



PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Planning Committee South

BY: Head of Development

DATE: 17th April 2018

DEVELOPMENT: Reconfiguration of the bus turning circle on Old Mill Drive

SITE: Bus Turning Circle Old Mill Drive Storrington West Sussex

WARD: Chantry

APPLICATION: DC/17/0861

APPLICANT: **Name:** c/o Agent **Address:** c/o Agent (Cushman and Wakefield, 125 Old Broad Street, London, EC2N 1AR)

REASON FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA: More than 8 representations have been received of a contrary view to the Officer recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Local Planning Authority advises the Planning Inspectorate that it would be minded to approve planning permission subject to appropriate conditions

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

To consider the planning application to enable the Local Planning Authority to provide a recommendation to the Planning Inspectorate as to how the application would have been determined in the event that an appeal for non-determination had not been lodged.

DESCRIPTION OF THE APPLICATION

- 1.1 The application seeks full planning permission to reconfigure the existing bus turning circle to Old Mill Drive, and seeks to undertake the following works:
- Rationalisation of the turning facility in to the south-western corner of the footprint of the existing facility;
 - Retention of two southbound bus stops to the north of the new turning facility, segregated by a new 'pedestrian island';
 - Minor realignment of the western kerb line of Old Mill Drive adjacent to the new bus stops;
 - Replacement pedestrian footpath to the east of the turning facility and bus stops;
 - Reinstatement of verge and full height kerbs at a number of uncontrolled crossing points;
 - Provision of new uncontrolled crossing points, with dropped kerbs and tactile paving in appropriate locations.

The application has been submitted to rationalise the bus turning circle as enabling works for future redevelopment of the Storrington Mill Road Diamond site.

- 1.2 The application is put forward to Committee following the submission of an appeal to the Planning Inspector on the grounds of non-determination.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

- 1.3 The application site is located within the centre of Storrington, immediately north of the High Street. The site is surrounded by a mix of residential and commercial premises, with the western boundary of Old Mill Drive consisting of an area of trees and grassland which runs to the River Stor. The site currently consists of a bus turning circle, with access to the car park to the east, and a number of trees positioned within the grass circle. The Storrington Conservation Area sits directly opposite Old Mill Drive to the west, and beyond the adjacent car park to the east.

2. INTRODUCTION

STATUTORY BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The following Policies are considered to be relevant to the assessment of this application:

- 2.2 **National Planning Policy Framework:**
NPPF1 - Building a strong, competitive economy
NPPF2 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres
NPPF3 - Supporting a prosperous rural economy
NPPF4 - Promoting sustainable transport
NPPF7 - Requiring good design
NPPF12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
NPPF14 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- 2.3 **Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF 2015)**
HDPF1 - Strategic Policy: Sustainable Development
HDPF2 - Strategic Policy: Strategic Development
HDPF3 - Strategic Policy: Development Hierarchy
HDPF7 - Strategic Policy: Economic Growth
HDPF9 - Employment Development
HDPF10 - Rural Economic Development
HDPF12 - Strategic Policy: Vitality and Viability of Existing Retail Centres
HDPF25 - Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character
HDPF32 - Strategic Policy: The Quality of New Development
HDPF33 - Development Principles
HDPF34 - Cultural and Heritage Assets
HDPF40 - Sustainable Transport
HDPF41 - Parking
HDPF42 - Strategic Policy: Inclusive Communities
- 2.4 **Storrington Old Mill Drive Diamond: Planning Brief**

RELEVANT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2.5 **Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Development Plan**

The draft Storrington, Sullington and Washington Neighbourhood Plan is at Regulation 16 consultation stage. As the draft Plan has not passed through formal examination it carries very little weight in the determination of planning applications.

2.6 **PLANNING HISTORY AND RELEVANT APPLICATIONS**

DC/11/2334	The part demolition of the existing food store and some adjacent shop units in Old Mill Square including some shop units, office space, a restaurant and a garage; and the construction of an extended food store including storage, plant and service areas, together with ancillary facilities including a 2 level car park.	Application Permitted on 24.05.2013
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This planning permission has now expired and cannot be implemented.

