

Your Ref
Our Ref JPB//Pre-app let
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Dear Sir/ madam

WATERLOOVILLE – WELLINGTON RETAIL PARK (PHASE 2 – HALFORDS BLOCK)

Phase 2 of Wellington Retail Park comprises Units 1A, 1 and 2 (Dreams, Halfords and Jolleys). Following our pre-application meeting with Aaron Wright of 29 November, we have been instructed by Henderson Retail Warehouse Fund to submit the two enclosed planning applications to you in relation to this part of Wellington Retail Park. The purpose of the two applications is to enhance the appearance, connectivity and function of this Part of the Park. This letter is the Planning Statement for the two applications.

Application 1 (ref PP-03052944) is for external changes to the block comprising Phase 2, including a 79sqm extension to Unit 2, and related enhancements to the public realm. In addition to this letter, the application comprises the following:-

- Forms/ certificate,
- CIL form;
- Plan 216-PL-100.P1 Location and (Existing) Site Plans at 1:1250 and 1:200 scale's;
- Plan 216-PL-101.P1 Proposed Site, Ground Floor & Roof Plans at 1:200 scale;
- Plan 216-PL-102.P1 Existing Elevations at 1:100 scale;
- Plan 216-PL-103.P1 Proposed Elevations at 1:100 scale;
- Plan 216-PL-104.P1 Site context at 1:200 scale;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Application fee (£770).

Application 2 (ref PP-03053017) seeks the removal of condition 21 of 88/50241 (as amended by planning permission 02/50241/007). The application comprises this letter, the forms and certificate as well as a site location plan (Plan 216-PL-100a.P1) and the £195 application fee.

The combined fee for the two applications is £965 and we enclose a cheque payable to your Council for this sum.

We set out below a review of the background, planning history, details of the proposed development and an assessment of planning policy, before setting out an assessment of why we consider that planning permission is justified for the two applications.

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Background

Wellington Retail Park comprises three phases; the first is the block comprising DFS, Harveys and Home Bargains, the second is the block comprising Jolleys, Halfords and Dreams and the third is the terrace which extends from TX Maxx to Matalan.

Henderson bought Wellington Retail Park in March 2010 with a view to enhancing the role and quality of it. Since then, it has secured permission to cut back and sub-divide the former Focus unit adjoining DFS, the implementation of which was undertaken last year. Both units have now been let bringing new traders (Home Bargains and Harveys) to the town. We consider that the scheme has enhanced the attractiveness of the Phase 1 part of the Retail Park, in terms of its appearance and retail offer to residents of Waterloo and its hinterland, as well as providing new local employment opportunities.

Phase 3 has an attractive design and is generally well let. The closure of the JJB unit was disappointing. However, following the grant of planning permissions APP/13/00214 and APP/13/0777, Henderson is in the process of re-letting of that unit to M&S for a Simply Food outlet. This will maintain and enhance the physical and functional attraction of this part of the Park.

We therefore consider that the design of the Phase 1 and Phase 3 buildings on the Retail Park provides an attractive appearance which, combined with the occupiers represented, results in a high quality offer. However, the external environment and Phase 2 are not of such a good quality.

To address the quality of the public realm, duplicate planning permissions (APP/13/00767 and 13/01712) have been granted by your Council and Winchester for a 3 unit pod building, along with improvements to the public realm, pedestrian connectivity and car park circulation. Whilst this scheme has yet to be implemented, Henderson expects to begin works early in 2014. The effect of this will be to widen the offer of the Retail Park, and to enhance the connections through the Park between the traditional town centre and the new Sainsbury store.

Furthermore, Henderson has been pleased to assist in the works required to provide a ramp to an at-grade crossing over Maurepas Way. These works, which have involved the removal of a number of trees along the boundary of the Park, form part of the redevelopment of the former Caetano Coach Works site on Hambledon Road for a new Sainsbury supermarket, to the north of the Retail Park. The removal of these trees has improved the visual connection between the traditional town centre, and the Retail Park/ Sainsbury store site. When the ramp/ crossing is completed, it will enhance the functional connections too.

Collectively, the above works and lettings on the Park, new Sainsbury store in the north as well as the provision of improved visual and functional connections over Maurepas Way, will both improve the attraction of Waterloo Town Centre as a whole to shoppers, and the connectivity of different parts of the Centre. This should result in more shoppers being attracted to the Centre, and to more linked trips between parts of it, benefiting existing and new retailers alike, which will be significantly enhanced next year through the implementation of planning permission APP/13/00767 and 13/01712.

