WALSINGHAM PLANNING
SPECIALIST PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS
Bourne House, Cores End Road, Bourne End, Bucks SL8 5AR
T 01628 532244 F 01628 532255 E bourne.end@walsingplan.co.uk
www.walsinghamplanning.co.uk

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

To support a planning application for change of use from Class D2 gym to mixed Class A1/A3 Costa Coffee shop, raised decked outside seating area with fixed barriers, new front entrance door, new rear access door and two replacement air conditioning units; and an advertisement consent application for one internally illuminated fascia sign (letters only) and one internally illuminated projecting sign at:

27 London Road
Cowplain
Waterlooville
PO8 8DF

June 2016

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Walsingham Planning has been instructed by Premier Coffee Ltd to submit a planning application to change the use of 27 London Road in Cowplain from a Class D2 gym to mixed Class A1/A3 use to accommodate a Costa Coffee shop. An advertisement application for new signage has also been submitted.

1.2 The applicants will operate the premises as a franchise from Costa Coffee. The applicants are running a small business and should not be mistaken for Costa itself, which is part of the Whitbread Group plc.

1.3 This statement will describe the site and surroundings, document the site's planning history and assess the proposals against relevant planning policy and the National Planning Policy Framework. A Design and Access Statement is included.

1.4 It is concluded that the proposal would support the function of Cowplain District Centre by sustaining and enhancing its vitality and viability, which is the objective of local and national policies, and would be suitable in all other respects. A recommendation for approval is therefore appropriate.

2 SITE & SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application property is the ground floor of a two-storey terrace building along the west side of London Road. The building is vacant, having previously been in use as a Class D2 gym.

Front (east) elevation of 27 London Road, Cowplain

2.2 The unit has an existing aluminium shopfront with two glazed panels above stallrisers and a double entrance door with glazed side panels. There are shutters over the entrance. The unit benefits from a level access and wide walkway to the front.

2.3 The rear elevation of the unit faces Silvester Road. It includes an open staircase fire escape for the neighbouring flats (Silvester House), a ground floor entrance door and first floor windows. Between the unit and Silvester Road is a private car park and outbuilding.

Rear (west) elevation

2.4 Four air conditioning units are located at first floor level on the building's south elevation and one air conditioning unit is located at ground level on the building's rear (west) elevation underneath the staircase.

South elevation

2.5 The unit is located on the west side of London Road in Cowplain District Centre. To the north is a terrace of two storey buildings occupied by shops and services which make up the District Centre. Some of the first floors of the buildings have been converted to residential flats. To the south is a single storey beauty salon (23 London Road) followed by a three storey building (Silvester House) occupied by a carpet shop at ground floor level with residential flats above.

Cowplain District Centre looking north along London Road

Cowplain District Centre looking south along London Road

2.6 The unit's district centre location ensures easy access on foot, by bicycle and on public transport. Bus stops, car and cycle parking are located within a short walk from the unit, including short stay on-street car parking in front of the shopping parade along London Road.

2.7 The property does not lie within a conservation area and is not listed. It is not located within a floodplain.

Cowplain District Centre

Planning History

2.8 In 2005, planning permission (05/61745/001) was granted for the change of use of the unit from a Class A1 Post Office to a Class D2 women's gym. Advertisement consent (05/61745/002) was also granted at the same time for a projecting sign and externally illuminated fascia sign.

2.9 In February 2016, planning permission (APP/16/00149) was granted for the change of use and subdivision of the ground floor to provide two Class A1 retail units and the change of use of the first floor to provide 3 x one bed flats. A single storey rear

extension to accommodate cycle and refuse storage were also permitted. This permission is yet to be implemented.

3 THE PROPOSAL

Costa Coffee

3.1 Costa Coffee started in 1971 and has its own roastery in London. The care and special attention that goes into selecting, preparing and roasting their beans is what makes the Costa Coffee distinctive and so popular. All stores have specially trained staff so that customers can enjoy a good product at its best.

3.2 Costa Coffee is the largest chain of branded coffee shops in the UK with over 1,800 outlets. Costa Coffee is Rainforest Alliance certified.

