

Langstone Gate, Solent Road, Havant, Hampshire, PO9 1TR

Site and surroundings

Comprises a small portion of the car park (north-east corner) that serves the Langstone Gate office campus. It is located on the south side of Solent Road just to the west of the Park Road South traffic junction. It is noted that just to the north of Solent Road there is a drive-through and sit-in restaurant with direct access from Park Road South.



Figure 1. The application site looking south towards the offices at Langstone Gate.

Designations

The site is located within the Havant Town Centre and Regeneration of the Borough area.

The application site appears to be within Flood Zone 1 but other parts of the car park are within Zones 2 and 3.

There are trees on the site but they do not appear to be covered by preservation orders.

The site is not within a conservation area although the opposite side of Park Road South forms the western boundary of the St Faith's Conservation Area.

Pre-application

Following the submission of a more extensive proposal than the current application to provide a stand-alone coffee unit on a larger site within the car park a written response was received from the council dated 10 May 2016. It set out that whilst the principle of the development was agreeable there were significant concerns about access from Solent Road, the impact on ecology and loss of trees. There were also reservations about the quality of the design of the proposed unit and its pedestrian connections to the town centre.

Proposal

To construct a stand-alone coffee unit (Class A3) with take away and sit-in facilities on a largely unused part of the car park. The floor area would be 128 square metres and 15 car parking spaces would be allocated to the coffee unit. The size of the unit and number of parking spaces has been reduced significantly compared to the pre-application scheme. There would be no requirement to culvert the nearby stream. Only two trees would be felled and pedestrian connectivity to the town centre has been improved.

Amount

The modest size of the unit proposed would be compatible with the context and result in an agreeable ratio of built form compared to parking, access and manoeuvring space.

Siting

The positioning of the built form close to this busy corner junction approaching the town centre would help to animate and enhance the locality and provide a distinctive piece of townscape.

Scale

The single storey height would be appropriate and in tune with the overall scale of development on this side of Park Road South. The punctuation of the mono-pitched roof with a “slab” advertisement would add visual interest to the development and act as an urban marker.

Design and appearance

A contemporary design approach has resulted in a distinctive built form with a striking mono-pitched roof and mainly glazed shopfront to the south and west elevations. The exposed rafters and deep eaves overhang would add character to the building. The external materials would be mainly metal panels and composite boarding in a terracotta colour.

Residential amenity

There are no residential properties nearby and therefore activities associated with the proposed development would not impact upon residential amenity.

Planning policy

The following policies in the council’s Core Strategy are considered relevant to the proposal:

Policy CS2 (Employment)

The proposed development would provide additional full and part-time jobs.

Policy CS4 (Town and district centres)

The site is located within the Havant Town Centre where A3 uses are considered appropriate.

Policy CS6 (Regeneration of the borough)

Additional commercial development within this town centre location would assist towards the council’s ambition to regenerate the borough.

Policy CS15 (Flood and erosion risk)

The site of the proposed development appears to be within Flood Zone 1 although some of the car parking areas are within Flood Zones 2 and 3. If required the proposed development would be constructed to be flood resilient.

Policy CS16 (High quality design)

The proposed building would be a steel framed structure with a distinctly contemporary design and high quality materials as detailed on the elevational drawings.

Policy CS17 (Concentration and distribution of development within urban areas)

The application site is within the defined urban area where development is encouraged.

Policy DM5 (Control of Class A3, A4 and A5 food, drink and entertainment uses)

This policy sets out various criteria for food and drink related uses. The proposed development is considered to comply in full with the requirements.

Policy DM10 (Pollution)

The proposed development would satisfy the requirements of this policy. It is noted there are no residential properties in the vicinity of the application site.

Chapter 2 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports proposals that promote competitive town centre environments.

Site Allocations Plan

In 2011 part of the car park serving this office campus was put forward through the “call for sites” process as being suitable for further employment development. The council has requested, very recently, as part of its employment land review, if the

site is still considered suitable for additional development and this has been confirmed.

Environmental issues

An ecological appraisal has been carried out together with a tree survey and the relevant documents form part of this application.

Transportation and highways

Although many users of the proposed development would be pedestrians, either working in the locality or the general public using the town centre facilities, there would be some that would arrive by motor vehicles, particularly to use the drive-through facility. The existing vehicular access from Solent Road would serve the proposed development. The matter of vehicular access to the site is covered in detail in the transport assessment. Cycle parking provision for staff and customers would be provided in accordance with planning policy. Given the town centre location the amount of parking for the proposed development, and the residual parking for the Langstone Gate office campus, would be far in excess of current standards for town centre development.



Figure 3. Existing vehicular access to the application site from Solent Road.

Assessment

The application proposals have been reduced considerably following the pre-application submission and comments received from the case planning officer. As such the environmental impacts are now insignificant.

It is asserted that the principle of an A3 use on this site is acceptable in planning policy terms.

Such a facility would help to animate and uplift this important corner site.

There is acceptable vehicular access from Solent Road, subject to the requirements set out in the Transport Assessment.

Car parking provision would be adequate and in excess of policy requirements for a town centre location.

Adequate cycle parking for staff and customers would be provided.

The design of the proposed development would be entirely compatible with the surroundings.

A similar facility exists just to the north of the Solent Road junction.

There would be no significant ecological impacts.

Any loss of trees or vegetation would be replaced nearby if feasible.