

Reference: 18/01405/FUL	Site: VNV Stores And Post Office 27 Corringham Road Stanford Le Hope Essex SS17 0AQ
Ward: Stanford Le Hope West	Proposal: Change of use from A1 (Shop) to D1 (Education & Training Centre).

Plan Number(s):		
Reference	Name	Received
10-101	Existing Floor Plans	27th September 2018
10-102	Proposed Floor Plans	27th September 2018
10-103	Existing Elevations	27th September 2018
10-104	Proposed Elevations	27th September 2018
10-001	Location Plan	27th September 2018
10-100	Site Layout	1st November 2018

The application is also accompanied by:

- Planning statement

Applicant: Mr Mashuk Ali	Validated: 27 September 2018 Date of expiry: 22 November 2018
Recommendation: Refuse	

This application is scheduled for determination by the Council's Planning Committee because the application was called in by Cllr. R. Gledhill, Cllr. B. Johnson, Cllr. A. Watkins, Cllr. D. Huelin and Cllr. S. Hebb to consider issues regarding parking, access to the site and neighbour amenity in accordance with Part 3 (b) 2.1 (c) of the Council's constitution.

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

- The planning application proposes to convert an existing retail (A1) shop to an education and training centre with associated parking spaces.

- 1.2 The proposed education and training centre would provide training for both adults and young people regarding literature and language, cultural learning, health and safety, life skills, business and finance. The applicant expects that about 15-20 people would visit the facility daily.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site is detached building located within the central area (as shown on the proposal map) of a local centre in Stanford Le Hope.
- 2.2 The first floor of the building is residential with a convenience store and post office on the ground floor.

3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

Application Reference	Description of Proposal	Decision
62/00478/FUL	Alterations	Approved
87/00995/FUL	Renovated shop front.	Approved
98/00982/FUL	Single storey store to side	Approved
99/00416/FUL	New store room to rear and retrospective permission for existing lobby	Approved
18/00040/FUL	Partial change of use from A1 to C3 to form 2 flats on ground floor (shop front to be retained)	Approved
18/01016/FUL	Change of use A1 shop post office to D1 (Education & Cultural Centre)	Withdrawn

4.0 CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1 Detailed below is a summary of the consultation responses received. The full version of each consultation response can be viewed on the Council's website via public access at the following link: www.thurrock.gov.uk/planning

4.2 PUBLICITY:

This application has been advertised by way of individual neighbour notification letters and public site notice which has been displayed nearby. 47 comments were received regarding the proposal.

- 4.3 13 comments were received in objection to the proposal on the grounds of:

- Inadequate parking;

- Additional traffic;
- Possible excessive noise;
- Access to the site;
- Environmental pollution;
- Impact upon the character of the area.

4.4 34 comments were received in support of the proposal on the grounds of:

- The need for the facility in the community.

4.5 It is noted that a number of the comments in support of the proposal do not have the complete addresses or the full names of the people who made the comments. In addition it is noted some of the comments are from people who do not live in close proximity to the application site.

4.6 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH:

No objection with condition.

4.7 HIGHWAYS:

Recommend refusal.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 National Planning policy Framework

The NPPF was published on 27th March 2012 and amended on 24th July 2018. Paragraph 10 of the Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 2 of the Framework confirms the tests in s.38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and s.70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and that the Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 11 states that in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The following headings and content of the NPPF are relevant to the consideration of the current proposals:

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 4. Decision-making
- 7. Ensuring the vitality of town centres

5.2 Planning Policy Guidance

In March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched its planning practice guidance web-based resource. This was

accompanied by a Written Ministerial Statement which includes a list of the previous planning policy guidance documents cancelled when the NPPF was launched. PPG contains a range of subject areas, with each area containing several subtopics. Those of particular relevance to the determination of this planning application comprise:

- Design
- Determining a planning application
- Ensuring the vitality of town centres

5.3 Thurrock Local Development Framework (as amended) 2015

The Council adopted the “Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development Plan Document” in (as amended) in January 2015. The following Core Strategy policies apply to the proposals:

OVERARCHING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

- OSDP1 (Promotion of Sustainable Growth and Regeneration in Thurrock)¹

THEMATIC POLICIES

- CSTP7 (Viability and Vitality of Existing Centres)²
- CSTP22 (Thurrock Design)

POLICIES FOR MANAGEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT

- PMD1 (Minimising Pollution and Impacts on Amenity)²
- PMD2 (Design and Layout)²
- PMD8 (Parking Standards)³
- PMD9 (Road Network Hierarchy)

[Footnote: ¹ New Policy inserted by the Focused Review of the LDF Core Strategy. ² Wording of LDF-CS Policy and forward amended either in part or in full by the Focused Review of the LDF Core Strategy. ³ Wording of forward to LDF-CS Policy amended either in part or in full by the Focused Review of the LDF Core Strategy]

Thurrock Borough Local Plan 1997 Saved Policies

- SH10 (Non-Retail Uses in District and Local Shopping Centres)

5.4 Thurrock Local Plan

In February 2014 the Council embarked on the preparation of a new Local Plan for the Borough. Between February and April 2016 the Council consulted formally on an Issues and Options (Stage 1) document and simultaneously undertook a 'Call for Sites' exercise. It is currently anticipated that consultation on an Issues and Options (Stage 2 Spatial Options and Sites) document will be undertaken in 2018.

5.5 Thurrock Design Strategy

In March 2017 the Council launched the Thurrock Design Strategy. The Design Strategy sets out the main design principles to be used by applicants for all new development in Thurrock. The Design Strategy is a supplementary planning document (SPD) which supports policies in the adopted Core Strategy.

