



EMSWORTHFORUM
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C/o The Emsworth Community Centre
North Street, Emsworth PO10 7DD
www.emsworthforum.com

Mrs Rachael McMurray, Planner
Development Management,
Havant Borough Council
Public Service Plaza
Civic Centre Road Havant PO9 2AX

Dear Mrs McMurray

Ref: APP/15/01397 and APP/15/01398 10-12 High Street, Emsworth, PO10 7AW

The Emsworth Forum has looked at the application submitted by the agents for Costa Coffee Ltd for Change of Use from Class A2 to Class A1/A3 and for advertisement consent for two internally illuminated signs. We object to this application because it does not demonstrate compliance with important aspects of a number of policies in the Havant Local Plan Core Strategy, which we describe in more detail below.

Background

The Emsworth Forum aims to

- promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of Emsworth and promote sustainable development, environmental improvement, conservation and high quality built environment and design;
- improve Emsworth for the benefit of its residents, and protect the character of the area
- prepare in partnership with the local planning authority a Neighbourhood Plan for the area

We have over 400 residents and 30 businesses and community organisations in our membership and are working closely with the Emsworth Business Association and the Emsworth Residents association.

As part of the development of the Emsworth Neighbourhood Plan, the Emsworth Forum conducted a survey of residents at the end of 2014 and the beginning of 2015 asking residents a series of open questions about what they value about Emsworth and their opinion on a range of topic areas. Over 200 people responded and summary of these findings can be found on the forum website here <http://emsworthforum.com/summary-of-the-survey/>

Of particular relevance to this application is that many respondents mentioned the value they placed on the independent shops, pubs and restaurants and the historic character and unique 'village' feel of the town centre. There was a strong desire to encourage and support independent retailers. People expressed satisfaction with pubs and restaurants and the general level of facilities in the town. There was comment that there were too many estate agents and charity shops in the town and people expressed regret that two out of three banks in the town had recently closed. There was a strong view that Emsworth should preserve its unique character, especially its village centre. Difficulty in parking was the most commonly mentioned concern. In the summer of 2015 the Forum



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also held a series of public consultation meetings to explore some of the issues raised in the survey in more detail and these meetings confirmed the survey findings.

Change of Use Application

The issues the Forum would raise about this are as follows:

DM2 Protection of Existing Community Facilities and Shops

The policy states

Development proposing the change of use or loss of any premises or land currently or last used as community services and facilities, including local shops, will only be permitted where both the following criteria can be met:

1. It has been demonstrated, through an active marketing process that the premises or land are no longer viable for their authorised use or any other use which would provide a beneficial facility to the local community.

2. The facility is no longer required for a community use or that there is an easily accessible existing or new facility for the community it is intended to serve.

As noted above, the departure of Barclays Bank from this site has been a significant loss of amenity to the local population. The Forum would therefore support new A2 financial services being provided from this site. We understand this site has been vacant for just over a year. However the application does not state or evidence what efforts have been made by the owner to attract a new financial services tenant to this site. We have seen advertising hoardings placed in the windows of the building in recent months but this alone we believe is not sufficient to meet the requirements of DM2. We have been told by the EBA that their offer to help find new tenants was not taken up. The applicant has not, in our view, therefore, demonstrated their case to justify change of the class of use.

The Forum would support a change of use application to A1 or A3 on this site where it has been demonstrated and evidenced that no financial services tenant was interested and where the A1 or A3 application enhanced the local market place and local amenities. We understand from the EBA that there are other retailers locally that would be interested in this site.

DM5 Control of Class A3, A4 and A5 Food, Drink and Entertainment Uses

This policy states

'Planning permission will only be grantedfor the change of use of existing premises to Class A3....where it can be demonstrated that all the following criteria are met:

4. The development includes adequate provision for the disposal, storage and collection of refuse, including litter bins for use by customers.

5. The development would not result in indiscriminate customer parking and/or traffic movement that would be likely to create hazards for traffic or pedestrians.....

7. In the case of change of use any marketing requirements are met.'



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We do not believe the measures described in the application are sufficient to address 4. The applicant does not address 5 and we believe this to be a significant risk. We have already addressed 7 above.

CS4 Town, District and Local Centres

This policy states with regard to District Centres (of which Emsworth is one) that

*Planning permission will be granted for appropriate Town centre development proposals
That*

Enhance the evening economy of the town and district centres.

Retain and enhance local markets.

Support small and independent businesses.

