

WHITLEY WOOD ROAD READING

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

P17-1380 | JUNE 2017

Pegasus
Group



PLANNING APPLICATION FOR SHOPFRONT ALTERATIONS

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**THE CO-OPERATIVE, 164-168 WHITLEY WOOD
ROAD, READING, RG2 8LQ**

ON BEHALF OF CO-OPERATIVE GROUP FOOD LIMITED

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group, to support an application for planning permission for shopfront alterations at the existing Co-op Foodstore, 164-168 Whitley Wood Road, Reading. The description of development is as follows:

“Shopfront alterations, including new entrance and relocation of ATM and realignment of shopfront to create 4sqm increase in Class A1 floorspace. External alterations to rear to infill existing opening and to erect 2 no 2.5m high close boarded timber fences around storage and existing plant areas.”

- 1.2 The proposal will also extend the existing store to the adjacent unit and this necessitates the requirement for a new shopfront to integrate this adjacent unit into the existing shop. At the same time, Co-op proposes to renew the shopfront of their existing frontage, relocating the ATM, altering the entrance.
- 1.3 The adjacent unit to the existing Co-operative is understood to be in Class A5 use (Southern Fried Chicken). The proposals will see its change of use to Class A1 via permitted development and its amalgamation into the exist Co-op unit, which does not require planning permission.
- 1.4 The submitted drawings, prepared by Archer Architects provide detail of the proposals with regard to the shopfront and external alterations.
- 1.5 This Statement will describe the context to the application, including a description of the site and surrounding area, details of the proposal and planning history, and an assessment of the proposal against local and national planning policy.
- 1.6 This Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings prepared by Archer Architects.

2. THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The site lies within the built-up area of Whitley Wood which is located toward the south of Reading, to the east of the A33 road and north of the M4.
- 2.2 The application site is an existing Co-operative store at Whitley Wood Road. The Co-operative store occupies the ground floor of a three-storey building which fronts Whitley Wood Road and is situated between commercial properties on either side which include, Betfred to the east and retail uses to the west. There are a number of retail and commercial properties situated in the immediate surrounding area, encompassing the Whitley Wood Local Centre which stretch to the north east along Northumberland Avenue. However, the surrounding area is predominately residential in nature with residential dwellings nearby, including on the upper floors.
- 2.3 The site comprises approximately 0.01ha.
- 2.4 The site is not located within a designated Conservation Area. The site lies within Flood Zone 1, the area least at risk from flooding.
- 2.5 At present the Co-op shopfront comprises an entrance door to the right of the building with a glazed shopfront either side. An ATM is positioned to the left of the entrance, beneath a canopy projecting at first floor level. There are existing roller shutters incorporated into the shopfront.
- 2.6 The existing Class A5 use adjacent to the existing Co-op comprises an aluminium shopfront, with glazing and a roller shutter.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The Council's online planning register has revealed the following planning history records relevant to the site.
- 3.2 **081491** – Advertisement Consent for signage at 164-168 Whitley Wood Road, permitted in January 2009.
- 3.3 **041260** - Advertisement Consent for signage at 164-168 Whitley Wood Road, permitted in July 2004.
- 3.4 **040828** – Planning permission for automatic door and fire escape at 168 Whitley Wood Road, permitted in Jun 2004.
- 3.5 **031252** – permission for retention of satellite dish for ATM at 164-168 Whitley Wood Road, approved in November 2003.
- 3.6 **020201** – Shopfront alterations at 168B Whitley Wood Road, approved in March 2003.
- 3.7 **010433** – Signage for the ATM, approved in June 2001.
- 3.8 **010858** – ATM and signage, approved in June 2001.
- 3.9 Other applications at the site are older than 20 years and relate to shopfront and signage approvals.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The proposal is for the installation of a replacement shopfront, to incorporate the adjacent Southern Fried Chicken shop unit into the Co-op shopfront and to ensure that the shopfront functions together as a cohesive frontage.
- 4.2 The proposed alterations to the front elevation of the existing foodstore include the installation of a new shopfront and double entrance doors to both units comprising glass with aluminium frames finished in RAL 7043 Traffic Grey.
- 4.3 It is proposed to replace the existing entrance door with a sliding double door in the centre of the unit. The existing ATM will be removed and a new ATM located to the east of the entrance onto the frontage. A new aluminium goods in entrance, finished in RAL 7043 Traffic Grey will be installed to the east of the shopfront.
- 4.4 To the left-hand side of the shopfront (west), the frontage will be realigned in order to present a straight line to the street, removing the existing set-back area in front of the existing ATM. This will result in a small increase of internal floorspace of 4sqm.
- 4.5 The site is set back from the street frontage, given the first floor overhanging canopy. As such, in order to protect the shopfront and ATM, the existing roller shutters will be retained and painted grey, extended across the whole site.
- 4.6 The proposed signage zone fascia band above the Co-operative frontage is provided on the enclosed drawings but it should be noted that this is indicative only and further details will be subject to a separate application.
- 4.7 There will be no changes to the hours of opening, servicing regime or the existing parking arrangements.