Arising from the above, the Council has recognised the role of the Retail Park functioning as part of the Town Centre, most recently in the Havant Borough Draft Local Plan (Allocations) Public Version October 2013.

However, other than within the Draft Local Plan, Phase 2 has not been included in any of the enhancements that have been undertaken or permitted. The purpose of the proposed development subject of the enclosed applications is to address this in design and use terms.

Planning History

Phase 2 of Wellington Retail Park, Jolleys, Halfords and Dreams, was granted planning permission (88/50241) on 5 April 1988. The consent was for:-

Erection of 20,000sqft (1,858sqm) (GIA) of retail warehouse accommodation and associated car parking and landscaping (divided into two units) (as modified by drawings received 24.2.88 and 26.2.88) - land at Hambledon Road, Waterloooville.

Condition 21 stated that the range of goods sold and/or displayed shall be restricted to bulky DIY goods, heavy electrical goods, motoring accessories including fixing exhausts and batteries, cycles and accessories, yachting accessories, furniture and carpets, and no other goods shall be sold from the premises without the prior written consent of the Council.

Condition 21 has been varied twice; originally by planning permission 91/50241/3 which allowed for the sale of animals, birds, fish and reptiles, together with associated feed and accessories, and planning permission 02/50241/007 which amended the condition so that all goods can be sold, except for the following:-

- Food (other than confectionary and pet foods);
- Clothing (other than sports goods);
- Fashion accessories;
- Books, stationary (except when sold as an office suppliers store);
- Perfume and toiletries;
- Music, records, CD's, audio and video tapes;
- China, glass goods, kitchenware.

Planning permission 05/50241/009 was granted for alterations to the building, including new entrances, to facilitate the sub-division of one of the existing units.

Proposed Development

It is proposed to refurbish the three units within Phase 2, continue the public realm enhancements and remove the restrictions on the goods that can be sold from them. Accordingly:

1. Application 1 proposes the re-cladding of the units with new entrance features, in a design that relates well the higher quality appearance of Phase 1 and Phase 3 on the Park;
2. Extend Unit 2 by 79sqm so that the frontage of the unit relates to the building line of the adjoining Halfords and Dreams units;
3. Improve the walkway in front of the units, and the footpath cycleway to the south of it, along with related public realm enhancements to the lighting and boundary treatment, removing one palisade fence and painting another.
4. Removing condition 21 of planning permission 88/50241

The first three matters above (explained in more detail in the D&A Statement) are contained within Application 1; the fourth provision is the subject of Application 2.

Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in planning decisions. It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Government's view of what sustainable development means is based upon three mutually dependent dimensions; an economic role should contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy to support growth and innovation, a social role creating a high quality built environment with accessible local services and an environmental role protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

Paragraph 14 confirms that at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. The 12 core land-use planning principles that should underpin decision-taking include: -

- Planning should be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve places;
- Proactively delivering the homes, business units etc to meet needs.
- Always seeking high quality designs and a good standard of amenity;
- Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas,
- Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed;
- Promoting mixed use developments and multiple benefits from the use of land in urban.

Paragraphs 18-22 address the delivery of sustainable development to build a strong, competitive economy. The planning system should operate to encourage and not impede sustainable growth. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. Planning authorities should apply a sequential test to such uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan. Retail impact should also be considered for such developments over 2,500sqm or other local thresholds.

Paragraphs 29-41 promotes sustainable transport, and paragraphs 56-68 require good quality designs, well related to local character. This includes establishing a strong sense of place, promoting a mix of uses and creating safe and accessible environments, as well as visually attractive architecture. Planning decisions should address the connections between people and places.

Planning for Growth 2011

The Ministerial Statement "*Planning for Growth*" emphasises the key role of the planning system in ensuring that the sustainable development needed to support economic growth is able to proceed as easily as possible. He confirmed that the promotion of sustainable economic growth and jobs as the Government's top priority in reforming the planning system. Except where it would compromise the key sustainable development principles, the clear expectation is that development and growth should be approved.

Development Plan

Core Strategy

Policy CS4 of the Havant Core Strategy (March 2011) concerns Town, District and Local Centres, and guides the broad quantum of new retail floorspace to identified centres by 2016. Waterlooville, along with Havant is a designated Town Centre within which planning permission will be granted for "*appropriate town centre development proposals*" that promotes and enhances the centre. Other

elements of the policy seek to enhance the evening economy and encourage high quality, mixed-use development in designated centres that retain active ground floor frontage.

