

PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposal - Change of use from Use Class E to Amusement Arcade (Sui Generis)

Application for Continue Arcades Ltd

Site - 4-6 Royal Parade, Plymouth, PL1 1DS

February 2024

(Submission version)



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1. Introduction

Scope of report

1.1. This Planning Statement has been provided to explain the proposals and the reasons for the scheme relative to the governing policy and guidance that applies to the area. This is a proportionate assessment and focuses on the key issues.

1.2. This statement should be read in conjunction with the supporting details listed below.

1.3. Supporting documents:

- Drawings - 06010 00, WD-11823 1 of 3 and WD-11823 2 of 3, location plan
- CIL form
- Planning Statement - JWP
- Climate emergency form

1.4. Signage details are being considered under a current pre-application request, LPA reference 24/00085/MOR.

2. Site and surroundings

Location and context

2.1. 4-6 Royal Parade is a former retail premises (vacant since...) and consists of a ground and first floor showroom. The premises are located within a larger 4/5 storey block that faces Royal Parade and Old Town Street, near to St Andrew's Cross. The City Centre Conservation Area covers the site and surroundings.

2.2. The premises are located within the Primary Shopping Area but outside of the Primary Frontage.

2.3. Next door to the site is a vacant unit, formerly a Jewellers shop. A bank is adjacent to the site and beyond that a Public house. The local area is varied in land uses with a mixture of eating and drinking establishments, retail, service industries and entertainment uses in the nearby Barcode.

Planning history

2.4. Pre-application enquiries noted above for signage, currently on-going.

3. The development proposal

Description of works

3.1. A change of use is proposed covering the ground and first floor to enable video gaming uses with an ancillary bar serving drinks. Works to the shop frontage and signage will form a separate application following pre-application consultations.

Justification

3.2. The proposal will bring a new entertainment use to a vacant unit in a prominent position within the city centre. This type of use aims to diversify the role of the city centre in being a destination for leisure activities, along with other similar uses at the nearby Barcode. A main town centre use is proposed outside of the primary frontage and will act as a complimentary use to the overall function of the city centre. The proposal supports the plan led approach to spatial planning and helps Plymouth to enhance the role of the city centre.

4. Planning policy

4.1. Decisions on planning applications are made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is the statutory basis for decision making in accordance with The Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 70 (2) and Section 38 (6) of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The relevant policy and guidance is highlighted below.

Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034

SPT1 - Delivering sustainable development

SPT5 - Provision for retail development

SPT6 - Spatial provision of retail and main town centre uses

PLY1 - Enhancing Plymouth's strategic role

PLY8 - Land at Royal Parade (between Armada Way and Old Town Street)

DEV1 - Protecting health and amenity

DEV16 - Providing retail and town centre uses in appropriate locations

DEV21 - Development affecting the historic environment

Plymouth and South West Devon Supplementary Planning Document

Retail hierarchy

National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (framework):

Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Section 7 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres

Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG):

Town centres and retail

5. Planning considerations

Overview

5.1. The proposal is for a complimentary main town centre use occupying a vacant unit in the primary shopping area. This will operate into the evening to encourage activity beyond regular shopping hours. The change of use has a limited range of issues associated with it and these are summarised in the preceding sections.

Non retail use

5.2. Strategic policy (SPT6) for town centre uses focuses sequentially on the existing hierarchy, Plymouth being the focus.

5.3. Within the centres, proposals should be at a scale appropriate to their role as per DEV16.1. As the site is outside of the primary frontage there is an opportunity for other complimentary uses. The remainder of DEV16 is not directly relevant.

5.4. Policy PLY8 states that within Royal Parade buildings should be refurbished to update the spaces and attract new complimentary uses to the upper floors, expanded spaces will be achieved through reconfiguration and vertical extensions. As part of the improvements, enhancement of the shopfronts is sought and active ground floor frontages. When considering uses that may present an enclosed frontage, a balanced judgement is needed to look at the area beyond the site itself and how this use fits within the overall frontage.

5.5. The framework supports the policy approach of the JLP. In particular, defining those areas that provide the primary shopping function and areas for other uses that support diversity and long-term vitality. This flexibility allows for rapid changes in retail and leisure industries, such as those in the post covid society following deep changes in habits and the need to re-purpose real estate.

5.6. The PPG contains relevant advice on how Local Authorities can support the management and adaption of town centres. Structural changes in the economy with changes in shopping and leisure habits involve a need to change to support this migration. Uses that continue into the evening increase the general activity and employment options, helping to diversify the economy. Careful management of late night uses needs to be factored in, in this case a Premises License will be in place and supervised by Plymouth City Council.

5.7. Taken together, this proposed change of use is an appropriate complimentary use in a location that is suited to non retail uses. It will support the growing leisure role that the city centre is taking in response to changing tastes and habits.

Amenity considerations

5.8. Being located in the city centre has a level of amenity that tolerates late night uses, the general level of activity and noise is higher than other outlying areas. Residential uses within the central area are therefore in an environment that reflects this. This use would have a closing time of 2300 at the latest and most evenings is at 2100. Whilst alcohol is sold, this is not a pub type use and there will be no anti social behaviour associated with the gaming activities. The use is compatible with the level of amenity locally.

Conclusions

5.9. Changes within society have affected how traditional uses and services are provided. In particular, retail uses have been forced to adapt to changes in consumer habits. Leisure uses have started to fill the void and this transition and there is increased demand for leisure pursuits. The city centre is a strategically important focus for this new activity and helps to reduce the level of vacant uses outside of the core retail areas. The proposal has shown how it supports the overall change in role for the city centre.

5.10. A use that continues later in the day is a positive step to help maintain a vibrant environment with people milling about and potentially supporting other uses.

5.11. Taken together, the proposals demonstrate how they represent a positive change and a sustainable form of development in accordance with the development plan and the associated guidance.