

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Site Address: Co-op 2 High Street, Emsworth, PO10 7AE
Proposal: Retrospective application for siting of InPost Parcel Locker
Application Type: Retrospective Planning Permission
Application No: APP/25/00147 Expiry Date: 08/05/2025
Applicant: InPost UK InPost UK
Agent: Mrs Herrick Case Officer: Denise Sheath
 NL Jones Planning
Ward: Emsworth

Recommendation: **REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION IN RETROSPECT**

1 **Site Description**

The application site comprises an InPost Locker facility, which is situated on a narrow area of land to the west elevation 2 The High Street. 2 High Street comprises a Co-op store at GF level and residential flats above.

2 **Planning History**

90/52728/006 - Erection of shopfront. PERM - 21/06/1990
90/52728/007 - Non-illuminated 'For Sale' board at first floor level on north-west elevation. NPW - 04/01/1991
94/52728/008 - Formation of bin storage area. PERM - 25/08/1994
04/52728/010 - Display of a non illuminated projecting sign. PERM - 17/08/2004
04/52728/011 - Installation of new shop front to north west and west elevations at southern end of the building. PERM - 13/09/2004
05/52728/012 - Installation of automatic teller machine. PERM - 07/11/2005
08/52728/013 - Form new entrance to existing retail shop. PERM - 22/04/2008
09/52728/014 - Display of 1No. externally illuminated fascia sign. PERM - 15/12/2009
APP/18/00767 - Minor shopfront alterations. PERM - 09/11/2018
APP/18/00768 - Display of 2No. externally illuminated fascia signs; 3No. non-illuminated hanging signs; 1No. non-illuminated store directory panel; 2No. non-illuminated window graphics. PERM - 03/10/2018
APP/19/00147 - Application for Non-material amendment to Planning Permission APP/18/00767 relating to the movement of the entrance doors 300m sideways from their approved position. PERM - 21/02/2019
APP/19/00336 - Display of 2No externally illuminated fascia signs, 3No non-illuminated hanging signs and 2No non-illuminated window graphics. (Alternative scheme to planning permission APP/18/00768). - PERM - 04/06/2019

3 **Proposal**

Retrospective application for siting of InPost Parcel Locker

4 **Policy Considerations**

National Planning Policy Framework
Havant Borough Council Borough Design Guide SPD December 2011
Havant Borough Council Parking SPD July 2016

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy) March 2011

CS11 (Protecting and Enhancing the Special Environment and Heritage of Havant Borough)
CS12 (Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB))
CS16 (High Quality Design)

Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations) July 2014

DM20 (Historic Assets)

Emsworth Neighbourhood Plan Post Examination Version 2020

ENP_H1 (Design & Heritage)
ENP_D1 (General Design Policy)

Listed Building Grade: Not applicable.

Conservation Area: Emsworth

5 Statutory and Non Statutory Consultations

Chichester Harbour Conservancy

Thank you for consulting Chichester Harbour Conservancy on the above planning application.

Chichester Harbour Conservancy is a unique organisation in that it is the only Harbour Authority with statutory responsibility for a National Landscape (formerly AONB).

Further details are explained in the Appendix to this response.

Please note that the above case has been considered as a fully delegated decision by the Principal Planning Officer at Chichester Harbour Conservancy.

Chichester Harbour Conservancy's Response

NO OBJECTION

Reasoned Justification

Given its size, location and relationship to the host (unlisted) building within a built town centre setting, in our view the parcel locker does not have a significant impact on the natural beauty of the Chichester Harbour National Landscape.

Conservation Officer

Site / Location

The application site comprises an InPost Locker facility, which is situated on a narrow area of land to the west elevation 2 The High Street. 2 High Street comprises a Co-op store at GF level and residential flats above.

Legislation

When assessing the proposal, the following legislation and policy context is taken in consideration.

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires planning authorities, when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a Conservation Area, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of that area.

National Planning Policy Framework (revised December 2024)

Chapter 16 of the NPPF relates to the Historic Environment including paragraphs 202-221. The following paragraphs are most relevant to the determination of this application:

Para 212 states that:

‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance’.

Para 214 states that:

‘Where a development will result in substantial harm to, or total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, permission should be refused, unless this harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits, or a number of criteria are met. Where less than substantial harm is identified paragraph 208 requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development’

Para 215 states that:

‘Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use’.

Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy 2011 and Allocations Plan 2014)

Policy CS11 – Protecting and Enhancing the Special Environment and Heritage of the Havant Borough

Policy CS11 (4) states that planning permission will be granted for development which:

‘Protects and where appropriate enhances the borough’s statutory and non-statutory heritage designations by appropriately managing development in or adjacent to conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, archaeological sites, buildings of local historic or architectural interest’.

Policy CS16 – High Quality Design

Policy CP16 (1a) of the Core Strategy states that:

‘Planning permission will be granted for development that is designed to a high standard, which helps to create places where people want to live, work and relax. All development should demonstrate that its design:

Identifies and responds positively to existing features of natural, historic or local character within or close to the proposed development site’.

