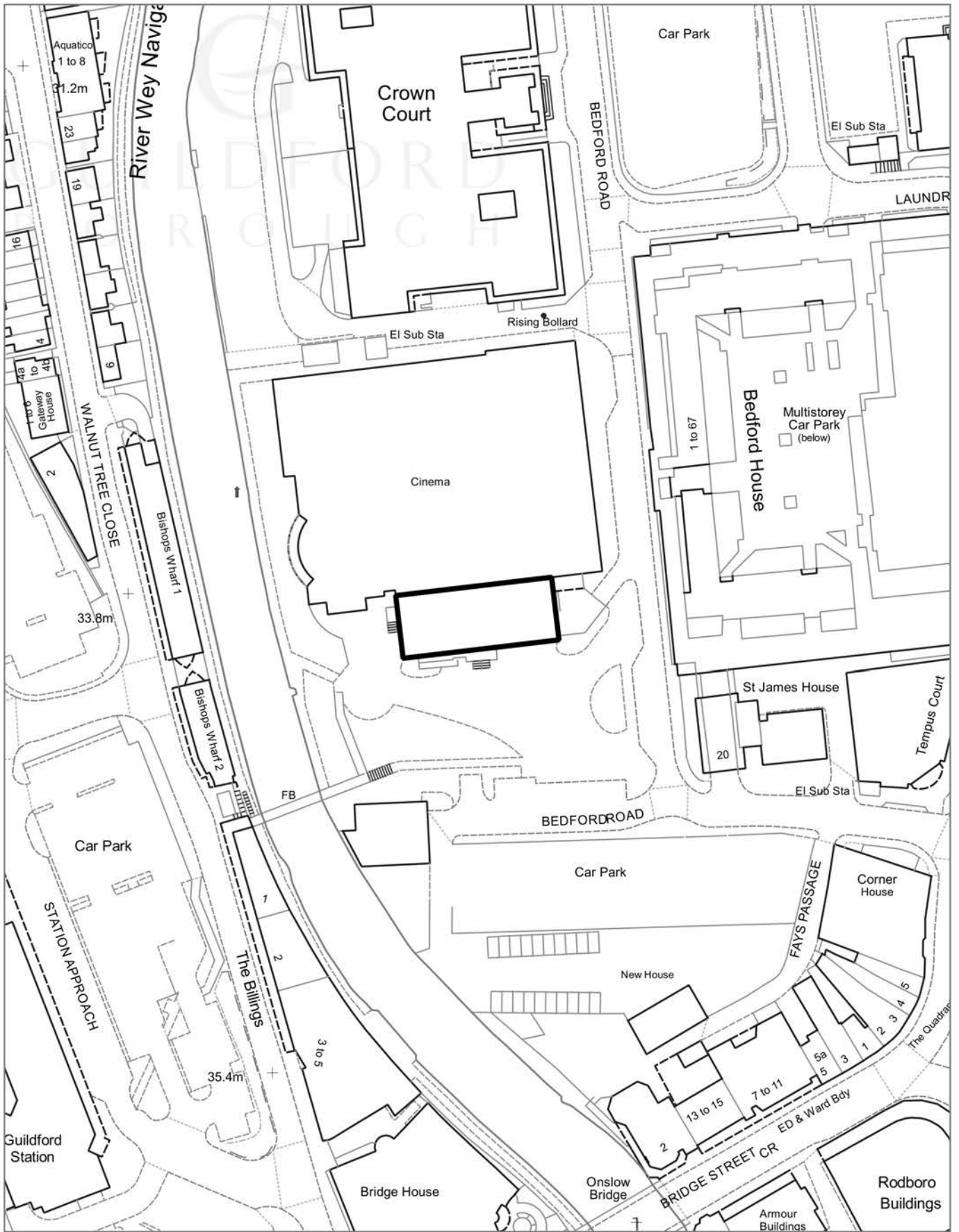


# 20/P/00774 - Old Orleans Restaurant, Bedford Road, Guildford



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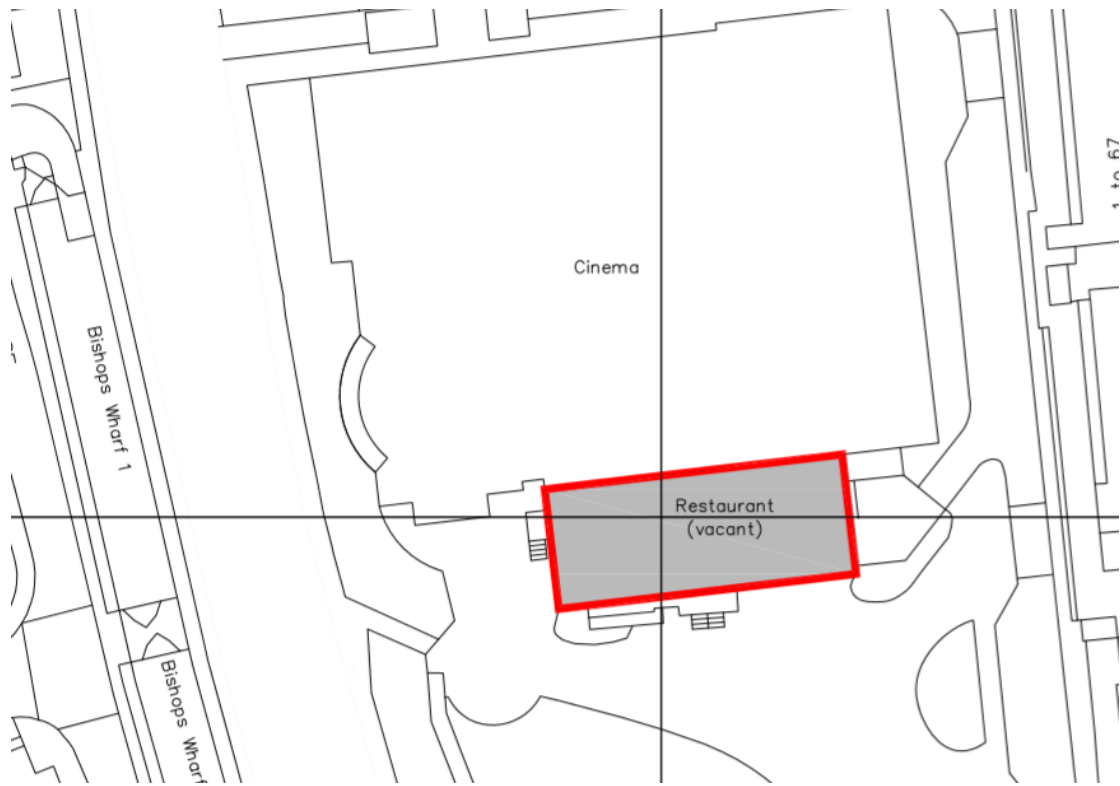


Not to Scale



**GUILDFORD**  
BOROUGH

**20/P/00774 – Old Orleans Restaurant, Bedford Road, Guildford GU1 4SJ**



**Not to scale**

**App No:** 20/P/00774  
**Appn Type:** Full Application  
**Case Officer:** John Busher

**8 Wk Deadline:** 01/07/2020

**Parish:** Friary & St. Nicolas  
**Agent :** Mr D Hammond  
McFarlane Latter  
3 Clifford Street  
London  
W1S 2LF

**Ward:** Friary & St. Nicolas  
**Applicant:** .  
Odeon Cinemas Ltd.  
Floor 3  
No. 8 First Street  
Manchester  
M15 4RP

**Location:** Old Orleans Restaurant, Bedford Road, Guildford, GU1 4SJ  
**Proposal:** Change of use of existing A3 premises to use class D2 (cinema) along with associated alterations to elevations and creation of two emergency exits in south elevation.

### **Executive Summary**

#### **Reason for referral**

This application has been referred to the Planning Committee as the Council owns the freehold of the application site.