3. **OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS**

- 3.1 The following section provides a summary of the responses received as a result of internal and external consultation, however, officers have considered the full comments of each consultee which are available to view on the public file at www.horsham.gov.uk.

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

- 3.2 Economic Development: No Objection
No objection provided that Old Mill Drive can continue to be stopped up for events.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

- 3.3 West Sussex County Council – Highways: No Objection

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

- 3.4 Parish Council: Objection on the following grounds:-

- Turning point is very tight which would restrict future vehicle options
- Safety hazard to both pedestrians and vehicles caused by northbound stop
- Increase in traffic due to restricted turning area
- Lack of bus shelters
- Loss of trees

- 3.4 Stagecoach South: Concerns in respect of visibility when leaving the two stops proposed and potential pedestrian crossing implications.

- 3.5 Sussex Bus Company: No comments received

- 3.6 Compass Travel: No comments received.

- 3.7 42 letters of objection were received from 21 separate households, these can be summarised as follows:

- Safety implications
- Extent of consultation with bus companies and other users
- Pedestrian accessibility and safety
- Restricted capacity for use

- Loss of trees and reduced landscaping
- Increased congestion
- Isolated nature of proposal
- Need and justification for the proposed alterations
- Impact on adjacent Conservation Area
- Overdevelopment
- Loss of turning and drop off point for vehicles

4. HOW THE PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION WILL PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS

- 4.1 Article 8 (Right to respect of a Private and Family Life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) of the Human Rights Act 1998 are relevant to this application, Consideration of Human rights forms part of the planning assessment below.

5. HOW THE PROPOSAL WILL HELP TO REDUCE CRIME AND DISORDER

- 5.1 It is not considered that the development would be likely to have any significant impact on crime and disorder.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENTS

- 6.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the redevelopment of the bus turning circle to Old Mill Drive.

Principle of Development

- 6.2 Policy 3 of the HDPF states that development will be permitted in towns and villages that have defined built-up areas, with any redevelopment required to demonstrate that it is of an appropriate nature and scale to maintain characteristics and function of the settlement. In addition, Policy 12 seeks to enhance and support retail centres through well designed and maintained public realm; accessible means of travel; respect for good urban design principles; and encouragement in innovation and support for improvements in retailing activity.
- 6.3 The application site lies within the built up area of Storrington directly adjacent to the High Street. Storrington is categorised as a “Small Town and Larger Village” and “Secondary Centre” under Policies 3 and 12 respectively. As such, redevelopment of the site is considered acceptable in principle, subject to all other material considerations.
- 6.4 A previous planning application under reference DC/11/2334 accepted the redevelopment of the application site and wider area to accommodate an extension of the Waitrose store, and associated redevelopment and reconfiguration of the bus turning circle. This application included the re-siting of the bus turning circle within the adjacent parkland area to the west. The submitted Planning Statement outlines that this previously consented scheme has now lapsed and is not sought to be renewed by the applicant on the basis that the approved store extension scheme is no longer considered viable.
- 6.5 The proposal seeks to rationalise the turning circle at Old Mill Drive, retaining its location in broadly the same place as the existing turning circle. The development is put forward as enabling works for the wider redevelopment of the ‘Diamond’ in the future, however it is acknowledged that there is no detailed design of the wider area at present

