



Planning Committee

Abbey Ward

6 January 2009

**2008/362/FUL EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO BUILDING (CURRENTLY HOMEBASE),
INTERNAL WORKS TO CREATE ONE ADDITIONAL UNIT AND
MODIFICATIONS TO CAR PARKING LAYOUT
HOMEBASE, ABBEY RETAIL PARK
APPLICANT: ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL PENSION FUND
EXPIRY DATE: 12TH FEBRUARY 2009**

Site Description

(See additional papers for Site Plan)

This building forms part of the Abbey Retail Park adjacent to the Alvechurch Highway, and is accessed from a roundabout where the highway meets Middlehouse Lane. This large rectangular building currently contains the Homebase store – (approximately 2904 m²) and Allied Carpets (993 m²). Beyond this building, further to the south, lies the Sainsbury's Store. The Homebase store, subject to this planning application is of brick and tile construction with a large, sparsely landscaped surface parking area to the Eastern side of the site.

To the west of the building is the service yard. Beyond this are residential properties which front onto Birmingham Road. Their rear gardens back onto the rear of the existing store.

It is a typical retail outlet, with large pedestrian area to frontage, including trolley storage areas.

Proposal description

The proposals are based upon sub-dividing the existing Homebase unit into a smaller Homebase unit and the creation of a new retail unit. The new unit, (which is understood to be a catalogue retailer) would be situated between the new, smaller Homebase store and the existing Allied Carpets store which remains unaltered. In short, the building would accommodate three retailers instead of the two at present. A new entrance feature in the style of the existing 'triangular shaped' Homebase / Allied carpets entrance together with a new fire exit door is proposed to the Eastern facing (or front) elevation of the building which faces the customer car parking area. In addition, further fire exit doors and a single new goods / loading door are proposed to the West facing (rear) elevation of the building to serve the down-sized Homebase unit. In addition, the incorporation of the new unit entrance has resulted in modifications to the existing car park which have included an increase in disabled parking spaces and the provision of cycle parking.

Relevant key policies

All planning applications must be considered in terms of the planning policy framework and all other relevant material considerations (as set out in the legislative framework). The planning policies noted below can be found on the following website:

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3

B(BE).13 Qualities of Good Design
B(BE).14 Alterations and extensions
C(T).12 Parking standards (Appendix H)

Relevant site planning history

1988/242	Erection of D.I.Y unit, garden centre and non-food retail warehouse	Approved	02.06.1988
2008/352	Certificate of Lawfulness (proposed use) To confirm that the proposed occupation of a retail premises by a catalogue retailer is lawful	Approved	05.12.2008

Public Consultation Responses

None.

Consultation responses

County Highway Network Control

No objection.

Environmental Health

No objection.

Procedural Matters

This application is put before the Planning Committee due to the fact that it is a 'major' application (as defined in the BV109 returns), with the site measuring more than 1ha in area (the site is approximately 1.22 hectares). Under the agreed scheme of delegation to Planning Officers, Part 7 states that 'major' applications should be reported to Committee.

Assessment of Proposal

The key issues for consideration in this case are the principle of the proposed development, the impact of the external alterations upon the character and appearance of the building and its surroundings and any potential impact upon highway safety.

Principle of development

Under application 2008/352, which was determined under delegated powers afforded to Officers on 5.12.2008, a Certificate of Lawfulness was issued which confirms that the sub division of the building from 2-3A1 retail units by a catalogue retailer is lawful.

The catalogue retailer use proposed would not represent a departure from the uses permitted under Condition 1 on the 1988 consent, and the Certificate above makes reference to Condition 3 on the 1988 consent which states that the minimum size of any retail unit within the building shall be 10,000 sq.ft gross floor area. Submitted floor plans detailing the proposed new unit show that the unit would measure 929 sq.m or 10,000sq.ft in area. In effect, planning permission is not required for these internal alterations, with this part of the proposal complying with extant planning conditions attached to the original 1988 consent. Officers have however considered it necessary to explain this part of the proposal, as the internal alterations are directly related to the proposed external changes under consideration here.

Impact of alterations upon character and appearance of the building

The proposals, whilst they require consent as 'material alterations to the external appearance of the building' are very minor in nature. The new pitched roof entrance canopy which would serve the proposed future retail unit would have a clay plain tiled roof, profiled metal clad fascia with powder coated aluminium door frames. This feature would match exactly in terms of size, design and appearance with that of the existing entrance serving the Allied Carpets entrance, which is located approximately 14 metres further to the South. The fire exit doors and goods entrance door would similarly match those on the existing building.

Highway Safety consideration

The incorporation of the new unit entrance has resulted in a modification to the existing car park. At present there are 155 car parking spaces, of which 6 are disabled spaces. No cycle spaces exist. The proposed layout would accommodate 151 spaces of which 8 would be reserved for disabled use. 16 cycle spaces would be created. This provision is in line with the Borough Council's parking standards and is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposals accord with Policies B(BE).13, B(BE).14 and C(T).12 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan, in that they would respect and enhance the character and appearance of the existing building and not prejudice highway safety. As such, Officers support this application.

Recommendation

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions and informatives as summarised below:

- 1) Development to commence within 3 years from date of consent.
- 2) Materials for walls and roofs to match existing.

Informatives:

1. A separate application for Advertisement Consent may be required for signage to advertise any future business. The applicant should contact the Local Planning Authority for further advice on this matter.