

Our ref: 22.056 LBH 15-08-22

15th August 2022

Development Control
London Borough of Hillingdon
Civic Centre
High Street
Uxbridge
UB8 1UW

Dear Sir/Madam,

THE PAVILIONS SHOPPING CENTRE, 18 CHEQUERS SQUARE, UXBRIDGE – REMOVAL OF ENTRANCE CANOPY AND REPLACEMENT OF FASCIA – PLANNING PORTAL REF. PP-11407858

This planning application is submitted to the London Borough of Hillingdon on behalf of the Applicant, Mars Pension Trustees Limited. The Applicant seeks the removal of a canopy and replacement of fascia located at the entrance to the Pavilions Shopping Centre, 18 Chequers Square, Uxbridge.

This letter, which also falls to be read as the Design and Access Statement, outlines the context in which the application is made and provides an assessment of the main planning considerations, together with a reasoned justification of the scheme's merits when assessed against relevant local and national planning policy and other material considerations.

The following documents and drawings are also submitted as part of the application:

- Completed application form
- Site location plan (drawing ref. PL01-001)
- Existing ground floor level plan (drawing ref. PL01-002)
- Existing roof plan (drawing ref. PL01-003)
- Existing elevations (drawing ref. PL01-004)
- Existing section (drawing ref. PL01-005)
- Proposed ground floor level plan (drawing ref. PL-01-006)
- Proposed roof plan (drawing ref. PL01-007)
- Proposed elevations (drawing ref. PL01-008)
- Proposed section (drawing ref. PL01-009)
- Proposed 3D views (drawing ref. PL01-010)

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Site Context and Background

The Pavilions Shopping Centre is located within Uxbridge Town Centre. The centre originates from the 1970's and has since been subject to various improvements over the years to ensure it remains a modern and desirable retail destination.

The main entrance and the associated external canopy is located to the south of the centre's eastern elevation, close to where Windsor Street and High Street culminate. The canopy, comprising clear glazed panelling and white structural elements, is 165sqm in size and partially extends outwards into the plaza to the east.

The boundary of the Old Uxbridge and Windsor Street Conservation Area partly runs along the frontage of the Pavilions, encompassing the application site (see Figure 1). Whilst your authority has informally confirmed the canopy sits adjacent to the Conservation Area, rather than within it, for avoidance of doubt and completeness an application for demolition in a Conservation Area has also been submitted.

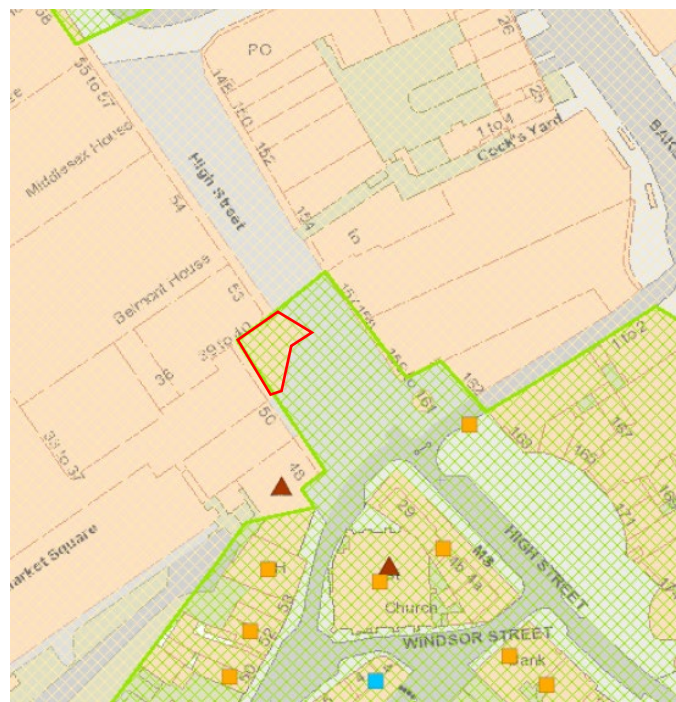


Figure 1. Site location (red outline) and Conservation Area boundary (green hatch)

Beyond this, the application site is not subject to any allocations or designations. Although not relevant to the scope of works proposed, the application site is located within Flood Zone 1, indicating the lowest level of flood risk.

