

APPLICATION NO: 23/01646/KMBC1 **CASE OFFICER:** John Fleming

WARD: Roby **PARISH:**

LOCATION: Royal Mail Delivery Office, Westmorland Road, Huyton, Knowsley, L36 9UL

PROPOSAL: EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS INCLUDING INSTALLATION OF NEW SHOPFRONT, ROLLER SHUTTERS, TILED STALL RISERS, TILING TO FIRST FLOOR, NEW LIGHTING, SERVICE ACCESS DOOR AND ALTERATIONS TO SIDE ELEVATIONS AND ASSOCIATED WORKS.

Site Description

The application site relates to an existing town centre unit. The property is located north east of Griffith's Road and provides one of the principal entrances into Huyton Village. The unit is independent of the remaining retail premises found to the south and east of the application property.

The buildings are currently used as Royal Mail delivery office.

The property is largely brick facing with concrete accents and white timber fascia together with glazed UPVC windows in white to the principal elevation. The west elevation is predominantly brick facing with white UPVC windows and two entrances to the sorting office. Fronting both of these elevations are tree lined public highways of which benefit from Tree Protection Orders. A blank brick face gable wall is located at the north eastern elevation

Proposal

This application seeks planning permission for the installation of a new shop front. The proposed works would comprise the following aspects:

- New shop front
- Internal roller shutters
- External encaustic tiles
- Steel signage
- New access and window openings at front and side elevations
- New external lighting

Other associated works are also proposed but these would not materially impact the appearance of the property, including making good and painting the existing concrete columns etc. These aspects of the scheme are not considered to be development but regarded as de minimus (not constituting development).

Consultations

Environmental Health – No objections in principle subject to condition.

Highways Authority – No response received.

Licencing – No objections to the principle of development.

Assets – No response received.

Major Development Team – No response received.

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 20 neighbours and displayed by site notice. No representations have been received.

Planning History

Ref: 74/10081/HIST: Notification of existing fence and erection of new fence.

Ref: 74/14128/HIST: Alterations to form new entrance door and ramp to customer reception officer. Granted 15th May 1992.

Ref: 96/00047/APP: Layout of car park spaces, soft landscaping, construction of low. Granted 4th April 1996.

Ref: 74/12867/HIST: Display of illuminated fascia sign. Granted 2nd November 1990.

Ref: 74/13241/HIST: Display of 1 by 48 sheet wall mounted hoarding. Refused 24th May 1991.

Ref: 97/00689/ADV: Display of internally illuminated fascia with integral. Granted 9th February 1998.

Ref: 74/14741/HIST: Installation of cash dispensing machine. Granted 13th May 1993.

Ref: 23/01647/ADV – 2NO. first floor level signs providing signage for Huyton Village/Derby Road. Pending consideration.

Relevant Policy

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

The development plan in Knowsley comprises the Saved Policies of the Replacement Unitary Development Plan, the Core Strategy Local Plan and the Joint Waste Local Plan. The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application.

CS2 - Development Principles

S2 – Diversification of uses within existing centres

CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

CS6 – Town Centres and Retail Strategy

Saved Policies

S9 – Shop Front and Security Shutters

In addition, the Shopfronts and Signage Design SPD (2023) is a material consideration for the purposes of this planning application and provides additional guidance in relation to development of shopfronts within Knowsley Borough.

The site is located within Huyton Town Centre. As such, changes to a shop front providing for an entrance to a mixed-use operation consisting of the Royal Mail facilities and a restaurant is considered acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with local planning policy and guidance.

Regarding the proposed application it has regard to policies CS2, S2 and CS19 of the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2016) and saved policies S9 and ENV3 of the Unitary Development Plan (2006), together with the Shopfront and Signage SPD (2023).

These policies and guidance require that new development demonstrates a high standard of design, which does not adversely affect the character of the property or street scene and is for an appropriate town centre use.

Article 35 Statement

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.

Assessment

Context

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) subdivides different uses of buildings and land into separate classes. Permission is not required for a change of use of this premises as it would fall under the scope of Use Class E for the sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on premises. As such, the principle of a restaurant in a town centre location is acceptable and the current proposals focus on the design of the shop front as opposed to the principle of development and use.

