

## **Agenda Item 7**

**ALTERATIONS TO SHOPFRONT AT 16 & 18  
PRINCES STREET, FALKIRK, FK1 1NE FOR  
MRS PAULINE SPEARS - P/18/0229/FUL**

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Subject:** ALTERATIONS TO SHOPFRONT AT 16 & 18 PRINCES STREET, FALKIRK, FK1 1NE FOR MRS PAULINE SPEARS - P/18/0229/FUL

**Meeting:** PLANNING COMMITTEE

**Date:** 24 October 2018

**Author:** DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

**Local Members:** Ward - Falkirk South

Councillor Lorna Binnie  
Councillor John Patrick  
Councillor Pat Reid

**Community Council:** No Community Council

**Case Officer:** Stephen McClure (Planning Officer), Ext. 4702

**1. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL / SITE LOCATION**

- 1.1 The site consists of two shop units at the northern end of a row of commercial properties located on Princes Street in Falkirk Town Centre. The site is within the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area. The units are currently operating as Shops (Class1), with the same company (selling ladies clothing) operating out of both units. The units operate independently of one another, with two separate external entrances.
- 1.2 The shopfrontages have retained their original 1930's design, formed of wood and glazing (several decorative panels), with recessed central doorways. The design of the frontages was originally replicated on all units within the row, but this has been lost to varying degrees on the adjacent units. It is now proposed to remove the recessed doorways of each unit and form a single entrance flush with the shopfrontages; which will comprise a contemporary metal and glazed design. This will result in the two units operating as a single unit.

**2. REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION**

- 2.1 This application was called in by Councillor Pat Reid to allow the Committee the opportunity to go on site to consider the proposed decision which appears to be judgemental, given similar properties in the town centre.

### **3. SITE HISTORY**

- 3.1 06/0018/FUL - Detail - Granted - 11 April 2006 - Alterations to Shop (Replacement of Flat Roof with Pitched Roof).
- 3.2 06/0720/FUL - Detail - Granted - 19 September 2006 - Amendment to Condition 2 on Planning Permission 06/0018/FUL to allow the use of tiles in lieu of slate

### **4. CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 The Roads Development Unit have no objection to the proposal.
- 4.2 The Environmental Protection Unit have no objection to the proposal.

### **5. COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

- 5.1 There is no Community Council for this application.

### **6. PUBLIC REPRESENTATION**

- 6.1 During consideration of the application, no letters of objection or representation were received.

### **7. DETAILED APPRAISAL**

Under section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, the determination of planning applications for local and major developments shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Accordingly,

#### **7a The Development Plan**

The Falkirk Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted on 16 July 2015. It includes a number of supplementary guidance documents which also have statutory status as part of the Development Plan. The proposed development was assessed against the following policy or policies:

##### **7a.1 Policy TC01 - Network of Centres states:-**

1. *The focus for retail, leisure, cultural and major community uses in the area will be on the network of centres identified in Figure 3.3 and Map 3.3. Significant new retail and commercial leisure development will be directed to these centres. The boundaries of centres are identified on the Proposals Map. Residential and business uses will also be promoted in these centres as appropriate.*

2. *New food shopping will be a priority in Denny, Bonnybridge and Bo'ness Town Centres, and in the new Local Centres of Banknock, Kinnaird Village and Whitecross.*
3. *Opportunities for development, regeneration and enhancement in the centres will be promoted as listed in the Settlement Statements, and detailed in the Site Schedule in Appendix 1.*
4. *Development which would significantly undermine the role of any centre in the network, as defined in Figure 3.3, will not be permitted.*

7a.2 The property is located within Falkirk Town Centre, which is currently going through a phase of regeneration. One such initiative in relation to this is the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) project. This has seen the availability of grants to repair, restore and enhance historic features of buildings, as well as allowing for buildings to be brought back into use. The THI project has also brought about urban realm upgrades within the town centre. This overall project is working in tandem with the wider policy and guidance covering the town centre, especially in relation to units within the conservation area. This has placed an emphasis on the retention, restoration and repair of historic shopfronts, or the re-introduction of suitable historic designs, allowing for a continued improvement in the urban environment, especially in relation to the external appearance of buildings. As a result, there is a gradual enhancement of the town centre and improvements to its appeal as a place to visit, shop, do business and live.

7a.3 The Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan also promotes a consistent approach in the town centre, especially in relation to historic elements, including shopfrontages. The proposed shopfront would see two original and historic 1930's recessed shopfronts removed and replaced with a modern glass and metal single doorway. This modern design is not complementary to the shopfront, and would not be seen to meet with the requirements of the regeneration and enhancement aims of Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area. There are suitable alternative designs available, which would allow a single entrance to be installed. Suggested alternative options have not been taken forward by the applicant. It is therefore considered that the proposal does not accord with Policy TC01.

