

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

12 January 2011

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

S/1687/10 – GREAT SHELFORD

**Fascia sign to principle elevation & rectangular signs to side elevations –
36-38, Woollards Lane, for Tesco Stores Ltd**

Recommendation: Refusal

Date for Determination: 29th November 2010

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee on 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, with 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 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. The application site is not specifically identified within the villages Conservation Appraisal. 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 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 erection of 0.60m high acrylic lettering attached upon metal framework to the principal elevation. This signage would be attached to the canopy porch roof above the site's main entrance and would be illuminated by a trough up-lighter (brightness: 285cd/m). The lettering would be in red and white colouring with a blue underline providing the words 'Tesco Express'.
4. The proposal would also comprise the erection of two rectangular acrylic signs to the flank first floor elevations of the east and west projecting gable elevations. These signs would measure approximately 0.90m high by 1.16 wide and would not be illuminated.
5. The application is supported by a Heritage Statement, Design and Access Statement but has not been party to any pre-application advice.
6. 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 since been rectified and the application in full has now been made publicly visible for a period in excess of 21 days.
7. The proposed development does not require a parallel application for Conservation Area Consent.

Planning History

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

Planning Policy

17. Planning Circular 03/2007 Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

18. Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5): Planning for the Historic Environment
19. Planning Policy Guidance Note 19 (PPG19): Outdoor Advertisement Control
20. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework, Development Control Policies, DPD, 2007:**
CH/4 Conservation Areas
CH/8 Advertisements
21. **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
22. **Consultation**
23. **Great Shelford Parish Council** – Recommends refusal making the following comments:
 - The externally illuminated ‘house style’ Tesco frontage sign by virtue of its size, materials and lettering is out of character with and does not enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
 - The shop is likely to be open for longer hours than the 9-5.30 of Eden Lilley, therefore the illumination will be intrusive to the occupiers of nearby residential properties;
 - In order to emulate good design and to be in keeping with the existing building the signs on the side elevations should be painted rather than acrylic lettering.
 - It is noted that Tesco Express Signs in other Conservation Areas are of a simpler and more restrained design without illumination.
24. **Conservation** – Recommends part approval of the two rectangular signs (subject to a conditions requiring details of the materials and elevation details and sections of the proposed sign and frame) and part refusal of the fascia lettering sign.
25. In principle the addition of signs on each side elevation is supported. However these should be simpler and more traditional than proposed. There should be a simple colour scheme on a timber or metal board (so less shiny and less prone to buckling than the acrylic proposed) and with either an oak or painted timber simple frame. As submitted it would neither preserve nor enhance the character of the conservation area so is contrary to CH/5 and PPS5 policies HE7 and HE9, but it may be possible to approve subject to the conditions stated above.
26. The fascia sign would create a precedent and its position, size, top-heavy proportions, design and materials would neither preserve nor enhance this part of the conservation area. Historically during the C19 there were occasionally signs that projected above roofs, but were lightweight, well detailed and generally wrought iron signs and were generally upon prominent buildings and on the most prominent elevation. If a historic study established that this was a building with such a sign a redesigned version would be considered, but currently this is not a type of sign characteristic of the area

and the frontage sign would therefore be better incorporated within the shop front fascia. This sign would therefore be contrary to CH/5 and PPS5 HE7 and HE9.

27. **Environmental Health** – No significant environmental impacts from an Environmental Health standpoint would occur.
28. **Local Highways Authority** – No significant adverse impact upon the public adopted highway should result from this proposal, should it gain benefit of planning permission.

Representations

29. **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 the comments raised with regard to this particular application:
 - The signs should be no larger than those that exist for the current premises;
 - The signs comprising of brightly coloured acrylic would be inappropriate within the Conservation Area;
 - The existing signage within Woollards Lane are mostly unlit at night, therefore the illumination proposed would spoil the character of the area;
 - Light from the signage would potentially disturb neighbouring properties through light pollution;
 - The signage is excessive in number, illumination, size and lettering;
 - The signage would highlight this building within the street scene, which would be out of character as the dominant signage would be inappropriate;
 - 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, 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 original store did not require an illuminated sign, surely local people will be aware of the store and its location;
 - The applicant should reduce the scale of the lettering signage and ensure that the illumination is proportionally reduced;
 - Signage within the conservation area should be more discreet with unlit plain signs;
 - The illuminated front signage is more than enough to advertise the premises, the flank signage should be removed from the proposal to minimise the clutter of the street scene;

- The signage proposed would be contrary to the principles of the Village Design Statement, Policy CH/8 and the Great Shelford Conservation Area Appraisal;
- There are examples of Tesco Express signs within other Conservation Areas that are of a simpler more restrained design without illumination;
- 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 proposed large lettering sign is a commercial 'house style' more akin to an urban environment and would unsympathetic in this rural location;
- 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.

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.