#### **Key information**

The application site is located within the town centre alongside a busy pedestrian route between the railway station and High Street. The proposal involves the incorporation of the former Old Orleans premises into the existing cinema and the formation of two additional screens. The site is located adjacent to two conservation areas and is within flood zone 3b.

#### **Summary of considerations and constraints**

The former Old Orleans building is being integrated into the existing cinema in an acceptable manner. The building would be modest in terms of its scale and massing and would be clearly subservient to the existing built form. The proposed materials would reflect those being used as part of the new Walnut Bridge proposals, and as such, the proposal will integrate well with the Council's plans for this area of the town centre. The Council's Corporate Programmes Team have been involved in the pre-application discussions with the applicant and raise no objections to the current proposal. Although the southern elevation of the building will be blank, this will allow for seating to be provided along this elevation, as part of the Council's landscaping scheme for the plaza.

The applicant is taking suitable measures to flood proof the building and the newly expanded building would be evacuated in the same manner as existing during flood events.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

### **Approve - subject to the following condition(s) and reason(s) :-**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: OD.GD.001.SPN, OD.GD.002.BPN, OD.GD.210.EGA, OD.GD.211.PGA A, OD.GD.001.EGA, OD.GD.101.PGA and OD.WR.000.LPN.

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and in the interests of proper planning.

3. No development shall take place (excluding demolition and site clearance) until details and samples of the proposed external facing and roofing materials including colour and finish have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and samples.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory.

4. The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until a landscaping scheme for the area between the application building and the red line plot boundary has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved landscape scheme shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved.

Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of an appropriate landscape scheme in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality.

5. The development hereby approved shall only be carried out in accordance with the flood risk reduction measures set out in an email from the applicant dated 28 May 2020. These measures shall be retained for the life of the development.

Reason: To reduce the flood risk to the building and its occupants / users.

**Informatives:**

1. This statement is provided in accordance with Article 35(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Guildford Borough Council seek to take a positive and proactive approach to development proposals. We work with applicants in a positive and proactive manner by:
  - Offering a pre application advice service
  - Where pre-application advice has been sought and that advice has been followed we will advise applicants/agents of any further issues arising during the course of the application
  - Where possible officers will seek minor amendments to overcome issues identified at an early stage in the application process

However, Guildford Borough Council will generally not engage in unnecessary negotiation for fundamentally unacceptable proposals or where significant changes to an application is required.

In this case pre-application advice was sought and provided which addressed potential issues. The application has been submitted in accordance with that advice and further minor amendments to the scheme were secured as part of the application process. As amended, the proposal is now deemed to be acceptable.

2. If you need any advice regarding Building Regulations please do not hesitate to contact Guildford Borough Council Building Control on 01483 444545 or [buildingcontrol@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:buildingcontrol@guildford.gov.uk)

**Officer's Report****Site description**

The application site is the former Old Orleans restaurant which is located on the eastern bank of the River Wey, between Bedford Road and Walnut Bridge. The building is attached to the existing cinema and its southern elevation fronts onto Bedford Wharf plaza which is an area of protected open space. The building is single storey in height and is significantly lower than the main cinema structure. It has steps and a ramp along its southern elevation, with the floor being raised above the level of the plaza. The building has been vacant for many years.

The site is within Guildford town centre and is adjacent to both the Wey and Godalming Navigations Conservation Area and the Bridge Street Conservation Area. The site is also within flood zone 3b.

**Proposal**

Change of use of existing A3 premises to use class D2 (cinema) along with associated alterations to elevations and creation of two emergency exits in south elevation.

The proposal involves the conversion of the former restaurant (A3 use) into two cinema screens as an extension to the existing cinema. The existing Old Orleans building would be significantly remodelled with the steps and ramps removed to create a structure which is the same level as the plaza. The remodelled structure would retain the same appearance as the existing, albeit with the use of different materials.

It should be noted that since the submission of the original application, amended plans have been received which alter the proposed external materials. Further detail on this will be provided below.

