

PLANNING COMMITTEE

4th March 2020

Planning Application 19/01279/FUL

Proposed change of uses to include: at ground floor- separation and modification of part of existing A1 (retail) use, change of use of part of existing A1 use to A3 (restaurant), B1 (offices) and B8 (self-storage) uses; and at first floor: change of use from D2 (bingo) to B8 (self-storage) and installation of mezzanine floor.

17 Alcester Street, Redditch, Worcestershire

**Applicant: Mr Richard Lanyon
Ward: Abbey Ward**

(See additional papers for site plan)

Case Officer: Claire Gilbert, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 881655 Email: claire.gilbert@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

17 Alcester Street is a large modern two storey building, situated within the Town centre of Redditch. At ground floor the unit currently consists of a mix of uses including a large retail unit which has been unoccupied for over 6 years, a restaurant use and a tanning salon. The first floor of the unit is currently used as a Bingo Hall. There is a car park that serves the building which is accessed off Grove Street to the south east of the building; The building currently has two main frontages, one off Red lion Street and the other off Alcester Street. The building is adjacent to the Palace Theatre which is a grade II listed building.

Proposal Description

The proposal is for various alterations and changes of use of the building at both ground and first floors to include:

- Ground floor- separation and modification of part of existing A1 (retail) use, change of use of part of existing A1 use to A3 (restaurant), B1 co-working area (offices) and B8 (self storage) uses;
- First floor: change of use from D2 (bingo) use to B8 (self-storage) and installation of mezzanine floor.

In total the self-storage B8 use would occupy approximately 3116sqm of the building, with the retail element occupying approximately 420sqm of the building. The B1 use would occupy approximately 100sqm of the building and would be made up of a co-working area and facilities. The A3 use would be expanded, taking up approximately 60sqm of the existing retail floor space of the building.

Some minor external alterations are also proposed to the north western elevation of the building, to include the insertion of new shop fronts to two of the new retail units that

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would be accessed from this side. No other external alterations are proposed at this stage.

The proposed B8 self-storage use would have up to 300 storage units of various sizes. It is proposed that the self-storage units could be used by members of the public between 0600-2200 daily, with a reception area manned between 0900-1800 Monday to Friday, 0900 to 1600 on Saturdays and 1000 to 1500 on Sundays. Outside of reception hours the self-storage units would be accessed from the Alcester Street entrance via monitored CCTV and security keypads.

Deliveries would be controlled and co-ordinated via reception desk staff and will be subject to agreed delivery times and only when the reception desked in manned. These appointments will normally be hour block appointments). It is also proposed that the self-storage company (Away Storage Ltd) would offer a collection and delivery service for both domestic and business customers; initially they propose to have one electric van with a charging point to facilitate this.

The supporting information that has been submitted with this application sets out that it is anticipated that the proposed B8 self-storage use would employ 3.5 full time employees, and that they expect the A1 uses would create around 10 jobs. They also expected that the co-working business area would look to support local businesses and create a local business community of between 40-50 members by year 3.

Relevant Policies:

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4:

Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Policy 19: Sustainable travel and Accessibility
Policy 30: Town Centre and Retail Hierarchy
Policy 31: Regeneration for Town Centre
Policy 32: Protection of the Retail Core
Policy 33: Use of Upper Floors

Others:

Redditch High Quality Design SPD
National Design Guide
NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
NPPG - National Planning Practice Guidance

Relevant Planning History

None

Consultations

Cllr Grubb Consulted 11/10/2019 Expired 01/11/2019
No Comments Received To Date

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Cllr Michael Chalk Consulted 11/10/2019 Expired 01/11/2019

I am aware of the application and am happy to leave the consideration to the planning committee

Highways Redditch Consulted 11/10/2019 Expired 04/11/2019

Worcestershire County Council acting in its role as the Highway Authority has no objection subject to conditions.

Economic Development and Regeneration Service Consulted 11/10/2019 Expired 04/11/2019

Welcome the extension of the restaurant, additional retail and office space in this area of Redditch Town Centre and have no objections.

Conservation Officer Consulted 11/10/2019 Expired 04/11/2019

No objections.

Crime Risk Manager Consulted 03/01/2020 Expired 27/01/2020

The applicant has responded with the security arrangements for the self-storage units. What they intend putting in place is acceptable; therefore I would not raise any objection.

Community Safety- Redditch Council Consulted 03/01/2020 Expired 27/01/2020

We support the comments of the Police Crime Risk Manager.

Public Consultation Response

Public Consultation

7 Neighbour Notification Letters Sent on 11/10/2019 Expired 04/11/2019

Site Notice Posted 14/10/2019 Expired 7/11/2019

Press Notice (Redditch Standard) Published 18/10/2019 Expired 04/11/2019

Representations

8 comments in objection to proposal received:

- Loss of Bingo use that many people still enjoy and is a meeting place for many
- Loss of Bingo Hall which is a great community asset
- Town is becoming a ghost town
- Proposal is outrageous when taking into account how many other storage facilities there are around Redditch and still not being used
- Redditch needs social and leisure activities
- Proposed facility is not appropriate for an area which is supposed to be retail/entertainment. It would be detrimental to the town centre.
- Self-storage will require access for users possibly trucks etc. The rd is not suitable in anyway.

