

LOCATION: THE MALL, THE SQUARE, CAMBERLEY, GU15 3SL
PROPOSAL: Refurbishment of interior of The Mall to include new elevational treatment surrounding existing shopfronts together with feature lighting, amendments to existing roof columns and decorative detailing to roof, and new flooring (excluding Bietigheim Way and tenant shopfronts).
TYPE: Full Planning Application
APPLICANT: Mr Macpherson
The Main Square Camberley Unit Trust
OFFICER: Jonathan Partington

The application would normally be determined under the Council's Scheme of Delegation, however, at the request of the Executive Head of Regulatory it is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee for determination.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT subject to conditions

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The proposal is for the comprehensive refurbishment of the Mall to include contemporary elevational treatments to existing shopfronts. These new elevations are intended to increase the vertical emphasis of the units. Materials used would be a combination of oak timber panels, aluminium and applied graphics. A mock example is currently in situ at the O2 store, 1 The Square. To complement the new elevations new lighting would be installed and throughout the Mall new flooring would be installed and existing columns and roofing detailing altered.
- 1.2 The applicant's overall aim is to modernise the Mall so that it remains an attractive and competitive destination for shoppers and investors. The development is therefore acceptable in principle as it is consistent with the Council's Area Action Plan and Key Priority 1. It is considered the design solution would result in a legible and coherent development. It would respect the wider historic townscape and enhance the overall environmental quality of the town. By association, this would promote the centre's retail health and future viability. The proposal is therefore in accordance with adopted policy and the NPPF.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The Mall is an enclosed shopping centre within the centre of Camberley Town Centre comprising approximately 37,160 sq m (400,000 sq ft) of retail and leisure accommodation. It lies within the town centre's core retail area and is designated as part of the primary shopping area. The main shopping routes within the Mall include the north-south axis of Cambridge Walk to Prince of Wales Walk and Reynolds Grace Walk which provides the main route to the High Street to the east.
- 2.2 The Mall includes a central covered square/Town Square plus Cambridge Square to the south. Obelisk Way, to the north is part covered.

The interior of the Mall is characterised by mock facades surrounding the shop frontages comprising uniform white timber pilasters and metal scroll work.

3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

- 3.1 88/0883 Outline application for refurbishment of existing town centre including improvement works to and enclosure of the malls and new central square and stopping up of the public highway. This included covering of the malls with glazed canopies, provision of new flooring and realignment of Grace Reynolds Walk.
- Granted 3/12/88. Completed 1990.*
- 3.2 15/1099 Mock-up installation to the Mall elevation (in connection with proposed internal refurbishment of the Mall Shopping Centre) consisting of refurbishment works to the O2 elevation, facade lighting, flooring, painting to the internal roof structure and film applied to the roof glazing at 1 The Square.
- Granted 2/3/2016 and implemented*
- 3.3 16/0184 Erection of cafe (Use Class A1) within existing shopping mall at 2A The Square
- Decision pending.*

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The proposal is for the refurbishment of the interior of The Mall to include new elevational treatment surrounding existing shopfronts together with feature lighting, amendments to existing roof columns and decorative detailing to roof, and new flooring. This proposal includes Cambridge Square, the main shopping route of Cambridge Walk to Prince of Wales Walk, Grace Reynolds Walk to Main Square Mall and Obelisk Way Mall i.e. the most northern mall. It excludes Bietigheim Way.
- 4.2 Visual illustrations for materials and lighting effects, and walk through impressions have been provided in support of the application. A Design and Access Statement (DAS) has also been submitted which explains the need for the proposal and the design rationale. Key points from the DAS are summarised below:
- The Mall's interiors are now dated and require updating to offer an attractive destination in the town centre and the current commercial retail market. A contemporary solution is therefore proposed.
 - The current interior elevation treatment is dominated by the existing demountable service bulkhead of GRG (Glass Reinforced Gypsum i.e. a robust but lightweight interior cladding material) panels of varying design which are a consistent horizontal feature throughout the scheme. Behind these panels the main horizontal services run, including landlord provision and tenants' connections. The location and depth of this zone is too cost prohibitive to consider major amendment, therefore the new interiors accommodate this feature in the design.

