

REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT

25 August 2011

Subject Heading:

P1062.11 – Hilldene Service Station,
Hilldene Avenue, Romford

Vacant petrol filling station and
mechanical car wash, to a hand car
wash and valeting service (Application
received 12th July 2011)

Report Author and contact details:

Helen Oakerbee (Planning Control
Manager) 01708 432800

Policy context:

Local Development Framework

Financial summary:

None

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Clean, safe and green borough	[]
Excellence in education and learning	[]
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	[x]
Value and enhance the life of every individual	[x]
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	[]

SUMMARY

This matter is brought before committee as the application site is Council owned. The application seeks full planning permission for a change of use from a vacant petrol filling station and mechanical car wash, to a hand car wash and valeting service. Staff conclude the proposal to be acceptable. The application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Time Limit – The development to which this permission relates must be commenced not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Accordance with plans - The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans, particulars and specifications.

Reason: The Local Planning Authority consider it essential that the whole of the development is carried out and that no departure whatsoever is made from the details approved, since the development would not necessarily be acceptable if partly carried out or carried out differently in any degree from the details submitted. Also, in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

3. Number of parking spaces – Before the use hereby permitted is first commenced, provision shall be made within the site for the 5 bays for general use car parking, 7 bays for people waiting, 4 bays for vehicles to be collected and 12 bays for the collection of trade vehicles and thereafter such provision shall be made permanently available for use. There shall be no parking elsewhere within the site, except in the marked bays, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate off street car parking provision in the interests of highway safety.

4. Hours of operation – The application site shall be closed to all activity associated with the use hereby permitted except between the hours of 08:00 and 19:00 on Mondays to Saturdays and between 10:00 and 17:00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Reason: To minimise the impact of the development on the surrounding area in the interests of amenity, and that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

5. No washing or cleaning of HGVs – No washing or cleaning shall take place in relation to HGVs.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and residential amenity in accordance with Policies DC32 and DC61 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD.

6. Marking of parking bays – Prior to the commencement of the hand car wash and valeting service hereby permitted, markings to indicate directions through the site and demarcate all parking bays shown on drawing No. 5630/D/01 shall be undertaken on site.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and residential amenity in accordance with Policies DC32 and DC61 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD.

7. Washing and valeting – Washing and valeting of all vehicles shall only take place underneath the existing canopy shown on drawing No. 5630/D/01.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and residential amenity in accordance with Policies DC32 and DC61 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD.

8. Foul and surface water drainage – The hand car wash and valeting service hereby permitted shall not be commenced until details of the foul and surface water drainage system has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment.

9. Hand car wash only - The use hereby permitted shall be a hand car wash only and no power tools or machinery shall be used other than jet washers and vacuum cleaners unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of neighbouring amenity.

Reason for Approval

The proposal is considered to accord with the aims and objectives of Policies DC55 and DC61 of the LDF Development Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD.

Informative

Car wash liquid waste is classed as trade effluent. It must not be discharged to a surface water sewer or watercourse untreated. Before it is discharged to a sewer you must always get a trade effluent consent or enter into a trade effluent agreement with your water and sewerage company or authority. If you are not able to discharge effluent to the foul sewer it will be classed as waste and you must then comply with your duty of care responsibilities. More information regarding the discharge of trade effluent can be found at

REPORT DETAIL

1. Site Description

- 1.1 The site is located in Harold Hill Minor District Centre. The site is on the junction of Hilldene Close and Hilldene Avenue and comprises of a vacant petrol filling station and mechanical car wash. There is Harold Hill Evangelical Free Church and The Bridge Over Resource Centre (also known as LBH Adult College) to the west and Harold Hill library to the east. There are residential properties surrounding the site. There is vehicular access onto Hilldene Avenue.

2. Description of Proposal

- 2.1 The proposal is for a change of use from a vacant petrol filling station and mechanical car wash, to a hand car wash and valeting service. There is a range of car wash options, starting from a basic wash to a full valet.
- 2.2 It is proposed that there would be five bays for general use car parking, seven bays for people waiting, four bays for vehicles to be collected and 12 bays for the collection of trade vehicles. The bays labelled as 'general use car parking' would be utilised by members of the public leaving vehicles which would be washed/valeted under the canopy and parked in the collection bays.
- 2.3 The agent advised that the majority of the business would be hand car wash/valeting services for the local community, with a small percentage of trade business e.g. cleaning vehicles for local garages, mini cab firms and cars to be sold at auction. The trade collection bays would be used for the parking of vehicles only. All vehicles would be washed and valeted under the existing canopy. It is proposed to employ five full time and three part time valeters.
- 2.4 The existing buildings would be utilised for a waiting room, offices, staff room and store room. Existing ingress and egress for the site would be from Hilldene Avenue.

3. Relevant History

P0823.98 – Change of use to MOT repair garage – Approved.

P0939.95 – Installation of jet wash, portico, screens and vacuum facility – Refused. Allowed on appeal.

P1336.92 – Demolition and development of sales building, forecourt canopy, underground tank, jet wash and associated works – Approved.

