



# Town Planning Bureau

Planning Service  
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
London Road  
Basingstoke  
Hampshire RG21 4AH  
Atten: Nicola Williams

The Barn  
43 Oakdene Road  
Redhill  
Surrey  
RH1 6BT

Dear Ms Williams

**RE: PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR: CHANGE OF USE OF PART OF BASEMENT FROM CLASS A3 RESTAURANT STORAGE/UTILITY AREA TO CLASS C3 TO FORM 2 NO. 1 BED DWELLINGS (LPA REF 19/03080/FUL); AND CHANGE OF USE OF PART OF UPPER GROUND FLOOR CLASS A1 SHOP STORAGE AND UTILITY SPACE TO CLASS C3 TO FORM 2 NO. 2 BED DWELLINGS (LPA REF 19/03081/FUL).**

**SITE: 20 WINCHESTER STREET, BASINGSTOKE, RG21 7DZ.**

**REF: 19/03080/FUL AND 19/03081/FUL**

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Our ref: TPB-435-ST4

## Loss of retail and commercial floorspace

Further to your request for more information I am writing on behalf of the Applicant of the above two applications in reference to the proposed loss of commercial floorspace and its impact on the vitality and viability of the units and town centre area. We consider that neither application will harm the vitality and viability of this Secondary Shopping Frontage located within Basingstoke Town Centre.

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**Policy EP3** of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan sets out the hierarchy of centres in the district. The site falls within the Basingstoke Town Centre within a Secondary Shopping Frontage.

**Policy EP3** states that *“Any development that would harm the vitality and viability of a defined centre will not be permitted.”*

The supporting text, at **para 7.27**, adds that a more flexible approach to town centre uses is taken towards proposals in the Secondary Shopping Frontage, while at **para 7.29** it adds that *“A diverse range of complementary evening and night time economy uses will be encouraged to improve the appeal for a wider range of age and social groups, in a safe and vibrant environment. The role that high quality residential development can have on the centre’s vitality is also recognised.”*

**Policy CN7** supports development proposals which sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of communities.

**Application 19/03080/FUL** proposes the change of use of part of the Class A3 floorspace located in the basement of the building, used by a Chinese restaurant for storage and toilet facilities, into two one-bedroom residential units. The proposal involves the change of use of just a small part of the overall restaurant floorspace. At present the restaurant occupies 554 square metres within the basement of the building. The proposed residential units would total 102 square metres (40 square metres for the studio and 62 square metres for the one-bedroom unit), a cycle store and utility space have been added to the back of the restaurant leaving a residual area of 314 square metres of floorspace - this is over 60% of the existing restaurant floor area and provides ample space for the continuation of the restaurant use. The restaurant can be reconfigured but will still yield a large restaurant. The restaurant, which makes a



contribution to the evening and night-time economy in line with policy, will be retained and the vitality and viability of this secondary shopping frontage will be unaffected. The provision of two high quality residential units would also contribute to the vitality of the area.

**Application 19/03081/FUL** proposes the change of use of part of the upper ground floor Class A1 shop storage and utility space into 2 x two-bedroom residential units. The unit is currently occupied by an ice cream shop fronting onto Winchester Street. The existing overall floorspace is 228 square metres and it is proposed to convert 117 square metres of floorspace at the rear of the unit into two residential units. The existing cycle store which occupies part of the proposed Flat 2 area will be relocated to the back the restaurant at basement level. The residual area remaining for the ice cream shop would be 117 square metres which is ample space for the continuation of the unit. This remains a sizable unit for viable shop use. The ice cream shop would be retained and the space can be reconfigured to accommodate storage and toilet facilities without affecting the main overall operation. This is a viable space to enable the ice cream shop to continue to operate and, with its street frontage, to continue to contribute to the vitality of the area. The provision of two high quality residential units would also contribute to the vitality of the area.

It is therefore considered that neither application will result in harm to the vitality and viability of the town centre. Both applications will result in large commercial units still being retained, of sufficient size to enable the continuation of the existing restaurant and shop uses and being large enough for alternative commercial uses. These units are of a viable size to enable continued commercial activity in order to avoid undermining the secondary shopping frontage on Winchester Street. The vitality, viability and character of the street frontage is retained.

The proposals are similar to several recent applications granted permission in secondary shopping parades in Basingstoke Town Centre.