To the rear of the site, an existing door will be infilled with brick to match the existing. A new 2.6m high close boarded timber fence will be erected around the existing external store and a second 2.5m high close boarded timber fence will be installed around an area of existing plant in the rear yard.

5. PLANNING POLICY

5.1 The following policy is considered relevant.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012 sets out the Government's planning policies for the planning system to ensure that the planning system helps to achieve sustainable development.

5.3 The key objective of the NPPF is to achieve sustainable development and **paragraph 7** confirms there are three dimensions to achieving this, namely economic, social and environmental. The economic role should contribute to sustainable development by building a strong, responsive and competitive economy and ensuring the sufficient amount of and right type of development to support growth.

5.4 **Paragraph 14** confirms that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF and for planning applications this means proposals for development conforming to the Development Plan should be approved without delay.

5.5 **Paragraph 17** sets out 12 core planning principles which underpin the NPPF. For the purposes of this application, relevant principles are that planning should:

- Not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live; and
- Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

5.6 **Paragraphs 186 and 187** relate to decision taking and confirm that "local planning authorities should approach decision taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of the sustainable development" and that they:

“should look for solutions rather than problems, and decisions taken at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible”.

- 5.7 The Government's overarching vision throughout the NPPF is that the planning system does everything it can do to support sustainable economic growth whereby there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Local Planning Policy

- 5.8 The current Development Plan for Reading comprises (inter alia) the adopted Core Strategy adopted in January 2008 and altered January 2015, the Sites and Detailed Policies Document adopted October 2012, altered January 2015, and the Proposals Map, adopted in October 2012. The most relevant policies contained within the development plan and set out below:

Core Strategy (adopted January 2008, altered January 2015)

- 5.9 **Policy CS7** Design and the Public Realm is relevant. This policy seeks to ensure all development is of a high quality of design, maintaining and enhancing the character and appearance of the area and responding to local context, whilst creating a safe and accessible environment, resilient to crime.
- 5.10 **Policy CS26** sets out the retail hierarchy for the borough. Whitley Wood is identified as a Local Centre within this policy. The policy seeks to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of these centres.
- 5.11 **Policy CS27** seeks to maintain a strong retail character within the centres.

Sites and Detailed Policies Document (adopted October 2012, altered January 2015)

- 5.12 Policy DM13 relates to the vitality and viability of smaller centres, including Whitley Wood. This confirms that within local centres, all new development should provide “centre uses” at ground floor level. The supporting text to this policy identifies retail uses as “centre uses”.
- 5.13 **Policy DM23** relates to shopfronts and cash machines. This states:

“Shopfronts, individual features of shopfronts and cash machines will respect the character of the building on which they are located and their surroundings, as well as the wider street, in terms of design, colours, materials, lighting, and location. Features that positively contribute to the character of the building and street will be retained and, where possible, restored. Safety and security will be maintained and enhanced.