3.3 Costa Coffee has entered into franchise agreements with a limited number of small companies and individuals which has allowed Costa to continue its expansion into more towns and cities across the country. One of those agreements is with Premier Coffee Ltd, the applicants.

3.4 Costa Coffee has been voted “Best Coffee Chain by Customers”. A survey of thousands of customers using Costa Coffee, Starbucks, Caffè Nero and Coffee Republic was undertaken. This researched why customers were there, who they were there with, what they were buying and how they rate the store. The survey also gained an understanding of the customer’s experience inside the store. Costa Coffee came out top.

3.5 Costa Coffee has a bespoke training and development programme called the ‘Whitbread Model’, which is the first and largest employer led programme of its kind in the hospitality industry. The programme is a 6 month apprenticeship and available to all employees.

The Operation

3.6 The unit would sell coffee and other hot and cold drinks, sandwiches, filled rolls, cakes, pastries, coffee beans, cafetieres, percolators, coffee cups and mugs, and other related products. There would be retail display units and a food server/counter, together with inside and outside seating.

3.7 There would be no cooking facilities at the coffee shop, though some sandwiches can be toasted on request. All sandwiches and cakes are prepared and packaged off-site and would be delivered to the unit each morning. As there would be no cooking on-site, the proposal does not give rise to any nuisance or disturbance from cooking odours. There is no kitchen extract in the conventional sense, as there is no kitchen.

3.8 All customers choose goods from the same range, and will choose whether to consume their goods on or off the premises. Either way, it will be the same product. There is no waiter service.

Mixed Use

3.9 The proposal is for a mixed A1/A3 use coffee shop. The mixed class A1/A3 approach to branded coffee shops has been accepted across the country and many appeals relating to this type of use have concentrated upon the nature of such uses and their role in the high street.

3.10 There would be retail display units and a prominent counter/server from which these goods are sold. This represents a strong A1 use and these elements of the operation are located towards the front of the store. The A3 element allows for certain customers, purchasing exactly the same range, to consume the goods on the premises.

3.11 On this basis, planning permission is sought for change of use to mixed A1/A3 use. There would be a mixture of A1 and A3 activities with customers purchasing an item to either take away or consume on the premises. These activities are very closely related, making use of exactly the same products sold in the same way over the same sales counter. Whether the sale amounts to an A1 or an A3 activity will depend solely on the customer's choice to either sit down or walk out of the door. These different activities are inseparably linked and would take place within the same planning unit.

3.12 Local planning authorities have previously accepted the mixed Class A1/A3 approach to a coffee shop with a view that they contribute to the commercial success of central shopping areas.

4 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Design

4.1 The proposal is for the change of use of 155sqm of floor area from Class D2 to Class A1/A3 to accommodate a coffee shop, along with a raised deck outside seating area with fixed barriers, new front entrance door, two replacement air conditioning units and a previously approved new rear door. Advertisement consent is also sought for one internally illuminated fascia sign (letters only) and one internally illuminated projecting sign.

4.2 The existing shopfront would be refreshed and painted Umbra Grey (RAL 7022). This does not require planning permission.

27 London Road's existing shopfront

4.3 A new signage scheme is proposed. This would take the form of an internally halo illuminated (letters only) replacement fascia signs and one internally halo illuminated projecting sign. These would also be positioned on the existing fascias which would be painted Umbra Grey and would provide an attractive, unified approach. The existing trough lights would be removed.

4.4 Outside seating is proposed in front of the unit and the area would be marked out by fixed barriers, comprising stainless steel posts and aluminium panels. Tables and chairs would be stored in the coffee shop overnight. The seating area would be located on new timber decking due to the slope which runs across part of the unit. The six existing metal posts shown in the photograph below would be removed.

Proposed seating area to the front of the unit

4.5 Two of the four existing air conditioning units on the building's south elevation would be removed. These would be replaced at ground level on the building's rear elevation. Technical details of the units are submitted as part of the application. A new rear access door (already approved under planning permission APP/16/00149) for the flats above would also be introduced.