*Encourage high quality, mixed-use development in designated centres that retain
active ground floor frontages.'*

Several pubs in Emsworth already provide evening coffee facilities in Emsworth. There is already a take away Costa Express in the petrol station on Havant Road that operates in the evenings. This application would therefore increase the café services available for one hour in the evening – a small enhancement.

The applicant states that this new café would 'support the function of Emsworth High Street by sustaining and enhancing its vitality and viability'. However they have produced no evidence, no economic assessment to support that claim. It is our view that an additional 90 plus seat café in the heart of Emsworth Village could significantly damage the local café market and the small, local, independent businesses that run them. Currently there are 21 establishments in Emsworth that sell coffee including eight cafes. The Emsworth Business Association and others have worked extremely hard, and with considerable success, in recent years to promote Emsworth as a visitor destination. There are some days when Emsworth's cafes are busy but this is not consistent and the visitor population is seasonal. The impact of a 90 seat café has not been assessed but is likely to be detrimental to viability of the small cafes nearby in Emsworth and could cause them to fail. This would damage the local economy and amenities and create new vacant sites in the town centre. We note that the HBC Economic Development team share this concern.

The Forum recognises that Costa Coffee is part of a reputable British company and provides a quality service nationwide that is valued by its customers. However, it is a part of a large Public Limited Company, Whitbread PLC, with no local links (other than the fact there are 8 franchises within a 5 mile radius of Emsworth). Residents and visitors to Emsworth have consistently stated in our consultations that they value the village feel and character of the Emsworth town centre and its independent local retailers, cafes and restaurants. This is supported by the comments in response to this application in social media, on the HBC Planning Portal the current petition by the EBA. Some residents have expressed their support for this application but they appear to be a minority. Given that there are Costa Coffee outlets elsewhere locally, the Forum believes the risk of damage to the character and brand of the town centre and the local café market by introducing a national brand such as this potentially outweighs any benefits it may bring to local residents.



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This is a prime site in Emsworth. The Forum would support an application under any of these classes on this site that would bring in a service that Emsworth does not have or where there is little competition for existing services.

Policy CS2 Employment

This policy states the 'planning permission will be granted for development proposals that...Promote local employment and training initiatives'. The applicant states that the Coffee shop would fill a void and create jobs. We understand that there are other potential tenants interested in this site. Any new tenant under A1, A2 or A3 class would fill the void and create jobs on this site. The Forum would like to see from any applicant a commitment to recruit and train local staff.

Policy CS20 Transport and Access Strategy

The policy states

'Development will be permitted that

2. Does not increase congestion and promotes better use of existing transport networks'

The applicant describes the current transport facilities and provision in the town. They do, not indicate, however, how they will mitigate the potential effects of additional traffic congestion and parking pressure with customers stopping for take away coffee, if their assertion about bringing increased footfall into Emsworth is correct. In addition the two deliveries a day could cause a further traffic and parking problem in that part of the High Street. Parking was the top concern for residents of Emsworth in the Emsworth Forum survey.

Signage Application

The applicant has also submitted design for illuminated signs and a new fascia. Whilst we are aware that Barclays had its national branding and illuminated signs previously, any application on this site provides an opportunity to enhance the design standards in the Emsworth Village Conservation Area.

Policy CS11 Protecting and Enhancing the special Environment and heritage of Havant Borough

This policy states that

'Planning permission will be granted for development that:

4. Protects and where appropriate enhances the boroughs statutory and non-statutory heritage designations by appropriately managing development in or adjacent to conservation area, listed buildings....'



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CS16 High Quality Design

This policy states that

'the development should demonstrate that its design

1. *Responds to, draws inspiration from and respects local context and:*
 - a. *Identifies and responds positively to existing features of natural historic or local character within or close to the proposed development site'*

Emsworth Design Statement

The EDS states under section 3 Built Environment that it supports

'18. Shop fascia and hanging signs whose size, proportion and materials including lettering and illumination relate to the building and its surroundings'

Whilst we note that Barclays had previously been permitted illuminated signs on this site, this application provides an opportunity, as Policy CS11 states, to enhance this site. It is our view that the illuminated signs and the dominant colours proposed in the application do not conform to the requirements cited above. They are not in keeping with the Georgian and Victorian style and character and heritage of the Emsworth High Street, sited in a Conservation Area. We note that Costa have adopted more appropriate signage in other historic towns and villages in the UK and believe, that if this application is approved, they should be required to do so here.

For these reasons the Emsworth Forum objects to both applications and asks Havant Council to reject them. If the Council decides to approve the applications we ask that the matters raised above are addressed in any conditions.

Yours sincerely

