

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

12 January 2011

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services)/
Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities)

S/1690/10 – GREAT SHELFORD
Alterations to Shopfront – 36-38, Woollards Lane,
for Tesco Stores Ltd

Recommendation: Approve Conditionally

Date for Determination: 29th November 2010

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee at the request of the local member Cllr Nightingale.

Members will visit the site on the morning of the 12th January 2010.

Site and Proposal

1. The application site comprises a two-storey detached retail unit (A1 Use Class) located within the centre of Woollards Lane. Woollards Lane is identified within the villages Conservation Appraisal as being a relatively calm street, even though this is the main shopping street and the centre for commercial and community life in the village. This part of the village contains a library, bank, newsagents, dental surgery and opticians, restaurants and delicatessens, convenience stores, a small department store (application site), pharmacy, estate agents, travel agents, bicycle shop and a greengrocer. The mix of commercial and residential properties are predominantly late 19th century in character, comprising the mainly unplanned conversion of former yellow brick and slate dwellings to shops. In most cases, this has led to the use of back lands as car parks.
2. The site is situated within the village development framework, Conservation Area, Character Area (as designated by the Village Design Statement) and is in within an area of special advertisement control. There are a variety of advertisements within Woollards Lane including ATM units and shop frontages with an array of shop fascia's. There are parking restrictions within Woollards Lane with the road being narrow at points with on street parking providing congestion at peak times. The application site is not specifically identified within the villages Conservation Appraisal. The village Design Statement designates Woollards Lane as the principal shopping centre and locus for village activity. This document refers to the conflict between pedestrians and vehicles within this concentrated area. Furthermore, this document goes on to reference that the design of shop fronts within Woollards Lane makes a strong and varied impact upon the appearance of the street in the village and in combination with signage and advertisements are a matter for attention in the raising of the standards of high visual quality.

3. The proposal comprises the alteration of the existing shop front to provide full height glazing within a timber frame, coloured to compliment the appearance of the building. The shop entrance will be re-located to the centre of the principal elevation with the provision of sliding doors. These alterations will also include the provision of an ATM unit, which forms part of a separate planning application.
4. The application is supported by a Heritage Statement, Design and Access Statement but has not been party to any pre-application advice.
5. There was an administration error during the consultation period whereby the correct application forms were not made visible via the website. However, this matter has been rectified and the application in full has been made public for a period in excess of 21 days.
6. The proposed development does not require a parallel application for Conservation Area Consent.

Planning History

7. Planning Application S/0481/74/F for a single storey rear extension was approved.
8. Planning Application S/1708/79/F for single storey rear extension was approved.
- 9.. Planning Application C/0715/69/O for internal alterations and extension to the rear was approved.
10. Planning Application S/0130/81/F for a replacement display window was approved.
11. Planning Application S/1039/84/F for a replacement display window was approved.
12. Planning Application S/1269/85/F for a first floor shop extension was approved.
13. Planning Application S/1579/85/F for the use of no.38 as retail space and new shop front was approved.
14. Planning Application S/0085/86/F for a two-storey rear extension was approved.
15. Planning Application S/0640/10 for a two-storey rear extension was approved.

Planning Policy

16. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework, Development Control Policies, DPD, 2007:**
 - DP/1 Sustainable Development
 - DP/2 Design of New Development
 - DP/3 Development Criteria
 - DP/7 Development Frameworks
 - CH/5 Conservation Areas

CH/9 Shop Fronts

17. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):**
Development affecting Conservation Areas SPD – Adopted January 2009
Great Shelford Conservation Area Appraisal – Adopted September 2007
Great Shelford Village Design Statement – Adopted February 2004

Consultation

18. **Great Shelford Parish Council** – Recommends refusal making the following comments:
 - The proposal to insert a double width glazed door in a prominent position on the façade of the building will create a feature out of scale and character with the existing building contrary to the requirements of Policy CH/9 and the Village Design Statement;
 - The Design & Access Statement states that the proposed works (which involve widening a side door, which could be used for deliveries) are necessary to facilitate the successful operation of the store but this would be at the expense of the amenities of the village in terms of noise at unsocial hours, traffic movements and unloading of vehicles close to a busy footway.
19. **Conservation** – Raises no objections to the proposed alterations subject to conditions requiring details of the proposed materials, colour and elevation and cross section drawings at a heightened scale showing the joinery, doors, screens, mouldings and fascia to be submitted for approval subject to development commencing on site.
20. **Environmental Health** – No significant environmental impacts from an Environmental Health standpoint would occur.
21. **Local Highways Authority** – Raise no objections commenting that no significant adverse effect upon the Public Highway should result from this proposal, should it gain the benefit of planning permission.