4.6 Internally, the entrance and retail counter is proposed towards the left side of the unit, with the majority of seating on the right side. Two toilets (including one disabled) and back of house area are proposed at the rear.

Access

4.7 Costa believes that it is not merely physical barriers that can cause difficulties for customers. Employees receive disability awareness sessions as part of their basic training, to understand the challenges customers with disabilities may face, and to ensure that their needs are met.

4.8 The unit's district centre location ensures easy access for a wide customer base by foot, by bicycle and on public transport. There is short and long stay car parking within the centre, including disabled bays.

4.9 Access to the unit is via the existing level access from a well maintained walkway. The store's layout has been carefully considered in order to accommodate the needs of those who have a physical impairment. A disabled toilet is provided at ground floor level. Other facilities provided to assist customers include:

- Assistance dogs welcome
- Assisted wheelchair users welcome
- Non assisted wheelchair access
- Assistance for the mobility impaired
- Facilities for the hearing impaired
- Induction Loop available
- Staff assistance
- Space for parents with pushchairs
- Assistance for the visually impaired or the blind

5 PLANNING POLICY

The Development Plan

5.1 The Development Plan consists of policies within the recently adopted Havant Core Strategy (2011) and Allocations (2014) documents. Cowplain is designated as a District Centre and the site lies within the Centre's Primary Shopping Frontage. Relevant policies from the Local Plan are summarised below:

5.2 Policy CS4 – Planning permission will be granted for appropriate town centre development which encourages high quality, mixed-use development in designated centres that retain active ground floor frontages. It seeks to promote the vitality and viability of identified centres.

5.3 Policy CS16 - Planning permission will be granted for development that is designed to a high standard, which helps to create places where people want to live, work and relax. Development should respect local context and maximise opportunities for mixed use developments in District Centres.

5.4 Policy DM5 – Planning permission will only be granted for A3 uses where:

- Measures are in place to mitigate the effect on nearby properties from the preparation of hot food and do not detract from the appearance of the building and surrounding area;
- Adequate provision for the disposal, storage and collection of waste are in place;
- There would be no adverse impact on parking or traffic movement;
- The development would not cause unacceptable disturbance to the occupiers of nearby residential properties; and
- Any marketing requirements are met.

5.5 Policy AL3 – Planning permission will be granted for main town centre uses within District Centres that:

- Contribute to their vitality and viability;
- Promote and enhance the shopping area of the Centre;

- Retain at least 50% of the units in an unbroken run of primary frontage as A1 use (exceptions may be made if more than 25% of units in the run are vacant);
- Generate pedestrian activity by opening during the day to visiting members of public; and
- Provide a shopfront with a well-designed and appropriate window display.

The supporting text to the policy recognises the important role that cafes play in centres and how they complement the retail offer.

5.6 Policy DM21 – Shopfronts, signs and advertisements will be required to be of an appropriate size, scale and design to the character of the building and its surrounding area. They should result in clutter or impact on public safety. Illumination should not result in significant levels of light pollution and be detrimental to the amenity of the local area. Individually illuminated letters are preferable to entirely illuminated signs.

National Planning Policy Framework

5.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and sets out the Government's aims for achieving sustainable development. Paragraph 14 states that where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole. Paragraph 17 sets out the core planning principles that underpin the planning system, including to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development and to encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed.

5.8 Part 1 states the Government's commitment to securing economic growth and places significant weight on the need to create jobs and prosperity through the planning system.

5.9 Part 2 recognises the need to provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer to ensure the vitality and viability of town centres.

5.10 Part 7 promotes good design as a key aspect of sustainable development. New development should:

- Function well and add to the overall quality of the area;
- Establish a strong sense of place to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development;
- Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials;
- Create safe and accessible environments; and
- Be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

5.11 Part 8 promotes planning decisions which offer opportunities for members of the community to meet.

5.12 Paragraphs 186 and 187 state that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development, working proactively with applicants, looking for solutions rather than problems and seeking to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

6 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL

Principle of Change of Use

6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes sustainable economic development through focussing main town centre uses in existing centres. The document places substantial weight on re-using sustainably located buildings and land, securing economic growth and creating jobs and prosperity through the planning system. The proposed development would support these aims by bringing the building back into gainful use, adding an attractive new coffee shop to Cowplain District Centre and providing local employment. This is exactly the type of development that the Council should be supporting in light of the NPPF.

