

DELEGATED FUL PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham

App Ref: PL/24/1174

Address: 18-20 Church Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8AU

Proposal: Retrospective application for installation of In Post Parcel Locker

Case Officer: Louise Coveney-Fuller

Applicant: In Post UK In Post UK

Date received: 09/09/2024 Decision date: 04/11/2024

Application Site



SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is known as Tesco Express and is located on Church Street. It is noted that, the site lies on the boundary of the St Peter's Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

This application seeks to obtain retrospective planning permission installation of In Post Parcel Locker.

The application has been assessed based on the following submitted information:

Existing & Proposed Elevations – L (02)101 Rev P1 (21-8)

Existing & Proposed Plans- L (01) 101 Rev P1 (21-8)

Block Plan – L (00) 100 Rev P1 (21-8)

Location Plan- L (00) 000 Rev 1 (21-8)

Received 9/9/24 by the LPA.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

The application site has an intensive planning history the most relevant are listed below:

PL/15/2145- 4no. replacement canopy fascia signs. Replacement MID sign. New pump island signage including, 3no. wave signs, 3no. koala signs and 6no. pump number signs.
-APPROVED

PI/15/2144-Removal of existing underground fuel tanks, below ground offset fills, vents, fuel pipework and fuel dispensers. Installation of new double skinned underground fuel tanks, below ground offset fills, vents (in new position), secondary contained plastic fuel pipework and fuel dispensers. New concrete and hora pavings to replace existing. Repositioning of air/water machine, additional floodlight.
-APPROVED

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (as amended)
National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
TR3: ACCESS TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING
RL1 - HIERACHY OF CENTRES
OU5 - SHOPFRONTS AND CASH MACHINES
EN1 - PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
EN3 - ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

SPG/SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design 2011
Design Guide for Shopfronts, Adopted January 2022

REPRESENTATIONS

At the time of writing this report 4 Letters of representation have been received (2 letters have been received from the same household so count as 1).

-1 outlining support for the proposal.

-3 raising the following concerns (summarised)

- eyesore
- out of character
- parking issues
- impact on traffic

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Design & Character

Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm is a strategic policy seeking high standards of design quality in new development. It sets out how various components of development including layout, urban structure and urban grain, and scale, make a positive contribution to their surroundings and respond positively to their local context.

Policies EN1 and EN3 refer to the protection of conservation areas, including their setting.

The in-parcel locker is situated directly to the front of Tesco express fronting Church Street. Therefore, the location of the addition is highly prominent within the street scene. The locker is clearly visible in views into and out of the St. Peter's Conservation Area.

Furthermore, it is considered that the installation of the in-parcel locker has resulted in materially harmful impact to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including the setting of the St. Peter's Conservation Area. As such it is considered that the development represents an incongruous and visually dominating addition which is out of character with, and harmful to the surrounding environment.

Accordingly, by virtue of its design, the development conflicts with the advice and guidance contained within Chapter 12 and 16 of the NPPF (Dec 2023) and Policy CC7, of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Residential amenity

Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity sets out expectations to ensure that new development does not reduce the quality of the environment for others, particularly where it would affect residential properties.

Due to the nature of the development, the in-parcel locker has not resulted in any materially harmful affect to neighbouring properties.

Highways considerations

Whilst the in-parcel locker has been constructed close to the highway, it is set back, and adequate sight lines are retained. No adverse impact has occurred as a result of the installation of this in parcel locker.

Conclusion

The retrospective development has been assessed against the adopted policies as outlined above and is considered, to be contrary to comply with to policies CC7: Design and the Public Realm, EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment, EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas and OU5 shopfronts and cash machines of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the advice and guidance contained within Chapter 12 and Chapter 16 of the NPPF (Dec 2023)..

RECOMMENDATION REFUSE PLANNING PERMISSION

Due to the following reason for refusal:

1. The In Post Parcel Locker, by virtue of its excessive scale, bulky appearance and prominent siting, represents an incongruous addition which is visually stark in its appearance and obtrusive within the street scene. As a result, the development is out of character with the surrounding area and has resulted in a materially harmful impact on the street scene and the appearance of the wider area, including the setting of the St. Peter's Conservation Area. Accordingly, the proposal fails to comply with to policies CC7: Design and the Public Realm, EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment, EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas and OU5 shopfronts and cash machines of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the advice and guidance contained within Chapter 12 and Chapter 16 of the NPPF (Dec 2023).

INFORMATIVES

1. The application has been assessed based on the following submitted information:

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