7a.4 Policy D01 - Placemaking states:-

*The following locations are regarded as key opportunities for placemaking within the area, within which there will be a particular emphasis on high quality design and environmental enhancement:*

1. *Strategic Housing Growth Areas & Business Locations*
2. *Town and Village Centres*
3. *Town Gateways and Major Urban Road Corridors*
4. *Canal Corridor*
5. *Central Scotland Green Network*

7a.5 Falkirk Town Centre is considered as the principal centre within the district, with on-going regeneration of the town centre seen as a priority. As part of this, the physical improvement and appearance of buildings is important, to ensure that the town centre works to become an attractive place to visit and spend time, both for leisure and business, and also as a place to live. There are examples of historic buildings within the town centre which have had unsympathetic and damaging alterations, resulting in the loss of the original design features and impacting negatively on the overall visual appearance of the area. Current policy and guidance covering Falkirk Town Centre has placed an emphasis on ensuring that historic designs are repaired, restored or reintroduced, to improve the image of the town centre and create a sense of place. This is also important on main transport routes within the town centre, including Princes Street. The proposal would see the loss of two 1930's recessed doorways, being replaced with a single modern metal and glazed entrance. The proposal would not be seen to continue the emphasis on high quality design or be an environmental enhancement to the area. The opportunity exists to alter the unit in a way that would be protective of the 1930's shopfront design, and allow for a single doorway to be created. However, as presented, the proposal is not seen to continue the placemaking objective within the town centre. It is therefore considered that the proposal does not accord with Policy D01.

7a.6 Policy D06 - Shopfronts states:-

*The design of new or altered shopfronts should be well-proportioned and sympathetic to the character of the building of which they are part, as specified within Supplementary Guidance SG04 'Shopfronts'.*

7a.7 Policy D06 - Shopfronts advocates that any altered shopfront should be seen to be well-proportioned and sympathetic to the character of the building of which they are part. The proposal would see the removal of the recessed doorways of two 1930's shopfronts to create a single entrance point, allowing the two units to be operated as one. In principle, given the restraints on the structural elements at the doorway area preventing the internal opening up of the walls, it is considered that a single doorway could be created. This would however have to take into account the overall shopfront design, and a wooden and glazed frame could be designed to complement the original shopfront. This would then preserve the shopfrontage and building design, especially given its location within the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area. The preservation of the design would also ensure that in the longer-term, the row of units could revert back to similar design proportions, ensuring a continued improvement to the area as a whole. This accords with current shopfront policy and guidance. However, the proposal seeks to replace the two 1930's recessed doorways with a modern metal and glazed entrance. This would not create a well-proportioned design, nor would it be sympathetic to the character of the shopfront building which forms part of the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area. It is therefore considered that the proposal does not accord with Policy D06.

7a.8 Policy D10 - Conservation Areas states:-

*The Council will protect the historic character and visual amenity of each Conservation Area. Accordingly:*

1. *New development in Conservation Areas should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, with particular reference to the historic pattern and density of development; its setting; the architectural style, massing and materials of buildings; landscape treatments; and boundary features.*
2. *The layout, design, materials, scale, siting and use of any development affecting an unlisted building in a Conservation Area, including extensions, replacement windows, doors, roofs, rainwater goods, boundary treatments and other features, should respect the character and appearance of the original building, and should conform to Supplementary Guidance SG16 'Design Guidance for Listed Buildings and Non-Listed Buildings in Conservation Areas'.*
3. *Demolition of unlisted buildings within Conservation Areas which make a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the area will only be supported where:*
  - the existing building is incapable of physical repair and re-use, as shown by the submission and verification of a thorough structural condition report; or*
  - the costs of repair and re-use are such that it is not economically viable. Supporting evidence should include a full economic appraisal, evidence that grant aid is not able to meet any funding deficit, and evidence that the building has been actively marketed at a reasonable price and for a period reflecting its location, condition and possible viable uses without finding a restoring purchaser; or*
  - the demolition of the building is essential for the delivery of significant economic benefits for the local or wider community; and*
  - proposals for redevelopment of the site contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation Area.*

*Existing buildings shall be retained on site until the redevelopment commences.*

7a.9 It is considered that the removal of the 1930's recessed shopfront doorway and replacement with a modern metal and glass single doorway, would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area. It is noted within this report that in principle the loss of the two doorways, and for one single doorway entrance to be formed, would be acceptable. However, the proposal in terms of its design and use of modern materials does not respect the character and appearance of the original shopfront or overall building. The proposal as presented also does not take account of the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan, which partly through shopfront improvement and design, is looking for the continued enhancement of the town centre. This should ensure that historic shopfronts are protected, or when requiring amendment, are sympathetic to the design and character of the shopfront and the building within which it is contained. The proposals do not take this into account, and are not considered to be suitable in the overall design proposed. It is therefore considered that the proposal does not accord with Policy D10.

