

Supporting Statement for developing the existing Under-croft North Street Arcade, Havant, Hampshire

Meeting with Sally Smith - Havant Borough Council
Re Applications Numbers: 14/01036, 14/01037

Date 22 December 2015

Present:

Sally Smith - HBC

Steve Tarling - Grastar

Graham Perrin - Grastar

Matthew Sewell - Spacely

Shawn Lambert - PWP Architects



The following commentary has been prepared in support of the application with reference to the development and utilisation of the external under-croft. Grastar, from the onset, in their liaison with Havant Borough Council and own companies vision, upheld that the under-croft is intrinsic to the success of this new restaurant venture. In previous discussion with the Local Authority (pre planning meeting with Rachel McMurray and the officer (now retired) responsible for economic diversity) the use of this space was raised and felt to be supported by the Council. The reasons to use the space are summarised as:

USP

There is nowhere in Havant where external covered seating is available for the enjoyment of food and drink. There are coffee shops and cafes in The Meridian Centre but these do not benefit from al-fresco dining, and other high street coffee shops do not benefit from the cover and shade afforded by the under-croft at the arcade.

The under-croft represents a great marketing proposition to pull people to a destination within a close proximity to the pedestrian centre offering more to the shoppers of Havant than just a coffee stop.

The restaurant is seen as a quality destination and something that is lacking in Havant. As such this venture aims to attract a quality customer for a particular experience and will draw people to the area helping drive a 'night time economy' that Havant local authority is keen to promote.

The restaurant is close to the train and bus stations as well as being opposite a large car park. Access to the restaurant is convenient which will add to its attraction.

Viability

The space is existing and needs no further restructuring... only enclosure and protection from the elements. The existing columns in the under-croft define the boundaries and no further 'construction' work is required.

Grastar restaurant is paying rent for the land within this part of the under-croft and intend to see its use as a more valuable commodity than pavement.

Late night

The under-croft will extend the useful hours of daily operation and evening flexibility.

The restaurant is sited on a pedestrian route to the train station and North Havant from the Town Centre. The restaurant is also close to nearby public houses and Indian restaurants whose customers will pass by.

The proposed use of planters as screens and discreet wind breaks will provide a degree of protection from the elements, as well as a sense of safety and security needed for the restaurant customers using this space.

Uplift

The use alone of this external space will add interest to this area rather than its current vacant use. A dynamic sense of place and purpose as a venue if successful will add a hustle and chic to this area of Havant.

Soften

The use of planters and structured plants will help to soften the street elevation. These will be structural and well placed softening the concrete areas and adding a natural enhancement to the area.

The planters need to be pleasing to look at as well as robust and functional. The planters will need to be high enough to provide protection from the elements as well as provide a degree of privacy from on-lookers and will have clear wind breaks within to protect customers from the high winds common in this area.

CCTV

It is proposed to provide CCTV surveillance to this area enhancing existing policies on crime reduction/prevention in the area.

Canopy

The existing soffits and fascias have already been repaired, reclad, and redecorated to provide a further enhancement to the tired street elevation. Following the installation of new signage and feature lighting the intention will be to significantly improve the feel of the building.

Asbestos

Grastar, working in collaboration with their landlord, have removed the entire soffit of the under-croft which was clad in an asbestos board. As part of the ongoing commitment and improvement to the area it is proposed to re-clad the soffit in an insulated self finish lining board.

New Access

The access door to the restaurant has been deliberately sited within the arcade and will draw customers into the space and enclosure of the arcade. It is thought that the increased footfall into the arcade will be beneficial to the neighbouring businesses within giving them increased exposure.

Longer term intention

Grastar discussed the intention to dress up the internal arcade. Further landscaping options were being considered, as well as annual Christmas trees etc, carol singers etc,, to provide a focus and a sense of ownership to the businesses fronting the arcade.

Tenure

The area of the under-croft in question is not public right of way or pavement and is currently within the rental tenure of Grastar. The restaurant do not foresee pedestrian access crossing this part of the site even if the under-croft concept is not supported.