For shopfronts, the following criteria will be fulfilled:

- a) Where a shop occupies multiple units, shopfronts will not run in a continuous horizontal line across the different unit façades. The fascia and the shop windows should be broken up to ensure the features of each unit are not lost;*
- b) Fascia boards should be lower than any first floor windows, and reflect the predominant height of existing fascia boards on surrounding buildings;*
- c) Canopies and blinds over windows and entrances should be for the shading of the shop and should be retractable; and*
- d) Shopfronts should present an active frontage to the street at all times. Where security is essential, security features will be internal, such as internal open mesh grilles. Opaque coverings on shop windows, such as paint and films, will be minimised and will not obscure the window.”*

6. PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS ASSESSMENT

6.1 This section of the Statement sets out the justification for the proposed shopfront alterations when considered against the relevant planning policies and other material considerations.

6.2 Use

6.3 The realignment of the shopfront will result in a modest increase of the internal floorspace of 4 sqm. This is an acceptable level of extension within this designated Local Centre, which is defined by the NPPF as a “town centre”, suitable for town centre uses, such as Class A1. Policy DM13 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document confirms that “centre” uses, including Class A1, will be expected to form the ground floor uses of designated Local Centres, including Whitley Wood.

6.4 Given that the site is within a designated centre and the proposal is for a small Class A1 extension, this is considered to be acceptable in principle with regard to land use. The location is appropriate for retail uses and there is no requirement for the proposal to pass a sequential assessment or impact assessment. Given that the proposal will assist in supporting an existing Class A1 retailer within the centre, this will contribute to enhancing the vitality and viability of the Whitley Wood Local Centre, which is in accordance with Policy DM13, as well as the NPPF.

6.5 As such, the small extension of 4sqm is acceptable in principle.

Design

6.6 The proposals for the shopfront have been carefully designed to ensure that they do not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

6.7 In terms of the shopfront, it is considered that the proposed alterations will be an improvement on the existing frontage. The existing foodstore entrance will be replaced with aluminium framed windows to match the rest of the shopfront, with a centralised double entrance door.

6.8 The proposed shopfront will be pulled forward to the left-hand side (west) to remove the inset part of the shopfront beneath the first floor overhang.

This currently is a magnet for litter and has the potential for anti-social behaviour. By bringing this section of the shopfront forward, this reduces the issues associated with this area of the property currently.

- 6.9 The extension of the existing shop, via permitted development, to the unit to the east has provided an opportunity for the site to be cohesively designed to present a unified frontage to the street. However, in line with Policy DM23, the shopfront has been designed so as it is discernible as a separate entity.
- 6.10 The proposals include for the retention of external roller shutters. These are already present at the site and are necessary with regard to ensuring safety and prevention of crime, in accordance with Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy. These will be extended across the shopfront in order to reduce crime.
- 6.11 The proposals retain the proportions and layout of the existing frontage and respects the character and appearance of the host building.
- 6.12 The alterations proposed to the rear of the property involve removing and infilling an existing door with bricks to match the existing. This will not harm the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, two areas of timber 2.5m high close-boarded fence are proposed. One will enclose the external storage area, whereas the other will enclose the existing plant area to the rear of the existing shop. These will have a benefit to the local area, by ensuring a tidier and less cluttered visual appearance to the rear elevation. No alterations to or additional air conditioning units are proposed to this elevation and therefore there will be no adverse visual impacts in this respect.
- 6.13 It is therefore considered that the proposals will have a positive impact in terms of visual amenity.

Access

- 6.14 The proposals will ensure that inclusive access for customers and staff is maintained at the premises with new double opening doors. As such, the proposals will afford inclusive, step free access to customers to the front.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group in support of an application for the installation of a new shopfront and external alterations to the rear at 164-168 Whitley Wood Road, Reading.
- 7.2 It has been demonstrated that the proposed development would be compliant with both local and national planning policy and that the external alterations would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 7.3 The proposed development will improve the efficiency of the operations at the existing foodstore, enhances its presence within the area and contribute to the improvement of the street scene.
- 7.4 For the reasons set out in this Statement that planning permission should be granted.

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