

St Ediths
Bratton Clovelly
Okehampton
Devon EX20 4JW

Tel: 01837 871366
Web: planningdevon.co.uk
Email: info@planningdevon.co.uk

Chartered Town Planner
Established 2003

Town and Country Planning Planning Statement

on behalf of XXXX

XXXX
XXXX
XXXX
XXXX

Full planning application for change of use
from A1 (retail) to A3 (café)

XXXX

1.0	<p>PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Full planning permission is sought for the change of use of the existing A1 (retail) unit to A3 (café) use at XXXX. The proposed café, to be known as XXXX, will be an upmarket “coffee house” serving refreshments and light meals.</p>
2.0	<p>SITE, SITUATION AND CONTEXT</p> <p>The site is within the Guildhall Shopping Centre, which forms part of the primary shopping frontage of the city centre. No XX forms part of a small frontage of 10 premises (Nos 12-23) accessed from Queen Street. These premises occupy 14 small units and are surrounded by several large anchor stores, including W H Smith, Sports World, Marks and Spencer and Mothercare. The area therefore exhibits a strong retail character, with a limited number of small units providing A3 food and drink facilities.</p>
3.0	<p>PLANNING HISTORY</p> <p>None relevant to this proposal.</p>
4.0	<p>PLANNING POLICY</p> <p>The statutory development plan policies are given in the adopted Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011. These policies have been saved under a Direction from the Secretary of State.</p> <p>Policy S5 will permit food and drink uses in the city centre, provided that they comply with Policy S3 and no harm is caused in terms of such matters as residential amenity, the potential for public disorder and the perceived attractiveness of the centre.</p> <p>Policy S3 will not permit the change of use of ground floor retail premises within the primary and secondary shopping areas if it would harm the vitality and viability of the centre. In the case of proposals for food and drink uses, no harm is likely to be caused provided that at least 50% of the premises in the same frontage are retained in retail use.</p>
5.0	<p>STATEMENT OF CASE</p> <p>The Local Plan seeks to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the city centre. The Local Plan recognises that the strength of the city centre lies in its ability to provide a complete range of activities for shopping, work, culture, leisure and relaxation. Cafés are identified as an important element of a healthy shopping centre and can contribute to the vitality and tourist appeal of the area. Many visitors will judge the quality of the centre on the</p>

availability and quality of food and drink establishments as part of the range of facilities they are seeking.

This proposal for an upmarket “coffee house” fully accords with the objectives and aspirations of the Local Plan. The development will make a significant positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the shopping centre, providing a high quality facility for shoppers, workers, residents and tourist visitors.

The immediate shopping frontage is identified in the plan extract below (Figure 1) as comprising unit Nos 12-23. A survey of these units was carried out on 9 January 2009. At present there is only one A3 use (No 12 Piazza coffee shop), corresponding to 10% of the 10 premises within the shopping frontage, with the remaining 90% in retail use. Following the implementation of this proposal, 80% of the premises would be retained in retail use. This far exceeds the 50% threshold and therefore complies with Policy S3.

It is acknowledge that the existing coffee shop at No 12 occupies a large triple unit. However, even if No 12 is treated as a three units, only 21% of the existing units are in non-retail use. The proposed change of use likewise affects a double unit. However, even if No 12 is treated as two units, only 36% of the units would be in non-retail use following the implementation of this proposal. This level still falls below the 50% threshold and the proposal therefore complies with Policy S3.

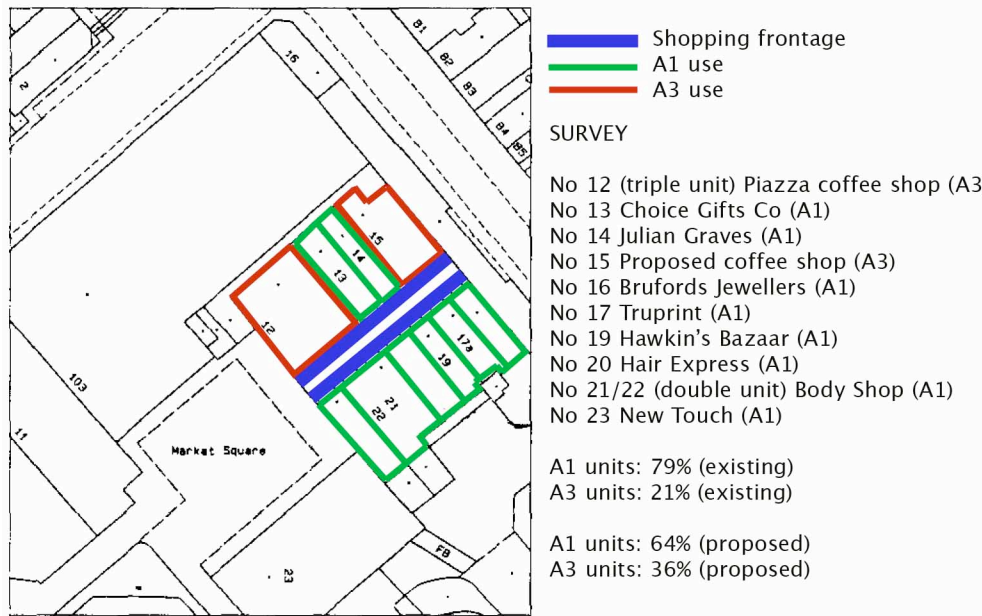


Figure 1: Shopping Frontage Survey (carried out 9 Jan 2009)

Furthermore, none of the large anchor stores would be affected by this proposal. The area would therefore retain its primary retail character and function and we do not consider that the proposed minor change of use would in any way harm the vitality and viability of the shopping centre. On the contrary, we see the proposed café as a complementary use to the principal shopping function.

The proposed cafe will not provide takeaway fast food. It is therefore not considered that such a use would cause any significant adverse effects in terms of residential amenity or public disorder. We believe the proposal will enhance the attractiveness of the centre by ensuring that a diverse range of high quality facilities is provided. As such, the proposal fully complies with Policy S5.

6.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

The proposed change of use complies with the relevant development plan policies and will help to maintain the vitality and viability of the shopping centre by enhancing the range and quality of facilities on offer. No other significant harm would be caused in terms of the amenities of the area. The local planning authority is therefore asked to support the proposal and grant planning permission accordingly.