

Monday, 18 December 2017

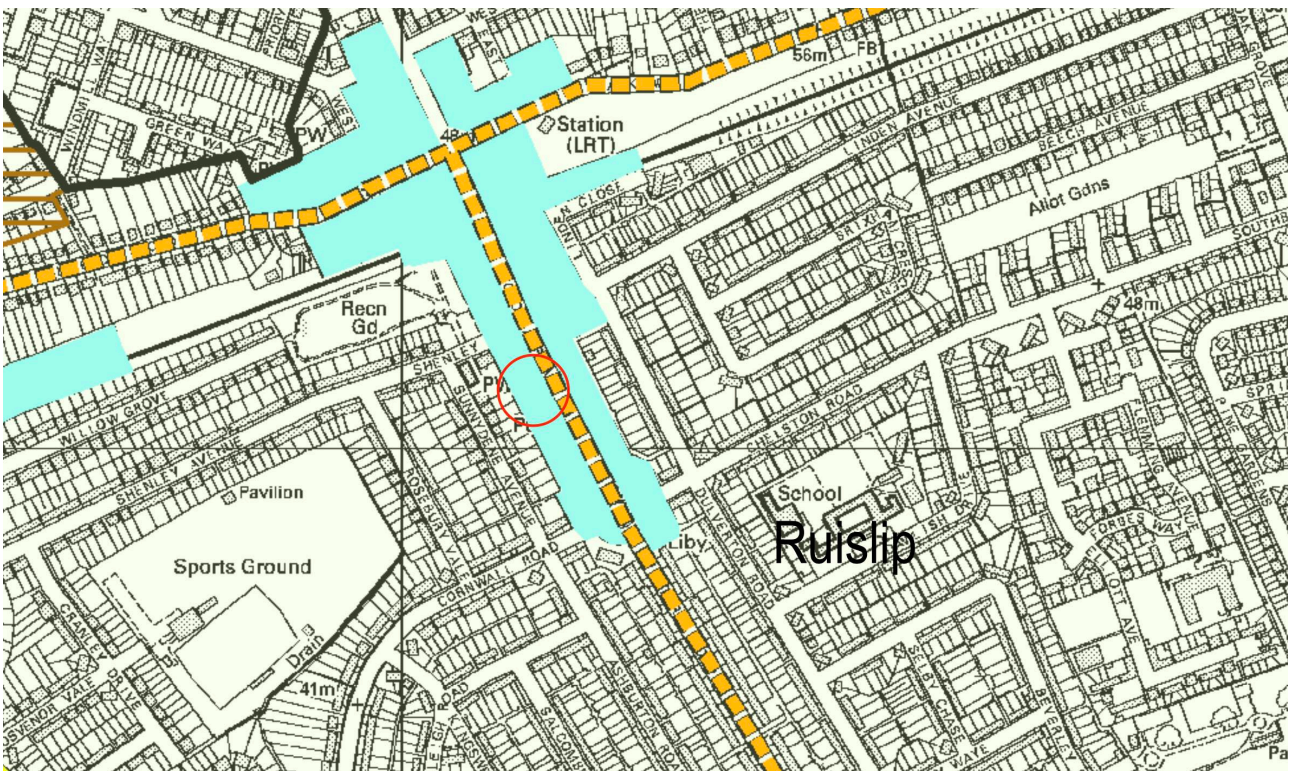
Planning Statement / Design & Access

66 Victoria Road, Ruislip, HA4 9BH

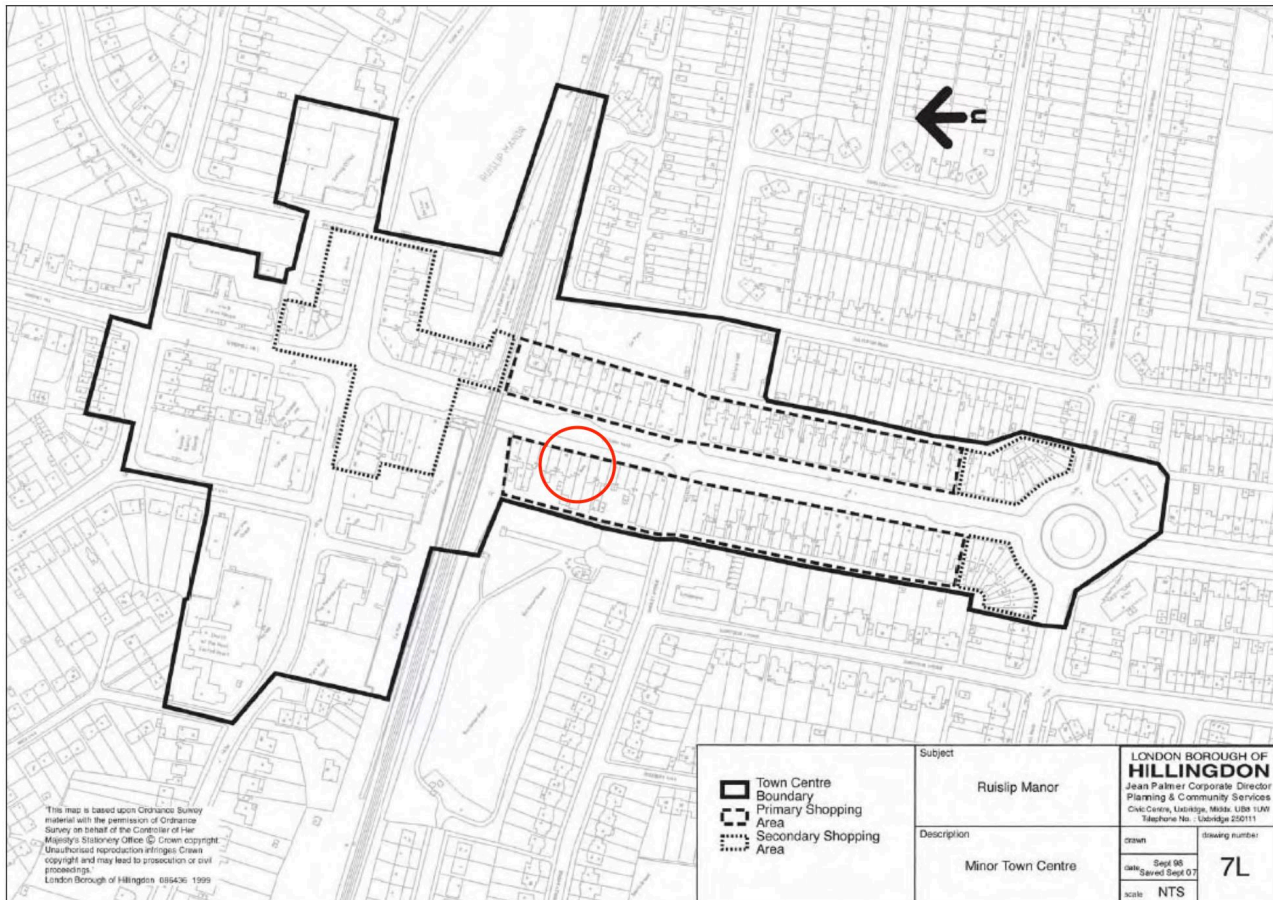
Planning application for the change of use from a bakery (A1 use), to a mixed class coffee shop (A1/A3 use).

Site

The site, as pictured below, lies within the London Borough of Hillingdon. As can be seen from the UDP Development Plan policies (proposals) map, the site is also within a designated Town Centre (site circled in red).



The below extract from the UDP saved policies also shows that the site is within a primary shopping area.



Proposed Use

This proposal is to change the existing use for the building from an A1 use bakery to an A1/A3 mix, facilitating its use as a Costa Coffee shop. This mix is important to note, as different to a standard café that trades solely under A3, it also functions as a retail unit for the take away purchases of hot and cold beverages as well as cold/warmed food. The sale of other comparison goods such as coffee beans and other coffee paraphernalia further contributes towards the A1 mix thereby contributing to the vitality and viability of the shopping frontage. The A3 part of the mixed use relates to the drinks and food items that are consumed on the premises. Various appeal decisions by the planning inspectorate confirm this is indeed the correct usage for such a coffee shop.