Design and Visual Amenity

As referred to above, the main consideration with regards to the proposed application submission is the impact of the proposed shop front alterations upon the character and appearance of the application property together with the wider street scene and surrounding area.

The current building is old and in need of repair and is largely obscured by hoardings fronting Derby Road depicting the Council's wider ambitions for the regeneration of Huyton Town Centre.

The proposed alterations consist of replacement of an existing window at the southwestern elevation together with new steel security door for services. New external finishes to the front elevation facing Derby Road to the south and eastern elevations consist of encaustic tiles, new external lighting fixtures, painted finish to external concrete columns (considered de minimis), together with 2no. bifolding windows located at eastern elevation and 1no glazed window to replace the non-original masonry infill to the southern elevation. Development would involve the installation of new fascia boards in red to provide signage (currently subject to advertisement consent application under application reference: 23/01647/ADV) with the remaining UPVC windows being replaced with new slimline aluminium framed doubled glazed windows and doors. A new internal box roller shutter to be installed of punched aluminium to match that of units at 36-46 Derby Road. Entrance levels would be made up from street level to the proposed entrances by lifting and relaying existing paving to suit.

The Shopfront and Signage SPD (2023) emphasises the Local Plan's approach to ensure the Borough's town centres are vibrant and welcoming focal points where people choose to shop and use facilities and services. It is therefore key that well-designed shopfronts and signage are critical to perceptions to both business behind the shopfront and the place the shopfront and signage is located. The SPD further states that windows should be the dominant feature of the shopfront and should provide a vertical emphasis by being noticeably taller than they are wide. The doorway should be clearly indicated as an entrance point and should be in proportion with the windows of the shop front.

The application property is two stories in height and relatively unique in terms of appearance in comparison to other retail units found within the street scene. The window arrangements below that of the proposed fascia panels would have a squarer appearance rather than vertical. However, if setting the fascia to the same height as the concrete cornice this would result in a more prominent and alien feature in terms of surrounding retail units. Although the new openings at the south and eastern elevations do not span the full vertical height to floor level the use of encaustic tiles below these openings help to provide vertical appearance in terms of their form and design. In addition, given that the windows span two stories together with vertical concrete post this helps to provide separation and vertical emphasis when considered collectively and are therefore considered appropriate in terms of design.

The SPD states that the fascia should be no more than 20% of the overall height of the shop from top to bottom. The fascia attains a maximum height of .3m and would be inset within the aluminium framings so that it does not protrude beyond the built form of the shop front. The shop front to the height of the fascia would measure 2.41m and would therefore result in the fascia height set at 12% which is considered appropriate in the context of the ground floor elevation.

Turning to the concrete pilasters, the SPD advises that these should generally be

between 150mm – 200mm wide, but where the shopfront is particularly large such as the application property, they can be as much as 300mm wide. The existing pilasters are to be retained and painted and alterations are considered de minimis in this respect, but the existing proposals would help frame the core aspect of the shop front.

Turning to swan neck lighting that is indicated on the southern elevation along the concrete cornice, the SPD advises that swan neck lights will in almost all cases not be permitted as they almost always look out of place and clutter the shopfront rather than enhance it. Indeed, there is only one retail unit located within the wider town centre that utilises swan neck lighting. The Local Planning Authority raised concern with the applicant regarding the use of swan neck lighting and it has been agreed that lighting is to be dealt with via condition. In addition, the use of proposed tiles in combination with the glazed frontage is considered appropriate in principle, however it was considered that, the proposed tiles put forward for consideration would clash with the overall design aesthetic of the wider area and an alternative tile should be sought. The Local Planning Authority has therefore agreed with the applicant that these matters can be dealt with via a condition.

Overall, the proposed shop front will create a more attractive and modern design than what is currently in situ and will help achieve the Local Planning Authority's ambitions concerning the wider regeneration strategy at Huyton Town Centre. The design of the new shop front is acceptable in terms of design and relates well to the street scene in principle.

Amenity Impacts

There are no residential properties in proximity to the site and by the nature and siting of the proposed alterations this would not lead to harmful impacts on occupants of adjoining buildings.

