

Advice from the Speen Stores Working Group
Please object to an amended planning application by Bucks Housing Association
Deadline for objections is 1 October 2020

Introduction

As you may be aware, Buckinghamshire Housing Association registered on 3 September 2020, an amended planning application for Speen Stores, under the same reference number and title as their previous application made on 6 August, namely:

Planning Application reference 20/07032/FUL – Change of use of the first floor from Retail (A1) to a Residential flat (Class C3) at First Floor Speen Stores Chapel Hill Speen

You can view this here <https://publicaccess.wycombe.gov.uk/idoxpa-web/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=QEQC�3SCKE900&activeTab=summary>

We strongly urge villagers to object to this amended planning application, even though you may have submitted a letter of objection to the earlier application. Buckinghamshire Council, Wycombe Area is inviting further comments on the amended application.

The amended application

Like its predecessor, the amended application proposes the conversion of the first floor to a self-contained one bedroom flat. Importantly, the amended application proposes the installation of toilet facilities on the ground floor, in what is currently the main shop storage area, effectively reducing current useable storage space by half. The shop would be downsized and lose its kitchen and food preparation area. **The shop cannot continue to operate without these facilities and would have to close.**

There are a number of valid reasons for objecting to a planning application. **In this case, the principal issue is the potential loss of the shop and post office**, an essential commercial amenity. The revised application is as unworkable as the original application, and will deprive the residents of Speen not only of the commercial use of the first floor, but of the shop and post office.

Objections should reach the Council no later than 1 October 2020

We recommend that you send a hard copy letter to the Case Officer (Heather Smith), Planning Department, Buckinghamshire Council – Wycombe Area, Queen Victoria Rd, High Wycombe HP11 1BB, quoting the Planning Application reference number given above. We understand that, compared to email, a letter has the added value of being reviewed at a senior level and consequently may have more impact!

If you prefer to register your objections on line go to www.wycombe.gov.uk and search Planning Applications. You will need to key in the postcode of the shop **HP27 0SL** and proceed from there.

We attach the letter of objection sent by the Speen Stores Working Group which we hope will be helpful in formulating your own objections to the Council.

Objections to the revised planning application

In writing your objection letter, we suggest that you explain how the loss of the shop and post office will impact on you personally, even if you did this in an earlier letter of objection. You might wish to include some of the following points:

- how frequently you use the shop - for many of you this may be daily
- the convenience of its location at the heart of the village
- there is no suitable location or building for a replacement shop
- the hair salon, currently closed, has operated successfully for many years as a valued community service. Its commercial use should be retained. BHA has not demonstrated that it is surplus to the needs of our community
- if you are elderly, you could mention that you will have to rely on others for your shopping
- if you are not a driver or do not own a car, you could state that you will have to rely on others or use the bus service (there are only two buses a week into Wycombe)
- the nearest shop to Speen is the Co-op in Walter's Ash which is 2 miles away. There are serious traffic management and parking problems in the vicinity of that store and these would become much worse if we lose our shop
- the application identifies three parking spaces in front of the shop and cars would have to reverse out onto the road at the Chapel Hill/Hampden Road junction. This is a dangerous junction with poor sight lines. The proposed parking area is also used for shop deliveries
- BHA must know that the shop will no longer be viable and you may be concerned that this application is a step towards converting the entire property to residential use.

It will strengthen your argument if you are able to make reference to the **Wycombe District Local Plan** and, more particularly, **Policy DM 29**, designed to protect land or buildings last occupied for community use. It is worded as follows:

1. *Development which cannot be adequately served by existing built facilities is required to provide sufficient additional built facilities as are needed to meet the needs of future occupants. This assessment shall take account of the capacity and accessibility of existing facilities. In assessing capacity, first priority will be given to allocated and committed growth in the area*
2. *Land or buildings currently or last occupied for community use must be retained unless the applicant has clearly demonstrated through an exhaustive needs assessment that the land and/or buildings proposed to be lost are surplus to any community needs.*

BHA has carried out no such assessment. The first floor is not surplus to community needs: the premises have traded successfully as a hair salon and are suited to a variety of commercial uses.

Please do lodge your objection with the Council to help safeguard this vital village amenity. It is essential that as many objections are made as possible. Thank you for your support.

Issued on behalf Speen Stores Working Group

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