- 6.6 The Storrington Old Mill Drive Diamond Planning Brief (2008) sets out the Council's guidelines and vision for any further redevelopment of the Old Mill Drive Diamond site in Storrington. This Planning Brief seeks to promote stronger links between the site and the wider town centre, encourage improved pedestrian links, and provide a wider selection of linked shopping facilities to encourage a more efficient and effective use of the important economic centre.
- 6.7 The Planning Brief also sets out that improved infrastructure is an important factor in any development, outlining that consideration should be given to traffic flows, not only within the development site but also through flow of local traffic on the High Street south of the site. It encourages the full or partial pedestrianisation of Old Mill Drive to encourage linkages and help mitigate the effects of local and short car trips.
- 6.8 The proposed development seeks to rationalise the existing bus turning circle, with a reconfigured bus stop and turning area and additional pedestrian linkages through the site. The proposal would consolidate the bus facilities within a defined area, with additional and improved pedestrian connections that would better facilitate accessible means of travel and linkages to the town centre. Whilst concern has been raised at the proposals coming forward outside of proposals for the more comprehensive development of the Diamond, in this instance it is not considered that the scale and location of the proposals would prevent any such wider development coming forward or otherwise frustrate the aspirations of the Brief. The degree of encroachment of the works into the wider Diamond site at a maximum of 14m is not considered significant, whilst the applicants have stated that the proposals have been formed specifically as enabling works for the wider redevelopment of the Diamond site.
- 6.9 On this basis it is considered that the principle of reconfiguring the bus turning area is acceptable and would not frustrate the wider development aspirations of the Storrington Old Mill Drive Diamond Planning Brief. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies 3 and 12 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Character of the site and visual amenities of the street scene

- 6.10 Policies 32 and 33 promote development which is of high quality and design, and is sympathetic to the distinctiveness of the dwelling and surroundings.
- 6.11 A number of objections have been received relating to the impact that the proposed alterations would have on the character of the area and the adjacent Conservation Area. There are concerns that the proposal would result in the loss of trees and reduced landscaping, with the general nature of the proposal considered to be to the detriment of the local character and street scene.
- 6.12 The application site lies directly behind the High Street and is located centrally within the town centre, with the area characterised by its urban-rural fringe town centre appearance. Whilst the proposal would result in the loss of planting within the central island, the principle of this loss has been established by way of the previous planning permission on the site to enable the wider redevelopment of the Diamond. The trees on the island are not formally protected by way of being within a conservation area or under a Tree Protection Order. Nevertheless all five trees on the island provide amenity benefit to the wider area.
- 6.13 The plans detail that three of the five trees sit within the application site, with the remaining two outside. The supporting Planning Statement states that these three trees will be removed as part of this application, with the implication being that the remaining two would be retained. In the absence of a comprehensive scheme for the development of the wider Diamond it is considered that the remaining two trees should be retained until such time as a proposal for the wider Diamond comes forward which may or may not include the retention of these trees. The loss of the other three trees is regrettable but accepted as a consequence of this development. The trees do not benefit from any protected status and could theoretically be

removed at any time without permission. It is not considered that their removal would result in harm which could warrant a planning refusal.

- 6.12 The proposed works do not include details on how the remaining turning circle and part of the central island under the applicant's control is to be integrated. Both these areas sit outside of the red line of the application site but fall under the applicant's ownership. To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the site and remaining bus turning area a Grampian condition is recommended requiring details on how this area is to be presented to ensure an appropriate appearance is maintained. Such details are to include the retention of the two trees within the remaining part of the island.
- 6.13 Subject to this condition it is considered that the proposal would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the area. The proposed works would sit appropriately within the context of the town centre location and, having regard to the previous permission which removed the bus turning circle and associated landscaping in its entirety, would not result in harm to the visual amenities of the street scene. The proposed works are therefore considered to comply with Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Amenities of the occupiers of adjoining properties

- 6.14 Policy 33 states that development should consider the scale, massing and orientation between buildings, respecting the amenities and sensitivities of neighbouring properties.
- 6.15 Given the existing context of the site, and the relationship with the surrounding properties and users of land, the proposal is not considered to materially harm the amenities and sensitivities of neighbouring properties, in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Existing Parking and Traffic Conditions