Planning History

Whilst a number of minor alterations and improvements have been made to the centre over the years, of most relevance to this application is application ref. 35214/APP/2014/2232 for *'The consolidation of 15 existing units within the Pavilions shopping centre to create a single, large format retail unit, including reconfiguration works at basement level, insertion of new mezzanine floor and associated works at roof level'*. The application was approved in 2014.

Details of the application refer to the intention for later phases of development, including the removal of the entrance canopy, as part of a wider masterplan for the Pavilions. As such, this application represents the progression of the aforementioned long-term plans for the modernisation of the shopping centre.

Proposed Development

Permission is sought for full planning and demolition within a Conservation Area. The proposal comprises the removal of the external entrance canopy in its entirety and the replacement of the fascia at the entrance. No further external works are proposed. Please refer to the submitted drawings for the full extent of the proposals.

Planning Policy

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that in the determination of applications *'The Authority shall have regard to the provisions of a development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material consideration'*. Similarly, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The following planning policy documents have been considered in the development of the application proposals:

National Planning Policy

- The National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

London Planning Policy

- *The London Plan (2021)*

Local Planning Policy

- Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 – Strategic Policies (2012)
- Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020)

It is not considered that there are any supplementary planning documents at local level that are of relevance to the application.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

Government planning policy and guidance includes the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and national Planning Practice Guidance (nPPG).

The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. Among other things, it provides for several objectives relevant to the proposal. The Framework is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In terms of decision-taking, paragraph 11 and the nPPG advises that LPAs should seek to approve development proposals which accord with the Development Plan without delay.

The following principles from the NPPF are most relevant to this application:

- Section 6 (Building a strong, competitive economy) stresses that significant weight should be placed in supporting economic growth, taking into account local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- Section 7 (Ensuring the vitality of town centres) states that planning decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities and take a positive approach to their growth, management and adaption.
- Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) considers what constitutes good design: the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is identified as a key aspect of sustainable development.
- Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) sets out that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. It notes that not all elements of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance.

The London Plan (2021)

Policy HC1 (Heritage Conservation and Growth) details that proposals which affect heritage assets should conserve significance by being sympathetic to the assets' significance. Proposals should identify opportunities to enhance by way of integrating heritage considerations from an early stage.

Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 – Strategic Policies (2012)

Policy E4 (Uxbridge) seeks to strengthen the status of Uxbridge Town Centre as a Metropolitan Centre in promoting it as a suitable growth location for retail, amongst other uses.

Policy HE1 (Heritage) states that the council will conserve and enhance Hillingdon's varied environment.

Policy BE1 (Built Environment) details how the council requires all new development to improve the quality of the built environment. This includes achieving a high quality of design in all alterations to the public realm that contribute toward a sense of place.

Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (2020)

Policy DMHB 12 (Streets and Public Realm) sets out how development should be well integrated with the surrounding area. This should involve ensuring that public realm design takes account of the established townscape character and quality of the surrounding area.

Policy DMHB4 (Conservation Areas) requires new development to be a high quality contextual design and resist the loss of features that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. Proposals should introduce new features that enhance the Conservation Area.

Planning Considerations

This section identifies the key issues relevant to the potential impacts of the proposals, assessing these against and considering their consistency with national and local planning policy and guidance. These are considered to be:

- Principle of Development
- Design and Appearance
- Heritage

Principle of Development

The proposal is minor in nature. The removal of the canopy helps ensure the Pavilions remains a high-quality and desirable retail destination, and contributes towards to longevity of the Town Centre as per Policy E4 (Uxbridge) of the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 1. The proposed removal of the canopy and replacement of the existing fascia vastly improves the arrival experience at the Pavilions and enhances the street scene by way of a high-quality and contextual contemporary design in a manner that conserves the character of the Conservation Area. As such, it is considered that the principle of development is entirely appropriate.

