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Planning Department
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands Rd
Haywards Heath
RH16 1SS

26th November 2024

Our Ref: 24/7771

Dear Sir / Madam,

**Full Application for Alterations to Existing Shopfront
32-36 South Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 4LA**

On behalf of our client, Coffee #1 Limited, Planning Potential is pleased to submit a full planning application for alterations to the existing shopfront at 32-36 South Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 4LA.

This application has been submitted separately to, but in conjunction with, the following:

- Consent for the display of advertising; and
- Pavement Licence.

Application Submission

The application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (ref: PP-13577168) and includes the following supporting information:

- This Cover Letter (including Design and Access Statement).
- Completed Application Form and Ownership Certificates.
- Site Location Plan (Dwg No: A-G/1617-24-P04).
- Block Plan (Dwg No: A-G/1617-24-P05).
- Existing Ground Floor Plans (Dwg No: A-G/1617-24-P01).
- Proposed Ground Floor Plans (Dwg No: A-G/1617-24-P03-A); and
- Existing and Proposed Front Elevations (Dwg No: A-G/1617-24-P02).

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Coffee #1

The applicant, Coffee #1 Limited, is a regional coffee shop operator with stores in Godalming, Epsom and Fleet. The company prides itself on the excellence of its coffee and the high quality and careful design of its stores. This approach has been acknowledged by the awards won by Coffee #1 over the years.

The alterations to the shopfront that require planning permission are minor and relate primarily to the painting of the shopfront, the replacement of damaged glazing, alterations to the entrance as well as the introduction of air conditioning units.

Additionally, fascia and projection signage detailed in the accompanying adverts application is also proposed.

Site and Surroundings

The application site is currently vacant and consists of the former Halifax bank located towards the southern end of South Road, Haywards Heath. The site makes up the ground floor of the property, with flats above. The property features large windows located on the front of the building together with an existing fascia advertisement board.

The site is predominately surrounded by commercial and retail uses, with the neighbouring units consisting of Greggs to the right and HSBC to the left. This site is located within the Town Centre Boundary of Haywards Heath. It is also within the Primary Shopping Frontage and the built-up area boundary of the town.

Proposed development

The proposed alterations are illustrated and annotated on the following plans:

- Existing and Proposed Front Elevations (Dwg No: A-G/1617-24-P02)
- Proposed Ground Floor Plans (Dwg No: A-G/1617-24-P03-A);

Further details of the projecting sign and fascia sign are to be provided as part of the Application for Advertisement Consent.

Planning History

The application site has been subject to a series of applications. These include:

- DM/23/1537 - Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for a Proposed Use or Development Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) for use as a restaurant/ coffee shop – Approved September 2023

This application sought confirmation that the former Halifax bank could be used lawfully as a coffee shop or restaurant and no change of use application would be required.

- DM/16/2805 - Proposal to add a mansard roof above an existing flat roof. The new roof space will accommodate 3 new apartments. – approved September 2016
- DM/16/0616 - Convert 1st floor to 4no. flats and external changes to fenestration and cladding to 1st and 2nd floor – Approved April 2016
- DM/16/0615- Application to determine whether prior approval is required for the change of use of existing offices to form 4no. flats. – Prior Approval Granted April 2016
- 13/01735/ADV - New fascia, projecting sign and new ATM collar to replace existing shopfront signage – approved July 2013

- 04/01310/FUL - Change of use of 2nd floor offices to night club and new fire escape – refused August 2004
- 03/02544/COU - Change of use from B1 (Office use) to D2 (Ladies Fitness Centre). – approved December 2003
- 03/00226/ADV - New corporate signage internally illuminated – approved March 2003

Planning Policy

The Development Plan for the site consists of the Mid Sussex District Plan, which was adopted in March 2018, and the made Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan (2016). Other relevant planning policy documents are the Design Guide SPD (2020) and the Haywards Heath Town Centre Master Plan (2021).

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (adopted 2018)

Policy DP2 relates to Town Centre Development and aims to create vibrant and attractive town centres. This policy also discusses Primary Shopping Frontages and states that the retail function should not be undermined by proposals, and that proposals should enhance shopping facilities. Additionally, proposals will be approved where they would sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the area.

This policy also highlights how, in order to help support regeneration within the town centres, development will be supported where it is appropriate in scale and function to its location including the character and amenities of the surrounding area and is in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan and Town Centre Masterplan.

It is considered that the development of a Coffee #1 in this location would be an appropriate scale and function, as demonstrated by the Lawful Development Certificate that was granted to allow the use of this property as a café or restaurant.

Policy DP26 relates to character and design. This sets out expectations of high-quality design and how any new development should respect and reflect the distinct character of the existing surroundings. It notes a number of key considerations including the need for high design quality, local distinctiveness, sustainability, accessibility and protection of amenities. It is considered that the understated and high-quality design of the shopfront proposed within this application would be in keeping with this policy. In particular, through the repair and enhancement of the windows and doors.

Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan (made 2016)

The Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan also forms part of the Development Plan. It sets out the development requirements for the area. Within this, South Road is described as the main shopping area within Haywards Heath.

Objective 6F of the Neighbourhood Plan relates to design. Within this objective, it highlights how it must be demonstrated that developments will enhance the character of the locality and relate to the specific local character of the site's location.

As Coffee #1 takes an understated and minimal approach to shopfront design, it is considered that the approach taken within this application would be in keeping with this Policy.

Policy E9 of the Neighbourhood Plan discusses how it must be demonstrated that proposals will protect and reinforce local character. This requires consideration for design elements including height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design and materials of buildings and will not result in unacceptable levels of light, noise, air or water pollution. As the proposals suggested within this application are minimal in nature, it is considered that there would be no adverse impacts with regard to design.

Policy B2 suggests that planning permission will be granted for development that encourages a diverse range of uses in the Town Centre which supports the core retail offer and generated vitality and viability while avoiding harm to existing businesses

and residential properties. Having a high quality and inviting shopfront design is key to the success of the Coffee #1, therefore can be important in maintaining the vitality of the town centre.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039

The District Local Plan is currently under examination, so whilst this may not form part of the decision making process, the Emerging Local Plan may hold some weight.

Within Policy DPN7 the noise impacts of development are taken into consideration and the expectations for development. This policy outlines that development is expected to be designed in such a way as to avoid or minimise adverse impacts from noise. It is considered that the A/C units noted within the ground floor plans would not create significant noise above what would be expected for a typical town centre use, including coffee shops.

As this site is located within the Primary Shopping Area Boundary, Policy DPE6 may be of relevance. This policy sets out that new food and beverage uses with the PSA “will be supported with the implementation of restrictions to maintain the mix of uses as permitted to ensure the vitality and viability of the centre is not harmed”. This is further supported by the approved Lawful Development Certificate which considers a proposed use as a coffee shop to be lawful. It is considered that the vitality and viability of the centre would be enhanced through the introduction of Coffee #1, as this would provide the reuse of a currently vacant property with an appropriate town centre use whilst creating activity and increasing dwell times in this part of the centre

Haywards Heath Town Centre Masterplan (March 2021)

This document sets out the vision and objectives for Haywards Heath Town Centre. Notably, it seeks to encourage an economic recovery and attract investment as well as ensuring the distinct character of the area is enhanced.

Within this document, South Road is identified as one of the main focuses for shopping and food and drink developments. It is also established within the Masterplan that the town centre is underperforming, and thus proposed y developments such as coffee shops, which attract increased footfall should be encouraged. The alterations proposed within this application will aid the regeneration of this part of the centre

Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD (adopted November 2020)

This document sets out design principles for the area, highlighting the need for high quality design that is considerate to local contexts and enhances the development potential of sites. Principle DG11 sets out how the development should generally reflect the scale of adjacent areas and the settlement context within which it is located to deliver a coherent and consistent urban fabric.

Given that the alterations proposed within this application are minor in nature, and relate to the enhancement of the existing shopfront, it is considered that they are in line with this guidance.

Design and Access Statement

This letter serves as a proportionate Design and Access Statement. It will explore the key design and access influences on the proposed development, namely its use, layout, amount (density, scale and massing), appearance and access.

Use

The present use fall under Class E and the proposed coffee shop is also with this use class categorisation. The proposed use of the premises is therefore considered appropriate. It will complement the wider retail provision within Haywards Heath. It is felt than the nature of the Coffee #1 operation will support the vitality and viability of the centre.

Layout

The proposed coffee shop will make no changes to the existing layout of the application site.

Amount

There will be no change to the amount of development in terms of density, scale and massing.

Appearance

The appearance of the application site will be altered but the changes will be kept to a minimum and relate to the repainting of the shopfront in a muted dark green matt colour as well as repairs and improvements to the windows and door. The design is reflective of the high quality, bespoke nature of Coffee #1's approach, which seeks to reflect each individual building in a sensitive and careful manner and aims to elevate its existing and original features.

The proposed paint will be coloured in Dulux 30GG 07/053 and RAL 6012.

It is considered that the minor elevation alterations represent an overall improvement to the appearance of the building.

Summary and conclusion

The proposed alterations to the Shopfront at 32-36 South Road are minimal in scope and relate to a change in the external colour scheme and replacement door as well as the introduction of new air conditioning units. This will enable the refurbishment of the site and allow its occupation by an appropriate town centre use. It will create interest and activity through the reuse of a currently vacant building.

The assessment of design and access matters demonstrate how the proposal will be a sympathetic and response development of the existing shopfront that will add vitality and viability to this part of the town centre, while meeting

Yours faithfully,