- 6.16 Policy 40 of the HDPF seeks to develop an integrated community connected by a sustainable transport system. Development proposals which promote an improved and integrated transport network will be encouraged and supported provided it is appropriate and in scale to the existing transport infrastructure; maintains and improves the existing transport system; includes opportunities for sustainable transport; and delivers better local bus services.
- 6.17 The applicant has confirmed that temporary provisions will be put in place during the course of development to ensure the continued function and use of the bus stops. The applicant has stated that this will be arranged through formal consultation with local bus operators and the Local Highway Authority. Notwithstanding this, it is envisioned that the new northbound bus stop would be constructed and brought into operation before the existing turning circle would be removed, thereby allowing continuity of service provision for those buses travelling north along Old Mill Drive. Southbound buses would be catered for through the provision of one or more temporary stops provided along Old Mill Drive, to either the north or south of the existing turning circle, to which it would be ensured that adequate footway provision was available. It is stated that the new turning facility would be constructed whilst the existing turning circle remains in operation, and there will be no requirement for any buses to be re-routed during the construction phase.
- 6.18 Concern has been raised over how other existing users of the bus turning area would be impacted by the proposals. The existing bus turning area is used for school pick up and drop of services, and occasional loading and unloading, amongst others, albeit the area is restricted with double yellow lines. These informal users would be displaced by the proposed works. The applicant has clarified that school buses would be able to use the new northbound and southbound bus stops, whilst the shops on Old Mill Parade are serviced via School Hill. The applicant notes that the previous proposals also removed these non-bus stopping areas.

Following the receipt of this additional information, and amendments to address matters raised by the Stage 1 safety audit, the Local Highway Authority (LHA) has advised that the layout would provide sufficient access and turning for anticipated users. The LHA has raised no objection accordingly.

- 6.19 It is not therefore considered that the proposal would have a detrimental impact upon the function and safety of the highway network, or to the provision of sustainable transport modes. A condition has been recommended by the LHA to secure further plans and details of the links between the bus turning area on Old Mill Drive and bus passenger infrastructure and footways, and this is included as part of the recommendation. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies 40 and 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Conclusion

- 6.20 The proposed alterations to the turning circle are considered to be of a scale and layout that would be sympathetic to the character and visual amenities of the street scene, whilst of a nature that would not materially harm the amenities of neighbouring properties and users of land, or the safety and function of the public highway network. Furthermore, the proposed works would not prevent the wider re-development of the Diamond area coming forward in line with the aspirations of the Planning Brief. As such, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies 3, 32, 33, 40 and 41 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To approve the application subject to the following conditions.

1 Approved Plans

- 2 **Standard Time Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3 **Pre-Commencement Condition:** No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for, but not be limited to:

- i. the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors
- ii. loading and unloading of plant and materials
- iii. storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
- iv. the erection and maintenance of security hoarding, where appropriate
- v. the provision of wheel washing facilities if necessary
- vi. measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction
- vii. a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works

Reason: As this matter is fundamental in order to consider the potential impacts on the amenity of neighbours and users of surrounding land during construction and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 4 **Pre-Commencement Condition:** No development shall take place until plans and details showing the integration of the proposed bus turning area within Old Mill Drive, bus passenger infrastructure and footways have been submitted to and

approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details and shall thereafter be retained as such.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 5 **Pre-Commencement Condition:** No development shall take place until a scheme for the removal of the existing bus turning circle and appropriate resurfacing and landscape enhancements has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall provide details of the materials and landscaping to be used in the resurfacing, and include a timetable of proposed works. The resurfacing shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details unless otherwise agreed in writing and shall thereafter be retained as such.

Reason: In the interests of road safety and the visual amenities of the street scene and in accordance with Policies 33 and 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 6 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** Prior to the first use of any part of the development hereby permitted, full details of the hard and soft landscaping works shall have been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The approved landscape scheme shall include the retention of the two trees on the existing traffic island east of the proposed new highway boundary. All soft landscaping shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first planting season following the first occupation of any part of the development. All hard landscaping shall be carried out prior to first use of the new bus stops. Any plants, which within a period of 5 years, die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development that is sympathetic to the landscape and townscape character and built form of the surroundings, and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

NOTE TO APPLICANT

The applicant is advised to enter into a legal agreement with West Sussex County Council, as Highway Authority, to cover the off-site highway works. The applicant is requested to contact the Implementation Team Leader (01243 642105) to commence this process. The applicant is advised that it is an offence to undertake any works within the highway prior to the agreement being in place.