## ***Supplementary Guidance forming part of Local Development Plan***

7a.10 It is considered from the above policy assessment that the proposal does not accord with Supplementary Guidance SG04 - Shopfronts or SG16 - Listed Buildings and Unlisted Properties in Conservation Areas. These documents reiterate the general thrust of the relevant Development Plan policies.

### **7b Material Considerations**

The material considerations to be assessed are the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan, Falkirk THI and the Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 (Proposed Plan).

#### **Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan**

7b.1 Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan - The Conservation Area Management Plan supports actions and a framework to support the continued enhancement and management of the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area. There is an emphasis on ensuring the physical design and appearance of the town centre continues to be enhanced. Shopfronts should be improved by repairing, restoring or, where unsympathetic, replaced with appropriate designs, to ensure that the overall quality of the environment is improved throughout the town centre. Shopfrontages of good quality design should not be lost and amendments/alterations should be sympathetic to the historical design character. The proposals are not sympathetic to the current design or materials of the shopfrontage, and therefore it is considered that the proposal would not accord with the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area Management Plan.

#### **Falkirk Townscape Heritage Initiative Project**

7b.2 Falkirk Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) - The Falkirk THI has been operating within the town centre over the last 5 years, providing grant assistance for the repair and restoration of historic buildings within the THI area. Although the site within the current application is out with the THI area, the principles of the THI are required by the Council to be applied throughout the conservation area, to ensure that the THI investment in the town is continued by conservation area wide improvement. The THI have provided the following statement in relation to the proposal:

*"Falkirk THI is a regeneration scheme which has been taking place in the town centre since 2013 and it will conclude in 2018. We have been funding sympathetic improvements, repairs and alterations to buildings and shopfronts throughout the Conservation Area.*

*We are a heritage-based scheme and support work which preserves or enhances the special architectural and historic character of the town, in accordance with the Conservation Area Management Plan. Our funding is provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Environment Scotland. As such, we are required to provide funding only for works which meet their specific standards.*

*We have looked over the proposed alterations to 16 and 18 Princes Street, Falkirk. This is a shop with two 1930s shopfronts, which were originally part of a row of five shopfronts (no.16 - no.24 Princes St) designed in the same style. Over time, the shopfront at no. 24 has been lost and replaced with a modern shopfront. The 1930s doorway at 20-24 has been removed and replaced with modern, unsympathetic infill and the fascia is obscured with modern, unsympathetic signage.*

*Nos 16 and 18 Princes Street are the most intact of the 1930s scheme, two of only a few similar examples which can still be found in Falkirk town centre. As such they are worthy of protection from any alterations which would significantly detract from their historic character.*

*We do not consider the alterations proposed under P/18/0229/FUL to either enhance or preserve the existing shopfront. This goes against the Conservation Area Management Plan for Falkirk town centre and against the work that the THI has been funding since 2013.*

*Had this scheme been submitted for THI funding, it would not have been considered acceptable as it currently stands."*

### **Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 (Proposed Plan)**

- 7b.3 The Proposed Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) has been approved by the Council for consultation. The consultation period runs from 27 September 2018 to 23 November 2018. Following consideration by Scottish Ministers of representations received it is expected that LDP2 will be adopted in 2020, at which point it will replace the current Falkirk Local Development Plan. LDP2 provides the most up to date indication of Falkirk Council's views in relation to Development Plan policy and constitutes a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The relevant policies contained within the Proposed Falkirk LDP2 are considered to highlight the same policy context as those within the current adopted plan. There are no material considerations within the policies which would cause the proposal to be assessed in a different manner. It is therefore considered that the proposal does not accord with the Falkirk LDP2.

### **7c Conclusion**

- 7c.1 It is considered that the proposal is not acceptable development as a replacement as the proposed alterations would not respect the architectural character and appearance of the original shopfront and Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area. It is not in accordance with Policy TC01, D01, D06 and D10 of the Falkirk Local Development Plan.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

**8.1 It is recommended to refuse planning permission for the following reason(s):-**

- 1. The proposed development does not accord with the terms of Policy TC01 - Network of Centres, D01 - Placemaking, D06 - Shopfronts and D10 - Conservation Areas of the Falkirk Local Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance SG04 - Shopfronts and SG16 - Listed Buildings and Unlisted Properties in Conservation Areas. The proposed alterations to the shopfront would not respect the architectural character and appearance of the original 1930s shopfront. The proposal would also not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area.**

