Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0017/24 Recommendation: Approve

Site: Office 1 6 Farncombe Road, Worthing

Proposal: New electrical meter kiosk on the south side elevation of the building

Date of site visit: 23.04.2024 by LP

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N Site notice posted 23.04.2024

Site and Surroundings

The site relates to a Victorian villa located on the east side of Farncombe Road, south of its junction with Church Walk. The building has been extended considerably and is in use as offices. There is car parking to the south of the building at its frontage and with further car parking areas to the rear, accessed from vehicular access to the south of the building which is shared with No.4 to the south. The site is within a Protected Key Employment area as a protected office location. The site is within a controlled parking zone which restricts parking between 10-11am and 2-3pm to residents only.

The site is within the Farncombe Road Conservation Area and is a local interest building.

Proposal

Permission is sought for the installation of a electrical meter cabinet to be sited adjacent to the south side wall of the building at the edge of the existing parking area. It would measure 1455mm by 1485mm and 700mm in height and would be set 4.5 metres back from the front of the building and 0.3m away from its side wall.

Relevant Planning History:
None relevant

Consultations:

The Worthing Society has commented as follows:

Thank you for requesting our comments in respect of the above Planning Application. The proposal relates to a significant Victorian villa now used as offices. The building is recorded on the Local Interest List and occupies a prominent position within the Farncombe Road Conservation Area. I have now had the opportunity to discuss the plans with our Heritage Team. We have no objection, in principle, to the installation of the meter kiosk and appreciate the applicant has tried to make the unit as unobtrusive as possible. However, we are concerned that the green colour of the cabinet unit

stands out and is in contrast to the white stucco finish of the building. It will be visible from the pavement when the car park is not in use and we feel consideration could be given to installing the cabinet unit in a more muted colour to complement the heritage building.

The **Highway Authority** raises no objection and has made the following comments:

The proposal seeks to create a new electrical meter kiosk within the car park of Offices at 6 Farncombe Road.

It is stated that the proposals do not affect the existing access or parking arrangements at the site.

The box is to be sited at the head of an existing parking bay, along the southern side of the building. The LHA would advise that whilst this parking space is in use, it may not be possible for the box to be accessed/maintained when necessary. It is not known how frequently the box will require access/maintenance, however it is not thought that this would be a frequent occurrence.

It is unclear whether the parking spaces are a first come first served arrangement however Farncombe Road is subject to parking restrictions which limits the availability of overspill parking. It appears that vehicles may have the ability to park informally or relocate temporarily within the carpark should this be required during maintenance/access periods.

The applicant may wish to consider relocating the box to an area that allows free access at all times, however it would not be considered a highways safety concern and more a matter of amenity.

The Local Highway Authority does not consider that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 115), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

***UK Power Networks** has made the following comments:*

Please note there are HV and LV cables on the site running within close proximity to the proposed development. Prior to commencement of work accurate records should be obtained from our Plan Provision Department at UK Power Networks, Fore Hamlet, Ipswich, IP3 8AA.

All works should be undertaken with due regard to Health & Safety Guidance notes HS(G)47 Avoiding Danger from Underground services. This document is available from local HSE offices.

Should any diversion works be necessary as a result of the development then enquiries should be made to our Customer Connections department. The address is UK Power Networks, Metropolitan house, Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, Herts, EN6 1AG.

These comments have been brought to the applicant's attention and an informative is also recommended.

Representations:
None received.

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan 2020-2036 (WBC 2023): Policies:
SP1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
SS1 (Spatial Strategy)
DM5 (Quality of the Built Environment)
DM11 (Protecting and Enhancing Employment Sites)
DM15 (Sustainable Transport and Active Travel)
DM16 (Sustainable Design)
DM18 (Biodiversity)
DM20 (Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage)
DM22 (Pollution)
DM24 (The Historic Environment)

National Planning Policy Framework (HCLG 2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

The proposals would support the continued use as offices within this protected employment area.

The proposal should principally be assessed in relation to the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF and weighed against the effects of the development proposal on visual amenity and the character and appearance of the conservation area, the effects on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and highway and parking considerations.

Visual Amenity and impact on the Conservation Area

The meter cabinet would be located close to the east side wall at the frontage of the building which is adjacent to the existing car parking area for the offices. The applicant has clarified that the proposed positioning has been determined following meetings with the electricity operator and was chosen due to amenity and logistical considerations. Other positions towards the rear of the site or set back from the frontage were considered but rejected by the applicant/operator due to limited space close to the shared access or parking areas, or being within other tenants' curtilage.

Although a position towards the rear of the building would be preferable, the rationale for this chosen siting is acknowledged and the applicant has agreed to colour-match the cabinet with the painted render finish of the existing building which would help to blend with the existing building. Whilst the proposed position of the cabinet would be visible at the frontage, it would be set back from the front wall by 4.5 metres and set behind the chimney where it would not appear particular dominant in the context of the

existing parking areas and landscaping surrounding this area. Amended plans were expected to reflect the colour change but have not yet been provided, but can be secured by a condition in the interests of visual amenity. The comments from the Worthing Society are noted and subject to the matching colour finish it is considered that there would be no significant harm to the character and special qualities of the building and wider conservation area.

Residential Amenity

Having regard to the size and position of the cabinet and that it would house electrical meter equipment, it is considered that there would be no significant threat to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

Highways and Access

The Highway Authority has pointed to maintenance issues while the affected parking space is in use and this has been brought to the applicant's attention. However, no objection has been raised and parking and access arrangements would remain as existing.

Conclusion

Whilst it is disappointing that the applicant has been unable to adjust the siting of the cabinet to a less conspicuous position, in view of the practical limitations associated with alternative locations and that the cabinet can be painted to match the existing building, on balance the proposal is considered acceptable.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. Notwithstanding the colour finish indicated on the approved plans and particulars, the cabinet shall be finished to match as closely as possible the colour of the painted render of the existing building unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA

Informative

- The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating, with the Applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.
- UK Power Networks advice

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? N

Case Officer: Rebekah Hincke Date: 17.06.2024

Authorised by: Louise Prew Date: 18/06/2024