Other issues

Highways

The Highways Authority has been consulted and no response has been received concerning this application. Given that the existing property can be converted to a restaurant under Use Class E as set by Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) it falls outside the scope of highways consideration. Notwithstanding this, there is parking available within the nearby short stay/multi level car parking facilities together with public transport services located nearby.

Environmental Health

Environmental Health has reviewed the information submitted and raise no objections to the principle of development. However, a number of conditions have been requested in respect of the control of smoke and odours, grease trap, fixed plant noise, the storage of waste and opening hours. These matters fall outside the scope of this application which relates solely to the shopfront itself. As such, subsequent applications may be required from the applicant/future occupier if they wish to install ventilation measures/fixed plant equipment and opening hours will be dealt with via licensing or further planning applications.

Trees

Several mature trees are located at the western and southern elevations which are

protected by a TPO fronting the property. Given that there are no increases to the footprint of the shop front and only minor alterations are required to raise the hardstanding it is not considered that these trees would be adversely affected by the proposed development.

Conclusion

The proposal would be acceptable in terms of design, residential amenity and highways. The proposal also complies with the relevant Core Strategy, Replacement UDP policies and guidance in the NPPF and is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

Recommendation

That planning permission will be granted subject to the following condition(s):-

- 1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed in Schedule 1.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

- 3) Notwithstanding any description of materials in the application, no above ground construction works shall take place until samples and/or full specification of materials to be used externally on the building have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include the type, colour and texture of materials and should be reflective of those within the surrounding area, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the agreed schedule of materials.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to comply with Policy CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted January 2016, and the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

SCHEDULE 1

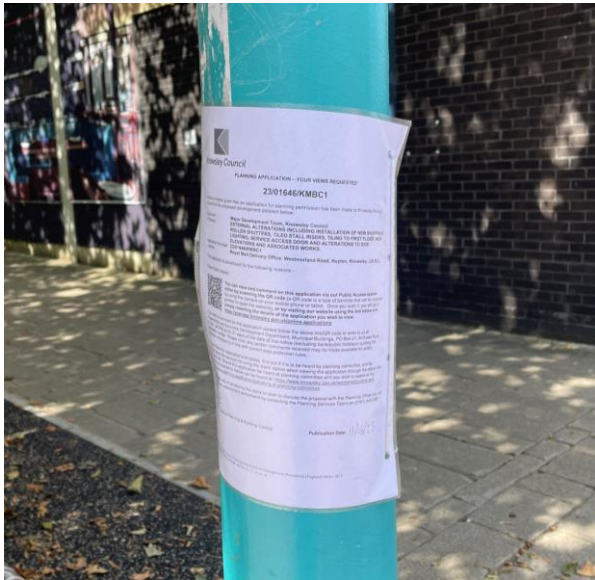
Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
17.08.2023	0.001_REV		LOCATION PLAN
17.08.2023	2.201_REV_*		DEMOLITION ELEVATIONS 01
17.08.2023	2.202_REV_*		DEMOLITION ELEVATIONS 02
17.08.2023	3.002_REV_D		SCOPE OF WORKS
17.08.2023	3.101_REV_E		PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN
26.09.2023	3.201_REV_F		PROPOSED ELEVATIONS 01
17.08.2023	3.202_REV_D		PROPOSED ELEVATIONS 02
17.08.2023	4.61.400.001		DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Signed Case Officer: **John Fleming**

**Signed Authorising
Officer:** **K Foster**

Date: **28 September 2023**

Appendix 1 – Site visit photographs



INFORMATIVES

1. HIGHWAYS

The applicant would need to obtain a licence under s177 of the Highways Act 1980 for any development overhanging the adopted highway. Applications should be made to KMBC Highways Department.

The Council as Highway Authority should be indemnified against any claims arising as a result of the advertisement(s) hereby permitted projecting over the public highway.

2. NEED FOR ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT

The proposed advertisement(s) indicated on the submitted plan(s) require a separate Express Consent to Display Advertisements. Please contact the Council's Development Control Section (Tel: 0151 443 2381) for further advice).