Integrates with existing local landscape features, promotes wildlife and biodiversity and/or applies characteristics of the local area into the design of a scheme wherever

possible to create variety and interest;

Uses the characteristics of the locality to help inform the design of the new development including heights, massing, existing buildings lines, plot widths and depths, materials and proportions of windows and doors;

Is well connected to and integrates with the immediate local area and the wider area by linking to existing pedestrian and cycle routes and encouraging people to use public transport where possible; and

The development does not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbours through smell, the loss of privacy, outlook, noise and overlooking.

Policy DM20 (Allocations Plan) - Historic Assets

Policy DM20 states that;

‘Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that conserves and enhances the historic assets of Havant. It also states that application which affect, or have the potential to affect, heritage assets are expected to provide a Heritage Statement that:

1. Describe the significance of the asset and its setting, using appropriate expertise and where necessary original survey, at a level of detail proportionate to its significance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal.
2. Sets out the impact of the development on the heritage assets and mitigation that is proportionate to the impact and the significance of the heritage asset, including where possible positive opportunities to conserve and enjoy heritage assets.

Assessment

The locker is located in front of the side (west elevation) of the Co-op building, on a narrow strip of land immediately adjacent to the footpath. The locker is not screened in anyway, nor integrated within the envelope of No. High Street, nor contained within an enclosure.

The closest listed building to the site is No. 6 North Street, which is located opposite the site. It considered that the setting of this building is to the side and rear of the building and not the front of the site. As such, it is considered that the proposal does not result in harm to this heritage asset, nor its setting.

With regards to the impact on the conservation area (also a designated heritage asset), the locker is positioned along part of the west elevation. This elevation is highly visible when entering the conservation area from the North Street roundabout. The entrance to the Co-op is located on the corner of the building facing into the High Street. Due to the lack of screening and prominent position, the locker is highly visible within the context of the conservation area. As it bears no relationship to the adjacent building and no consideration has been made to mitigate and / or minimise the visual

impact so it appears less prominent, nor any justification given for its position, it is considered that the proposal results in less than substantial harm to the Emsworth Conservation Area.

Overall, it is considered that the development results in harm to the significance of the Emsworth Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset. It would therefore fail to meet the test set out in S72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ("1990 Act"), along with the relevant policies in the NPPF and Local Plan.

Conclusion

OBJECTION

Conservation Officer - Additional Response

ADDITIONAL RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION RESPONSE PROVIDED ON 30/4/25

Assessment

The initial response concluded that the development results in less substantial harm to the Emsworth Conservation Area. With regards to the spectrum of harm within this less than substantial bracket, this would be considered to be at the lower end of the scale, given that the postal locker facility, is adjacent to a relatively modern building within the context of the conservation area and also one which is a commercial unit.

Nonetheless, the locker has been implemented without the benefit of planning permission and no attempt has been made to mitigate or minimise its visual impact by integrating it with the adjacent building, nor to justify why it must be located in this position and not in a less visible position. For these reasons, it fails to meet the test of Section 72 which requires development in a conservation area to have special regard for the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of that area.

Para 215 of the NPPF (December 2024), states the following:

‘Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use’.

With regards to a public benefit, the provision of the postal locker facility, which can be utilised 24/7, could be considered a public benefit to a limited extent for the public who choose to use it as a postal service.

However, given the failure of the development to meet Section 72 of the T&CPA 1990, whereby it does not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area, given that no attempt has been made to position it in a less visible location, nor to integrate it with the adjacent building, it is considered that the limited public benefit arising from the development, does not outweigh the less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset (the Emsworth Conservation Area).

Conclusion

OBJECTION

Suggested reason for refusal:

By reason of its highly visible position within the Emsworth Conservation Area and absence of any design features which help to soften and / or integrate its appearance with the adjacent building (No. 2 High Street), the postal locker facility results fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area and therefore results in less than substantial harm to the Emsworth Conservation Area.

Emsworth Residents Forum

No comments received

Natural England Government Team

No comments received

6 Community Involvement

This application was publicised in accordance with the Council's Code of Practice for Publicity of Planning Applications approved at minute 207/6/92 (as amended), as a result of which the following publicity was undertaken:

Number of neighbour notification letters sent: 37

Number of site notices: At least one site notice exists - check the number.

Statutory advertisement: 21/03/2025

Number of representations received: 5

Summary of the 5No. Objections Received:

- Total Eyesore - **Noted**
- Should have some form of screening - **Noted**
- Location of the Locker detracts from the character of Emsworth and the Conservation Area - **Noted**
- The locker does not enhance or preserve the Conservation Area - **Noted**
- Concerns regarding the locker causing additional traffic on highway - **insufficient evidence to demonstrate there would be a significant level of increased traffic to the Town Centre.**
- Locker users potentially illegally parking within the loading bay and on double yellow lines. - **Any concerns regarding illegal parking should be raised with the Highways Authority which will be dealt with under their legislation**
- Pedestrians using the lockers have no safe way of crossing the road from the South Street side of the High Street as there are no marked or traffic light / pedestrian crossing controlled crossings - **There is a pedestrian crossing adjacent the roundabout not 15m from the Inpost Locker with a pedestrian crossing on the junction of High street and West Street not 10m from the proposed lockers. Any other concerns with regard to pedestrian crossings further from the site would be a Highways Authority any safety concerns should be raised with them.**
- Should be re-located to an alternative location - **Noted**
- The post office can be used for posting of packages - **Whilst this is correct many companies use different methods of delivering parcels, In Post lockers are a new**

convent option not restricted by opening days and hours.

