

# Delegated Report

## Planning Application

**Planning Application No:** 20230861

**Location:** 7 Queen Street Gravesend Kent DA12 2EQ

**Description:** Retention of aluminium shop front.

**Applicant:** Mr A Yazdi

**Site Visit Date:** 19/01/2024

### Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application form;
- Drawing no. A1/101 – Shop Front Existing and Proposed;
- Drawing no. A1/102 – Block Plan;
- Heritage Statement.

### Relevant Planning History

| Reference | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Decision  | Decision Date |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| 20210130  | Application for change of use of ground floor from retail (Use Class E(a) to hot food-takeaway (sui generis), installation of ventilation/extraction ducting and relocation of external stairs to the rear. | Permitted | 11.05.2021    |
| 19840425  | Installation of a new window frame and door into existing shop front                                                                                                                                        | Permitted | 24.07.1984    |

### Development Plan

#### Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS05 – Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles
- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

#### Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas
- TC9 - Shopfronts

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) sets out that policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

### **Other material considerations**

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended, states that with respect to buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

#### National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 4 – Decision-making
- Section 7 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

#### Supplementary Planning Guidance

- High Street & Queen Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2009)
- Management Plan Gravesend Town Centre Conservation Areas (2009)
- Shopfront design sheets 1-6 (2020)

### **Consultations, Publicity and Representations**

#### Consultees

##### No response from:

- GBC Conservation Officer

#### Neighbouring properties

53 surrounding properties were consulted plus site and press notice – overall consultation expiry date was 08.01.2024 and no responses were received.

### **Officer's Analysis**

The application site consists of a two storey building situated on the western side of Queen Street. The building has a commercial unit at ground floor which is currently in use as a pizza takeaway.

The building is situated within the High Street & Queen Street Conservation Area, in Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area and is secondary shopping frontage.

The proposal is for retention of the aluminium shopfront which has been installed in the building.

The principle consideration is the impact of the development on the character and appearance of the High Street and Queen Street Conservation Area.

The application building is a traditional brick building (the bricks have been painted white on the upper storey) with a decorative cornice with timber sash windows and recessed brick panel above.



It is in a row of four semi-detached two storey 19<sup>th</sup> century former houses. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Queen Street became more of an established commercial street and the buildings in Queen Street have been rebuilt and altered many times leading to a variety of architectural styles and forms although a number of buildings retain their early 19<sup>th</sup> century features from the first floor upwards. There have been many modern shopfronts installed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century which have altered the appearance of the street but it still retains a strong 19<sup>th</sup> character.

Based on an assessment of the area including the High Street & Queen Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal, notwithstanding that there has been much unsympathetic alteration of many of the buildings and many period shopfronts have been removed or altered, the southern part of Queen Street still retains a 19<sup>th</sup> character particularly at first floor level and above and due to the narrowness of the street which is lined with rows of predominantly two to three storey buildings mostly one or two bays wide.

No. 7 is one of the traditional buildings within the southern part of Queen Street. Although in Queen Street there are a number of buildings which have unsympathetic shopfronts, it is noted that there are still some which retain a traditional timber shopfront, and in this section of Queen Street where the application building the other adjoining semi-detached building to the north no. 9 King Street (excluding the plastic door) and then the other pair of semi-detached detached buildings at nos. 11 & 13 beyond that all have timber period shopfronts. Before the unauthorised shopfront at no. 7 Queen Street was installed therefore, there was a run of four timber period shopfronts in this part of Queen Street alone.

As stated, it is appreciated that there are a number shopfronts in the vicinity of no. 7 which fail to conform to traditional designs on account of their proportions and materials. Nevertheless, overall the traditional buildings in the Conservation Area and the remaining traditional shopfronts provide a high quality streetscape along this southern part of Queen Street which makes a considerable contribution to the character and appearance and significance of the High Street & Queen Street Conservation Area.

