

**PLANNING  
COMMITTEE**

14th January 2015

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**Planning Application 2014/284/FUL**

**Amalgamate three small adjacent [A1] retail units to a single [A3/A5] fast food eat-in and takeaway food unit.**

**Units 16, 17, 18, Kingfisher Walk, Town Centre, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 4EY**

**Applicant: Kingfisher Shopping Centre  
Expiry Date: 14th January 2015  
Ward: CENTRAL**

**(see additional papers for Site Plan)**

The author of this report is Nina Chana, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 548241 Email: nina.chana@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

**Site Description**

These three units lie on Kingfisher Walk which is on the western side of the Kingfisher Centre near to the Hub Leisure Zone, which includes the cinema and a number of food outlets. Two of the units are currently vacant and the occupiers of the third unit are waiting to be located into an alternative location within the Kingfisher Centre. To either side of these units are those occupied by Bodycare and a health and beauty parlour.

**Proposal Description**

It is proposed to combine the three units and convert them from A1 Retail Use to a single A5 Restaurant and Take Away. The combined area of the three units would provide approximately 222 square metres of space.

The proposed frontage of the units is shown to be plain glazed with an opening the width of a single unit.

**Relevant Policies :**

**Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3:**

ETCR01 Vitality and Viability of the Town Centre  
ETCR05 Protection of the Retail Core  
ETCR12 Class A3 Uses

**Emerging Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4**

Policy 32: Protection of the Retail Core

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**Others:**

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework  
NPPG National Planning Practice Guidance

**Relevant Planning History**

1995/154/FUL	New Shopfront	Granted	23.05.1995
1995/155/ADV	Shop Signs	Granted	23.05.1995

**Consultations**

**Development Plans**

Objection:

'This proposal is for a use which is, in principle, acceptable within the Town Centre. However, the size of the proposed frontage and its location within the retail core conflicts with both adopted and emerging local planning policy which seeks to prevent the loss and dispersal of retail facilities. The submitted information does not demonstrate how the proposal would enhance the vitality and viability of the retail core as it would actually result in the displacement of existing retail occupiers.'

**Town Centre Co-ordinator**

No Objection

**Environmental Health- Food**

No comments received

**Public Consultation Response**

No representations received

**Assessment of Proposal**

The site falls within the retail core as designated in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No 3. Policy E(TCR). 5 of the Local Plan would apply which states that a change of use from Class A1 to A2, A3, A4 and A5 will only be acceptable if the proposed use does not result in a continuous frontage of more than two non-retail units; (units are defined as a shop front width of about 6 metres). The reasoned justification of the policy states that the growth of non- retail units in Town Centres can result in a loss of retail provision and the creation of 'dead' frontages which can fragment and disrupt the appearance of the shopping centre, resulting in further distances to walk between shops, making the area

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less attractive to shoppers and potential investors. The total frontage of the proposal would be approximately 16 metres and would result in the loss of three A1 Retail units. The proposal would conflict with this policy, and as such could be viewed as inappropriate development. Additionally, given the location of these units, this proposal would result in fragmentation of the types uses within the centre.

Allowing too much non retail uses can bring about two key disadvantages:

1. Each non retail use represents the loss of a retail unit for comparison shopping thereby reducing provision
2. A plethora of non-retail uses tend to create "dead" retail frontage and further distances to walk between shops

The proposal for these units does not result in an overall loss of retailing opportunity in the retail core that is within the shopping centre. This is because the businesses currently trading on the application site will be relocated within the primary retail core area, elsewhere within the Kingfisher Shopping Centre. Consequently whilst this proposal does not enhance the retail core in terms of comparison retail offer it does not weaken the opportunity. The applicant has suggested that the units to which they are moving were proving difficult to bring back in to use and this relocation of occupiers could reduce the vacancy rate across the centre as a whole.

The concentration of non-food retail uses in the vicinity of Units 16, 17 and 18 Kingfisher Walk could result in a situation where some shoppers may choose not to visit this part of the centre for retail purposes because the retail offer in this area will be significantly limited. Comparison retail will not be a significant attracter to this area instead it will be the food, leisure, public transport and some car parking. Whilst such attracters are to be welcomed generally in the town centre the concentration of eating establishments is at odds with the retail core policy, which seeks to put such uses within the town centre but not the identified retailing areas.

However, the location would lend itself well to night time activities being promoted in this vicinity with good links to the bus and train station nearby. Therefore, it is very unlikely that the proposed use of these units would make the rest of the shopping centre less attractive to customers or potential investors.

**Conclusion**

The proposal sits at odds with policy however, the site is located within the retail core of the Town Centre and the existing business in Units 16 and 18 have been re-located into units within the retail core which have been empty for a length of time despite being marketed. As such it is unlikely that the proposed use for these units would hinder the vitality and viability of the main shopping centre and re-using a vacant unit would be welcomed in this part of the shopping centre.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:**

- 1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of the grant of this permission.

Reason: - In accordance with the requirements of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2) The proposal shall be carried out as shown on the plans, schedules and other documents listed below:

Location Plan - Drawing Number - A3/1000  
Drawing Number - 24547-KW-U17-LPML

Reason: To make sure the development is carried out exactly as shown on the plans, to ensure that it relates to the area in which it is being built and protects how that area looks, in order to comply with Policy B (BE).13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan Number 3.

**Procedural matters**

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because the application is for a change of use to A3/A5. As such the application falls outside the scheme of delegation to Officers.