

APPLICATION REF: 12/00212/FUL
 PROPOSAL: CHANGE OF USE OF STORAGE BUILDING TO 24 HOUR TAXI CALL OFFICE
 SITE: 787 LINCOLN ROAD, PETERBOROUGH, PE1 3HE
 APPLICANT: MR SAMEER KHAN
 OLYMPIC CARS
 AGENT: N P BRANSTON MRICS
 BRANSTON ASSOCIATES
 REFERRED BY: COUNCILLOR K SHARP
 REASON: HARMFUL IMPACT UPON NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTS AND INCREASE IN PARKING ON-ROAD IN AN AREA ALREADY HEAVILY CONGESTED
 SITE VISIT: 22.02.2012
 CASE OFFICER: MS L C LOVEGROVE
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RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL SUBJECT TO RELEVANT CONDITIONS

1 Description of the site and surroundings and Summary of the proposal

Site and Surroundings

The application site is formed by a large detached single storey store building which was permitted under application reference 03/01334/FUL with a lawful storage and distribution use (Class B8). The site lies to the rear of No. 789 Lincoln Road, a vacant shop unit. The surrounding area is characterised by a mixture of uses, with residential dwellings to the south east, commercial buildings to the north east and a car sales unit directly opposite. Access is currently gated and situated between Nos. 785 and 789 Lincoln Road with an area of hardstanding surrounding the building, used for car parking. This part of Lincoln Road has recently been altered to restrict on-road parking.

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the site from B8 storage and distribution to a 24 hour taxi call office. The proposal would only be for the use of employees taking calls and will not be open to members of the public, or be a base for taxis.

2 Planning History

Reference	Proposal	Decision	Date
03/01334/FUL	Erection of storage building	Application Permitted	21/10/2003

3 Planning Policy

Decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan policies below, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policies

A summary of the relevant policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (published 27th March 2012) will be provided in the Update Report for Members.

Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011)

CS14 - Transport

Promotes a reduction in the need to travel, sustainable transport, the Council's UK Environment

Capital aspirations and development which would improve the quality of environments for residents.

CS16 - Urban Design and the Public Realm

Design should be of high quality, appropriate to the site and area, improve the public realm, address vulnerability to crime, be accessible to all users and not result in any unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbouring residents.

4 Consultations/Representations

Transport and Engineering Services (08.03.12)

No objections - subject to provision of on-site car parking for 6 no. vehicles and removal of the proposed bollards.

Councillor K F Sharp (19.03.12)

Objection and referral to Committee - Potential harmful impact to neighbour amenity and concerns regarding on-road car parking.

Neighbourhood and Empowerment Section

No comments received

Millfield and New England Residents Planning Sub Group (29.02.12)

Objection - totally inappropriate place to site such an office which does not provide sufficient on-site car parking and will exacerbate existing parking issues in the area. Disagree that drivers will not visit the office, given sections 1 and 1a of the Private Hire Operators License which states that off road parking must be provided.

Taxi Enforcement Officer (17.02.12)

In order to be able to issue an operator license, need to be assured that there is sufficient off street parking as per license conditions. This alleviates parking issues for local residents. There is also an issue of vehicles returning and leaving from the office at all hours of the day which is a contentious issue for local residents.

Local Residents/Interested Parties

Initial consultations: 5

Total number of responses: 31

Total number of objections: 31

Total number in support: 0

A petition of 29 signatories has been submitted objecting to the application scheme however no reasons for the objection were provided. Two additional letters of objection have been received on the following grounds:

- Noise and general disturbance caused to occupants from vehicles starting and manoeuvring within the site at night
- Insufficient visibility when exiting the site will cause a danger to pedestrians
- The number of taxis cannot be accommodated on the site and will lead to parking on-road which is already at capacity and heavily congested

One further objection has been received by Councillor Keith Sharp who has requested the referral of the application to Committee. His objection is based around the concern of local residents with regards to the impact upon their amenity and that the proposed use will lead to an escalation in the amount of traffic which may cause highways issues given the on-street parking restrictions.

