

APP/14/01036 (c/u) and /01037 (advert)
1 – 3 North Street Arcade, Havant

Background

This property is situated on a prominent corner site just south of the station. It comprises part of a relatively modern mixed commercial development (commercial/residential). It lies outside but immediately adjacent to St Faiths conservation area. North Street is one of the key routes to the town centre.

Assessment

The prominence of the site means that changes to the current arrangement could have a material impact on the conservation area from which it is viewed. This is the basis on which I am responding.

A restaurant on this site with outside seating has the potential to add to the vibrancy of the local area and therefore in principle is to be supported. The majority of the changes to the appearance of the building (APP/14/01036) are positive.

- a) Extension to commercial area and new shopfront.
No details of materials provided but new shopfront design poses no particular concern, potential enhancement. I feel the creation of a sitting out area within the first bay framed by the column has potential but the landtake is a concern coupled with the method of screening. In the proposals the shopfront screen is extended to enclose this bay on the street frontage. A more modest sitting out area with minimalist demarcation e.g. low planter or light barrier (no substantial front screen) would be supported. My concern is to retain the general openness of the arcade so it remains enticing to the pedestrian to walk into. Whatever we allow here would set a precedent for something similar on the opposing side.
- b) The Achilles heel of restaurants is to find a suitable mechanism for dealing with air handling equipment, both to address environmental health concerns (noise/fumes) and visual appearance. Commercial ducting for kitchen fume extraction is ugly. It is not uncommon for restaurants also to want air conditioning. This case very much proves the point. The proposal as illustrated on drawing 36708_02-02 is includes substantial ducting for air intake and outtake. The current elevation to Prince George Street is not very elegant but this is no reason to make it substantially worse. The ducting shown would be hideous. The mechanism for addressing the air handling needs to be reconsidered to address the visual impact. Given the paucity of the present elevation there may be a mechanism for addressing this by cloaking the equipment in well designed extension. Makeshift boxing in of the flues will not resolve the issue. This aspect of the application gives me the chief cause for concern and is currently unacceptable. The visual impact close-to and more distant needs to be more carefully considered and resolved.

Adverts (APP/14/01037)

Limited information provided on proposed signs – which where illuminated are to be externally lit. Two fascia signs fine in principle. Projecting sign OK. Question need for and size of sign board on Prince George Street elevation and have some reservations about choice of materials - acrylic base plastic finish in terms of shiny appearance. Accept durability will be an issue

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