6.2 Coffee shops should be recognised for the positive role that they play in town and village centres and differentiating the High Street shopping experience with its opportunities for social interaction from online shopping. The future of district centres such as Cowplain is dependent on a flexible approach to retail planning which caters for all complementary district centre needs and not just pure retail uses. The proposal would draw members of the public into the centre, increase ‘dwell time’, add to the interest, vitality and viability of this part of the centre and have a complementary relationship with other shops and services in Cowplain. It is the nature of coffee shops to be part of linked trips to existing shops and services in centres. The Local Plan recognises the important role that cafes can have in District Centres and how they can complement the retail offer.

6.3 Coffee shops are now regarded as part of the usual town centre amenities used by visitors, shoppers, residents and local workers. They are used to purchase sandwiches, cakes, hot cups of coffee (and other drinks), all to take away, together with other retail items, as well as providing somewhere to sit down and consume such products.

6.4 As the unit lies within Cowplain’s Primary Shopping Frontage and an element of Class A3 use is proposed, the tests within policies DM5 and AL3 apply. Policy DM5 sets out criteria to which proposed A3 uses must meet to be considered acceptable. I address

each of these criteria in turn. There will be no cooking on the premises, other than the optional toasting of sandwiches. Refuse and recycling would be stored to the rear of the unit until collected by a private contractor. The proposal does not therefore give rise to any nuisance or disturbance from cooking odours and makes adequate provision for waste.

6.5 The unit's district centre location ensures easy access on foot, by bicycle and on public transport for both staff and customers. There is on-street short stay car parking along the London Road and two longer stay car parks to the rear of the district centre within walking distance. The proposed use requires one or two deliveries per day. Deliveries would be timed to minimise any disturbance or inconvenience to other occupiers. The proposed use would therefore have no adverse impact on the safety and convenience of the highway.

6.6 It is understood that the unit has been vacant for approximately eight months. All the criteria within Policy DM5 are therefore met.

6.7 Policy AL3 addresses Use Class A1 presence and vitality and viability within Primary Shopping Frontages. It is considered that the change of use of the ground floor unit from Class D2 to Class A1/A3 would contribute to the aims of the policy. The proposal would include the introduction of a significant proportion of A1 use. Costa Coffee holds the view that its coffee shops contribute more to the vitality and viability of a centre than many retailers. They encourage people to spend their time and money in the High Street instead of other spending outlets. Linked spending, increased footfall and dwell time are all associated with the introduction of coffee shops in district centres such as Cowplain.

6.8 The criteria within Policy AL3 also requires the retention of at least 50% of the units in an unbroken run of primary frontage as A1 use. The unbroken frontage runs from Silvester House to 35 London Road. The existing use of the unit is D2 and the introduction of a mixed Class A1/A3 use would increase its Class A1 occupancy rate back up to 50%, as shown by the following table:

Address	Use Class Existing	Use Class Proposed
Carpet News Ltd, 1-17 Silvester House	A1 (shop)	A1 (shop)
Tattoo Inc & Keely's Beauty, 23 London Road	Sui Generis (tattoo parlour/beauty salon)	Sui Generis (tattoo parlour/beauty salon)
Vacant, 27 London Road	***D2 (gym)***	***A1/A3 (coffee shop)***
Mark Allen Hairdressers, 29 London Road	A1 (hairdresser)	A1 (hairdresser)
Cowplain Kebab House, 29a London Road	A5 (takeaway)	A5 (takeaway)
J&D Nail Studio, 31 London Road	A1/Sui Generis (shop and nail bar)	A1/Sui Generis (shop and nail bar)
Lidl, 33 London Road	A1 (shop)	A1 (shop)
Banks Fish & Chips, 35 London Road	A5 (takeaway)	A5 (takeaway)
Number of A1 units	3.5 out of 8	4 out of 8
% of A1 units	**43.75%**	**50%**

(Retail survey carried out June 2016)

6.9 The proposal introduces a new A1 unit into Cowplain's Primary Shopping Frontage. The proposal would add to the interest, vitality and viability of this part of the centre in and have a complementary relationship with other shops and services. The future of centres such as Cowplain is dependent on a flexible approach to retail planning which caters for all complementary district centre needs and not just pure retail uses. The prolonged vacancy period of the unit should also be borne in mind. Its occupancy would create an active shopfront which would enhance the shopping area.