Policy CS2 states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that prioritise the use of previously developed land for the provision of new employment floorspace, favours town centre locations for the provision of town centre uses, promotes local employment and training initiatives, and that provides jobs, generate wealth or produce an economic output.

- CS6 Regeneration of the Borough – encourages development which positively contributes by type of use and design to the social, economic and/or physical regeneration of the whole borough. Specific reference is made to improving the connectivity of Wellington Retail Park to Waterlooville Town Centre.
- CS14 promotes high quality design which helps to create places where people want to live, work and relax. All development should respect the local context, respond to existing local features of character within or close to the proposed development site. Development should promote higher density development, especially for mixed uses, and produce a positive relationship between buildings, street and spaces reduces opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour; contributes to improving community safety with inclusive layouts which promote legible layouts.

Local Plan (Allocations)

As noted above, this document confirms that the Council recognises that Wellington Retail Park now forms part of Waterlooville Town Centre.

Policy Evidence Base

Town Centres, Retail and Leisure Study

Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP) produced the Town Centres, Retail and Leisure Study report for the Borough Council in March 2009. This included an assessment of the quantitative need for additional retail floorspace, the outcome of which (set out on page 66) underpins the overall comparison goods floorspace requirements set out in Policy CS4 as well as the distribution of that floorspace set out on the Key Diagram.

Interestingly, NLP recall that the Borough Council's health check of 2005 found Waterlooville Town Centre to be performing well in terms of four of the six criteria adopted. NLP's own assessment, despite being undertaken in recessionary conditions, found the health of the centre to have improved (paras 7.10-11).

Town Centre Vitality and Viability Assessment

This assessment found that Waterlooville's market share of non-food shopping trips had increased from 16.5% in 2001 to 19.8% in 2003, which was identified to be directly attributable to the expenditure clawed back from Portsmouth (especially Commercial Road) arising from the Dukes Walk and the Hambledon Road Retail Park schemes. Both schemes were recognised to have increased the provision of national multiple retailers in the centre, which improved the public perception of the centre, and was identified as contributing to town centre's vitality and viability.

Assessment

We consider that the proposal is a sustainable economic development which should be allowed for the following reasons:-

1. The proposed development seeks to build on recent developments/ permissions to make better use of an existing accessible and centrally located retail site. The application proposals will continue the regeneration of this part of the town improving the connectivity of Phase 2 to public transport on the A3 Hambledon Road on the one side, and to the rest of the Retail Park (and the traditional town centre beyond) as well as to the forthcoming Sainsbury supermarket. The re-arrangement of the car park will improve circulation within it, and better meet the needs of disabled shoppers. This is shown on the enclosed context plan and accords with Policies CS2 and CS6 which prioritise the re-use of central previously developed sites, physical regeneration and promotes improved connectivity between the Retail Park and the traditional Town Centre.
2. The Retail Park is situated at an accessible location which will be within the Town Centre when the Local Plans (Allocations) Plan is adopted. The proposed design is of a high quality and well connected. This will improve the attraction of the Town Centre to shoppers.
3. The proposed development will improve attraction of these three units to the market in terms of their size and configuration, attraction and the removal of occupancy restrictions within them. This will maintain and improve the employment opportunities which should primarily be available to local people encouraging economic growth is the top priority of the Government; the NPPF states that significant weight should be given to such proposals.
4. The proposed development will be of a high quality design, not just in terms of the appearance of the pod building (which will relate to the local character), but to the wider public realm. The higher density development arising from the scheme will help connect people and places, in accordance with Policy CS14 and the NPPF.
5. The proposed development is at an accessible location relative to the urban area and public transport connections. The scheme will ensure that vehicular circulation through the car park is appropriate, and an adequate level of car parking will be maintained.

Accordingly, we consider that the proposed development accords with national and local planning policy to promote sustainable development in terms of town centre uses, employment development, high quality designs and transport/ accessibility considerations.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The proposed development should not raise a requirement for CIL contributions as the scale of enlargement is less than 100sqm. However, we have completed the forms for both applications.

Conclusions

We consider that the proposals subject of the enclosed submission constitutes sustainable economic development. For the reasons set out above, we consider that it will enhance the quality of the Retail Park and enable it (and the adjoining Sainsbury scheme) to further and better integrate with the traditional centre, in accordance with national and local planning policy. Should you require any further information, please contact me on the above number.

Yours faithfully



Jonathan Best MRTPI
Director
On behalf of Blue Sky Planning Ltd