Change of Use Application to change the Ground Floor from Sui Generis to Class E at 60 High Street, Alfreton

Design & Access Statement.

This brief statement covers the key criteria involved in the design process, and the principles upon which the scheme is based.

SITE HISTORY

AVA/493/356 was submitted on 30th April 1993 as an outline application for development to provide building society branch office on ground & first floor level and was conditionally approved on 12th July 1993.
AVA/1293/1033 was submitted on 7th December 1993 for internal shopfitting, new shop front licensed betting office and conditionally approved on 27th January 1994.
AVA/AD/1293/1034 was submitted and approved on the same dates for an illuminated shop sign and projecting sign.

APPRAISAL of the APPLICATION SITE and its SURROUNDINGS

The application site comprises the ground floor premises of the vacant, former William Hill betting shop, a terraced property on the principal high street of Alfreton. The overall floor area is approximately 163m2.
To the east is a tanning studio and to the west the King Alfred public house. The adjacent buildings are a mixture of two and three storey commercial properties with some having residential accommodation above them.
It is a typical mixed use building in a town centre location. Parking is on street and limited to 30 minutes.

PROPOSAL/AMOUNT/LAYOUT

This statement accompanies an application to change the use of the ground floor premises only from a betting shop (Sui Generis) use to an estate agency (Class E – Commercial, Business and Service) use.
A minor internal change will be the installation of a stud wall to provide separation of the sales area from the kitchen and toilet provision but this does not require planning approval.
A simple rectangular sign will be affixed to the existing shop front signboard but this also does not require planning approval. There are 14 classes of advertisement benefiting from deemed consent and we consider that this proposed shopfront sign will sit under class 13 which allows advertisements to be displayed on a site that has been used continually for the preceding ten years for the display of advertisements.

JUSTIFICATION

The property at 60 High Street, Alfreton has been identified as a suitable premises for use as a new branch for Cope & Co., a long established letting and estate agent, due to its prominent and sustainable town centre location.
Estate agency businesses benefit from a visible High Street presence, where they can be easily accessed by clients, prospective buyers, sellers, landlords and tenants. The property's frontage, accessibility and proximity to other town centre services make it well suited to this type of business use, allowing it to operate effectively while remaining convenient for members of the public.
Alfreton has been selected as an appropriate location for Cope & Co. because it is an established local centre serving both the town and surrounding area, with an active property market and a strong community focus. Locating an estate agency within the town centre supports not only the day-to-day operation of the business, but also the wider role of the High Street by encouraging footfall, supporting linked visits to nearby businesses, and maintaining active commercial occupancy.
The proposed use is therefore considered to be appropriate to both the premises and its location, delivering commercial investment alongside a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of Alfreton town centre.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

In terms of biodiversity net gain, the building occupies the entire application site and therefore the de minimis exemption applies.

POLICIES

Amber Valley Borough Council adopted the Local Plan on 2nd March 2026, and the Plan now carries full weight for decision making purposes in relation to development proposals in the Borough.
Policies relevant to this proposal are :

Policy SS4 – Supporting Centres of Economic Growth
Policy SS5 – Development in Town Centres
Policy SS6 – Primary Shopping Areas
Policy EN1 – Climate Change
National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 90 and 91 – Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Policy SS4 states, amongst other things, that development proposals for office facilities will be permitted where they would maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the Borough's Town Centres.
Four town centres (including Alfreton) will be the preferred location for the provision of new office and other uses appropriate to a town centre which attract large numbers of people.
Within each town centre, the Borough Council will seek to ensure that new uses :
- positively contribute to the mix and diversity of uses without undermining their primary retail function
- support the appropriate re-use or regeneration of land and premises

Policy SS5 states, amongst other things, that within town centres development will be permitted for uses within Class E where the proposals :
- would sustain or enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre
- can be satisfactorily accessed by both private and public transport

Policy SS6 supports the retention of all uses of Class E within the Primary Shopping Areas within which this building is located.

Policy EN1 – due to the nature of this proposal (ie a change of use application with no development proposed) there is no practical way of demonstrating compliance with Parts 1 & 2 of this policy. Part 4 is not relevant to this scheme.
In terms of Part 3 we have assessed the proposed design against the relevant sections of the Vision Derbyshire Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation Checklist and confirm :

- the proposal retains/re-uses an existing building worthy of retention
- there are good public transport links to the town centre locations
- this is a mixed use building

ACCESS

Access into the premises for staff and members of the public will be via the existing double doors on the shop frontage. These are outward opening and will remain unaltered.
There is a nominal ramp up into the building from the pavement of around 50mm and this will also remain unaltered.
Internally, the majority of the floor area is on a single level which provides ease of access to the sales area and toilet & kitchen facilities. There is an existing accessible toilet which presently also provides wc facility for ladies. The main toilet for the men is accessed via three steps up although there is a separate toilet provision at the lower level as well.

SUMMARY

The proposal is an opportunity to re-use a vacant, well-positioned, building within the town centre of Alfreton.
Only minor changes to the signboard are proposed and the scheme will have no detrimental impact on the street-scene – it should improve it. The scheme will not unduly affect the amenity or privacy of any adjacent properties.
As such, it generally accords with the Saved Policies set out within the Adopted Local Plan.