P1430.91 – Redevelopment involving erection of new sales building, jet wash, forecourt canopy, installation of five underground tanks – Approved.

4. Consultations/Representations

- 4.1 Notification letters were sent to 40 neighbouring properties. No letters of representation were received. At the time of drafting this report the neighbour notification period has yet to expire. Members will be verbally updated on the evening of any representations received.

5. Relevant Policies

- 5.1 Policies DC16 (Core and Fringe Frontages in District and Local Centres), DC55 (Noise) and DC61 (Urban Design) of the Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document and PPS4 (Sustainable Economic Growth) are material planning considerations.

6. Staff Comments

- 6.1 This proposal is put before the Committee owing to the land being Council owned. The issues arising in respect of this application will be addressed under the headings principle of the development, its impact on the streetscene and on residential amenity and parking and highways implications.

7. Principle of development

- 7.1 The proposal would be for an employment use within the Harold Hill Minor District Centre. The site comprises of a vacant petrol filling station and mechanical car wash, so the proposal would not result in the loss of any retail uses. It is considered that the hand car wash and valeting service would be acceptable in principle in relation to Policy DC16.

8. Design/impact on street scene

- 8.1 It is considered that the proposal would not result in any significant adverse impact on the streetscene, as it would utilise existing buildings, a canopy and hardstanding. All equipment would be stored in existing buildings.

9. Impact on amenity

- 9.1 It is noted that residential properties located to the north of the application site in Bridgwater Road have been demolished. It is considered that the proposal would not result in a significant loss of amenity to other properties in Bridgwater Road, as the ingress and egress to the site is from Hilldene Avenue and the vehicles would be washed and valeted to the south of the site, behind the former sales building.

- 9.2 There are residential properties above some shop units in Hilldene Avenue. It is considered that residential properties opposite the site would not be adversely affected by the proposal as there is a separation distance of approximately 54 metres between the southern boundary of the site and these dwellings in Hilldene Avenue.
- 9.3 It is considered that the proposal would not result in a significant loss of amenity to residential dwellings to the west of the site, as there is a separation distance of approximately 35 metres between the eastern boundary of No. 151 Hilldene Avenue and the western boundary of the site.
- 9.4 It is considered that the proposal would not result in a significant loss of amenity to residential dwellings to the east of the site, as there is a separation distance of approximately 89 metres between the western boundary of No. 253-257 Hilldene Avenue and the eastern boundary of the site.
- 9.5 It is recognised that occupiers of adjacent residential properties would, at least to a degree, be able to see and hear the proposed activity at the application site, particularly when they walk or drive along Hilldene Avenue and Hilldene Close. However, this should be balanced against the fact that the residential premises are situated particularly close to Harold Hill Minor District Centre, and that levels of residential amenity would therefore be lower than in a quiet residential street away from the high level of commercial activity associated with this Minor District Centre.
- 9.6 When considering the merits of this application, consideration was given to the fact that the application site was previously used as a petrol filling station and mechanical car wash.
- 9.7 The proposed opening hours are between 8am until 7pm every day including Sundays and Bank Holidays. Following a telephone conversation with the agent on 9th August 2011, it was agreed that the opening hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays would be reduced to 10am to 5pm in the interests of neighbouring amenity.
- 9.8 Staff therefore consider that subject to appropriate conditions to limit noise from any equipment, noise and general activity at the application site would not cause any significant harm to residential amenity. In particular as Hilldene Avenue is a relatively busy public highway located on bus routes and that the site is a former petrol station and mechanical car wash. Staff consider that the proposal would have an acceptable impact on residential amenity.

10. Highway/parking issues

- 10.1 There would be no change to the access to the highway and parking for vehicles that are waiting to be washed and/or valeted would be located within the site boundaries.

10.2 There are no specific servicing requirements indicated in connection with the proposal as there would be sufficient space within the site boundaries for this to be undertaken.

10.3 There are no highways objections to the proposed development. The Highway Authority require that markings are shown to indicate directions through the site and a parking area marked out for vehicles waiting to be washed/valeted, in order to prevent any congestion from the business causing queues onto Hilldene Avenue. A condition is required that dirty water from the business does not drain onto the public highway.

11. Other issues

11.1 The Environment Agency have requested a condition to be attached requiring submission of details of the foul and surface water drainage system in order to prevent pollution of the water environment. A condition will be attached to any grant of planning permission. The Environment Agency recommended an informative regarding car wash liquid waste.

12. Conclusion

12.1 The proposal is for a change of use from a petrol filling station and mechanical car wash to a hand car wash and valeting service. Staff consider that the proposal would not result in any harm to visual amenity in the streetscene. Staff consider that the proposal would also be acceptable in terms of its impact on residential amenity of adjoining occupiers and that the proposal is acceptable and in accordance with Local Development Framework Policies.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

None.

Legal implications and risks:

This application is considered on its own merits and independently from the Council's interest as owner of the site.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None.

Equalities implications and risks:

The Council's planning policies are implemented with regard to Equalities and Diversity.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Application form and plans received on 12th July 2011.