

**From:** richard.peats@HistoricEngland.org.uk  
**Sent:** 20 March 2024 17:36  
**To:** Planapps  
**Subject:** Historic England advice on Application no(s) 23/02094/FULMAJ  
**Attachments:** 2302094FULMAJ\_HERef\_P01566254\_L446619.doc

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Dear Mr Shepherd,

Please find attached our advice on the following site -

The Mall, The Kennet Centre, Newbury, RG14 5EN  
Application No(s):23/02094/FULMAJ

Thanks for consulting us on this latest iteration.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Peats  
Team Leader  
E-mail: richard.peats@HistoricEngland.org.uk

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Historic England

Mr Matthew Shepherd  
West Berkshire District Council  
Council Offices - Planning Department  
Market Street  
Newbury  
Berkshire  
RG14 5LD

Direct Dial: 0207 973 3632

Our ref: P01566254

20 March 2024

Dear Mr Shepherd

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015  
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**THE MALL, THE KENNET CENTRE, NEWBURY, RG14 5EN  
Application No. 23/02094/FULMAJ**

Thank you for your letter of 4 March 2024 regarding further information on the above application for planning permission. On the basis of this information, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

**Historic England Advice**

The revised proposals contain several minor amendments to the scheme made in response to our comments of 24 January 2024.

Our overarching concerns about the scale and bulk of the development remain, although these amendments address our key concerns about the architectural detailing.

In relation to that detailing, Block C has been revised to show a more decorative gate, which is an improvement. Details have also been given of a string course, but it is unclear which stringcourse this is.

The façade of Block E is improved. The windows have got smaller, so no longer clash with the windows below. The lack of a brick flat arch or a lintel over them still makes them look like holes in the wall that are at odds with the rest of the elevation. Replacing the missing arches on the top floor is also a positive move.

The colour of the railings around the roof terrace on the corner element of Block F have been changed, which would slightly reduce their visibility. The colour of the brick string course on the central element has been changed too. This would improve the look of the building, as it will make the oddness of string course with bricks laid on their



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side in an otherwise traditional building less obvious.

The scale, bulk and massing of the proposed development nonetheless remains at odds with the historic urban grain of Newbury. As a result, it would harm the significance of the conservation area and the opportunity that redeveloping the Kennet Centre in a way that truly enhances the town would be missed.

Your council will now need to assess whether the remaining harm to the conservation area, which we consider to be in the middle of the range of less than substantial harm, is clearly and convincingly justified, and whether the public benefits of the scheme outweigh the harm, as directed by paragraph 206 and 208 of the National Planning Policy Framework. A key consideration should be whether development on the scale proposed is necessary to make a regeneration scheme viable.

If your council does decide to grant planning permission this would need to be carefully conditioned to ensure the quality of the scheme built. The success of the designs proposed would be almost wholly dependent on the highest quality of detailing. Excellent sample details have been provided but these would need to be executed faithfully on the buildings that they relate to, and a similar standard applied across all the traditionally styled buildings (blocks C, F G & H, the northern part of block E). If they are not, the entire scheme would be poor. Given the great importance of detailing in this case, we suggest that a very robust approach is taken to the discharge of conditions to mitigate the high risk that its quality will be compromised during the building process.

Therefore, if the Council's resolution is to grant planning permission, Historic England would like to be consulted on future applications for the discharge of conditions relating to design details.

### **Recommendation**

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 206 and 208 of the NPPF.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess and section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.



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Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

**Richard Peats**

Team Leader

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