- The remodelling will promote verticality. All banner and projecting signage including the suspended TV advertising units will be removed, reducing the amount of information which currently bombards the shopper with information.
- Existing tenant shopfronts and signage will be retained. Retailers will be encouraged to replace their shopfronts with full height windows to complete the interior remodelling. This process has begun, with an example at Jones the Bootmakers.
- No changes are proposed to the entrances, mall gradients and means of escape routes. A new over-tiled floor will be laid and will respect the existing thresholds to all units and doors.
- Four generic elevation bay types have been designed (but with a more specialised treatment designed for gateway units, for example, to the Main Square) explained below:
 - Bay type 1 would be constructed of solid European oak timber battens arranged vertically as a full height screen including demountable panels for the service zone. The oak would be treated to retain its colour;
 - Bay type 2 would be an anodised aluminium screen with a laser cut leaf motif drawing a parallel with the wooded and natural environs of Camberley, and a bronze finish;
 - Bay type 3 would be a simple plasterboard treatment of the high and low level panels. These panels have been identified as opportunities for an applied graphic treatment. They would be located above major mall retail units or mid mall entrances and exits. Retailers such as J Sainsbury and Top Shop / Top Man will be encouraged to populate the elevation with vinyl graphics, adding dynamic imagery enlivening the malls. Large areas of graphic treatments will be broken with a simple stepping of the panel's vertical plane to create diversity, depth and interest;
 - Bay type 4 would be the simplest mall elevation treatment based on bay type 3 but without graphics, and painted.
- New ambient and pilaster lighting is proposed for the Mall. Beyond this no additional or internally illuminated lighting is proposed for elevation types 3 and 4. Elevation types 1 and 2 would, however, use feature lighting reflected from the rear or between panels.
- Existing bridges located within Cambridge Walk will be removed (subject to cost) with the aim of opening up currently truncated views. Elsewhere the bridges would be incorporated into the refurbishment.
- The existing ornate column casings and bases of the colonnades will be replaced with simplified cladding in aluminium.

- The central café at Cambridge Square would remain but with a new café proposed at The Square (see 16/0184 on this agenda)

4.3 The applicant proposes all works to be undertaken at night so enabling the retailers to operate normally during the day.

5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

5.1 County Highways Authority No objections or comments to make.

5.2 Environmental Services No objections or comments to make.

5.3 Surrey Police No objections or comments to make.

6.0 REPRESENTATIONS

6.1 At the time of writing no letter of representation have been received.

7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATION

7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); Policies CPA, CP8, CP10 and DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 (CSDMP); and, Policies TC1, TC2 and TC11 of the Camberley Town Centre Area Action Plan 2014 (AAP) are of most relevance. Regard should also be had to the Camberley Town Centre Masterplan and Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document 2015 (PRS). In determining this application the following issues need to be considered:

- Principle of development;
- Impact on character and quality of the townscape;
- Impact on vitality and viability of the town centre; and,
- Other matters including residential amenity, CIL, access.

7.2 Principle of development

7.2.1 Policy CP10 of the CSDMP has earmarked Camberley Town Centre as the continued focus for major growth. This includes significant opportunities for regeneration and to improve the environmental quality. To facilitate this growth the Camberley Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) was published in August 2013. This AAP identified the following four key challenges:

- To ensure that the town centre is able to respond to changing consumer and market behaviour;
- To deliver the measures that support the economic vitality and viability of the town centre;

- To ensure the town centre is accessible and sustainable;
- To ensure that future development needs can be met.

Paragraph 1.38 of the AAP recognises that the town centre has shown resilience in surviving recession but is close to competing centres including out of town locations and this competition, together with planning improvements of other centres in the catchment area means that Camberley is at risk of slipping in retail rankings.

- 7.2.2 Hence, the APP's retail strategy for the town centre seeks to raise Camberley's profile as a destination of choice. One of the key aims of the AAP is to redevelop the London Road block and expand the retail core, but paragraph 3.2 of the AAP states there is a risk that any major retail development to the north will leave a vacuum elsewhere in the town by existing tenants relocating. In order to prevent this, the retail strategy therefore recognises the necessity to work with the existing main town centre operators to reinforce attractiveness elsewhere in the retail core. This includes supporting the Mall in adapting units to meet present needs. Paragraph 3.5 of the AAP goes on to explain how future retail development is likely to be phased in the short –medium – long term (i.e. 2016 – 2028 respectively) and identifies the enlargement and adaptation of existing units in the Main Square of the Mall as a short term objective.
- 7.2.3 Given the above policy context, the principle of this development is therefore supported. Moreover, the Council's Key Priority 1 is: *'To deliver an improved Camberley Town Centre for the benefit of the Borough, including the redevelopment of the A30 frontage, regeneration of the town centre and provision of leisure facilities in Knoll Road'* and so the principle of this proposal is consistent with this.

