

PLANNING APPLICATION

TO

Copeland Borough Council

FOR

**PROPOSED INTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING RETAIL
BUILDING TO PROVIDE AN INCREASE IN RETAIL
AREA (USE CLASS A1) AND PROVIDE DDA CUSTOMER
ACCESS TO FULL RETAIL AREA AND PROVIDE DEFINED
CUSTOMER PARKING**

AT

**SPAR CONVENIENCE STORE AND POST OFFICE
1 MAIN STREET, FRIZINGTON. CUMBRIA, CA26 3SA**

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

JANUARY 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is in support of a planning application made to Copeland Borough Council for proposed internal alterations within the existing retail building and the external repairs to both the building and external hard landscaping to provide designated customer parking. This Statement should be read in conjunction with the plans also submitted in support of this application.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is for the internal alterations to the retail area to improve customer access and remove the internal steps between the retail areas, all within the existing envelope of the existing building. The retail area (use class A1) will increase from 184.2m² to 220.9m². A new customer entrance will be created off Main Street with both a ramped and stepped approach to provide a full DDA compliance customer entrance. The existing external areas will be repaired with a new tarmac black top finish and clearly marked to provide 8 number customer parking bay one of which will be a full DDA. A new plant and bin store area will be formed to the rear of the site with a 2m high close boarded fence around. The existing finishes to the building will remain and be repaired as necessary. The new customer entrance will be via a new fully glazed entrance screen with automatic sliding doors. The reconfigured building would provide a convenience store and post office unit within the existing building footprint of 370.4m² slightly reduced from 375.4m².

3. THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The irregular shaped site extends to approximately 0.1157ha. The site has a frontage to Main Street of approximately 34 meters. The site is presently run as a SPAR convenience store and Post Office. The site is occupied by a former small Cinema building that was converted into the current retail facility some time ago. The building is single store split level and is brick built with render finish and a metal roof. The external areas are hard landscaped and in a poor condition, parking is undefined.
- 3.2 The site is located directly off Main Street approximately 40m north of a roundabout forming the junction between Main Street, Coronation Drive, Frizington Road and Mill Street Close. The area is predominantly residential with a small butchers and take away across main street to the East. A vacant & flattened public house site lies directly to the South.

- 3.3 The existing site has one vehicular access point to the South of the store directly off Main Street, this access is to be maintained.

PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 It is understood there have been no recent planning application on this site.

4. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 The Development Plan for Copeland Borough Council was adopted in November 2019 and runs until Spring 2022, the existing usage of the site will remain but with more modern and user friendly facilities.

6. THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 6.1 The NPPF clearly states '*that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*' (paragraph 6). Paragraph 197 confirms that '*in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development*'. Paragraph 14 states that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF. It goes on to say that '*for decision-taking this means:*

- *Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:*
 - *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole; or*
 - *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted*'.

7. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY Copeland Borough Council

- 7.1 The site falls within the settlement Boundary of Frizington and policy ST2. The development hereby applied for does not alter the existing usage of the site but improves the facilities to provide much more accessible facilities to the local community.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Pre-planning application advice has not been sought.
- 8.2 In summary, the site is already in a commercial use and the proposal would not introduce a new commercial use into the neighborhood. Furthermore, the proposal would cater for a local need and provide much improved customer access.

9. PLANNING ISSUES

The main issues relating to the proposed development of the site are:-

- general principle of the development;
- accessibility highway safety, access and parking;
- character and appearance of the area;
- flood risk
- neighbour amenity
- other miscellaneous.

Each of these issues is referred to in turn below.

Principle

- 9.2 The site is located within the urban area of Frizington. The site is not subject to any specific policies of development restraint, such as might apply in areas of ecological value, areas of built heritage value or countryside areas.
- 9.3 The site is already developed and in active use as a convenience store and post office. Planning policy is supportive of and positively encourages the re-use of previously developed sites, as proposed, subject to consideration of issues relating to such as access, residential amenity, and design.
- 9.4 The modest proposal is intended to contribute further towards the creation and maintenance of a sustainable urban neighbourhood, i.e. a locality where people will want to live, work and / or visit. This will require, amongst other things, an appropriate mix of uses, quality homes and job opportunities, accessible local facilities, sustainable transport systems, etc. The slightly expanded convenience store facility will continue to primarily assist in meeting 'top-up' and local shopping needs of the local community in a convenient and more accessible location, i.e. satisfying local need and enhancing local consumer choice at a sustainable location accessible by those walking and cycling. The store catchment is primarily the immediate residential neighbourhood. The store would provide that community with increased choice

within a convenient walking distance of their homes. The very nature of the convenience store is such that it offers a limited range of everyday goods including fresh produce, ambient range, alcohol, tobacco and confectionary, and a limited range of goods that might be found elsewhere in supermarkets and larger centres. There is no requirement in policy to assess impact for a small store such as proposed. Indeed, the net gain of retail floorspace of the convenience store, at 36m², is such that there could be no appreciable impact on trading patterns at or the vitality or viability of Fizington. Any further trade draw associated with the typical turnover for a convenience store of the size proposed would not be concentrated in any existing one location and would have no material impact upon other established centres (Whitehaven). The nature and size of the proposal would not form a destination attracting custom from a wide area.