### Relevant planning history

Reference:	Description:	Decision Summary:	Appeal:
20/P/00775	Advertisement consent for two internally illuminated fascia branding signage to south elevation.	Approved with conditions.	N/A
20/P/00235	Advertisement consent for three internally illuminated fascia signs and low level illuminated poster cases.	Withdrawn 26/03/2020	N/A
20/P/00234	Change of use of existing A3 premises to use class D2 (cinema) along with associated alterations to elevations and creation of two emergency exits in south elevation.	Withdrawn 26/03/2020	N/A

### Consultations

#### Statutory consultees

County Highway Authority: No objections raised. It is noted that the proposal is unlikely to have a material impact on highway issues.

Environment Agency: Refers the Local Planning Authority to standing advice.

#### Internal consultees

Corporate Programmes (Major Projects), Guildford Borough Council: It is noted that the new elevation on to Bedford Square should not be overbearing and instead feel part of the public space. As this elevation is in effect dead frontage, it should comprise a variety of materials that reflect the vernacular of surrounding riverside buildings.... This appears to be achieved in the sections under the gables (where the illuminated boxes are positioned), however there is a long section between these where the material looks plain and more functional (similar to what may appear at the rear of such a building in a servicing area). We would ask that particular attention is paid to this section in the final designs and that conditions are applied accordingly to achieve the agreed joint aspiration. [Officer Report: It is noted that the grey industrial style cladding has now been removed from the plans. The building would now be finished mainly with timber cladding and tile hanging].

#### Amenity groups/Residents associations

Guildford Society: Raise objection due to the loss of active frontage, the use of industrial type metal panels for the elevation treatment and the general poor quality of the design. [Officer Report: As above, it is noted that the grey industrial style cladding has now been removed from the plans. The building would now be finished mainly with timber cladding and tile hanging].

## **Third party comments**

No comments received.

## **Planning policies**

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

Chapter 6. Building a strong, competitive economy  
Chapter 7. Ensuring the vitality of town centres  
Chapter 12. Achieving well designed places  
Chapter 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change  
Chapter 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment  
Chapter 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015-2034:

Policy S1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
Policy P4 Flooding, flood risk and groundwater protection zones  
Policy D1 Place shaping  
Policy D3 Historic environment  
Policy E7 Retail and leisure uses in Guildford town centre

### Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 (as saved by CLG Direction 24 September 2007):

Although the Council has now adopted the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015-2034 (LPSS), some policies of the saved Local Plan 2003 continue to be relevant to the assessment of planning applications and carry full weight. The extant policies which are relevant to this proposal are set out below.

Policy G1 General standards of development  
Policy G5 Design code  
Policy HE10 Development which affects the setting of a conservation area

## **Planning considerations**

The main planning considerations in this case are:

- the principle of development and change of use
- the impact on the character of the area and setting of the conservation areas
- the impact on neighbouring amenity
- highway/parking considerations

### The principle of development and change of use

The proposal results in the loss of a long-term vacant A3 unit and the subsequent enlargement of the existing cinema. The site is located outside of the main shopping areas of the town centre where more restrictive retail policies exist. As a cinema is still a main town centre use, the proposed change of use is acceptable in principle and is not objectionable.

It is noted that the proposal is located within flood zone 3b which is the functional floodplain. The development would not result in any increase in the footprint of the existing building, if anything, it is noted that its overall extent would be reduced due to the demolition of the existing steps and ramp.

As such, the proposal would not result in any loss of flood storage in this area and there would be no greater risk caused to other surrounding sites. If during a flood the building needs to be evacuated, this would take place along with the rest of the existing cinema, and as such there would be no increased risk to the public. This would be carried out in accordance with cinema's evacuation plan which will be adapted as necessary to include the additional two screens. The applicant has confirmed that the building would be constructed with 'flood proofing' in mind. For example, electrical sockets would be located higher and all cabling will be routed overhead. In addition the proposed ground floor plans indicate that the floor level of the additional screens would be no lower than the existing cinema. On this basis, the proposal would not result in any increased flood risk and measures are in place to protect customers and the building itself.