**Informative(s):-**

- 1. For the avoidance of doubt, the plan(s) to which this decision refer(s) bear our online reference number(s) 01.**

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**pp Director of Development Services**

**Date: 12 October 2018**

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

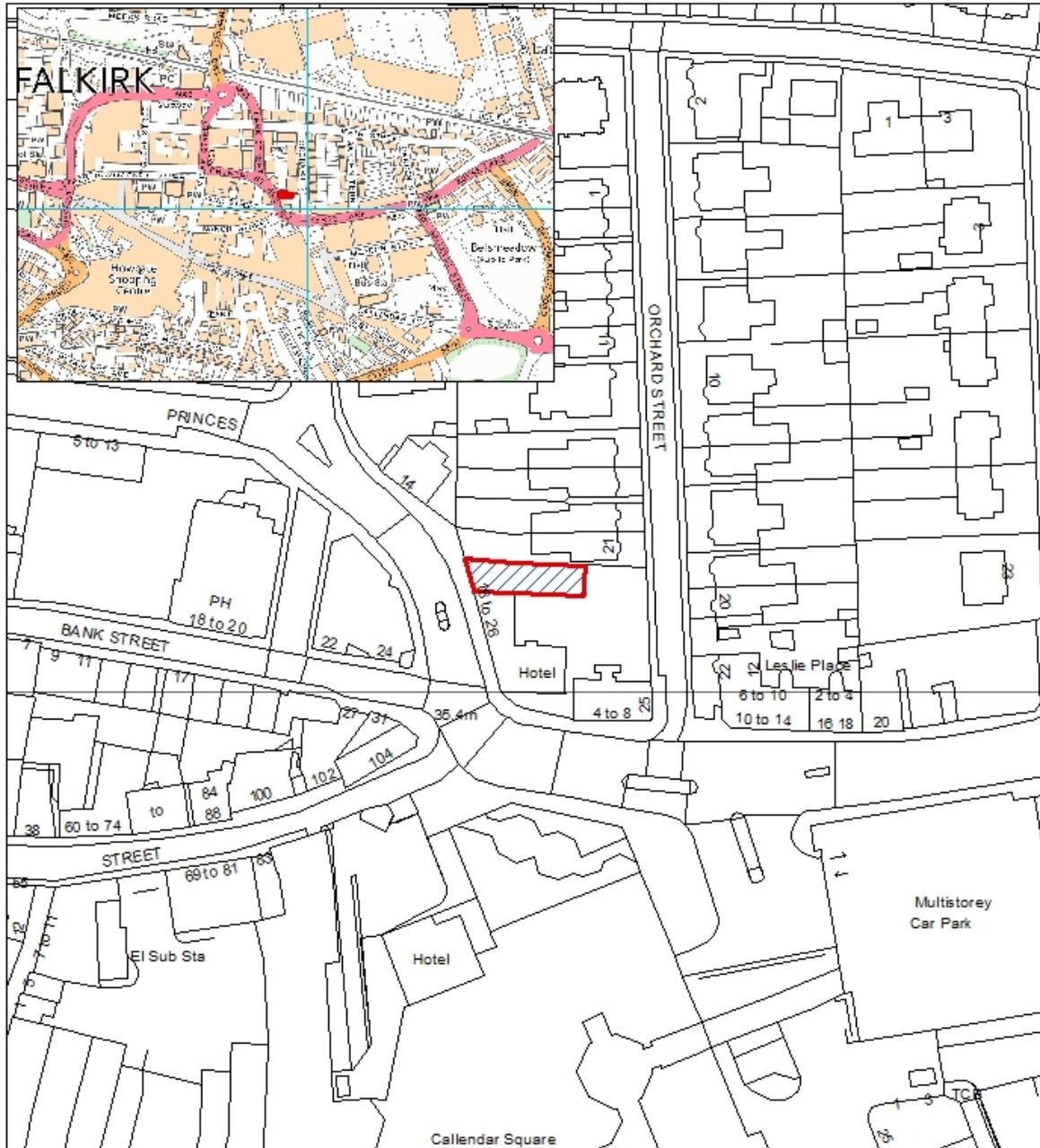
- 1. Falkirk Local Development Plan.**
- 2. Falkirk Council Supplementary Guidance SG04 - Shopfronts.**
- 3. Falkirk Council Supplementary Guidance SG16 - Listed Buildings and Unlisted Properties in Conservation Areas.**
- 4. Falkirk Town Centre Conservation Area Proposed Plan.**

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone Falkirk 01324 504702 and ask for Stephen McClure, Planning Officer.

# Planning Committee

## Planning Application Location Plan **P/18/0229/FUL**

This plan is for location purposes only. It should not be interpreted as an exact representation of the application site.



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