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- In the current climate of high risk for terrorist attacks have grave concerns over the location of storage units in a populated area. Who is going to check what is stored in them? There has to be a security risk.

3 comments in support of proposal received (including from the Palace Theatre):

- Improved car parking arrangements
- Shared working spaces are in short supply in area
- Riley's Restaurant is popular and often full, additional space would benefit them
- self-storage lacking in Redditch and one that is not out of town would be benefit
- Proposal would increase is footfall in area and regenerate this part of the town

Assessment of Proposal

Principle of Proposal

The ground floor retail element of the building has been unoccupied for over 6 years. Although the D2 Bingo Hall use at the first floor is still active at present. However Shipleys who currently lease the premises have provided confirmation that they are looking at closing the bingo Hall on the 29 march 2020.

The proposal is to subdivide the existing A1 retail unit at ground floor to provide smaller A1 units, and other uses including A3, B1 and B8 uses. The existing retail frontage of the building at ground floor level is proposed to be fully retained, which is vital to ensure and encourage the vitality and viability of this area of Redditch Town Centre.

The existing A3 unit currently occupied by Riley's restaurant is proposed to be extended into part of the exiting retail floor space. However the external frontage of this A3 unit is not proposed to change.

The proposed B1 use is proposed to replace the existing tanning studio at the rear of the building, and the remaining retail floorspace at ground floor level, which does not have an active frontage, is proposed to be used as part of the proposed B8 self-storage use (404sqm).

The whole of the first floor area of the building is proposed to be changed into a B8 self-storage use from its existing D2 bingo Hall use, with a new mezzanine level proposed to be installed to increase the storage capacity.

Comments have been received in relation to the loss of the existing D2 Bingo Hall use from members of the public, which is used a social meeting place by some residents.

Paragraph 92 of the NPPF does set out that planning policies and decisions should: Plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces and community facilities; guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities; ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to development and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community. In this case it is noted that the proposed would result in the loss of an

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existing D2 Bingo Hall use, which as can be seen from the comments received from members of the public is used as a meeting place by residents in Redditch.

The applicants have however provided information to set out that the existing D2 use is commercially unviable and that the current tenants can no longer pay the required rent. Due to this vacant possession is to be given on 13th April 2020.

A letter confirming this has also been received from Shipley's who currently run the Bingo Hall, which sets out that trade has dwindled away in recent years and the business was not sustainable. As such they intend to close the Bingo club on Sunday 29th March 2020 so they can strip out the venue and return the lease to the landlords on 13th April 2020.

A letter from John Truslove has also been provided in support of the proposal which sets out that following recent discussions and marketing, in the event that the tenants of the upper floor of this unit were to vacate, they do not believe that there would be any other operators seeking premises which benefit from a D2 use of this size and nature within the Town centre. They state that there is currently an oversupply of Gym operators and, therefore, demand from this sector has currently been satisfied. Given the nature of the accommodation, they believe that it is essential to seek to secure alternative planning use, to include B8, where there is a constant reasonable demand.

Policy 33 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan for Upper floors sets out that proposals which bring into use vacant upper floors within the Town Centre will be encouraged. As upper floors in retail centres can add to the viability of an area. Furthermore it sets out that full and comprehensive building use ensures that buildings are maintained, which contributes to vitality and overall perception of a place.

Although it is acknowledged that the upper floor of this building is not currently vacant, from the information provided it would seem that this is likely to be the case in the near future if an alternative use is not secured.

It is also noted that Economic Development have raised no objections to the proposal and welcome the extension of the restaurant, additional retail and office space in this area of Redditch Town Centre.

Overall it is considered that although the proposal would result in the loss of a community facility, it would result in a mixed use development with extended restaurant facilities, offices and a number of smaller retail units in addition to self-storage. It is therefore considered that the proposal would encourage the re use of these units within the Town Centre and contribute to the vitality and viability of Redditch town centre.

Highways

Further information provided with this application clarifies that there are no alterations to the scale of the car park and that provisions are included for accessible spaces, electric vehicles and motorcycles.

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The Highway Authority notes that the adjoining Palace theatre has confirmed in their comment dated November 2019 their lorry movements are occasional and that they support the application. The Highway Authority considers that they are best placed to understand their delivery needs and accepts the proposed parking and manoeuvring arrangements with a condition to ensure a car parking management plan is provided and maintained over the life of the planning permission.

Overall the Highway Authority concludes that there would not be an unacceptable impact on Highway Safety or a severe impact on congestion. As such there are no justifiable grounds on which an objection could be maintained.