6.10 Whilst it is acknowledged that planning permission has already been granted (APP/16/00149) for the unit to subdivide and operate as two pure A1 uses, it is unknown how long these would take to occupy the unit. Premier Coffee Ltd, the applicant of this application, would start works and occupy the unit as soon as permission is granted.

6.11 The benefits of the scheme are significant: re-use of a vacant sustainably located existing building; provision of local employment; active frontage; financial investment in the premises; customer attraction; establishment of a popular use which will bring linked benefits to other town centre operators; and improved customer choice. The coffee shop use would bring considerable benefits to the district centre in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF. The NPPF places significant weight on economic

development and a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It would support economic development, reuse land that has been previously developed and create jobs and prosperity. There are no adverse impacts associated with the coffee shop use which would outweigh these significant benefits.

Design

6.12 The proposals includes the making good and repainting of the shopfront, the provision of attractive, high quality new adverts and an area of outdoor seating with high quality fixed barriers to enhance the unit's active frontage. The proposed fascia sign and projecting sign only require advert consent due to their height from the ground. The signs are of an appropriate size and do not impair highway safety. The proposed materials, colours and illumination sit comfortably within the streetscene. The advertisements are in accordance with Policy DM21 of the Local Plan and Part 7 of the NPPF. The proposed signage would be consistent with what is already in the centre and provides an opportunity to improve the appearance of the unit to the benefit of the centre.

Operational Considerations

6.13 The unit's district centre location ensures easy access on foot, by bicycle and on public transport for both staff and customers. Access is via a double door and level entrance and facilities and assistance will be provided for wheelchair users. There is on and off-street car parking within walking distance of the unit and cycle parking along London Road. The proposed opening hours are 7am to 6pm Monday to Saturday and 8am to 5pm on Sundays.

6.14 The proposed use requires one or two deliveries per day. Deliveries would be via the rear entrance and timed to minimise any disturbance or inconvenience to nearby occupiers. Refuse and recycling would be stored, as existing, at the rear of the unit and collected by a private contractor. The proposed use would have no adverse impact on the safety and convenience of the highway and makes adequate provision for waste.

6.15 As previously stated, there would be no cooking on the premises. As there would be no cooking on-site, the proposal does not give rise to any nuisance or disturbance from cooking odours. It is therefore concluded that there would be no adverse impacts on neighbours.

6.16 Two small air conditioning units are proposed at ground floor level to the rear of the building to replace two of the existing four units located on the building's side (south) elevation. The relocation of the units is considered to improve the amenity of occupiers of nearby flats.

6.17 A separate rear access door to the approved flats above is also proposed. This has already been approved as part of planning permission APP/16/00149.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Planning permission is sought for the use of the application premises as a Costa Coffee shop (mixed A1/A3 use).

7.2 A Costa Coffee in this location would bring the property back into active use following an extended period of vacancy, create a popular new use in the district centre, supporting its vitality and viability and bringing associated economic benefits through linked spending in the surrounding area. It would increase A1 presence within the centre.

7.3 Costa Coffee is a compatible and complementary use with the existing shops and services in the centre, providing a use which shoppers have come to expect to be available.

7.4 The proposed alterations to the shopfront and signage will improve the appearance of the building and enhance the character and appearance of the district centre. The coffee shop will be carefully managed in order to be a ‘good neighbour’.

7.5 The proposal will create employment opportunities for local people.

7.6 The proposed change of use complies with the provisions of the Development Plan and the NPPF. A recommendation for approval is therefore appropriate.