Representations

22. **528** letters of objection have been received in total in addition to a petition of **395** signatures. The objections are summarised below with relevance to this application:
 - The proposal would result in noise and disturbance to neighbour residential properties;
 - Opening doors this close to the road would represent a risk to children and the elderly not to mention users of the footpath;
 - The alterations proposed would damage the character and appearance of the building and that of the Conservation Area; as the design is not in keeping with the policies and guidelines laid out within the village design statement;
 - The proposals should be referred to the Conservation Officer for a recommendation;
 - The proposed alterations to the access will encourage people to park and pop in to shop and will have consequences on the free flow of traffic in this already congested narrow road;
 - It is unclear as to where delivery cages and refuse will be stored;

- If minded to approve conditions should be imposed limiting the movements of lorries and hours of opening to limit the impact upon highway and pedestrian safety;
- The alterations will remove the porch element to the stores frontage that was used to store buggies and cycles clear of the footpath;
- The applications Heritage Statement fails to address the protection of buildings of local character from unsympathetic changes;
- The proposals would break the rhythm and proportions of the elevation;
- The village and nearby villages are well provided for by shops selling the same merchandise as those offered by Tesco;
- The presence of Tesco would threaten the local stores;
- The applications will contravene Planning Policy SF/1 as they will threaten the loss of traditional village shops;
- The development would contravene Planning Policy SF/4 as Tesco would not be of the size or the attraction appropriate to the scale of the village;
- The use of the premises as a Tesco store would result in increased antisocial behaviour and is not wanted;
- Shelford is defined as a Rural Centre (Core Strategy Policy ST/4), which serves its local catchment area and not the wider community that Tesco wishes to reach;
- A new Tesco store would not be in scale with the retail hierarchy of the village as the village is adequately served by sufficient retail provision;
- Woollards Lane is unsuitable for multiple daily deliveries by Tesco. The volume of traffic using this road has increased over the years and upon rubbish collection day there are noticeable tailbacks and jams;
- Tesco will apply for an alcohol license, which will lead to increased anti-social behaviour;
- The proposed shop front alterations do not address the principles of the Great Shelford Design Statement;
- The existing shop front is in harmony with the buildings and wider street scene, the existing set back creates an interesting entrance. Bringing the shop forward with the installation of automatic sliding doors would destroy the scale and harmony of the area;
- The current window style is a significant architectural feature that gives charm to the property;
- The style of frontage proposed is generic to that of the applicant's national style in numerous other locations and is both alien to the building and its surroundings;
- The alterations proposed would be larger and more intrusive with the rest of the Conservation Area;
- The shop front should retain the Edwardian store frontage and not the continuous glass open frontage proposed;
- The proposals would be contrary to Policy CH/9 and the Village Design Statement as the proposal would create a feature that is out of scale and character with the existing building;
- If the store is to be open late at night then the car park will be used to a late hour, which would adversely affect neighbouring residential properties through undue noise and disturbance;
- All the application forms upon the website relate to S/1687/10 and not the relevant applications, furthermore, there is no Conservation Area Consent for these applications;
- The heritage statement submitted has several material deficiencies, such as the fact that the statement addresses all four planning applications and is not

therefore specific to each proposal. In addition there is no evidence of the examination of historic records or the expertise of the author. The statement also fails to correctly address and assess the significance of local heritage assets. The archaeological potential of the site has also not been considered.

23. **10** Letters of support have been received, which raise the following comments:

- The positives of the store would outweigh the negative, such as the stores increased accessibility for older customers;
- The store would provide a wide range of affordable food items for all;
- The store would provide local jobs when unemployment is high;
- Local retail competition will be healthy for the village;
- No change in land use would occur;
- The store will create little additional traffic and the existing co-op store already has parking and access problems with the use of large delivery lorries;
- There is sufficient local parking to accommodate the store;
- Not everyone in the village is against this store;
- The store would be more accessible to the elderly;
- There is ample car parking within the village to serve the store;
- The existing food retailers within the village such as the CO OP block pavements and access when delivering goods and this has never been a problem locally;
- There are already chillers in similar retail premises and there have been no objections to these;
- The Parish Council has rarely if ever supported any form of retail or restaurant use within the village citing their view of justification or demand. However, the village has benefited from the opening of new premises recently and it is for Tesco to decide, whether their investment will bring a return;
- Were the application made by an alternative retailer to Tesco there would be substantially less objections;
- Tesco will not stop residents shopping locally at other stores, but it will bring about more choice and competitive prices;
- Many other stores within the village sell alcohol;

In addition to the above the Stop Tesco Action Group (STAG) have submitted a joint submission to all four applications, which is included within the annexe to this report.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

24. The key issues to consider in this instance are the impact that proposals would have upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the public realm.
25. Representations have been received which raise general objections and support of the proposal that relate to the occupation of the premises by Tesco and the resultant impact upon local retail competition and the village as a whole. These comments are not considered to relate to material planning considerations and have not been given weight in the in the determination of this planning application.