Historic Environment

17 Alcester Street is a modern large retail unit, which is of no special architectural or historic interest. It is not therefore considered to be a heritage asset in its own right. However it is located adjacent the Grade II listed Palace Theatre; therefore it is considered to be within the setting of a designated heritage asset. As such the Council's Conservation Officer has assessed the proposal. They have raised no objection to the proposal as they do not consider that it would have an impact on the setting of the Grade II listed building.

They have however noted that no details of the proposed advertisement have been provided as part of this application and set out that any new signage to the rear access yard must be sympathetic to the adjacent Palace Theatre.

Community Safety

No objections have been received from the police in relation to this application. They consider that the security arrangements they intend to put in place for the proposed for the self-storage units would be acceptable, and as such the Police do not raise any objection to the application.

The security measures that are proposed would include:

- All customers will be photographed and provide relevant Id before they can start storing items;
- no cash payments will be accepted so that all payments are traceable;
- every storage room would have its own lock, customers will not be able to provide their own locks;
- staff will be on site 7 days a week during trading hour and will be trained to monitor and react to any irregular or suspicious activities in or around the store;
- out of hours, every storage building is closely monitored through CCTV by external 24 hour monitoring station; and,
- access to storage units will be by use of a private PIN case on the entrance door.

Amenity

There are residential apartments situated opposite the site on Alcester Street. However given that the site is situated in a town centre location adjacent to existing public houses

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and restaurants, it is not considered that the proposed use would have a detrimental impact on the existing residential amenities of the neighbouring occupiers.

It is however recommended that a condition should be appended to any permission that is granted to control the proposed opening hours of the storage facility to safeguard the existing amenities of the residential occupiers of the nearby residential occupiers.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the proposal would accord with the policies in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan and the NPPF and is therefore considered to be acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION:

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

Conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of the grant of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and drawings:

Drawing No. P00 Location Plan

Drawing No. P01A Site Plan Current

Drawing No. P04A Ground Floor Plan Retail, Restaurant, Co-Working & Self-Storage Plan

Drawing No. P05 First Floor Self-Storage Plan

Drawing No. P06 First Floor Mezzanine Self-Storage Plan

Drawing No. P11 Retail Elevations

Reason: To provide certainty to the extent of the development hereby approved in the interests of proper planning.

3. All new external walls and roofs shall be finished in materials to match in colour, form and texture those on the existing building.

Reason: To ensure that the development is satisfactory in appearance, to safeguard the visual amenities of the area and in accordance with Policies in the Local Plan.

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4. The Development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until the parking and turning facilities have been provided as shown on drawing P01A.

Reason: To ensure conformity with submitted details.

5. The Development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until 1 electric vehicle charging spaces have been provided within the carpark within the site. Thereafter such spaces and power points shall be kept available and maintained for the use of electric vehicles as approved.

Reason: To encourage sustainable travel and healthy communities.

6. The Development hereby approved shall not be brought into use until the applicant has submitted a Travel Plan in writing to the Local Planning Authority that promotes sustainable forms of travel to the development site and this has been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall use Modeshift STARS Business to carry out this process and include mechanisms for monitoring and review over the life of the development and timescales for implementation. The approved Travel Plan shall be implemented, monitored and reviewed in accordance with the approved details

Reason: To reduce vehicle movements and promote sustainable access.

7. The self-storage use hereby approved as indicated on Drawing No. P04A, P05 and P06 shall only be open to members of the public between the hours of 0600 to 2200 daily.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

8. Notwithstanding the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) and Town and Country Planning (permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) or any Orders revoking, amending, or re-enacting those Orders, the self-storage use hereby approved and indicated on Drawing No. P04A, P05 and P06 shall be used only for the purposes of self-storage as per the submitted information, and not for any other purpose, including any other use within Use Class B8 without express planning permission first being obtained from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

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Informatives

1. The local planning authority have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner to seek solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with this planning application through negotiation and amendment.
2. This permission only relates to planning permission and is not for the display of any advertisement. You may need to apply for advertisement consent to display an advert or sign on your premises. For information on this please either contact the Local Planning Authority on 01527 881770 or visit https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/4/adverts_and_signs.
3. Worcestershire County Council has published guidance on how it expects travel plans to be prepared, this guidance is freely available from the County Councils Travel Plans Officer. As part of this process the applicant must register for Modeshift STARS Business and ensure that their targets have been uploaded so that progress on the implementation of the Travel Plan can be monitored. Worcestershire County Council can assist applicants with this process should they need.

Modeshift STARS Business is a nationally accredited scheme which assists in the effective delivery of travel plans, applicant can register at www.modeshiftstars.org

Procedural matters

This application is reported to Planning Committee for determination because the application is for major development and because two (or more) objections have been received. As such the application falls outside the scheme of delegation to Officers.