The nature of this style of coffee shop means that no primary cooking facilities will be installed, as the only food items served within the premises are pre-manufactured off-site. The only food to be warmed is then the panini which is done by a Merrychef oven behind the servers which does not require any extraction or ventilation.

The above means that we are happy for a planning approval to be conditioned so that no primary cooking facilities are to be installed, allowing for heating of pre-packaged items only. This will therefore restrict any uses of the store as predominantly A3 in the future which could give rise to detrimental impact to the surrounding amenities through noise or smell.

Local Plan

Under policy S11 of the UDP Saved Policies September 2007 (Published Version), it is stated that the local planning authority will grant permission both A1 and A3 uses as applied for under this application where it is satisfied certain criteria are met.

The first criteria, to which this application accords is that the both the proposal and the surroundings are adequate for the character and function of the shopping centre and will provide for the needs of modern retailing including consumer interests. The proposed use will also not result in a concentration of non-retail uses which might harm the viability or vitality of the centre.

Primary shopping areas are also subject to the considerations set out in policy S6. This policy again states that permission as applied for under this application will be granted if certain other criteria are also met...

- i. The proposal will not be detrimental to visual amenity where the premises form part of a statutory or locally listed building or are located within a conservation area.
- ii. A frontage of a design appropriate to the surrounding area is maintained or provided.

The proposed application also seeks a redecoration of the shopfront and replacement signage which is applied for under a separate advertisement application. As can be seen from the drawings, the proposals clearly offer an improvement to the area through better design and detailing.

- iii. The proposed use is compatible with neighbouring uses and will not cause unacceptable loss of amenity to nearby residential properties by reason of disturbance, noise, smell, fumes, parking or traffic related problems.
- iv. Has no harmful effect on road safety and does not worsen traffic congestion or disrupt bus operations.

As previously outlined, due to the specific nature of the proposed use, this application will not require any commercial extraction that could be of detriment to local amenity through either noise, smell or fumes. It should also be noted that coffee shops are intended to be used as part of a daily shopping or commuter routine and are not intended as a destination spot. The majority of the footfall for the store will therefore come from existing passers-by, and as such there will be no effect upon existing parking and neither will it cause any traffic related problems.

It should also be noted that the existing bakery already has a small element of A3 use in place due to the fact that it has some seating and chairs for customers already inside. The impact through the change of use is therefore even more negligible than that of a change of use from a straight A1 use (again noting that our proposal is not for a pure A3 use and neither is it to remove the existing A1 use, but a proposal to add further A3 usage to the existing mix).

With regards to the effect on the vitality and viability of the area as a result of granting this application, figures published in 2014 in a report by industry analysts, Allegra Strategies, show that British high streets are enjoying significant economic and social benefits brought by the rise of branded and independent coffee shops.

The report draws on research with over 2,000 consumers and local businesses. The Role of Coffee Shops on the High Street 2014 report demonstrates that the presence of coffee shops typically boost local high street economies by 2 to 4% through a combination of increased footfall and dwell time. Footfall studies show that branded coffee shops can increase high street footfall by up to 28%. 52% of consumers interviewed for the study are more likely to shop for longer when there are coffee shops nearby.

The Role of Coffee Shops on the High Street 2014

Allegra Strategies

Key findings

- Coffee shops have a highly positive impact on local businesses: 58% of local businesses interviewed indicated that coffee shops attract more people to their business, an increase on 38% in 2010. 43% of local businesses were positive about the contribution of coffee shops to their individual trading.
- Coffee shops create a valuable regenerative effect: 85% of local businesses interviewed agreed that coffee shops improve the viability of the local area, an increase on 76% in 2010.
- Coffee shops play a significant role in driving high street visits: 58% of consumers surveyed had planned to visit coffee shops as part of their trip to the high street. Furthermore, 18% of consumers visited the high street primarily to go to the coffee shop.
- Coffee shops are fundamental to the wellbeing of British high streets: 95% of consumers interviewed feel that coffee shops improve the vitality of the local area.
- Coffee shops produce neighbourhood hubs and foster a strong sense of local community: 85% of consumers state that coffee shops have a valuable role in the local community, an increase from 77% in 2010.

