application also proposes to install a new secondary entrance.

It is felt that the application will serve to enhance the existing property and positively contribute to the improvement of the street scene.

This application is acceptable in heritage terms subject to the following condition:

Details of appropriate paint colours and signage will need to be submitted for approval from the LPA.

#### **BC Highway Authority:**

No Objections.

Having assessed the submitted documents, I have no concerns or objections to raise to the proposed development. The proposals will not result in a detrimental impact upon highway safety or operation.

I note that the proposed light fittings are proposed to be appropriately angled and shielded preventing glare to vehicular highway users. Due to the height of the lighting items and minimal projection, I have no concerns that this would present a highway safety concern with regards to projection over the public highway.

Mindful of the above, I have no objections to, or conditions to recommend for, the proposed development.

### Representations:

None received.

# APPENDIX B: Site Location Plan

23/07806/R9FUL  
Scale 1/1250



Planning Committee  
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Ordnance Survey 100062456