

Application Number: FUL/2018/3516

HSS Hire Progress Works Fletchamstead Highway

Change of use of the part of the premises for warehousing/storage purposes (Class B8) together with the provision of an ancillary trade counter area (retrospective application)

WITHIN GREEN BELT? No

VISIBLE FROM GREEN BELT? No

WITHIN CONSERVATION AREA? No

LISTED BUILDING? No

POLICY GUIDANCE

The Coventry Local Plan 2016 to 2031 has been adopted on 05/12/2017. Policies that are relevant include:

AC1/AC2/AC3/DE1/DS3/JE2/JE5

ADDRESS AND DATE OF NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION

Adjoining neighbouring properties were notified on 27 February 2019 and a site notice was displayed on 6 March 2019; no responses have been received.

RELEVANT HISTORY

R/2000/0043 - Continued use as tool and equipment hire/ maintenance premises, and retention of new shop front; approved 22/11/2000

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways – No objection

Environmental Protection – No Objection subject to condition in relation to electric vehicle recharging points.

ISSUES

The application seeks retrospective permission for the change of use of the one third part of the existing HSS Hire (sui generis) premises (northern part) on Fletchamstead Highway into a storage and distribution (use class B8) facility for Howden Joinery Ltd, a nationwide builder merchant. The existing HSS Hire (sui generis) has recently been sub-divided into 3 sections, one of which is occupied by Howden Joinery Ltd, and one part (southern end) is by Topps Tiles and the middle part has been retained for the HSS Hire. A separate application has been submitted for the use of the southern section by Topps Tiles.

The proposed storage and distribution unit would include a trade counter. The trade counter is ancillary to the main use and open to any customers. The trade counter would occupy approximately 9% of the floor space of the total floor area of whole of the B8 use and the planning statement indicates the monthly takings over the trade counter is under 10% of the total takings. The unit will be open Mondays-Fridays 07:30 hrs – 18:00 hrs and on Saturdays between 07:30 hrs – 13:00 hrs.

The unit will be closed on Sundays and Bank Holidays. The planning statement also indicates that this proposal would create at 8 full time jobs with scope for additional employment prospects as well as 'hidden' employment creation in the local area.

The application site is part of a large industrial type building which was wholly occupied by HSS Hire. The planning permission was granted for HSS Hire in November 2000 as Sui Generis. The submitted documents indicate that as part of down sizing of the existing HSS Hire use, the premises has been subdivided into 3 units and one of the units has been occupied by the Howden Joinery who has sought permission to use their unit under use class B8 (storage and distribution) with an ancillary trade counter. The application site has not any designation within the Local Development Plan, although the site and surrounding area is commercial in nature with abundance of various type of commercial and industrial activities. On that basis this area can be recognised as employment site as well. In relation to new industrial sites, Policy JE5 suggests that the new Research & Development (R&D), industrial and storage/distribution development should be located to the sites are identified in Policy JE2.

However Policy JE5 of Coventry Local Plan 2016 suggests that the proposals for new R&D, industrial and storage/distribution development (including changes of use and the expansion of existing operations) on sites not allocated under Policy JE2 will be permitted provided that they are:

- a) Accessible by a choice of means of transport or will be made accessible by a choice of means of transport as a consequence of planning permission being granted for the development; and
- b) Have good access to a primary route on the highway network and an acceptable impact on the capacity of that network; and
- c) The proposal would not significantly compromise the viability or deliverability of land allocated in this Plan for employment development; and
- d) The development is compatible with other Plan Policies.

The Policy JE5 goes on stating that the proposals for new general industrial and storage/distribution development (including changes of use and the expansion of existing operations) on all sites (including those allocated under Policy JE2) will also be required to demonstrate that the proposed development would not result in significant harm to the amenities of persons occupying nearby residential property or other land occupied by uses sensitive to environmental pollution.

Overall the objective of Policy JE5 is to ensure that businesses can locate in the optimal location in terms of accessibility and minimising environmental conflicts whilst also providing residents with good access to a range of job opportunities across the city.

The part of Fletchamstead Highway where the application site is located and the surrounding area is characterised by industrial/commercial uses and has good connection via A45 and rest of the highways network. The site is served by a separate service road parallel to A45. In addition to public transport, the pedestrian infrastructure is well established with all surrounding footways lit. The application documentation indicates that the proposed number of vehicle movements to the site (including an average of 3-4 no. HGV movements per week) is entirely appropriate for a B8 use in a normal working day. There are number of on-site parking spaces, however, the planning statement indicates that generally the site and its use does not require more that 4 or 5 cars or vans to be on site at any one time. The on-site parking provisions include disabled spaces as well.

This provision appears satisfactory and given the site is located within an established industrial/commercial area within a sustainable location, it is considered that the proposal would not result in any more significant impact in terms of free flow of traffic and parking provision than that which already exists. The Highways Officers are satisfied with the proposal and the existing parking and manoeuvring arrangement within the site and do not raise any concern. Nevertheless, the site

is away from residential amenities, therefore it is not considered that the proposal would result in harm to the amenities of nearby residential occupiers in terms of noise and disturbance and issues in association with highways.

The application documents indicate that the new use of the site would employ 8 members of staff. The storage and distribution is not a main town centre use and the proportion of the retail function is minimal and ancillary to the main use. In addition the retail function of the proposed unit is unlike any other retail uses; the customers come to the counter and request the goods/building materials which they order from the catalogue or online. Given this arrangement and the nature of the business, it is not considered that this use would have any detrimental impact on the nearby local centres in terms of retail function and subsequently their viability and vitality. A condition to restrict the current use and not to allow any other similar uses within the same use class under planning legislation would therefore be reasonable.

The area where the application site is located is within the Air Quality Management Area declared for NO_x, so in line with the NPPF, the Environmental Protection Team has recommended a condition to ensure electric vehicle recharging points are provided with a rate of minimum 1 per 10 spaces.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal is unlikely to have any detrimental impact in terms of amenity of the nearby residential occupiers' as well visual amenity of the street and highway safety. Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with the CLP 2016 Policies DE1, AC2, EM1, JE2 and JE5 and would be acceptable.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. Officers have taken this into account and given due regard to this statutory duty, and the matters specified in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in the determination of this application. There are no known equality implications arising directly from this development.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above the change of use of the part of the existing building to a storage and distribution with ancillary trade counter accord with development plan policies subject to conditions and therefore the application is recommended for approval.