



Bath Heritage Watchdog

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APPLICATION NUMBER: 17/02453/FUL

ADDRESS: 24-25 Stall Street

PROPOSAL: Change of use of the building from A1 retail use to A2 financial & professional services use and alterations to the front elevation, including new advertising signage. Front elevation to be fitted out with NatWest brand banking premises including:- Replacement of external shopfront at ground floor level.- Forming level entrance for access for all to comply with the requirements of an essential service provider. Install three external ATMs, one night safe and a letter box.- Install new brand fascia signage up to first floor level only.- Fit-out ground and first floor interior with new retail banking specification in line with national framework roll out programme.- Fit-out remaining first floor area and seconds floor with new office space.- Install new external air handling units to the rear of the premises

CASE OFFICER: Anna Jotcham

DATE: 28 May 2017

COMMENT: OBJECTION

Bath Heritage Watchdog objects to this application.

When determining all applications for new shopfronts and signage we ask that the following guidelines are observed.

The context, or general setting, of Bath should be understood, respected and reflected in any proposed work to shopfronts.

Design, materials and workmanship should be of the highest quality.

Any proposed or altered shopfront should be historically credible.

House styles which do not meet the requirements of style, lettering, materials and signs are not acceptable. Multiples should be required to adapt their proposals to the special conditions of the city.

Standard designs of any sort are not acceptable. They should be specifically designed for their context.

This application involves the change of use from A1 retail to A2 financial. 24-25 Stall Street have, until very recently, been retail, being two units that are linked. Given that the shops only closed in the last couple of weeks, the required advertising for another retail outlet has not happened at all, let alone for 6 months. Therefore no proof has been provided indicating a lack of retail interest in the units. This is prime retail frontage protected in the local plan and we do not consider that 2 shop units should be lost in what is one of the main shopping streets in the city.

We also object to the proposed frontage. That proposed would be strident and overwhelming in this location. The blocking of 3 windows with purple vinyls to enable installation of 3 ATMs is unacceptable. If the windows are to be obscured then a frosted grey or something similar would be less strident and therefore less harmful. We do not consider the provision of 3 ATMS necessary and would suggest that the number is reduced to 1 or 2 at the worst. This also applies to the window for the letter box.

Although recognising that the buildings are not listed, they are in the setting of listed buildings and also in the Bath Conservation Area. All illumination should be removed from proposals (this includes the ATMS, the signage and window signs). This is a well lit area and such excessive illumination is not required and would be harmful.

The proposed offset lettering for the fascia signage is considered acceptable, however we believe the colours should be less strident.

The works, by virtue of the loss of prime retail frontage, excessive and disproportionate signage, unnecessary illumination and the use of overly strident colours are considered to be detrimental to the special architectural and historic character and interest of adjacent listed buildings and the conservation area contrary to S16 and S72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 12 'Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment of the NPPF and Local Plan Policies B1, B2 and CP12 of the BANES Core Strategy and saved policies BH2, BH6, BH17, BH19 and S5 of the BANES local plan and should be refused in its current format.