

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

1st March 2006

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0137/06/F – Bar Hill

Change of Use for Car Valeting Operation Including Siting of Office and Canopy at Tesco Stores, Viking Way for Car Park Valeting Ltd.

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 28th March 2006

Site and Proposal

1. The site, located within the car park serving the Tesco Stores and 'New Mall' towards the southern boundary of the Tesco Stores Car Park, consists of 9 parking bays in total. To the south of the application site is an area of landscaping which includes a small raised area and a mixture of trees and hedgerow. Beyond that is located Bar Hill Primary School, a church and the Parish Council offices. To the east of the site lay further parking spaces and an electricity sub-station. Beyond that is the Gladeside residential estate. To the west are the 'New Mall' and the large Tesco superstore.
2. This full application, registered on 27th January 2006, seeks permission to site a portable building on one parking space and a canopy covering four parking bays to provide an office and a 'dry' bay, with a further 4 'wet' bays for the car valeting operation, resulting in the use of 9 parking spaces in total.

Planning History

3. Planning permission was refused under reference **S/1826/05/F** for a similar development seeking change of use for valeting operation further towards main vehicular entrance to the car park that serves the Tesco Stores and 'New Mall' site. The application was refused on the grounds that it was located near the most congested area of the site at a pedestrian crossing of the principal access road through the car park and that it would form an additional distraction to motorists, whilst reducing vehicle and pedestrian visibility around the access road, to the detriment of the safety of vehicles and pedestrians using the car park.

Planning Policy

4. The site is within the village framework.
5. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 states that development will be restricted where there is an unacceptable risk to the quality of underlying ground or surface water.
6. **Policy CS3** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 states that the development of sites where drainage to a public foul sewer is not feasible, will not be permitted if proposed alternative facilities are considered inadequate and would pose an unacceptable risk to the quality or quantity of ground or surface water, pollution of local ditches, watercourses or sites of ecological importance.

7. **Policy CS4** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 states that development will not be permitted which poses an unacceptable risk to the quality of the underlying groundwater.
8. **Policy ES6** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 states that the District Council will seek, by the means of appropriate planning conditions, to minimise the impact of noise and pollution on noise-sensitive development arising from any new industrial, commercial or recreational activities.
9. Draft Local Development Framework 2006 **Policy DP/3** states that planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse impact on residential amenity; from undue environmental disturbance such as noise, in accordance with Policies NE/16 and on quality of ground or surface water in accordance with policy NE/8.
10. Draft Local Development Framework 2006 **Policy NE/8** reiterates the advice contained within policy P1/2 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and policies CS3 and CS4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 which seek to protect the quality of ground and surface water.
11. Draft Local Development Framework 2006 **Policy NE/16** states that planning permission will not be granted for development which has an unacceptable adverse impact on the indoor and outdoor acoustic environment of existing or planned development; and that conditions may be attached to any planning permissions to ensure adequate attenuation of noise emissions or to control the noise at source.

Consultation

12. **Bar Hill Parish Council** recommends that the application is refused and comments “objection on the grounds of being of visual nuisance to the residents of Gladeside. A noise nuisance to the Bar Hill Primary School during school hours and also it will deprive the car park of seven fewer spaces and will therefore lead to further traffic congestion in the village.”
13. **Environment Agency** comments awaited at the time of writing this report.
14. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** comments awaited at the time of writing this report.

Representations

15. The following concerns/comments were received from the owners/occupiers of 10 Gladeside, 7 Robin Close and County Councillor S Johnstone and Councillor B. Waters:
 - a) Change of use of car park only to industrial use.
 - b) Wash water discharge dangerous to users of car park, particularly in cold weather – potential for large areas of ice.
 - c) Noise pollution generated by vacuum cleaning equipment – disturbance to residents in Robin Close. Further exacerbates existing problems arising from use of car park – exhaust fumes.
 - d) Should be sited in Tesco garage area – already provide automatic car wash and jet wash.