7.3 Impact on character and quality of the townscape and public realm

- 7.3.1 Policy TC11 of the AAP requires new development to make a positive contribution towards improving the quality of the built environment. This requires development, where appropriate to respect its local context, but in addition lists 7 criteria that should be taken into account. This includes: consideration to the introduction of contemporary materials that respect or enhance existing built form; including a level of architectural detail that gives the building visual interest for views both near and far; and, a positive contribution to the public realm.
- 7.3.2 Given that this is an enclosed shopping mall this proposal would have no adverse impact on the traditional architecture of the town centre. The applicant's rationale is that the existing Mall has a dated appearance and given that this is over 25 years old it is considered that the introduction of contemporary materials would only enhance the existing environment. The increased vertical emphasis of the units would have the effect of increasing the sense of space. It is further considered that the lighting and amendments to the floor and roof would positively complement the elevations.
- 7.3.3 Poor permeability (ease of movement) and poor legibility (the ability to understand your position within the urban environment) is recognised by Policy TC11 of the AAP as a current weakness of the town centre. TC13 (iii) of the AAP therefore encourages improvements to the quality of the public realm with upgrading of existing areas to improve linkages through the town and the quality of the public realm along these links. With this proposal the variation of design with a palette of four different elevational treatments (as explained at paragraph 4.2 above), used in different areas of the Mall, would provide visual interest and also serve to provide legibility and coherence to the pedestrian routes. For example, oak panels (bay type 1) would be the predominant elevational treatment for the north-south axis of Cambridge Walk to Prince of Wales Walk which is the main shopping route. Specialised elevations for gateway units and the ability for individual units to add

graphics and imagery would also increase visual interest. Given, therefore, that this proposal would improve legibility within the Mall this may have the wider effect of facilitating improvements to the wider public realm. In short, the proposal would be an improved experience for shoppers and therefore accords with the objectives of Policy TC11.

7.4 Impact on vitality and viability of the town centre

7.4.1 Policy TC1 (iii) of the AAP requires development proposals to support the regeneration of the town centre and enhance its vitality and viability. Policy TC2 of the AAP also requires development to add to vitality and viability and enhance Camberley's image as a sustainable and desirable destination of choice for high quality shopping.

7.4.2 An improved built environment (as identified in paragraph 7.3 above) would, by association, increase the desirability and image of Camberley thus supporting a vibrant and active town centre. The modernisation of the Mall, which contains a high proportion of the town centre's Class A1 retail uses including anchor stores and is part of the primary shopping area, would ensure that the overall town centre remains competitive. Improvements to this part of the town may provide the catalyst for retail operators to invest into Camberley and assist in the delivery of the London Road Block and as already explained the wider public realm improvements. As such the proposal would support the vitality and viability of the town centre consistent with Policies TC1 and TC2 of the AAP and with the PRS.

7.5 Other matters

7.5.1 The development will have no adverse impact on existing pedestrian routes or the highway and there are no residential properties affected by the proposal within the immediate vicinity. The proposal would therefore comply with Policies DM9 and DM11 of the CSDMP and Policy TC1 (v) and (vi) of the AAP. In addition, the proposal is not CIL liable.

8.0 ARTICLE 2(3) DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) ORDER 2012 WORKING IN A POSITIVE/PROACTIVE MANNER

8.1 In assessing this application, officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner consistent with the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the NPPF. This included 1 or more of the following:

a) Provided or made available pre application advice to seek to resolve problems before the application was submitted and to foster the delivery of sustainable development.

b) Provided feedback through the validation process including information on the website, to correct identified problems to ensure that the application was correct and could be registered.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 The development would help deliver an improved town centre so promoting Camberley as a destination and investment choice. The proposal would accord with development plan policies and the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT subject to the following conditions:-

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions and in accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The proposed development shall be built in accordance with the following approved plans: CTL series 020 -047 unless the prior written approval has been obtained from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning and as advised in ID.17a of the Planning Practice Guidance.

3. There shall be no variation from the palette of elevation materials as shown on drawing nos. CTL series 046 (illustrative view materials) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the townscape and to comply with Policies DM9 and CP10 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy Development Management Policies Document 2012 and Policy TC11 of the Camberley Town Centre Area Action Plan 2013.

Informative(s)

1. The applicant is reminded that this planning permission does not give any consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended).