

**REFERENCE NO: CR/2019/0165/NCC**

**LOCATION:** [METRO BANK, 25 - 29 QUEENS SQUARE, NORTHGATE, CRAWLEY](#)  
**WARD:** Northgate & West Green  
**PROPOSAL:** REMOVAL OF CONDITION 2 ON CR/2018/0236/FUL REQUIRING ALTERATIONS TO GLAZING BARS AND FENESTRATION WITHIN 4 MONTHS OF THE DATE OF THE PLANNING PERMISSION

**TARGET DECISION DATE:** 28 May 2019

**CASE OFFICER:** Mrs J. McPherson

**APPLICANTS NAME:** Metro Bank PLC  
**AGENTS NAME:** Mr Samuel Elliott

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**PLANS & DRAWINGS CONSIDERED:**

ES0.0, Site Location Plan  
ES0.0.1, Block Plan  
A3.2, Current/Existing Elevation (The Martlets)  
E3.0, Elevation As Permitted & To Be Implemented by Condition 2 of CR/2018/0236/FUL (Queens Square)  
A3.4, Current/Existing Elevation (Overall Elevations)  
A3.1, Current/Existing Elevation (Truncated Corner Towards Queens Square)  
E3.2, Elevation As Permitted & To Be Implemented by Condition 2 of CR/2018/0236/FUL (The Martlets)  
E3.4, Elevation As Permitted & To Be Implemented by Condition 2 of CR/2018/0236/FUL (Overall Elevations)  
E3.1, Elevation As Permitted & To Be Implemented by Condition 2 of CR/2018/0236/FUL (Truncated Corner Towards Queens Square)  
A3.0, Current/Existing Elevation (Queens Square)

**CONSULTEE NOTIFICATIONS & RESPONSES:-**

None.

**NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATIONS:-**

The application was publicised by a site notice

**RESPONSES RECEIVED:-**

None.

**REASON FOR REPORTING TO COMMITTEE:-**

The application has been called in by Councillor Guidera

## **THE APPLICATION SITE:-**

- 1.1 The application site is MetroBank which occupies a prominent corner location on the southern side of Queens Square and the western side of The Martletts. The unit is two storey in scale and has a shop frontage onto both The Martletts and Queens Square, with its entrance located on the corner.
- 1.2 The site is located within the town centre and within the primary shopping area and forms part of the historic New Town development. Queens Square has recently been subject to major investment and environmental improvements with works completed in Autumn 2017 for re-paving and public realm improvements.
- 1.3 The site is located within the Town Centre and the Primary Shopping Area.

## **THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:-**

- 2.1 The application seeks the removal of condition 2 from planning permission CR/2018/0236/FUL which was granted on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018 for the: *REDESIGN AND RECONSTRUCTION OF THE BUILDING FACADE INCLUDING NEW SHOPFRONT, REVISED ENTRANCE AND INSTALLATION OF 2 ATM MACHINES (PART RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION) (AMENDED DESCRIPTION)*
- 2.2 Condition 2 on the permission reads:  
*The glazing details including the glazing bars on the fenestration above and below the fascia signage as shown on the approved plans shall be installed within 4 months of the date of this permission.*  
*REASON: In order to control the development detail in the interest of the visual amenity and to ensure that the development accords with policies CH2 and CH3 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 and the guidance in the Urban Design SPD.*
- 2.3 The applicant states that while the principle of the approach was agreed with (Planning) Officers prior to planning permission being granted, they have since been reviewing the options about how this can be achieved and weighing up the practical aspects of the disruption in implementing these alterations and the cost versus the alternative solutions. The applicant states that the building is of a high standard and contemporary design and is considered appropriate from a design perspective and is not out of place or out of character. Furthermore, they consider there is no explicit policy requirement for the glazing to be amended and therefore the glazing installed does not conflict with policy. They are seeking to leave the shopfront in its current design (as installed).

## **PLANNING HISTORY:-**

- 3.1 The application site has an extensive planning history. The key applications are set out below.
- 3.2 In respect of occupier MetroBank:
  - CR/2018/0236/FUL - Redesign and reconstruction of the building facade including new shopfront, revised entrance and installation of 2 ATM machines (Part retrospective application) (Amended description) - Permitted 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018 (subject to conditions).
  - CR/2018/2037/ADV - Installation of 2 x high level pin mounted entrance fascia signs, 2 x fascia signs (in the glazing bays), 2 x 'Open 7 days' signs (in the glazing bays), 2 x projecting signs and 2 x ATM signs (all signs internally illuminated ) (Amended Description) - Split Decision. An appeal was lodged against the refusal of the Projecting signs - these were Allowed on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019.
  - CR/2017/0920/ADV - ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT FOR FASCIA SIGNS, PIN-MOUNTED SIGNS, LOGO DOOR HANDLE SIGNS, 'OPEN 7 DAYS PER WEEK' SIGNS AND ATM'S. - WITHDRAWN
  - CR/2017/0919/FUL - INSTALLATION OF NEW SHOPFRONT AND ALTERATIONS TO INCLUDE REDESIGN OF BUILDING FACADE. - WITHDRAWN

- 3.3 In respect of previous occupier Diechmann Shoes the following alterations:
- CR/2011/0469/FUL - ERECTION OF A NEW SHOPFRONT - PERMITTED AND IMPLEMENTED
  - CR/2011/0468/ADV - ERECTION OF 1 X FASCIA SIGN AND 2 X PROJECTING SIGNS (ALL INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED) - CONSENTED AND IMPLEMENTED
- 3.4 The original 'new town' building constructed as part of Queens Square was demolished and reconstructed under the following permission for a new occupier New Look:
- CR/1998/0241/FUL - ERECTION OF A NEW BUILDING TO BE USED FOR USE CLASS A1 (RETAIL) PURPOSES (GROUND AND FIRST FLOOR) WITH PART SECOND FLOOR STORAGE AND PLANT - Permitted and implemented

### **PLANNING POLICY:-**

#### Crawley Borough Local Plan (2015-2030) (adopted December 2015)

- 4.1 The relevant policies include:
- Policy SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development. In line with the planned approach to Crawley as a new town and the spatial patterns relating to the neighbourhood principles, when considering development proposals the council will take a positive approach to approving development which is sustainable.
  - Policy CH2: Principles of Good Urban Design in order to assist in the creation, retention or enhancement of successful places development proposals will be required to amongst other things - respond to and reinforce locally distinctive patterns of development and create public spaces and routes which are attractive, safe, uncluttered and which work effectively for all in society.
  - Policy CH3: Normal Requirements of All New Development states all proposals for development will be required to:
    - a) *"Be based on a thorough understanding of the significance and distinctiveness of the site and its immediate and wider context and demonstrate how attractive or important features which make a positive contribution to the area would be integrated, protected and enhanced"*.
    - b) *"Be of a high quality in terms of their urban, landscape and architectural design and relate sympathetically to their surroundings in terms of scale, density, height, massing, orientation, views, landscape, layout, details and materials....."*.

Proposals must provide and retain a good standard of amenity for all nearby and future occupants of land and buildings; be able to meet its own operational requirements necessary for the safe and proper use of the site. Development proposals must adhere to any relevant supplementary planning guidance produced by the council.
  - Policy EC2 identifies the Town Centre as a main employment area which makes a significant contribution to the economy of the Borough.
  - Policy EC5: Primary Shopping Areas states that Crawley Town centre is a key retail destination of sub-regional significance. It states that ground floor proposals for A1, A2 and A3 uses will normally be permitted and the effective and efficient use of upper floors is encouraged.
  - Policy ENV6: Sustainable Design and Construction. All development, including the alteration and extension of existing buildings, should consider how it may achieve the sustainability objectives in relation to carbon. These include an active approach to energy consumption, utilisation of renewable and lower carbon technologies, minimising the amount of carbon emitted through the construction process. All development should also consider how it will tackle water stress and cope with future temperature extremes.

#### Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (adopted October 2016)

- 4.2 The Town Centre SPD is a non-statutory document which explains in more detail policies EC2 and EC5 listed above. It emphasises that the primary shopping areas are the commercial focus of the town centre and the need for ground floor uses to support development that interacts positively with the street scene and encourages footfall. Queens Square is the daytime economic focus of the town centre. Active shop frontages are encouraged. Paragraph 4.8 states that in all cases

*“development should be planned and delivered in a manner that has regard to its individual design and operation, its interaction within the context and character of its immediate surrounds, and its wider contribution to the town centre as a whole”*: The document signposts the Urban Design SPD for further detail in relation to design requirements.

#### Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document (adopted October 2016)

- 4.3 The Urban Design SPD is a non-statutory document which supplements the policies of the Local Plan and is applicable to this application in that it provides additional guidance on policies CH2 and CH3 referred to above. It contains guidance on the standards the Council expects for public design, advertisements and signs.

In particular, it states that:

- *Quality of the Public Realm - All development should create public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and which work effectively for all in society, including disabled and elderly people - para 2.1*  
Massing and Materials
- *Buildings, structures and surfaces within the urban realm should work harmoniously together and complement each other. All new elements with the urban realm should consider the scale and materiality within their immediate context, as well as the overall character of their setting - para 2.13*
- *Crawley has a very distinct material palette which defines its character. Bricks, concrete and render are the materials most commonly found in the borough, which seem to work successfully in creating a sense of place as well as an individual architectural character, though other materials can be used if appropriate for the site. Development proposals are, therefore encouraged to consider the material palette to create well designed and innovative buildings that work well in their context - para 2.18*  
Retail Development and Shopfronts
- *Retail development should be inclusive and should be designed to best accommodate its customers' needs... - para 3.66*
- *Fascias should be designed in order to enhance the streetscape and building, rather than to just to advertise the premises. The proportions of the fasciae should be based on the character of the surrounding area and streetscape and the proportions on the building they sit within - para 3.68*
- *Fascia boards should not be too deep and should not project beyond the first floor - para 3.70*
- *...Account should be taken of the depth of fascias on adjoin and nearby properties. Fascias should, where possible, have a small projection above them, both decorative and functional. This will visually help define the boundary between the shopfront and the rest of the building and prevent water running down the face of the shopfront - para 3.71*
- *Stallrisers should be included as part of shopfront design and should be at least 300mm high. However height may vary depending on the style of the shopfront and the character and appearance of the nearby shopfronts. Contemporary shopfront designs, including shopfronts without stallrisers may be allowed when appropriate and justified. - para 3.73*
- *However, in the town centre, canopies are traditionally built in within the retail unit and is a feature that is characteristic of Crawley Town Centre. Any development within the town centre where a built canopy already exists would be encouraged to retain the canopy or provide an appropriately designed alternative solutions - para 3.77*

#### **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:-**

- 5.1 The key consideration in relation to this application relates to the design and appearance of the shopfront as installed and the reason it was considered necessary to impose condition 2 on the planning permission.

#### Background to the imposition of condition 2

- 5.2 Application CR/2018/0236/FUL was eventually approved in November 2018. During the course of the determination of the application there had been extensive discussions relating to the design between planning officers and the applicant, following the earlier withdrawal of a previous application for a remodelled shopfront. In the spirit of the NPPF, officers had been working with the applicant to find an acceptable solution and compromise which would be appropriate in the context

of the street scene. By the time the application was determined, the works as installed and forming the subject of this application were substantially complete as the applicants had proceeded with their development at their risk.

- 5.3 The application granted planning permission for the complete redesign and reconstruction of the building façade comprising the removal of the existing building facades, removal of the circular corner feature from the top of the building, the removal of the canopy along the Queens Square frontage and reconstruction of the walls fronting Queens Square and The Martletts. The design increased the height of the ground floor shop windows and fascias on both The Martletts and the Queens Square frontage raising the fascia line on the building. Above each fascia, the shopfront has incorporated full height glazing.
- 5.4 Around each of the shop windows is cream rendered cladding which extends as 2 storey vertical columns and joins as a horizontal band above the 1<sup>st</sup> floor glazing. A brick parapet is introduced above the render. A small brise soleil is incorporated above the upper fascia line. The corner entrance to the unit is chamfered and incorporates a set of double glazed entrance doors. There is no fascia band on this elevation but two stainless steel bands following the fascia line. The frameless glazing is detailed with a stepped recessed stainless steel trim extending around the entrance glazing.
- 5.5 The shopfront as installed does not have the benefit of planning permission and is unauthorised. The glazing details currently in situ have invisible frames. However, the proposed design as agreed to be implemented is for alternative glazing with thicker horizontal and vertical glazing mullions in a stainless steel satin finish to the ground and first floor windows on the Queens Square and The Martletts frontages. The frameless chamfered corner entrance feature glazing is not proposed to be changed. Condition 2 was used to secure the implementation of the approved scheme.

#### The design and visual impact character of the streetscene

- 5.6 The MetroBank premises occupies a prominent corner location at the junction of Queens Square and The Martletts and visually relates in context to both streets being tied into the adjoining buildings and forming part of each frontage. The shopfront as installed is considered to have little reference to the surrounding new town architecture.
- 5.7 Queens Square was developed as an original part of the New Town shopping precinct and its architecture is characteristic of the period. The character of the Square is of 3 or 4 storey buildings (a ground floor retail unit with canopy and two or three floors above). There is strong horizontal emphasis to the design with the upper floors having a strong rhythm and being simply detailed using varied glazing pattern and materials. The character of the shop fronts, but especially the upper floors has a small glazing pattern defined with thicker framing, this in turn gives a more three dimensional and articulated façade. The strong fenestration pattern on the buildings around Queens Square gives the area its character and adds to the visual interest of the buildings, in particular the upper floors. There is also a strong horizontal emphasis to the architecture of the Square achieved through the fenestration pattern, the canopies and other detailing on the buildings.
- 5.8 On the application site, the previous Deichmann frontage which itself was a replacement for the original new town building, sought in its design to at least retain the shopfront proportions, horizontal emphasis and window sizes/ detailing of its New Town predecessor. It also maintained a consistent shopfront and fascia height with its immediately adjoining neighbours onto both Queens Square and The Martletts frontages.
- 5.9 The Pavilions is more recent addition to the Square but, while obviously of a different period has kept the themes of the new town architecture in its design. The shopfronts while higher than the new town shop units, retain a consistent fascia line which reinforces horizontal design character in the square. Above the fascias, a distinctive horizontal and vertical pattern has been achieved with the upper glazing with strong window frame detailing breaking up the extent of glazing and giving depth and definition to the frontage.

- 5.10 Decathlon on the eastern side of the square is perhaps the exception to this design approach but was intended to look different (having originally been designed as a department store). Notwithstanding this, the building also has a strong fenestration pattern characteristic of the buildings in the Square with a strong horizontal emphasis and varied framing pattern including smaller glazing panels.
- 5.11 The Martletts frontage is less cohesive in design along its length with some remodelling of the shopfronts permitted more recently towards County Mall. However, the MetroBank part of this frontage is relatively intact with shops having a consistent fascia line with more varied window and brick detailing above.
- 5.12 It is considered that the architectural characteristics described above give Queens Square and The Martletts their character and help define the architectural quality of this part of Crawley Town Centre. The amendments agreed with the applicant and required by Condition 2 seek to mitigate the impact of the current shopfront as installed and reinforce these important visual characteristics which are absent from the glazing.

#### The harm with the shopfront as installed

- 5.13 The officer recommendation to approve the shopfront under application CR/2018/0236/FUL with the imposition of condition 2 was an 'on balance decision' as there were concerns about the overall design within the context of Queens Square and The Martletts given the visually prominent location of the building. While it was understood that MetroBank wanted a prominent and modern frontage, its shopfront as installed is considered to have had little reference to the surrounding New Town architecture having removed the canopies, increased the fascia height, increased the expanse of glazing and resulted in the total dominance of a glass frontage.
- 5.14 In determining the application (CR/2018/0236/FUL), officers considered that the increase in fascia height on the shopfront introduced a discordant horizontal emphasis onto both street frontages when viewed alongside the adjoining shop units. However, it was accepted that there are some units within Queens Square (notably the Pavilions) which have a higher fascia height with which the shopfront would be visually consistent (when viewed within this context from some angles of Queens Square). It was therefore considered that a limited precedent had been established for higher fascias on new developments and on corner sites which, it was considered made the possibility of a higher fascia acceptable for this shopfront. However, in order to run with this approach officers considered it was vital that the detailing and design of the shopfront with a higher fascia band was of a high quality and acknowledged its immediate context and in particular the scale and character of the buildings it is attached to and wider architectural New Town character of Queens Square.
- 5.15 The current glazing at ground and first floor level on the windows directly facing The Martletts and Queens Square comprises large plate glass windows with invisible framing. These are considered unacceptable as they result in a considerable expanse of flush and featureless glazing which is considered to be incompatible with the fenestration detailing found in both Queens Square and The Martletts. The glazing is considered to represent an incongruous and alien addition within the street scene. The glazing as installed appears out of context with its surroundings having a featureless and flush profile, where the character of the other shopfronts and upper floors has a much smaller glazing pattern defined with thicker framing, this in turn giving a more three dimensional and articulated façade. The strong fenestration pattern on the buildings around Queens Square gives the space its design character and adds to the visual interest of the buildings in particular the upper floors. There is also a strong horizontal emphasis to the architecture of the square achieved through the fenestration pattern, the canopies and other detailing on the buildings. Officers consider that the design as installed is incongruous with the square and would be contrary to the guidance in policies CH2 and CH3 of the Local Plan and the Urban Design SPD.

#### The works required by condition 2

- 5.16 Condition 2 as agreed with the applicant requires the amendment of the fenestration of the upper and lower windows on both The Martletts and Queens Square elevations. The changes to the glazing details required by condition 2 are explained in more detail below.

- 5.17 The introduction of visible thicker grey glazing bars horizontally and vertically are proposed to break up the windows and intended to reinforce a stronger visual link to the adjoining units while retaining the higher fascia band. This is intended to give visual consistency to the upper and ground floors of the unit and again introduce a stronger horizontal emphasis. The smaller panes at ground floor level are more visually consistent with the retail frontages in the immediate vicinity.
- 5.18 At ground floor level a grey horizontal glazing bar is to be introduced to the windows which aligns with the existing fascia height of the adjoining retail units (the former canopy line). It is considered that this would help visually reference the scale and proportions of the neighbouring units and introduce a horizontal emphasis to the shopfront and bring a horizontal feature on the shopfront back in line with the existing adjoining shopfront fascia bands. The additional glazing bar would mitigate the current discordant step between the new frontage fascia and the existing fascia which visually jars with the neighbouring shops.
- 5.19 At 1<sup>st</sup> floor the fenestration pattern is proposed to be altered to considerably reduce the size of the window panes to ensure that the building would appear more visually consistent with the first floor of other properties in Queens Square and along the northern part of The Martletts. The alteration adopts a similar design approach to that adopted on the Pavilions. It is considered that the flush plate glass windows as installed are visually harmful to the character of the area and are an incongruous feature in the locality, the smooth glazing finish, invisible framing and resultant scale of each window panes appears out of character with surrounding buildings and the extent of glazing completely dominates the scale and proportions of the buildings on both frontages (particularly the adjoining neighbour on The Martletts elevation which it abuts).
- 5.20 It is considered that with these agreed alterations to the fenestration of the shopfront design would be more in keeping with the character and appearance of Queens Square and The Martletts and reduce the visual prominence of the building which, as currently installed with such large expanses of glass, appears completely out of character with its surroundings. The amendments required by condition 2, were the result of negotiation with the applicant, a positive approach to approving development by the Local Planning Authority and are considered to give the development more visual cohesion with the surrounding area and the smaller proportions of the glazing would work better in the context of the site and mitigate the scale larger scale and proportions on the building introduced with the higher fascia.

#### Other Matters

- 5.21 The applicants have stated in support of their proposal that they consider that, as there is not any explicit policy requirement for the glazing to be amended, the design as installed is not in conflict with policy. The Urban Design SPD clearly cannot cover every aspect of design in every situation. However, the relevant elements of the SPD in relation to this application are quoted in paragraph 4.3 of this report. This guidance explains that new buildings and structures should work harmoniously together and complement each other, new elements of design should consider their immediate context and setting and features such as fascias and shopfronts should be designed to enhance the surrounding area. Detailing matters such as the glazing and fenestration patterns is an integral part of the building design and a shopfront / fascia would not function efficiently without these design components. The changes required by condition 2 are integral to the design of the building as a whole for which the Local Plan policies and SPD require to be of high quality and in context and character with their surroundings. These policies as listed are therefore directly relevant to the design of the shopfront and the alterations required by the condition and there is no change in policy circumstances since the permission was issued.
- 5.22 The cost and inconvenience of carrying out the alterations is not a planning consideration.

#### **CONCLUSIONS:-**

- 6.1 For the reasons explained above it is considered that the design as installed and as proposed to be retained is in conflict with the development plan and is harmful to the character of the street scene. The alterations negotiated by officers, agreed by the applicant and subsequently required by

condition 2 are considered appropriate for the reasons set out above and meet the relevant tests set out in Paragraph 55 of the NPPF. Furthermore, the applicants have not provided any planning reasons why this condition should be varied.

**RECOMMENDATION RE: CR/2019/0165/NCC -**

**REFUSE - for the following reason:**

1. The design detailing and proportions of the shopfront glazing, framing detail and fenestration pattern as currently installed fails to respect the character and appearance of the original New Town shopping area and is visually incompatible and incongruous with its surroundings causing harm to the street scene in The Martletts and Queens Square. The proposal therefore conflicts with policies CH2 and CH3 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 and the guidance in the Urban Design SPD.

**NPPF Statement**

1. In determining this planning application, the Local Planning Authority assessed the proposal against all material considerations and has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions where possible and required, by:

Informing the applicant of identified issues that are so fundamental that it would not be possible to negotiate a satisfactory way forward due to the harm that has been caused.

This decision has been taken in accordance with the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework, as set out in article 35, of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015.





# ArcGIS Web Map

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