6.0 **ASSESSMENT**

The assessment below covers the following areas:

- I. Principle of the Development
- II. Traffic Impact, Access and Car Parking
- III. Design and Layout
- IV. Impact on Neighbour Amenity

I. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 6.1 Saved Local Plan Policy SH10 seeks to prevent the loss of A1 retail uses in designated shopping parades, subject to certain criteria.
- 6.2 The site falls within a Central Shopping Area designated between 19 to 27 Corringham Road, where changes of use from A1 to A3, A2 or D1 will normally only be permitted where it would not result in more than 2 non-retail uses being located together and where no more than 30% of the parade is devoted to non-retail uses.
- 6.3 CS Policy CSTP7 states that the Council will *"maintain existing retail function, with changes of use to ground floor retail units to non-retail use permitted where it can be shown there is no long term demand for retail use of the unit or where there is a particular community need that would be met by the change of use"*.
- 6.4 The application site is a retail unit which is positioned adjacent to another retail unit. Adjacent to the retail unit (A1) is a B1 Dental laboratory, followed by a nail and beauty studio (Sui generis) and a restaurant (A3).

- 6.5 Of the five units in the designated parade three are already in non-retail use which is beyond the 30% which would normally be permissible. If this application were to be approved it would further increase the proportion of non-retails uses in this parade. This would have a noticeable impact upon the vitality and viability of this central area which is contrary to Policy SH10.
- 6.6 No marketing evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that there is no retail use demand for the unit. The proposal is also therefore contrary to Policy CSTP7 of the Core Strategy. It is understood that the existing Post Office would be relocated to the Rainbow Store on Corringham Road. However, this does not form part of the current application, which must be assessed on its own merits. Given the above, the principle of the loss of the A1 retail unit is considered to be unacceptable.
- 6.7 It is acknowledged that the previous permission 18/00040/FUL allowed for the part change of use of the ground floor retail unit to residential. However, this permission retained a retail frontage which would ensure a continued retail presence, contributing towards the vitality and viability of this area. The current proposal does not include any retail use and therefore would result in an unacceptable impact upon the retail offer in the area.

II. TRAFFIC IMPACT, ACCESS AND CAR PARKING

- 6.8 The site is within an area of high accessibility where public transport can be easily reached and as such, the provision of 6 parking spaces to the rear of the premises would under normal circumstances, be acceptable. However in this case, the rear car park is accessed via a track along the side of building, measuring 18m in length by just 2.1m wide.
- 6.9 The access along the side of the property is not wide enough for 2 vehicles. As a result vehicles entering the site may be confronted with vehicles already on the access track exiting the site and this could result in vehicles stopping suddenly on Corringham Road, or even reversing back out across the footway into the road, causing a road safety hazard.
- 6.10 It is acknowledged that this access is existing. However, the proposal would likely result in an increase in the intensity of the use which increases the possibility of a situation prejudicial to highway safety. No evidence has been submitted with the application to indicate the likely number of vehicle movements and how these will be spread over the course of the day. Therefore the proposal must be assessed on the basis of the likely increase associated with a number of people visiting over the course of the day.
- 6.11 In light of the above, the Council's Highways officer has recommended refusal as the proposal would be contrary to Policy PMD2 and PMD9 of the Thurrock Local Development Framework Core Strategy due to the potential impact on highway safety.

III. DESIGN AND LAYOUT

- 6.12 The existing A1 retail shop comprises of a shop with storeroom and toilet to the rear. The proposed change of use would include the provision of an additional toilet, kitchen area and office space to the rear of the unit while the former retail space would be an open area.
- 6.13 There would be limited alteration to the appearance of the premises and no objection is raised on design grounds.

IV. IMPACT ON NEIGHBOUR AMENITY

- 6.14 Given the comments of the Council's Environmental Health Officer and subject to reasonable conditions limiting the opening hours, noise and disturbance it is considered that the proposal would not significantly impact upon neighbour amenity.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR REFUSAL

- 7.1 The loss of the retail unit would have a detrimental impact upon the vitality and viability of this designated central shopping area. The proposed change of use to another non A1 retail unit would unbalance the diversity of uses within this centre contrary to policy CSTP7 of the Core Strategy 2015 and saved policy SH10 of the Local Plan 1997.
- 7.2 The existing access road to the side of the building which would be used to access is substandard due to its narrow width. As a result there is insufficient room for vehicles to pass which could result in vehicles having to reverse onto the highway which would adversely impact upon pedestrian and vehicular safety. Whilst this is an existing access the increase in the intensity of its use would result in an increase in the frequency of such occurrences resulting in an adverse impact upon highway safety. Therefore the proposal would result in an unacceptable impact upon highway safety contrary to policies PMD2 and PMD9 of the Core Strategy 2015.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 To Refuse for the following reasons:

1. The proposed change of use would lead to the loss of an A1 retail unit within a designated central shopping area detrimental to the vitality and viability this area. No evidence has been provided to show that there is no long term retail demand for the unit. The proposal is therefore contrary to saved policy SH10 of the Local Plan 1997 and policy CSTP7 and PMD2 of the Thurrock Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2015).

2. The proposed change of use, by reason of the increase in the intensity of the use of the existing substandard access, which is of insufficient width for 2 vehicles to pass, would result in the potential for a significant adverse impact upon highway safety contrary to policies PMD2 and PMD9 of the Core Strategy 2015.

Planning Committee 22.11.2018	Application Reference: 18/01405/FUL
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Documents:

All background documents including application forms, drawings and other supporting documentation relating to this application can be viewed online:

www.thurrock.gov.uk/planning