30. 10 Letters of support have been received, which raise the following comments:

- a) The positives of the store would outweigh the negative, such as the stores increased accessibility for older customers;
- a) The store would provide a wide range of affordable food items for all;
- b) The store would provide local jobs when unemployment is high;
- c) Local retail competition will be healthy for the village;
- d) No change in land use would occur;
- e) 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;
- f) There is sufficient local parking to accommodate the store;
- g) Not everyone in the village is against this store;
- h) The store would be more accessible to the elderly;
- i) There is ample car parking within the village to serve the store;
- j) 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;
- k) There are already chillers in similar retail premises and there have been no objections to these;
- l) 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;
- m) Were the application made by an alternative retailer to Tesco there would be substantially less objections;
- n) Tesco will not stop residents shopping locally at other stores, but it will bring about more choice and competitive prices;
- o) Many other stores within the village sell alcohol;

Comments – Key Issues

31. The key issues to consider in this instance are the impact that proposals would have upon the public safety and visual amenity.
32. 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.

Visual Amenity:

33. Policy CH/8 'Advertisements' states that advertisements will be restricted to the number, size, format, materials and design appropriate to the building or locality to which it is proposed they be attached in order not to detract from the character and appearance of the district. In Conservation Areas advertisements will be kept to a minimum in order to maintain the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. When considering applications for the display of advertisements or signage in Conservation Areas consideration will be given to the size, design (including projection), materials, illumination (internal and external) and the application of lettering and / or logos.
34. The presumption is that on traditional buildings within Conservation Areas signage will be applied in a traditional manner, i.e. using traditional sign writing techniques on timber boards, or direct onto masonry or render. Permission is likely to be refused for modern, plastic signage and / or applied lettering where such materials will be out of keeping with the context of a Conservation Area. Permission is also unlikely to be granted for internally illuminated signs within Conservation Areas. Where signs are to be illuminated this is to be achieved with modest and appropriately styled lamps directed onto the sign. Strict controls will be applied over the extent of any illuminated signs in Conservation Areas, to avoid harming their character and / or appearance, and also to avoid unnecessary light pollution.
35. PPG19 states that designers should be prepared to compromise on matters of "corporate" design where it is unsuitable in a particularly sensitive area; but "corporate" designs should not be refused elsewhere simply because a planning authority dislike the design.
36. In light of the above, the proposed 'Tesco Express' projecting lettering sign is considered to be incongruous within the setting of this part of the Conservation Area. The premises does not benefit from a traditional shop fascia such as a timber board upon which to provide store signage. The sign is considered to be overtly large in scale with top-heavy proportions and would result in a design and use of materials that is not characteristic to this part of the Conservation Area. Projecting lettered signs are more common upon more prominent building elevations, and were traditionally lightweight, detailed and comprised of cast wrought iron. As a consequence the lettering proposed would result in a prominent and alien form of a non-traditional form of signage and would not be appropriate to the building that it would be attached to. This element of the proposal is therefore considered to fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

37. Notwithstanding the above, the proposed rectangular signage would replace existing signage of a similar scale and appearance upon the flank elevations of the forward projecting gable to the principal elevation. Signage of this scale is considered to be appropriate within this location in terms of the visual amenity of the area and would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. However, it is noted that the signage proposed would represent the corporate identity or house style of the applicant and would not be a traditional form of signage. Therefore it is considered that to ensure that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is preserved, further detail of the signage proposed is required. This detail can be secured by way of a condition and would require traditional timber or a metal painted board upon a similar frame. Sectional drawings at a heightened scale will also be required to ensure that the scale and position of the signs are appropriate.

Public Safety & Environmental Pollution

38. The signage proposed is not considered to impede any public right of way, CCTV or site lines that would result in a detrimental impact upon either highway or public safety.
39. The proposed trough up lighter would not shine towards residential properties, as it would illuminate a specific single object. Therefore spilling of light beyond the boundary is unlikely. Nevertheless, the impact of lighting could be reviewed after installation as a statutory nuisance under Section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. In light of the above the trough up light is not considered to result in a significant adverse impact by virtue of light pollution due to the illumination levels of 285cd/m. Nevertheless, it is recommended that this element of the proposal is refused on design grounds as discussed above.

Conclusion:

40. Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is considered that advertisement consent should be part granted and part refused in this instance.

Recommendation

41. Part Approve and Part Refuse

Refusal

1. The proposed fascia sign by virtue of its modern projecting lettering and use of non-traditional acrylic materials would be unduly prominent and unsympathetic in appearance within the special historic centre of Great Shelford, which is designated as a Conservation Area. They are, as such, contrary to the requirements of Policies CH/4 and CH/8 of the South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies DPD, 2007, the South Cambridgeshire Development Affecting Conservation Areas SPD, 2009, The Great Shelford Village Design Statement and PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment, all of which require advertisements to either preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and to

contribute positively to the appearance of an attractive and cared-for environment.

Approval

1. Notwithstanding the details shown on drawing nos.1828/12B & 1828/06K, no development shall commence until details of the colours, materials and elevation drawings at a scale of 1:20 with section drawings at a scale of 1:5 (or larger) showing the signs and frames have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the development shall be implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

(Reason - Insufficient information was submitted with the application to assure the Local Planning Authority that the proposed signage would comply with Policies CH/5 and CH/8 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

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