

Dear Sir/Madam,

20260674

I am writing as a local resident to express my concerns about the proposed changes to the shop front of the former charity shop at 161 Windmill Street, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 1AH, which I understand is now intended to become a hot-food takeaway.

The existing building and shop front are an attractive feature of our high street. In my view, the frontage contributes positively to the character and appearance of the town and is one of the features that gives this part of the high street its identity. It would be a great shame to lose this character through alterations that are primarily designed around the requirements of a takeaway business.

I understand that the building may have historic or architectural importance, and I believe particular care should be taken to ensure that any alterations respect the original character and appearance of the building. A traditional and attractive shop front should not be unnecessarily replaced or substantially altered where it can continue to serve a useful commercial purpose.

I am particularly concerned that a takeaway-style frontage, including potentially new signage, lighting, extraction equipment, shutters or other external alterations, could have a detrimental effect on the appearance of the building and the wider high street. Individually these changes may appear relatively minor, but collectively they can have a significant impact on the character of an older town centre.

The high street benefits from retaining buildings and shop fronts that reflect its history and local character. Once original or sympathetic features have been removed, they can be extremely difficult to restore. I therefore believe that any proposal should give considerable weight to retaining the existing shop front and ensuring that any necessary alterations are sympathetic to the building and surrounding streetscape.

I would respectfully ask the Council to carefully consider:

- The architectural and historic character of the existing building and shop front;
- The effect of the proposed alterations on the character and appearance of the high street;
- Whether the existing shop front can be retained and adapted rather than replaced;
- The appearance and potential impact of any new signage, lighting, shutters or other external equipment;
- The potential impact of takeaway-related extraction equipment and other external installations;
- The cumulative effect that changes of this kind could have on the character of Windmill Street and Gravesend town centre.

I fully appreciate that shops and businesses need to adapt and that the high street needs to remain commercially viable. However, I believe this can be achieved without unnecessarily compromising attractive historic buildings and the character of the area.

I therefore ask the Council to give careful consideration to the proposed alterations under planning application 20260674 and, where possible, require the existing shop front and its important architectural features to be retained.

I would also ask the Council to ensure that any alterations associated with the proposed takeaway use are appropriate to the existing building and do not adversely affect the appearance and character of Windmill Street.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns.

Yours faithfully,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.