Design

27. The existing shop front comprises of two bay windows either side of a single door porch entrance, which is not centred within the shop frontage. The bays are not symmetrical with one being larger than the other with a bowed glass fascia, the other forming a rectangular box glazed window. The fascia comprises of thin vertical joinery (coloured black) with patent glazing upon a red brick plinth. A lean-to canopy roof finished in dark red plain tiles and lead flashing encompasses the fascia by thick upright supports (also coloured black). This shop frontage was constructed post 1985, following the planning consents to adjoin nos.36 and 38 as a single retail unit. Neither the shop front or retail unit is referenced within the Conservation Area appraisal or indeed the Village Design Statement for Great Shelford.
28. Notwithstanding the above, the Great Shelford Conservation Appraisal states that most of the shop fronts in Great Shelford are modern but some historic shop fronts survive that should be protected. They are identified as being at 66 High Street and the Woollards Lane library (No. 12), located in a 1930s former post office, with an attractive bay window. Furthermore this SPD references the fact that the village also has some examples of poor shop front design (for example the Co-op at No. 76 High Street, which represents an opportunity for improvement, perhaps emulating the good traditional shop front of Parker Brothers Butchers on the opposite side of the road.
29. The Great Shelford Village Design Statement states that the design of shop fronts makes a strong and varied impact on the appearance of the streets in the village and these, coupled with their associated signage, are a matter for attention in relation to raising standards of visual quality. Whereas Policy CH/9 'Shop Fronts' states that shop fronts alterations to existing shop fronts will only be permitted where they create a fascia and shop window, which is in character with the building itself and the street scene and would not result in a needless loss of architectural features or introduce 'house style' using materials which are alien to the building and its surroundings.
30. The proposed shop front alterations would comprise the squaring of the existing rectangular bay window to encompass the existing single door porch. This element of the proposal was also designed to house the proposed ATM unit under consideration of Planning Application S/1988/10, which has been recommended for refusal elsewhere on the agenda today. In addition the proposal seeks to square off the larger curved bay into a flush glazed opening utilising sliding doors that would become the new point of entry to the premises. The alterations proposed would not alter the canopy roof or its supports.
31. In light of the above, it is considered that the proposed alterations would be sympathetic to the existing shop frontage form and would not result in the loss of any architectural features. Furthermore, the development proposes to use appropriate replacement materials, such as timber joinery and glazing. Representations from local residents refer to the proposal resulting in a typical 'House Style' of that of a general Tesco Store. However, the existing shop front is of an unusual design and not typical of a traditional historic frontage, such as those referenced within the Village Design Statement. In light of this it is the opinion of officers that the alterations proposed, in isolation of the associated signage and ATM unit, would not resemble a

'house style' and it would be in character with the existing building preserving its appearance within the public realm.

32. It is the view of the Conservation Officer that the principle of the development is supported, as the shop front is relatively modern. However, the application is considered to provide limited information other than an indicative proposal. In addition the proposed sliding doors are viewed to be uncharacteristic of this part of the Conservation Area. In substitute a single door proportional and aligned with the original fenestration would be preferable. If this provision was to exceed the width of a traditional door it should be subdivided with a moulding, such as that provided for the library in Woollards Lane. Therefore, it is considered necessary to require additional details by way of condition. The further information required would comprise of a cross section drawing of the frontage along with details of the proposed joinery, mouldings and fascias submitted in elevation form at a scale of 1:20 and sections at 1:5 or larger.
33. In consideration of the above comments, it is the view of officers that through the use of the appropriate planning conditions an acceptable finish to the proposed shop front alterations can be achieved. Whilst it is noted that sliding doors or the appearance of double doors is not characteristic of the Conservation Area, this can be mitigated through the provision of careful moulding to give the appearance of patent glazing similar to that of the proportions of the existing shop front. As a result of this, it is considered that the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area.

Conclusion:

34. Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is considered that planning permission should be approved in this instance.

Recommendation

35. Approve, subject to the following conditions:
 1. **The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.**
(Reason - To ensure that consideration of any future application for development in the area will not be prejudiced by permissions for development, which have not been acted upon.)
 2. **The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:1828/06K, 1828/12B & 1828/15.**
(Reason - To facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)
 3. **No development shall take place until details of the materials (including colour finish) to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**
(Reason - To ensure the appearance of the development is satisfactory in

accordance with Policies CH/4, CH/9 and DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

- 4. No development shall commence until details of the joinery, doors, screens, mouldings and fascia including elevation at a scale at 1:20 and section drawings at a scale at 1:5 (or larger) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**

(Reason - Insufficient information was submitted with the application to assure the Local Planning Authority that the proposed shop front elevations comply with Policies CH/5, CH/9 and DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

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