

MC/16/5035

Date Received: 15 December, 2016

Location: Land Opposite Mcdonalds Commercial Road Strood ME2 2AD

Proposal: Change of use from car park to B8 (storage facility) to allow for storage of shipping containers, one to be used as an associated office, together with parking.

Applicant: Brayden Storage Containers Ltd.

Agent: Ms Harris-Mills arki:tek Bleak House Back Street Leeds ME17 1TE

Ward Strood South

Case Officer Alison Webster

Contact Number 01634 331700

Recommendation of Officers to the Planning Committee, to be considered and determined by the Planning Committee at a meeting to be held on 12 April 2017.

Recommendation - Approval with Conditions

- 1 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 (as amended).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

L(0)500 received 10 January 2017, L(0)501 and L(P)200 received 18 January 2017.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 This consent is granted for a limited period only expiring on 11 April 2020 and on or before that date the use shall cease and the storage containers hereby permitted shall be removed from the site.

Reason To ensure that the aspirations of the Strood Masterplan can be realised as a later date.

- 4 No development shall commence until details of the colour of the proposed storage containers has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The agreed colour shall be implemented and retained in perpetuity.

Reason: To safeguard conditions of amenity in accordance with Policy BNE1 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 5 The number of containers on the site shall be limited to 46 with an additional container to be used as an office and shall not be stacked.

Reason: To safeguard conditions of amenity in accordance with Policy BNE1 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

For the reasons for this recommendation for approval please see Planning Appraisal Section and Conclusions at the end of this report.

Proposal

Change of use from car park to B8 (storage facility) to allow for storage of shipping containers including one to be used as an associated office together with parking.

The containers will be arranged around the boundary of the site and form the boundary treatment. The intension is for 46 containers to be used for storage and an additional one to be used as a site office. The plans show the potential for a further 12 containers stacked on top of those to the rear of the site however the applicants have confirmed that at this point in time all containers will be single storey height only. The containers will be approx. 6m long, 2.25m wide and 2.6m high. Ten parking spaces will be provided for the use within the site and also use as an option for overflow for Tesco at peak times. The containers will remain in situ and will not be transported on and off the site. It is envisaged that those utilising the containers, will be unloading from the rear of their vehicles. It is anticipated that there will be 7.5 tonne lorries occasionally unloading and a fork lift truck will be available on site. The access will be from Commercial Road and will be fenced.

Relevant Planning History

MC/12/0461 Redevelopment of existing supermarket and adjacent land to create a Class A1 superstore and cafe (9,390sq m gross (GEA)), associated atrium (650 sq m (GEA) (includes ground floor and first floor)), library (902 sq m), associated car parking and access and 12 residential units

Decision Approval With Conditions

Decided 10/08/2012

MC/10/3579 Redevelopment of existing supermarket and adjacent land to create a Class A1 superstore and cafe (8,400 sq m gross (GEA) associated atrium (1,080 sq m (GEA) includes ground floor and first floor), additional floorspace of 1400 sq m (GEA) for Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4 or D1, associated

car parking and access, and 14 residential units.
Decision Approval With Conditions
Decided 10/11/2011

Representations

The application has been advertised on site and by individual neighbour notification to the owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties. Three letters of objection have been received from members of the public and one from the City of Rochester Society. The main concerns are:

- Out of character
- Plans contradict the aim of the Strood Town Centre Masterplan
- Concerns regarding traffic entering and exiting the site
- This is the wrong location
- It will reduce parking and take business away from the town
- Will result in more traffic
- Should be used for retail use

Another anonymous letter has been received however the Council is unable to accept anonymous letters.

The Environment Agency has suggested that the floor levels of the proposed storage units should be raised above ground level by as much as is practical. The applicants have confirmed that the containers have to be at ground level in order for customers to drop off and access their belongings. They have confirmed the containers are sealed shut.

Development Plan

The Development Plan for the area comprises the Medway Local Plan 2003 (the Local Plan). The policies referred to within this document and used in the processing of this application have been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and are considered to conform.

Planning Appraisal

Principle

The application site is currently used as an informal overflow car park for employees of Tesco at busy periods. It is fairly overgrown and bounded by approx. 2m high palisade fencing that has recently been installed following the removal of a large sign to the front of the site that did not have consent.

The site falls within the urban area as defined by the Medway Local Plan 2003 where there is no specific policy land use designations however to the north east of the site the land are designated for retail uses. The Strood Town Centre Masterplan 2009 shows the car park site as part of a comprehensive redevelopment of the Tesco site as a whole and is designated as retail use. The Masterplan is clear in its aspirations for Strood and identifies an opportunity to improve the public realm along Commercial

Road. An application reflecting the aims of the Masterplan was indeed approved in 2012 (MC/12/0461) however the permission was never implemented and is no longer extant.

As the aspirations of the Masterplan are to bring forward a comprehensive development of the entire Tesco site, including this piece of land, it is recommended that permission is granted on a temporary basis with a timescale to match the length of the lease the applicant has with Tesco which is three years.

The temporary use of the land for storage purpose is considered to be acceptable subject to an assessment of design, amenity and highway safety.

Design

The application site is overgrown, unused and makes no positive contribution to the public realm. A recent palisade fence has been erected following the removal of an unauthorised sign. This fence does not have permission in its own right however, boundary treatment is shown within this application.

The storage of shipping containers at a single height (2.6m) would improve on the current visual impact of this piece of land. The buildings surrounding the site such as Tesco and Topps Tiles are typically grey in colour and clad in corrugated material not dissimilar to shipping containers. Due to the prominent position of the site a condition is recommended that the shipping containers shall be painted in a colour to be agreed by the Council. It is anticipated that a mid-dark grey would be in keeping with the building surrounding the site.

In summary, the proposed shipping containers will result in some improvement to the existing public realm in the short term while there are no other plans for this land and therefore accord with the objectives of Policy BNE1 of the Medway Local Plan 2003 and paragraphs 17 and 56 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Amenity

Due to the location of the proposed development there will be no detrimental impact on any neighbouring properties in terms of loss of outlook, privacy, sunlight or daylight. The site is located within an Air Quality Management Area however the end use is not considered a sensitive receptor and therefore no concerns are raised. In terms of noise, there are no sensitive residential receptors immediately adjacent to the site so no concerns are raised.

Therefore the proposal accords with Policy BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan.

Highways

The applicants undertook pre-application discussions and it was determined that the development would not require a Transport Assessment. The plans show how vehicles will enter the site and sightlines. Justification for the spaces lost at Tesco has been made as they are rarely used and the applicants have provided some spaces for Tesco if they need them. No objection has been raised on Highways grounds.

Local Finance Considerations

None relevant

Conclusions and Reasons for Approval

The proposed use to the site for storage of shipping containers, for B8 use, for a temporary period is considered to accord with the abovementioned policies and in order to allow the objectives of the Strood Masterplan to be realised.

This application would normally fall to be determined under officer's delegated powers but is being reported for Members' consideration due to the number of letters of representation expressing a view contrary to the officers' recommendation.

Background Papers

The relevant background papers relating to the individual applications comprise: the applications and all supporting documentation submitted therewith; and items identified in any Relevant History and Representations section within the report.

Any information referred to is available for inspection in the Planning Offices of Medway Council at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR and here <http://publicaccess.medway.gov.uk/online-applications/>