Future Developments

The report concludes that over the next few years, coffee shops will take an expanded role in local communities and the evening economy. Branded coffee shops and artisan independents will make further efforts to strengthen links with communities with more authentic and locally relevant store designs. The report predicts more widespread partnerships between coffee shops and retail and leisure operators, which will make valuable use of both existing and vacant high street space.

Jeffrey Young, managing director, Allegra Strategies, said: "The report illustrates that coffee shops are helping high streets to evolve away from over-reliance on outdated retail models to embrace the demands of a more experience-led British consumer. Coffee shops offer much more than just refreshment, providing a space for community events and mobile working, while boosting local employment opportunities."

Jason Cotta, managing director, Costa Retail UK and committee member of the Future High Streets Forum, added: "Coffee shops have effectively become more than just a place to enjoy a hot drink. They play an integral role in terms of the social and economic development of the high street; from employment opportunities to providing friendly community meeting hubs. As a panel member of the Future High Streets Forum, we have been working closely with local councils to revive and develop their high streets. I welcome the findings of this report which reinforces the role of coffee shops in driving footfall to the high street, as well as helping to improve the viability of the area."

This information was supplied by Allegra Strategies and further information can be found at www.allegrastrategies.com. Future Development information by Intelligent Business Systems news.

The Allegra report was developed from:**Consumer research**

- 1,599 online interviews with consumers from across the UK
- 343 face-to-face interviews with consumers inside branded and independent coffee shops in 6 UK case study locations (Putney, Shoreditch, Edinburgh, Leeds, Sutton Coldfield and Cardiff)
- 16,452 online consumer interviews (Allegra Project Café13 UK)

Business research

- 119 in-depth face-to-face interviews with business owners and managers of local businesses in close proximity to coffee shops in 6 case study locations (Putney, Shoreditch, Edinburgh, Leeds, Sutton Coldfield and Cardiff)
- 24 telephone interviews with industry leaders from branded chains, independent coffee shop owners, planning experts, town centre managers and other relevant specialists
- 100+ coffee industry leader interviews (Allegra Project Café13 UK)

About Allegra Strategies

Allegra Strategies is a London-based strategic research consultancy recognised as a global leader in the coffee shop sector. The company is best known for its definitive Project Café reports on the European and UK coffee shop markets. Allegra has accurately predicted trends in the UK branded coffee shop market since 1999. The report is considered by the industry as 'the bible' of the coffee sector. In December 2013, Allegra created The World Coffee Portal, the premier global information platform for senior decision makers across the coffee sector. Building upon over 15 years of unparalleled coffee expertise from Allegra Strategies, the World Coffee Portal delivers strategic analysis on some of the most important coffee markets across the world.

Coffee Shops in the Evolving High Street

Deloitte Consumer Review, November 2013.

Research from Deloitte also reveals the importance of the high street to UK consumers for leisure activities, such as dining and drinking out. Over half (52%) of consumers surveyed say they prefer to go to their local high street for a visit to a coffee shop, compared to just 18% at in-town shopping centres and 11% who go to an out-of-town shopping centre.

The research shows those high streets which maintain the right mix of shops, while offering experiences and convenience that cannot be replicated online remain popular. This is particularly pertinent as, despite concerns around the demise of the high street, it is still consumers' choice of destination for top-up groceries, health and personal care and clothing and footwear.

The research and percentages featured in the Deloitte Consumer Review were based on a consumer survey carried out by independent market research agency, TNS. The survey was conducted online with a nationally representative sample of over 1200 UK adults aged 18+.

Planning Evidence

The role of a coffee shop as proposed in promoting the vitality and viability of the area is not only proven by recorded figures, but is also confirmed by similar planning applications through planning inspectorates. One of the most important factors when looking at the impact in approving such an A1/A3 use as in this application is the effect it will have on the shopping frontage and surrounding area. Appeal decision APP/M5450/A/09/2117917, relates to a similar change of use application within a primary shopping frontage to a mixed use A1/A3 (for Starbucks coffee shop). In this appeal it was stated by the inspectorate that in generating such high levels of activity throughout the normal shopping day, in part due to its retail element, a coffee shop use is beneficial to the vitality of a primary shopping frontage. Moreover, the particular format of combining takeaway retail sales, café and social meeting place does add something different to the retail mix, improving choice and thereby according with the current national planning policy statements.

