



Speen,  
PRINCES RISBOROUGH,  
Bucks. HP27 0SR

The Planning Department  
Buckinghamshire Council  
Council Offices  
Queen Victoria Road  
High Wycombe  
Bucks. HP11 1BB

31<sup>st</sup> August 2020

Dear Sirs,

**First Floor over Speen Stores, HP27 0SL  
Planning Ref 20/07032/FUL**

Buckinghamshire Housing Association has submitted a planning application seeking to change the use of the first floor accommodation over Speen Stores to residential use. In their covering letter they state that they are seeking consent for a one bedroomed flat which is to be put on the rental market.

Plans submitted clearly show that the proposal involves the loss of the only toilet facilities and kitchen which have been occupied with Speen Stores for the past 20 years. Clearly this proposal not only destroys the first floor retail space which has been occupied as a village hairdressers for 20 years, it also leaves the only village shop in Speen without toilet and kitchen accommodation and therefore contrary to health and safety regulations and completely unviable.

The application has been studied and discussed by members of the speen heritage Group and we strongly object to the proposal for the following reasons :-

Government policy reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework of 2012 highlights the importance of sustainable developments. This proposal creates a situation where Speen will be deprived of its only village shop forcing villagers to travel to buy every last item of grocery, which is totally contrary to the intention of sustainable development.

Moreover the proposal flies in the face of countless policies clearly set out in the Wycombe Local Plan adopted on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2019. This also seeks to achieve sustainable development- i.e. Para 4.16 "The economic, environmental and social wellbeing of the rural areas are an important consideration for sustainable development.

Paragraph 6.92 refers to the National Planning Policy Framework and confirms "Planning Policies should also " promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops,...etc"

The detailed policies to protect rural businesses are set out in policy DM29 which deals with the retention of community facilities. Paragraph 6.93 confirms that community uses protected by this policy includes Post offices and local or neighbourhood shops (and other uses).

DM29.2 states that **buildings currently or last occupied for community use must be retained unless the applicant has clearly demonstrated, through an exhaustive needs assessment, that the ...building proposed to be lost are surplus to community needs".**

No such needs assessment has been carried out in this case and there is no doubt in my opinion that the first floor is not surplus to village needs. On the contrary it forms an essential part of the village shop. For 20 years the first floor has housed a hairdressers who have provided an important village service. During this period the village has been very fortunate to have shop tenants who have travelled in to run the shop every day. This however is a very unusual situation and many village shops and neighbourhood stores rely on tenants who live on site to enable them to provide long hours of service to the community. The first floor must therefore be retained with the existing planning unit either for commercial use, ancillary storage or for residential use **solely and exclusively** in connection with the use of the shop. Clearly the kitchen and toilets are essential elements of the shop which already lacks much by way of storage space.

Paragraph 6.94 confirms that community “uses enhance the sustainability of communities and residential developments and **the presumption is therefore that they should be retained**”

In conclusion this proposal is very clearly contrary to countless policies both in the National Planning Policy Framework and also the adopted Wycombe Local Plan and it should be rejected unless any residential use is limited solely and exclusively to use in conjunction with the occupation of the shop for retail purposes that benefit the local community. It would be entirely wrong to deprive some 300 households of their only shop merely to create a one bedroomed flat.

Yours faithfully

Peter Symonds  
Chairman – Speen Heritage Group