

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

4th January 2012

PLANNING APPLICATION 2011/315/EXT

EXTENSION OF TIME APPLICATION: EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO BUILDING AND INTERNAL WORKS TO CREATE ONE ADDITIONAL UNIT AS APPROVED UNDER APPLICATION 2008/362/FUL

HOMEBASE LTD, ABBEY RETAIL PARK, REDDITCH

**APPLICANT: ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL PENSION FUND
EXPIRY DATE: 16TH FEBRUARY 2012**

WARD: ABBEY

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(See additional papers for Site Plan)

Site Description

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 Argos (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

This extension of time application relates to application reference 2008/362/FUL. Permission was granted for external alterations to the building and internal works to create one additional unit at the Planning Committee of 6th January 2009. The decision notice was dated 7th January 2009.

The development proposed under that application is set out as follows:

Sub-division of the existing Homebase unit into a smaller Homebase unit and the creation of a new retail unit. The new unit would be situated between the new, smaller Homebase store and the existing (now Argos, previously Allied Carpets store) which remains unaltered. The building would accommodate three retailers

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instead of the two at present. A new entrance feature in the style of the existing 'triangular shaped' Homebase / Argos 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 websites:

www.communities.gov.uk

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

National Planning Policy

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
PPG13 Transport

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3

CS.7 The sustainable location of development
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/FUL	Erection of D.I.Y unit, garden centre and non-food retail warehouse	Approved	02.06.1988
2008/352/CPL	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
2008/362/FUL	External alterations to building and internal works to create one additional unit	Approved	07.01.2009

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2009/082/FUL	Installation of floor space at Mezzanine level	Approved	15.07.2009
2011/053/FUL	Partial widening of service yard to rear	Approved	01.04.2011
2011/084/S73	Variation of condition 2 (ref 88/242) to allow a chemist to operate from premises	Approved	26.05.2011
2011/152/S73	Variation of condition 5 (ref 09/082) to allow retailing to public from mezzanine level	Approved	10.08.2011
2011/229/FUL	External and internal alterations to create two new units	Approved	17.10.2011

Public Consultation Responses

None

Consultee Responses

County Highway Network Control

No objection.

Worcestershire Regulatory Services: Environmental Health

No objection

Procedural matters

As stated earlier in this report, due to the economic slowdown, the previous Government enacted legislation to allow an applicant (via a formal application) to be able to extend the length of time before commencement of that development, provided that the 'original' consent (the application to be extended) in itself is extant. Subject to the planning policy framework not changing in the intervening period, the legislation allowing 'extension of time' applications would normally consider an additional three year extension of time to be reasonable. The Council receives relatively few such applications and they are rarely presented before the Planning Committee. This application only comes before the Committee due to the fact that the site area exceeds 1hectare and is therefore classified as a 'major' application. Application 2008/362/FUL, to which this extension of time application relates, granted permission for external alterations to the building and internal works to create one additional unit. The decision notice is dated 7th January 2009.

Assessment of Proposal

In considering such applications, it is only relevant to consider what has changed since the previous approval, both in terms of the planning policy framework under which the decision should be made, and also, any significant

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physical changes to the site and/or its surroundings that might result in different impacts from the proposed development. In both respects, no material changes have occurred since the 2009 approval. The plans which have been submitted are identical to those plans approved under application 2008/362/FUL. The issues which were considered to be relevant under application 2008/362/FUL are as follows:-

Principle of development

Under application 2008/352/CPL, which was determined under delegated powers afforded to Officers on 5.12.2008, a Certificate of Lawfulness was issued which confirms that the occupation of the building by a catalogue retailer (in this case Argos) is lawful.

The catalogue retailer use proposed would not have represented a departure from the uses permitted under Condition 1 on the 1988 consent, and the Certificate made reference to Condition 3 on the 1988 consent which stated that the minimum size of any retail unit within the building shall be 10,000 sq. ft gross floor area. The sub division of the building from 2 to 3 retail units is acceptable since 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 Argos store 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 considerations

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.

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Conclusion

The planning policy framework under which this application should be determined has not changed in the intervening period. Similarly, the site itself and its surroundings have not changed materially, nor have any significant planning permissions been granted in the area which could change the context of the site. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would accord with policy criteria and objectives and would not result in harm to amenity or safety. It is therefore considered reasonable to allow an extension of time to implement this consent for a further three years, subject to the inclusion of conditions as summarised below.

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
- 3) Development in accordance with plans (listed)

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.