

Conservation area impact

The application falls within the West End Conservation area and as such is required to make a positive contribution to the area. The proposed elevation treatment appears to successfully open up the façade on both the West End Lane and Fawley Road elevations, bringing additional life to the street on an important corner site. This represents a significant improvement to the current, inward looking and fortress like elevations offered by the bank.

However, there do not seem to be any proposals for the large paved area along Fawley Road, which sits over the applicant's basement area below. The applicant is most likely intending to locate tables and chairs under the proposed awnings along this elevation. Perhaps a more clearly defined outdoor seating area should be considered, which is delineated from the pavement along this part of Fawley Road and the corner with West End Lane?

This area of paving and tarmac has been poorly maintained and neglected by Barclays Bank for a number of years. The surface is very uneven and represents as serious trip hazard to pedestrians (see photo below). The primary reason for this issue is the level difference between the public pavement and the area under the applicant's control. This unevenness needs to be addressed as part of the application.



Uneven and neglected area of paving and tarmac

One simple solution would be to require the applicant to construct planters along Fawley Road between their land and the public pavement and to upgrade the paving in this area. This would serve several purposes:

- segregate the applicants seating area from the pavement, making a more pleasant environment for outdoor diners;
- resolve the level difference between the public pavement and the applicant's site;
- introduce some greenery to an otherwise large expanse of tarmac and paving, with consequent environmental benefits;
- generally enhance the conservation area; and
- prevent the space being used for ad hoc parking of scooters.

There are two examples on West End Lane which demonstrate the positive impact planting can make in similar situations- outside Sirous and outside the Black Lion/ Wolfpack (see photos and sketch below).

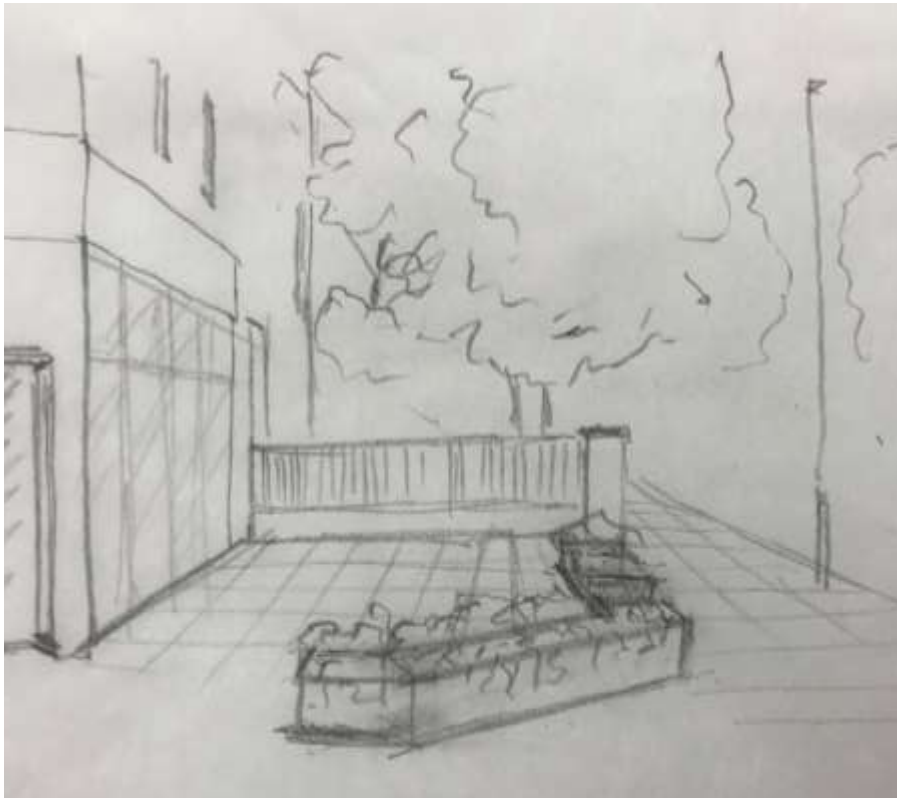


Planters outside Sirous



Planters outside Black Lion/ Wolfpack

A similar arrangement could be established along Fawley Road and on the corner with West End Lane to establish a clear seating area, distinct from the pavement- see sketch below:



Potential location of planters along Fawley Road/ West End Lane corner

Consultation process and application completeness

Government guidance on planning consultation states that:

It is a statutory requirement that applications for planning permission and associated documents are placed on the local planning authority's planning register.....The planning register must include an index to enable those interested to identify the application. Local planning authorities will wish to ensure documents can be easily found on their website and are clearly named. (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/consultation-and-pre-decision-matters>)

The existing basement plan, listed on the application form as one of the drawings included in application, is not included on the Council's website alongside the other drawings and application documents. Please can the Council upload this drawing to the website to ensure that the consultation process is conducted properly?

With regard to the basement, the applicant has not submitted a proposed basement plan and the application form gives no details on intended use of the basement space, which constitutes more than 50% of the total floor area. It is therefore not possible to assess what the applicant intends to use the basement area for. This represents a significant omission from the application. Please can officers request a proposed basement plan from the applicant as well as an explanation of intended use of this space? Please will officers also upload these documents to the council website so that the application can be properly assessed by consultees?

The concern here is that the applicant wishes to use the basement as an extended kitchen area, potentially supporting a significant delivery/ take away operation. This could fundamentally change the use of the site, making it more akin to an industrial catering, or “dark kitchen” operation and less of a restaurant. The applicant needs to clarify this.

As officers are aware, if a full and proper consultation process does not take place then any decision made by the council may be open to challenge.

Refuse arrangements

The application does not make any reference to arrangements for refuse storage and collection. Please can officers request clarification on this matter and upload details to the website for comment?