9.5 there are clear benefits associated with the proposal, including:

- economic – the development would have economic benefits during the development phase, with employment in the construction industry and materials supply chain
- social – the development would contribute to supporting the local community by providing accessible local services. The proposal would enhance local consumer choice and assist in creating a sustainable community by aiding social inclusion and reducing car dependency; and
- environmental – the development would allow for the re-use of a previously developed site and provide a development of appropriate appearance.

It is demonstrated elsewhere in this submission that there are no adverse impacts that would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development.

Accessibility, highway safety, access and parking

9.6 The site is in a highly accessible location on Main Street and sat close to the residential neighbourhood. The proposed convenience store and post office would be convenient to both pedestrians and cyclists, resident in the locality. The location also benefits from local bus services. With the proposed level access the store would become accessible for those with mobility difficulties

9.7 The site is already in active use. The proposal will not have a materially different

impact on traffic flows to and from the site and, in any event, the traffic generation associated with the proposed development would be insignificant in the context of traffic flows on the local highway network. There would be no adverse impact on the local highway network and highway safety.

- 9.8 The general access arrangements would remain unchanged with the one existing access off Main Street being retained. Overall, there would be no harm to local highway safety. Parking numbers would be maintained with spaces being clearly defined including one dedicated DDA parking bay being introduced. A cyclist stand will be introduced to encourage people to cycle. As such, there would be no overspill of parking on to the local highway network and no harm to local highway safety.

Character and appearance of the area

- 9.9 The proposal would involve the repair of the existing structure and finishes only, the main shape and appearance of the building would not be affected with the exception of the proposed new entrance area where both a stepped and ramped customer approach will be created. The main customer entrance will be relocated directly off Main Street with the old side entrance being closed. The scale and appearance of the building will remain as existing.

Flood Risk

- 9.10 The site falls within Flood Zone 1 (i.e. at the lowest risk of flooding, less than a 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding). As such, no Flood Risk Assessment is required. In any event, the sensitivity of the proposed development to flood risk would not change from that associated with the existing development. Given the nature of the existing and proposed developments, there would be no material change in the surface and foul water discharge rates, and existing connections to public sewers would be utilised. As such, the development is not at unacceptable risk of flooding and would not increase flood risk elsewhere. Accordingly, the development is compliant with planning policy relating to flood risk.

Neighbour Amenity

- 9.11 As previously described, the site falls in the existing residential area of Frizington. The site is already in an active commercial usage, and is part of the the comings and goings with the existing nearby retail business. With regards to servicing to the convenience store, this would typically be by one delivery per day as is the current situation. The proposal does not introduce a new commercial use into a quiet

residential neighbourhood and there is no reason to consider that the activity associated with the proposed development would have any significant increased impact on the amenities of local residents

Other Miscellaneous

9.14 The proposal provides the opportunity to improve the thermal efficiency of the building and to install modern, more efficient heating and air conditioning plant. Similarly, refrigeration would be provided by highly efficient and quieter modern units than are currently installed

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 The proposal is to improve the existing retail space to provide a broader range of produce to local residents. The convenience store will have a retail floorspace increase from 184.2m² to 220.9m².

10.2 With regards to the issue of 'principle', No significant impact would arise from the proposal. Indeed, the proposal does not introduce a new commercial use into the area. The alterations to the building have been designed in a manner to have no impact on neighbour's amenity by such as overshadowing or noise. The retail element remains small scale and would continue to mainly serve local customers and the 'top-up' needs of the local community. The site would continue to form part of and be complementary to the local shopping / commercial areas. The proposal is not of a scale to either prejudice investment within, or the vitality / viability of any existing shopping centres.

10.3 The assessment of detailed issues, including accessibility, highway safety, impacts on the character of the area, flood risk and neighbour's amenity demonstrates that there would be no adverse impacts arising from the proposal. Indeed, there are benefits associated with the proposal, not least of which is that the proposal makes effective use of a previously developed site.

10.6 The Council is respectfully invited to grant planning permission for the development

John Williams M.C.I.A.T A.C.I.O.B

HARRY WALTERS & LIVESEY Ltd