5 Assessment of the planning issues

The main considerations are:

- Impact upon residential amenity
- Highways implications

a) Impact upon residential amenity

It is acknowledged that there is significant concern expressed by local residents with regards to the application proposal and the impact that this would have upon residential amenity. However, subject to conditions, it is not considered that the proposal will have any harmful impact upon the amenity of neighbouring occupants. The application proposes the change of use of the unit to a 24 hour taxi call office - this would not involve taxis operating directly out of the site but would instead involve employees taking calls from members of the public which are then passed on to the taxi drivers located elsewhere by radio etc.

In order to prevent any significant level of vehicular movement in and out of the site, it is proposed to restrict vehicular movements to only those persons directly employed as call operators and only allowing the taxis themselves to visit the site once per week in order to drop off any takings. The applicant has proposed that the gates to the site be locked between the hours of 1800 and 0600 thereby preventing any vehicular movements to, from or within the site during unsociable hours. However Officers have concerns regarding the enforcement of this if it were secured by condition. Given that only the call centre workers would be regularly visiting the site, and that the taxis are to be conditioned to allow only one visit to the site a week, the hours in which these taxis can visit the site can be conditioned thereby achieving the same restriction whilst being enforceable. It is considered that the above measures would ensure that the site does not experience high levels of vehicular traffic at any time of day, particularly at night and as such, will not result in any harmful impact to the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Councillor Sharp has requested that the number of taxis allowed to operate from the site be restricted to no more than 15 cars on any planning permission if granted. However, Officer's consider that the above restrictions in terms of taxis only visiting the site once per week to drop off takings will adequately ensure that no harmful impact will arise to neighbouring occupants.

b) Highways implications

The Highway Engineers have not raised any objections to the application proposal. At present, the access to the site allows for 2 vehicles to pass one another however there is no pedestrian visibility splay to the south east. Given that the site has an established access and that the application proposal would not increase the number of vehicular movements from the site, the LHA does not require the splay to be provided. Within the site, it is evident that there is sufficient space for 6 vehicles to park. Whilst taxis are only to be allowed to visit the site once per week for the purpose of dropping off any takings, the 6 car parking spaces should be provided to allow for safe manoeuvring should the 5 taxis stated as controlled by the applicant's company visit the site at one time, in addition to the member of the staff taking calls.

6 Conclusions

Subject to the imposition of the attached conditions, the proposal is acceptable having been assessed in the light of all material considerations, including weighing against relevant policies of the development plan. Specifically, the proposed use as a 24 hour taxi call office will not give rise to any significant harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupants, will not result in a significant increase in vehicular movements to, within and from the site and will not result in any harm to the safety of the public highway. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policies CS14 and CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011).

7 Recommendation

The Head of Planning Services recommends that planning permission is **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

C 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

C 2 No taxis or private hire vehicles shall visit or operate from the site, other than a frequency of once per week in which to drop off any takings and not outside the hours of 0800 to 1600.

Reason: In order to prevent undue noise and disturbance and to preserve the amenities of neighbouring residents in accordance with Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011).

C 3 No members of the public shall visit the site at any time for the purpose of booking or being collected/dropped off by a taxi or private hire vehicle.

Reason: In order to prevent undue noise and disturbance and to preserve the amenities of neighbouring residents in accordance with Policy CS16 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011).

C 4 Notwithstanding the details hereby approved and as shown on drawing no. 11.071 B, space shall be laid out within the site for 6 no. parking spaces in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These spaces shall be provided prior to implementation of the change of use hereby approved and in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to ensure adequate on-site car parking is provided for taxis and staff when visiting the site and to prevent undue pressure on the on-road parking in accordance with Policy CS14 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011).

C 5 Prior to implementation of the use hereby approved, secure and covered cycle parking to accommodate one cycle space per member of staff shall be provided in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to promote more sustainable methods of transport, in accordance with Policy CS14 of the Peterborough Core Strategy DPD (2011).

Copy to Councillors - Sharp K F, and Swift C W OBE