Expiry Date - 08/01/2025

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1454/24 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **Shop 57 Elm Grove Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Retention of new shopfront. Retrospective application**

Date of site visit: 13/01/25

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: Y – additional neighbour consultations sent – 21 days

Site and Surroundings

The site is located to the west side of Elm Grove in a predominantly residential area of Worthing. The convenience store occupies the ground floor of the property, at the end of a terrace of two storey houses. Elm Grove School is located two doors down to the south of the site. The shop has a tarmacked frontage and dropped kerb for parking.

The terrace is notable for a shallow mono-pitched projection across the width of the houses at the front. Behind and above the shop is the owners' flat which comprises living accommodation on the ground floor with access to a good sized garden, and bedrooms above. To the south of the site is a detached two storey building containing 2 flats.

The previous shop front consisted of painted render with green painted wooden doors and windows and blue fascia sign with lighting and canopy above.

Proposal

Retrospective consent is sought for retention of the new shop front and fascia.

The shop front consists of new grey powder coated aluminium doors and windows, timber stall risers painted grey and grey aluminium cladding to the existing piers.

The doors and windows have been reconfigured to form two large windows either side of a central door and a separate door to the left hand side of the frontage. The second door is fixed shut from the inside and blocked to the outside by the parcel locker storage unit and cannot currently be used for access. The parcel locker to the frontage is being considered separately under a different application.

The new metal fascia consists of 400mm high lettering on a 600mm green background with lettering 'ELM GROVE CONVENIENCE STORE' lit from

above by projecting LED lights. This light was an existing part of the fascia but has been repositioned slightly higher on the shop front to accommodate the higher fascia. Beneath this is a white plastic canopy projecting 400mm out from the wall, with small fabric awning and a row of LED lights below, hidden beneath the canopy. The two striped fabric canopies above the fascia sign have been removed.

Additional plans were provided to show section details of the fascia and canopy.

Relevant Planning History:

AWDM/1655/24 - Retention of In-Post Parcel Locker on frontage – Pending Consideration

AWDM/0315/19 - Extension to East elevation creating new shop front; new entry door to create self-contained flat on South elevation - Approved

AWDM/1353/18 - Extension to east elevation with new shop front and flat entry door (resubmission of approved AWDM/1305/17) - Refused

AWDM/1305/17 - Front extension and new shop front. New door to south elevation to facilitate self-containment of flat above - Approved

Consultations:

None required

Representations:

One objection received, relating specifically to the parcel locker that is the subject of a separate application and also concerning inappropriate changes to the shop front including light pollution but also stating that the shop lights are now being turned off when the shop is closed, so this issue relates to the parcel locker mainly. Concern that all applications are retrospective after works have already taken place.

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan policies (WBC 2023): SP1, DM5, DM6
National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

The principle of development can be supported as it upgrades a commercial unit that provides a valuable local service to the community. The matters for consideration are the visual impact of the new shop front and fascia on the locality and any impact on the residential amenities of neighbours.

Visual Amenity

The previous shop front was tired and dated with the paintwork needing renovation and repair. The fabric canopies above the fascia were mouldy and damaged and have been removed.

As there are no other shop fronts in this location which is primarily residential in character, there are no comparisons to be made with other commercial units. The shop front has been updated with a more modern appearance using aluminium frames powdered coated in a dark grey. The stall risers have been lowered and the display windows enlarged with the window and door positions being reconfigured. Part of the new shop front is obscured by the new parcel locker that has been positioned to the front on the left hand side. There is an additional door behind this that is currently fixed shut. The agent has confirmed that this door although not required at present has been installed in case of an application to convert the shop to a flat in the future. This is not however part of the proposal being considered under this application and consideration is limited to the appearance of the door only.

The new fascia is slightly higher than the previous fascia sign but is similar in overall size. The fascia features yellow lettering on a dark green metal background. The facia is illuminated externally by projecting LED lights, this lighting is the same as on the previous shop front but has been positioned slightly higher to accommodate the higher fascia position.

A new fixed canopy has been added beneath the fascia and projects 400mm from the face of the shop front, attached to this fascia is a small fabric skirt with more lettering. Concealed under the canopy and fabric skirt is a row of LED lights. These lights do not however illuminate any signage.

The property is not within a conservation area and the introduction of a modern shop front, new fascia and canopy in this location are not considered to detract from the character of the street scene or the visual amenities of the locality.

Residential Amenity

The most affected neighbours are the houses to each side and opposite the site. The flat above the shop is in the same ownership as the shop.

There is no expansion of the commercial premises or change of use proposed by this application and consideration is limited to the changes to the shop front and fascia, including to the existing lighting.

The modernisation of the shop front would not adversely affect neighbours and there is no harm caused by this aspect of the proposal. The fascia replaces an existing fascia of similar size with the only difference being the lettering detail and the slightly higher position. As a result of this higher position the existing external lighting has been repositioned slightly higher but is the same lighting reused. There would be no additional impact on neighbouring amenity as a result of the slightly higher lighting position however given the residential nature of the location, it is considered appropriate to condition the lighting to ensure

that it is switched off at 8pm to ensure that there is no glare to the neighbouring residential properties late in to the evening.

The canopy does not project as far as the monopitch roof of the adjoining property and this would not have any detrimental impact on neighbours. The new lighting installed under this canopy is hidden by the canopy and fabric skirt therefore preventing any exposed lighting glare. This lighting does not illuminate any signage and has therefore been considered as part of the new shop front. Although there is no impact arising from this hidden lighting it is considered appropriate to condition this to be switched off at 8pm to prevent any future issues if the canopy and fabric skirt were to be removed. These measures to control the lighting are considered sufficient to mitigate any impact on neighbours.

Comments raised with regard to light pollution relate to the Parcel locker which is being considered separately under a different application AWDM/1655/24.

There would be no significant adverse impact on the residential amenities of adjacent occupiers as a result of the changes to the shop front.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers - retrospective
2. The external lighting to the shop front consisting of the repositioned lighting above the fascia and under the canopy, as hereby approved, shall not be illuminated outside the hours of 8am to 8pm and at no time when the premises are closed for business.

Informative

1. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. The applicant is advised that advice should be sought prior to any further alterations or additions to the premises to avoid any further retrospective applications.

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

Case Officer: Amanda Haslett Date: 31/01/25

Authorised by: Jo Morin Date: 31.01.2025