Application Number: ADC/0009/08 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: Big Box Storage, Chapel Road, Southwick

Proposal: Extensions to front of existing self-storage warehouse (class B8) and cladding to front elevation with provision of ancillary office and reception space

The Application

The application relates to a large B8 warehouse which is used as a self access storage centre. The existing building is steel framed with an outer brick skin painted white and higher level profile metal cladding, also white coloured. The roof is also constructed of profile metal sheeting. A canopy projects along the front of the building where there is access for delivery.

The site measures approximately 0.39 ha and is located within a mixed commercial and residential area. To the north there is a terrace of dwellings which are unaffected by the proposal, while to the west there is a flatted development, with the side windows of the nearest block facing the site. To the south and east lie other commercial buildings including offices to the east which are separated by a 3m gap and which are positioned slightly forward of the building line of the site. The building and forecourt are raised slightly above the road level.

Permission is sought to construct two extensions at the front of the building to form a new office area and reception (to the east) and new loading bays (to the east and west). The extensions are to be clad with metal composite panels, as is the remainder of the front elevation of the building, to produce a 'box' form with parapet walls concealing the pitched roofs behind. The access will remain as existing but with a reduced forecourt area for parking and turning.

Consultations and Representations

County Transport Planning Services: No highway objection subject to conditions. Although some of the car parking and lorry turning area are shown built on as part of this proposal, the applicant has demonstrated that certain sizes of HGV could still enter and leave in forward gear. Demand for car parking on the site appears to be moderate to low and space is still set out to cater for this. Recommend that secure and covered cycle parking is provided to encourage access by sustainable modes.

Environment Agency: No objections subject to imposition of contaminated land condition

Chief Environmental Health Officer: No adverse comments to make in terms of noise. Request contaminated land condition.

Southwick Parish Council: Not received

Third Parties: There have been no third party representations

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016 (WSCC 2005): NE5, DEV1, DEV4, DEV5
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993 – 2006 (ADC 1996): AG1, AE1, AE2, AE4, AE16

Planning Assessment

Policies

The site is located within the built-up area as defined in the Local Plan. It consists of an existing commercial building that wishes to extend and therefore complies within Policy AE16 which permits alterations or improvements to improve the efficiency of existing businesses, providing on-site car parking arrangements and access to the highway are acceptable and there are no significant adverse effects on the amenity of nearby residents.

Visual amenity – character and appearance

The eastern extension is the largest element and, as originally proposed, would have projected 15.2m forward of the existing building, so that part of the extension would have been built up to the front edge of the site boundary (the forecourt is angled to the road). It would also have been 18.5m wide and 7.3m high, which reflects the ridge height of the existing building, but which would have projected 1.4m above the eaves of the existing building resulting in a rather awkward relationship with the existing stucture. Amended plans have been received which have reduced the forward projection by 1m so that there is a uniform gap of 1m to the site boundary. The front elevation of the extension is now angled to run parallel to the road. The height of the extension has also been reduced to rise just 0.6m above the eaves, resulting in a less clumsy relationship with the main building.

The smaller extension to the west will be 6.4m deep, 12.7m wide and has been amended to be the same height as the larger extension. Both extensions are to be clad with modern metal profile composite panels with a colour powder coated finish in a dark grey colour. The reception entrance on the west side of the larger extension will have full height glazing in one complete section. The pitched roof of the extensions will be hidden behind parapet walls, forming a box-like appearance in keeping with the box storage use of the building.

The extensions will bring the building forward towards the street and will be of a different form and finish to the existing building. However, the existing building has no particular architectural merit, having a purely functional appearance. The applicants have stated that the aim of the extension is to enhance the visual appearance of the building, while making a statement

about the company itself. It is agreed that the proposed extensions and re-cladding of the front elevation will improve the external façade to the benefit of the wider area, being of a similar scale and height to other commercial buildings in the street.

The front boundaries will be secured by a new 1.8m high steel wire fence with sliding cantilever gates at the entrance. This is not considered to be an unduly harmful feature in the street scene.

Impact on light, outlook and amenity for adjacent occupants

The larger extension will project forward by between 14.2m and 16.4m, due to the angle of the boundary, and will present a 7m high wall for the occupants of the industrial building to the east. There is a 3m gap between the buildings and the extension is likely to result in some loss of outlook and light to the ground floor windows on the front elevation. However, they are south facing windows and will continue to receive light for much of the day and, as the building is an office/industrial unit only, it is considered that a more relaxed view can be taken with regard to the impact of the proposal on its neighbour.

To the west, the nearest flats are 16m away and three windows face the site. However, in view of the distance between the buildings, the occupants will not lose any significant outlook or light.

The industrial buildings to the south are on the opposite side of the road at a slightly lower level. They will not be adversely affected by the proposal.

Access and parking

The proposal involves the loss of a number of parking spaces and a reduction in the area available for vehicles to turn on site. The application was accompanied by a traffic survey which demonstrates that there are deliveries to the site by mainly small vans and cars, with only occasional large vans and removal lorries visiting the site. The applicants have also demonstrated that adequate space will remain for the larger vehicles to turning safely and that sufficient parking (10 spaces, of which 6 are for staff) will be provided for a site which is relatively infrequently visited and has an underused frontage at present. Delivery vehicles will generally drive up to the loading bays at either end of the building rather than use a parking space.

The Highway Authority has advised that cycle parking should be provided. While this is clearly unnecessary for visitors to the site who will be delivering and collecting large items, provision should be made for staff. This can be conditioned as part of an approval.

Recommendation

APPROVE for reason:

2PPii

Subject to the following conditions:

1. C1Ci
2. C7Ci **amended "No development shall take place until details of the proposed fence and entrance gates have been..." Policy AE16**
3. C8Gii
4. C9N
5. C9S
6. C12Ai **amended "schedule and sample of materials.."**
7. C14Aii **6 February 2008. Policy AE16, Policy DEV1.**
8. C18Rii

6/2/08

7/2