7 Planning Considerations

7.1 Having regard to the relevant policies of the development plan it is considered that the main issues arising from this application are:

- (i) Principle of development
- (ii) Impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and Chichester Harbour National Landscape.
- (iii) Impact upon residential amenity

(i) Principle of development

The application site is situated within an urban area where further development is considered acceptable subject to the usual development control criteria.

(ii) Impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and Chichester Harbour National Landscape.

The proposal is for the retention of a 'Inpost Locker' which is located in front of the side (west elevation) of the Co-op building, on a narrow strip of land immediately adjacent to the footpath without the benefit of planning permission. The locker is not screened in anyway, nor integrated within the envelope of No. High Street, nor contained within an enclosure. No attempt has been made to mitigate or minimise its visual impact by integrating it with the adjacent building, nor to justify why it must be located in this position and not in a less visible position. The agent was advised of a more suitable placement of the locker to the rear of the Co-op Shop facing on to Kings Terrace or a form sympathetic screening was requested. The agent declined this request and asked for the application to be assessed as submitted.

Therefore it is considered that the retention of the InPost locker in its current location with no mitigation for integration or screening fails to meet the test of Section 72 which requires development in a conservation area to have special regard for the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of that area.

Para 215 of the NPPF (December 2024), states the following:

'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'.

With regards to a public benefit, the provision of the postal locker facility, which can be utilised 24/7, could be considered a public benefit to a limited extent for the public who choose to use it as a postal service.

Policy DM20 (Historic Assets) states that:

'Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that conserves and enhances the historic assets of Havant. It also states that application which affect, or have the potential to affect, heritage assets are expected to provide a Heritage Statement that:

1. Describe the significance of the asset and its setting, using appropriate expertise and where necessary original survey, at a level of detail proportionate to its significance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal.

2. Sets out the impact of the development on the heritage assets and mitigation that is proportionate to the impact and the significance of the heritage asset, including where possible positive opportunities to conserve and enjoy heritage assets.

With regards to the impact on the conservation area (also a designated heritage asset). Due to the lack of screening and prominent position, the locker is highly visible within the context of the conservation area. As it bears no relationship to the adjacent building and no consideration has been made to mitigate and / or minimise the visual impact so it appears less prominent, nor any justification given for its position, it is considered that the proposal results in less than substantial harm to the Emsworth Conservation Area.

Overall, it is considered that the development results in harm to the significance of the Emsworth Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset.

Given the failure of the development to meet Section 72 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, whereby it does not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area, given that no attempt has been made to position it in a less visible location, nor to integrate it with the adjacent building, it is considered that the limited public benefit arising from the development, does not outweigh the less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset (the Emsworth Conservation Area).

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CS11, CS16 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy) March 2011; DM20 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations) July 2014; ENP_D1 and ENP_H1 of the Emsworth Neighbourhood Plan Post Examination Version 2020 and Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Chichester Harbour National Landscape have raised no objection to the retention of the Inpost Locker.

(iii) Impact upon residential amenity

Due to the location of the Inpost locker is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the amenities of nearby residential properties

(iv) Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is a legal requirement for planning permission introduced for small sites such as this on 2 April 2024. In this case the applicant has claimed the de-minimis exemption that the development does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than:

- 25 square metres (5m x 5m) of on-site habitat
- 5 metres of on-site linear habitats such as hedgerows

Having reviewed the submitted evidence of this claim, it is considered likely that the development would meet the above criteria. On this basis it is agreed that the development is exempt from BNG

requirements. An Informative can be added reminding the applicant of the BNG exemptions criteria on which this decision is based.

8 Conclusion

The retention of the Inpost Locker by reason of its highly visible position within the Emsworth Conservation Area and absence of any design features which help to soften and / or integrate its appearance with the adjacent building (No. 2 High Street), fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area and therefore results in less than substantial harm to the Emsworth Conservation Area contrary to Policies CS11, CS16 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy) March 2011; DM20 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations) July 2014; ENP_D1 and ENP_H1 of the Emsworth Neighbourhood Plan Post Examination Version 2020 and Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. On this basis the application for retention is recommended for refusal.

9 RECOMMENDATION:

That the Head of Place be authorised to **REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION IN RETROSPECT** for application APP/25/00147 for the following reason

- 1 By reason of its highly visible position within the Emsworth Conservation Area and absence of any design features which help to soften and / or integrate its appearance with the adjacent building (No. 2 High Street), the postal locker facility results fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area and therefore results in less than substantial harm to the Emsworth Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CS11, CS16 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Core Strategy) March 2011; DM20 of the Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations) July 2014; ENP_D1 and ENP_H1 of the Emsworth Neighbourhood Plan 2021 and Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.