Subject to the design of the building being in keeping with its surroundings (which will be discussed below), the proposal is deemed to be acceptable in principle.

#### The impact on the character of the area and setting of the conservation areas

The site is located in a predominately commercial area on a busy pedestrian route between the railway station and the High Street. The existing Old Orleans building has been vacant for many years and although it did have an active frontage onto Bedford Wharf, this hasn't been the case for a considerable period. The vacant building now presents very poorly to the public realm and does little to positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area.

The proposal would see the substantial remodelling of the building to allow it to be converted into two additional screens for the existing cinema. The existing steps and ramp would be removed and the new building would be set level with the existing plaza area. The structure would mimic the existing Old Orleans with the three small gables being retained which reflects the main entrance into the cinema. The building would be modest in its height, scale and bulk and would be much smaller than the main cinema structure. As noted above, the grey metal cladding which was a concern to the Guildford Society has been removed from the plans. The gables and the elevations would now be finished in a mix of materials, including timber cladding and tile hanging, all of which would need to be agreed through the conditions.

Blue LED strip lights would be installed into the three gables which would again reflect the main entrance into the cinema. The proposal also includes a small glazed extension which would facilitate access between the existing cinema and the new extension. This extension is modest in size and would be set back from the main southern elevation of Old Orleans.

The extension to the building would be clearly subservient to the main cinema and it would integrate into its surroundings in an acceptable manner. It is noted that discussions have taken place between the applicant and the Council's Corporate Programmes Team. The materials will tie in with those expected to be used for the new Walnut Bridge and the re-landscaped Bedford Wharf plaza and are therefore deemed to be acceptable. In terms of the main southern elevation being inactive, it is noted that this issue was raised with the applicant. However, due to the nature of cinema auditoriums, it is not possible to have windows in the elevation fronting onto Bedford Wharf. Rather than install 'dummy' windows into the elevation to give the perception of activity, it is noted that when the landscaping scheme for Bedford Wharf plaza is implemented, the blank facade will allow for benches and seats to be placed along the southern elevation of the building. This will promote pedestrian activity in this area of the plaza and will be a significant improvement over the existing situation. The Council's Corporate Programmes Team raises no objections to the proposal.



It is also noted that the site is located close to two town centre conservation areas - the Wey and Godalming Navigations Conservation Area and the Bridge Street Conservation Area. If anything, the proposals would improve the setting of these conservation areas, and over and above the existing situation would not result in any additional harm.

With conditions to control the exact choice of external materials, the proposal is deemed to be acceptable in this regard.

#### The impact on neighbouring amenity

The proposal would form an extension to the existing cinema in an area of the town centre which is predominantly commercial in character. The application site is located well away from neighbouring residential properties.

The proposal would not result in any harm to the amenity of any surrounding property and is deemed to be acceptable in this regard.

#### Highway/parking considerations

In terms of parking it is noted that the existing cinema does not have any on-site spaces, however, there are a number of public car parks within close walking distance for customers to use. Furthermore, the site is very sustainably located, being close to the High Street, the railway station and the bus station. While the proposal may increase trips to the cinema, customers would arrive in the same way as they do now, without harm to the parking situation in the town centre.

The County Highway Authority have raised no concerns regarding highway safety or capacity.

The proposal is deemed to be acceptable in this regard.

#### Conclusion

The former Old Orleans building is being integrated into the existing cinema in an acceptable manner. The building would be modest in terms of its scale and massing and would be clearly subservient to the existing built form. The proposed materials would reflect those being used as part of the new Walnut Bridge proposals, and as such, the proposal will integrate well with the Council's plans for this area of the town centre. The Council's Corporate Programmes Team have been involved in the pre-application discussions with the applicant and raise no objections to the current proposal. Although the southern elevation of the building will be blank, this will allow for seating to be provided along this elevation, as part of the Council's landscaping scheme for the plaza.

The proposal is therefore deemed to be acceptable and is recommended for approval.