



PLANNING STATEMENT

LEANDER SERVICE STATION, 182 – 184 HENLEY
ROAD, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 5LN



Supporting the application for a Variation of Condition No.8 to change the opening hours to 24 following grant of Planning Permission reference 83/TP/829

Leander Service Station is situated on the A4155 Henley Road which runs between Henley on Thames and Reading in an otherwise predominantly residential area..

The Service Station comprises of a filling station complete with forecourt canopy and new tanks, four square pump island configuration accessed from Henley Road.

The Station is open to Henley Road frontage. There is soft landscaping along the north East, north West and South west boundaries. The forecourt shop and some light trees are on the North West boundary.

Planning History

Planning permission was granted 1984 reference 83/TP/829 for erection of filling station including jet wash and associated works. Condition 8 of that permission restricted the hours of the petrol station and shop from 7.00 am to 10.00pm any day.

The main determining issues with this application will be whether or not 24 hour trading would be compliant with Council Policy and whether it would give rise to an adverse impact on the character or amenity of the surrounding area. The reason for restriction of Condition 8 was stated to be in the interests of amenity.

In applying to vary the time when the premises open for 24:00 hours the applicant is responding to lifestyle changes that have taken place since 1984 when the station traded from 7.00 am to 10.00 pm. These changes have occurred due to the transition to busier, less regimented lifestyles and changes in working patterns, increase in the population and growth of consumerism which has required many service providers to extend their services to the customer.

Responding to these changes, in order to meet customer expectations, is a challenge the applicant must embrace head-on.

Busier lifestyles start earlier in the day than in 1984 but in order to offer an extended service throughout night time hours, the applicant recognises the need for councils, local residents and businesses to work together. So often complaints of noise come about as a consequence of conflict between the proximity of residential property and commercial activities, where there has been no attempt to address concerns beforehand.

In order to address possible concerns that may arise with an application to open 24 hours, the applicant proposes a restriction on the use of the premises during the period 10.00 pm to 7.00 am. This would limit activity to the shop and forecourt pumps only. No other activity would be carried out including deliveries or jet wash in strict compliance with control measures put in place by the applicant, including staff training on noise pollution, security and health and safety.

It has been commented that consideration should be given to the make up of the local area and the potential impact the business may have on local residents, balancing the need of the business with those of local residents.

To a certain extent, different land uses and activities need to co-exist in modern society. Over the last half a century Planning controls have played an extremely important role in establishing the balance between the benefits of a proposed development and any potential adverse consequences.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is now placed firmly within the context of the Government's policy on sustainable development, with the renewed emphases here on development of previously used land and mixed use areas. The issues raised become more common as there are competing needs that interested parties must seek to balance.

The site's lawful current use and planning history indicates that the site has been in commercial use as a petrol filling station for a substantial number of years. With the demise of the petrol filling station and corner shop over the last 10 years, these stations are now often required to be open for extensive hours due to the merchandise sold and customers' demands, and the NPPF now clearly encourages proposals which would support economic development and growth of businesses. It is in consequence now considered not unreasonable in principle, for a filling station shop to be available with unrestricted hours.

In order to demonstrate responsible management of the proposed night time operation and to allay the concerns of neighbouring residents, it is proposed:

1. Restrict fuel sales to the two inner pump islands closest to the shop between 10.00 pm and 7.00 am hours
2. Restrict external lighting to the recessed lights within the underside of the canopy and immediately above the two inner pump islands
3. Restrict the jet wash, vacuum, air and water hours to between 7.00 am and 10.00 pm
4. Restrict all deliveries to between 7.00 am and 10.00 pm
5. A temporary period of 6 months would enable the local planning authority to monitor the activity
6. Signage within the forecourt requesting respect from customers for the night time hours, and additional and high visibility CCTV surveillance on the forecourt

Other considerations to be noted:

- A. The site sits on Henley Road which is well used including night time and it is considered relevant that, with the control measures in place, it is unlikely to lead to a difference in unacceptable levels of noise between the carriageway and the forecourt
- B. The approach and exit is screened from the most sensitive uses at the rear of the site
- C. Night time operations would increase employment and would also increase surveillance of the immediate area
- D. MFG is a responsible, independent operator of more than 900 petrol filling stations throughout the country. They seek to achieve a local neighbourhood service from their sites and encourage local residents to report any concerns or ideas in order to improve the service on offer. On sites that operate through night time their staff are given specialist training in all aspects of customer service, customer relationship and communication.

For the reasons provided in this statement, the applicant is of the opinion that having due regard to:

- Proposed limited activity on site between 10.00 pm and 7.00 am
- Background noise from traffic using the A4155 Henley Road
- Lifestyle changes that will already generate activity and some noise during the proposed night time operation

It is fair and reasonable, relevant for the sustainability of the Station and controllable by the local Planning Authority, to allow temporary night time trading in order to be able to fully and properly assess the impact on the local amenity.