- e) Alternative locations available in Viking Way/Trafalgar Way industrial areas.
- f) Sets a precedent for further commercial activity in car park.
- g) Already operating in the car park – current drainage issues. Results in great deal of dirt – hazard and unsightly.
- h) Traffic impact. Takes up to three parking spaces. Queuing traffic for the store is already a problem in Bar Hill.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

16. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application relate to:
- a) The visual impact of the development
 - b) The impact of the development upon the amenity of nearby buildings
 - c) The impact of the development on the environment
 - d) The impact on the safety of users of the car park

The visual impact of the development

17. The proposed office and canopy are illustrated as being finished in yellow, according to the information submitted with the application. Whilst I accept that these structures taken on their own would be quite visible it is important to consider the context within which they are set. The Tesco/New Mall site is a commercial area, with a number of existing advertisements on the adjacent buildings, and particularly the Tesco superstore itself. The applicants, after discussions following the refusal of the previous planning application have resited the proposed valet operation in accordance with advice given to address the previous reasons for refusal. The site is set against the boundary planting at the external boundary of the car park site. Furthermore the structures would be seen with the existing mall and various advertisements as a backdrop. Given the character of the area and the setting for the structures and the distance of the proposed structures from the residential dwellings I do not consider that the proposed structures will result in undue harm to the character or appearance of what is essentially a commercial area nor would they be overbearing to the nearby dwellings. The applicants have previously stated that the canopy can be finished in blue, should the Authority see fit. Given the typical colour scheme on the Tesco building this may be a more appropriate colour for the site. As such a condition is recommended below to ensure that the colour of the external structures is submitted to and agreed in by the Authority prior to commencement of the development.

The impact of the development upon the amenity of nearby buildings

18. At the time of compiling this report the comments of the Chief Environmental Health Officer are awaited with regards to noise disturbance and will be reported verbally. However, having visited the site it is again important to consider the context within which the proposed use is set. The car park serving the adjacent retail environment caters for approximately 500 car parking spaces. It is my opinion that the associated vehicular movements within this environment is likely to generate a far greater level of noise and disturbance currently than the use of vacuum cleaners as part of the valet service. Furthermore, given the siting of the use approximately 115 metres away from the nearest dwelling and 30 metres away from the school it is unlikely that the level of noise generated would result in an undue increase in noise disturbance to the surrounding area. I have, however, recommended a condition to control the hours of

operation for power operated machinery to ensure that a disturbance does not arise outside the core hours typically associated with the superstore.

The impact of the development on the environment

19. The comments of the Environment Agency are awaited at the time of this application and will be reported verbally. However, at the time of the previous application the concerns of the Agency were resolved by the proposed use of a below ground, closed loop system using ACO drains to collect wash water, which would then be passed through interceptors prior to discharge into the normal foul sewer. The applicant's have illustrated that they intend to use this method in the current application. This system would be likely to address concerns with regards to dirt and a hazard, should the Environment Agency fine the system acceptable, as it would facilitate the suitable management and discharge of the dirty wash waters arising from the use.

The impact on the safety of users of the car park

20. Since the previous application the proposed use has been relocated approximately 125 metres from the main vehicular entrance to the car park. It is also located further from the nearest pedestrian walkway at the end of the main circulation road in the car park. By moving the proposed use away from the main vehicular entrance to the estate I am of the opinion that the applicants have addressed the concerns regarding the safety of users of the car park. The vehicular movements in this location are significantly lower than most other areas of the car park as they are located away from the main entrance to the car park and the superstore itself. Furthermore it is no longer located immediately adjacent to one of the designated pedestrian walkways within the car park and so affords greater visibility to pedestrians within the site.
21. With regards to the loss of parking spaces the proposal will actually result in the loss of one parking space, for the siting of the office unit. The applicants have indicated that the remaining parking spaces, although indicated for use within the car valet, will be available for use by shoppers in general. They have described their trade as being generated by shoppers using the store who wish to have their cars cleaned whilst they shop. As such, and given that no condition exists on the consent for the superstore and car park for the spaces to be preserved as parking there does not appear to be any undue loss of parking facilities.
22. At the present time the applicants are currently running a hand car wash from the Tesco Car Park in an alternative location from the current proposal, much closer to the main vehicular entrance to the car park, and without the proposed drainage systems. Should members be minded to refuse the current application it may be necessary to proceed with enforcement action to ensure that the current units are removed from the site.

Recommendation

23. Approval with conditions

Recommended conditions

1. SCA (3 Years) – RCA.
2. SC5 – the external colour of the office and canopy (Reason – RC5 aii).
3. No power-operated machinery shall be operated on the premises before 08.00 hours or after 18.00 hours on weekdays and Saturdays (nor at any time on Sundays or

Bank Holidays) unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions. – RC26.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Draft Local Development Framework 2006
- Planning file Refs: S/0137/06/F, S/1826/05/F

Contact Officer: Michael Osbourn – Assistant Planning Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713379