Appeal decision APP/K3605/A/14/2212307 for Costa Coffee in the small local town of Hinchley Wood where similar local plan policies are in place further concluded that the loss of retail in such a coffee shop is small due to the retail element being retained, and as such is considered not materially to affect the level of services available to meet the needs of the local community.

The use as a coffee shop therefore, is an appropriate use in this Primary Shopping Frontage, contributing to the vitality and generating footfall throughout the day from early morning to evening which would further add to the activity within the centre which may in turn result in additional business for existing retailers. It will add to customer choice and contribute to the provision of a diverse retail offer. It will also provide another meeting place which would supplement that existing and would contribute to the social and community function. Appeal decision APP/K3605/A/14/2212307 goes on to say that such a Costa Coffee “Rather than contribute to local job losses and a reduction in the well being of the community... would have benefits that would ensure that it would not be harmful to the centre as a whole and that it would add to its vitality and viability, even though it would result in some loss of retail floorspace and a wholly retail unit.

National Policy

Within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) it is recommended that planning should “proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, businesses and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs.”

Furthermore, the proven increase in vitality and viability given through the introduction of coffee shops such as Costa directly responds to the requirement of Councils to “recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality”.

It should also be noted that where independent businesses exist near to the proposal site and that the applicant is not an independent operator does not in itself demonstrate harm. Even the existence of any other similar units of either independent or franchised does not weigh against such a proposal as section 2, paragraph 23, bullet point 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that local planning authorities should promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer.

Permitted Development

It is important to note that government has recently amended permitted development rights to commercial buildings. It has concluded that such a change of use from A1 to mixed A1/A3 is of such a vital importance to local trade and is of such low impact that it can be carried without the requirement for planning permission, under Class C of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(Amendment)(England) Order 2015.

The relevant section of Class C, being retail to restaurant or cafe, states that this permitted development covers C.(a) *a change of use of a building from a use (i) falling within Class A1 (shops) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order, to a use falling within Class A3 (restaurants and cafes) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order.*

In order to meet the criteria for such permitted development certain criteria must be met with prior-approval. We believe that these criteria themselves are the matter for planning consent, and as such to remove the implications of applying for prior approval and then permitted development separately, this application for full planning permission is being made.

It is however crucial to note that there are also permitted development rights for a temporary change of use covering a 2 year period to which the same prior-approval details are not required.

This means that local policies relating to the loss of A1 are no longer relevant as such losses are now covered by permitted development.

Appeal decision APP/K3605/A/14/2212307 for the change of use to a similar A1/A3 mix Costa Coffee confirms this, and as such, weight should be accorded to this situation when making the planning decision.

Portas Review

This is an Independent review carried out in 2011 looking into the Future of our High Streets, commissioned by the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. Within the report it looks at how retailers need less shops due to the increase of online transactions and that the consumer is looking for more than just retail when visiting a town centre, including leisure and entertainment facilities such as that proposed in this application.

The report goes on to state how the high street should include a diverse range of social, commercial and meeting places, again such as that proposed.

In the Government response, it was emphasised to the Local Authorities how they should manage local needs and improve their High Streets, an important part of which is through providing uses such as coffee shops to improve the vitality and viability of the street.

Design & Access

The counter has been positioned near to the entrance door for ease of serving both sit-in and take-away customers. The main seating area will be sited directly opposite and to the rear of this. In order to maintain an active frontage, the main facilities of staff areas, storage and dishwash rooms have been positioned to the rear of the unit.

In order to increase the shops facilities for customers, 2 new toilets are proposed, one of which will be fully wheelchair accessible, inclusive of baby change facilities. Level access to both the entrance and throughout the store will be maintained to ensure that wheelchair users can access all parts of the store easily.

Other facilities to assist customers will also be installed on site, including assistance for the mobility impaired, facilities for the hearing impaired, induction loop available, staff assistance, space for parents with pushchairs, and assistance for the visually impaired.

In addition to the above, a new shop frontage is proposed. Full details of this are in the attached plans and clearly show an enhancement to the area through better design and detailing.