Design and Appearance

The existing canopy, which has been in-situ for a number of years, is not considered to reflect the ambition of the Pavilions to be a modern and desirable retail destination for Uxbridge. Despite regular maintenance and upkeep, the canopy appears somewhat dated and is no longer in keeping with the surrounding otherwise contemporary appearance of the high street.

The modernisation of the Pavilions entrance through the removal of the canopy and fascia replacement will significantly improve the appearance of the streetscene and contribute

positively towards the public realm surrounding the application site, in line with policies BE1 (Built Environment) and DMHB 12 (Streets and Public Realm) of the Hillingdon Local Plans. The replacement fascia provides a refreshed and updated look to the Pavilions, ensuring the long term vitality of the centre and that Uxbridge Town Centre remains a relevant and appealing location for continued investment and growth.

Heritage

As previously stated, there is some ambiguity as to whether or not the application site formally lies within the Conservation Area. For the avoidance of doubt, the former is assumed and this submission considers the heritage impacts of the scheme.

The Old Uxbridge/Windsor Street Conservation Area was created in 1987, following amalgamation with the Windsor Street Conservation Area. Extensions and deletions were subsequently put in place in 1988. The Conservation Area covers all of Windsor Street and the majority of High Street.

There is no character appraisal available alongside the Conservation Area designation. Nonetheless, the area covered features a variety of building ages and styles. The most cohesive part of the Conservation Area is considered to be along Windsor Street, where there is a high prevalence of listed buildings, many dating back to the 16th Century. The remainder of the Conservation Area is somewhat piecemeal in nature, creating a vibrant mixture of 17th Century, early 19th Century and 20th Century buildings.

The application site is located on the northern boundary of the Conservation Area's 'lower half'. On this stretch of the High Street, there is no consistent character to the Conservation Area and, as such, the removal of the canopy and the fascia replacement would create no discernible effect on the heritage asset. Rather, there are a large number of 20th and 21st Century buildings in proximity to the site (and also located within the Conservation Area) and the modernisation works via the proposal would greater improve the Pavilions relationship with such buildings. Furthermore, with the upgrade and improvement of buildings that are not considered to be a high-quality design value, such as the application site, the streetscene and setting of the Conservation Area is enhanced and maintained for years to come.

Overall, it can be concluded that the minor works proposed would create a positive impact on the streetscene. Given the wide variety of vernaculars in this part of the Conservation Area, it is not considered that the application site bears a meaningful connection to the designation by way of specific features. As a low-quality design feature within the Conservation Area, the proposal represents an opportunity to improve the appearance of the Pavilions. The development would therefore not lead to any harm of the heritage asset and would instead enhance its setting, as per Policy DMHB4 (Conservation Areas) of the Hillingdon Local Plan and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

Summary

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposal would strongly accord with the provision of the Development Plan, so far as they are relevant.

The submitted scheme represents practical and necessary, yet minor, external alterations to the Pavilions Shopping Centre entrance. As one part of a longer term plan of enhancements for the Pavilions, the development will help promote Uxbridge as a desirable retail destination by way of creating a contemporary and contextually relevant approach to the shopping centre. In addition, the proposals are considered to elevate the appearance of the High Street and contribute towards enhancing the character of the Old Uxbridge/Windsor Street Conservation Area.

The application has been positively prepared and has sought to understand and responds to the relevant planning issues. There would be no adverse impacts that would arise as a result of the proposal which would outweigh the benefits of the scheme.

The planning balance weighs in favour of this proposal and should be supported by your authority. On this basis, it is considered that both full planning and demolition in a Conservation Area should be granted without delay.

Should you have any queries on the proposals, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Harriet Nind BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI
Senior Planner