From Google Street View it can be seen that the previous shopfront which has been removed was timber with a timber surround and door:



The below is what has been installed:



The pilasters and corbels and lower tiled section below the window remain but the shop frame and door that were timber have been replaced with aluminium. It is considered that the aluminium shop frame and door are a poor substitute for the timber shop frame and door it has replaced. The glossy black aluminium shop frame and door are at odds with the painted timber pilasters and corbels which still remain from the previous timber shopfront resulting in a wholly incongruous and jarring appearance. The previous shopfront had a recessed door whereas in the new shopfront the door is fully flush. The door itself with aluminium frame and large upper and lower sections of glass is unsympathetic when compared to the previous door which was timber with a solid recessed panelled lower section and top glazed section complete with ironmongery. The previous timber shopfront had a cill detail which is a traditional component of a shopfront whereas the new shopfront has no cill and so the bottom section of the frame is just flush. The egg & dart moulding at the top of the shopfront has either at worst been removed or at best has been concealed with the fascia sign that has been applied:

The egg and dart moulding in previous shopfront:



The fascia has concealed the top section of the shop frame therefore with no frame between the top of the shop window and the fascia the predominant feature is the glass window which in combination with the large amount of glazing in the door as discussed above creates for the predominant features of this shopfront to be glossy aluminium and glass. When set against the traditional timber shopfront that pre-existed at no. 7 and other traditional shopfronts that make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area as mentioned earlier, the materials and detailing of the installed shopfront represent a modern and incongruous addition to the host building and the surrounding area. The overall impression is of a 'mash up' a modern, minimalist shopfront but with some historic remnants such as the pilasters and corbels with the whole appearance of the shopfront overall being at odds with the elegant character and appearance of the upper parts of the building.

Consequently, the shopfront by reason of its materials and detailing does not contribute positively to the host building or the significance of the High Street & Queen Street Conservation Area. Moreover, the loss of the pre-existing shopfront has eroded the aesthetic value of the overall building and the contribution it made to the significance of the High Street & Queen Street Conservation Area. Therefore, it is considered that the development has resulted in harm to the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area including the High Street & Queen Street Conservation Area.

It should also be noted that although as stated there are a number of unsympathetic shopfronts, there has actually been positive change in the street where an unsympathetic shopfront at no. 1A Queen Street has been replaced with a traditional timber shopfront under ref. 20170673 as seen below:

Before:



After:



To therefore allow the current proposal which would not preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be at odds with the improvements that have taken place elsewhere in the street such as at no. 1A.

Overall therefore the proposal is contrary firstly to the expectations of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Paragraph 205 of the NPPF (2023) states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Given the localised nature of the impact, the harm to the High Street & Queen Street Conservation Area as a whole would be less than substantial. In such circumstances, paragraph 208 of the NPPF (2023) states that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the development. There is no evidence of any public benefits associated with the development.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CS19 and CS20 (LPCS) and saved Policy TC3 (LPFR) which, amongst other things, require new development to conserve and enhance the character of the area and to protect heritage assets. In addition, it does not comply with Saved Policies TC3 and TC9 (LPFR) which amongst other things expect development to make a positive contribution to a Conservation Area and that the Council will resist development which would result in existing shopfronts or traditional design and materials being lost.

#### Any Other Material Planning Considerations

None.

#### **Conclusion & Recommendation**

The shopfront which has been installed by virtue of its materials and design does not positively contribute to the host building or the significance of the High Street and Queen Street Conservation Area. Furthermore, the loss of the majority of the elements of the pre-existing shopfront has caused harm and with the retention of the pilasters and corbels from the pre-existing shopfront this has led to an awkward juxtaposition of materials and design detailing creating an incongruous and unsympathetic addition to the building. The development has therefore caused harm to the character and appearance of the host building and to the High Street and Queen Street Conservation Area. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies CS19 and CS20 (LPCS), saved Policies TC3 and TC9 (LPFR) and sections 12 & 16 of the NPPF (2023).

(For detailed reasons for refusal and informatives, see draft Decision)

|                      |                         |                     |                                                                                       |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Case Officer:</b> | Ms Rebecca Harrison     | <b>Team Leader:</b> | Miss Faye Hobbs                                                                       |
| <b>Signed:</b>       | <i>Rebecca Harrison</i> | <b>Signed:</b>      |  |
| <b>Dated:</b>        | 22nd January 2024       | <b>Dated:</b>       | 22 January 2024                                                                       |