Application Ref: 18/01880/FUL: Permission was granted in October 2018 for the change of use from Class A3/A4 to Class A1/A2 with residential at the rear of the ground floor and above at 18 London Street. The Officer Report on the application stated, with respect to the loss of commercial floorspace for residential use, that

*“In addition, although a reduction in retail//commercial floorspace is proposed, the remaining 55sqm of A1 / A2 use will support the retention of essential facilities and services in accordance with Policy CN7 of the Local Plan as the development would not result in a total loss of retail units.”*

We note that the size of the remaining unit in this case, 55 square metres, is less than half the size of the residual unit proposed in application 19/03081/FUL for the use of the ice cream shop (117 square metres) and a modest reduction in the size of the residual restaurant area proposed in application 19/03080/FUL for the use of the Chinese restaurant (314 square metres). Clearly if a unit of 55 square metres is considered by the Council to be large enough to support *“the retention of essential services and facilities”* then a unit of 117 square metres will easily be large enough for continued commercial activity let alone one of 314 square metres.

Application 18/01569/FUL granted permission in July 2018 for the change of use of part of an A2 unit into 3 residential units at 5-6 New Street. In this case a residential unit of 40 square metres would be provided at the rear of the ground floor leaving a residual A2 commercial unit of just 33 square metres. The Officer Report on the application stated, with respect to the loss of commercial floorspace for residential use, that

*“The proposed development in this instance would ensure that the vitality, viability and character of the street frontage is retained given that an element of commercial space is to be retained on the New Street frontage. New sash style windows are proposed and it is expected that they would not differ significantly*

*in appearance from the buildings existing fenestration. The development would therefore not result in the building appearing significantly different from the existing situation, albeit providing a reduced scale of commercial offering as a result of the proposed residential elements.”*

Again we note that the size of the remaining unit, in this case 33 square metres, is less than one third of the size of the residual unit proposed for the continued use of the ice cream shop (117 square metres) with application 19/03081/FUL and only a modest proportion of the size of the residual restaurant area proposed for the use of the Chinese restaurant (314 square metres) with application 19/03080/FUL. Again we highlight the fact that if a unit of 33 square metres is considered by the Council to be large enough to “ensure that the vitality, viability and character of the street frontage is retained given that an element of commercial space is to be retained on the New Street frontage” then a unit of 117 square metres will easily be large enough for continued commercial activity let alone one of 314 square metres. It is also noted that the Officer Report on application 18/01569/FUL highlights the contribution residential use can make to ensuring the vitality of town centres. The Report concludes by stating that

*“there are no objections in principle to the reuse of the building for a combination of residential/commercial use and this application is therefore supported by Local and National Planning Policy.”*

Clearly these recent applications described above, dealing with similar proposals to the two applications now under consideration at 20 Winchester Street, demonstrate the acceptability of the loss of some commercial floorspace to residential use providing a sufficiently sized commercial unit is retained and with a retention of an active street frontage. The proposed applications comply with these requirements in that two much larger commercial units than those approved in the schemes referred to above are provided which are of ample size to retain the existing commercial uses and which continue to provide an active street frontage. In combination with the provision of much needed high-quality residential units the character, vitality and viability of the Secondary Shopping Frontage and the town centre will be retained and enhanced.

### **Summary and conclusions**

This letter explains why the proposals are acceptable in terms of their impact on the viability and vitality of the individual units and wider town centre.

- Neither application will result in harm to the vitality and viability of the town centre.
- Both applications propose the provision of commercial units of sufficient size to enable the continued operation of the existing uses, namely the Chinese restaurant and the ice cream shop.
- These units are of a viable size to enable continued commercial activity in the future and will not undermine the secondary shopping frontage on Winchester Street.
- The vitality, viability and character of the street frontage is retained.
- The residual commercial units proposed are significantly larger than similar units approved recently in secondary shopping parades considered acceptable by the Council.
- The provision of high-quality residential units will add to the vitality of the town centre.

- The scheme is in accordance with the relevant National and Local policies and guidance.

The merits of the overall proposals for each application have been set out in the supporting Planning Statement that accompanied the applications. The policy presumption is in favour of the grant of planning permission in each application and there are no material considerations that outweigh this presumption.

Should you wish to discuss this application, please do not hesitate to contact the writer.

Yours faithfully

Paul S Bottomley BA (Hons) MA MRTPI  
Town Planning Bureau