

10/00099/FUL: ADDITIONAL PARKING AREA WITHIN APPROVED GARDEN CENTRE –
RETROSPECTIVE - AT PETERBOROUGH GARDEN PARK,
PETERBOROUGH ROAD, EYE

VALID: 29.01.2010

APPLICANT: GARDEN PARKS (PETERBOROUGH TWO) LTD

AGENT: GREGORY GRAY ASSOCIATES

REFERRED BY: CLLR SANDERS

REASON: TRAFFIC IMPACT

DEPARTURE: NO

CASE OFFICER: AMANDA MCSHERRY

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1 SUMMARY/OUTLINE OF THE MAIN ISSUES

The main considerations are:

- The need for additional customer parking spaces
- The impact of the development on the transport network

The Head of Planning Services recommends that the application is **APPROVED**.

2 PLANNING POLICY

In order to comply with section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan policies set out below, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan Policies

Relevant policies are listed below with the key policies highlighted.

The Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement)

T1 New development should not unacceptably impact on the transport network

T10 Car and motorcycle parking requirements

Material Planning Considerations

Decisions can be influenced by material planning considerations. Relevant material considerations are set out below, with the key areas highlighted:

PPG13 Planning Policy Guidance for Transportation seeks to integrate planning and transport.

3 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Retrospective planning permission is sought for the additional 84 car parking spaces already provided on site, to be used in association with the Garden Centre development. This is an approximate 20% increase to the car parking compared to the 412 spaces that were originally approved. The area of land of the additional car parking was originally approved as a picnic area for visitors to the site under planning reference 07/00011/OUT.

4 DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site is located on the north east edge of the City. The site is positioned within the urban area boundary of the city, with its northern boundary marking the settlement edge.

The site is to the north of the Eye/Peterborough Road and A47 Paston Parkway roundabout. The site was previously used as a sports ground by the Parkway Sports and Social Club.

The site covers an area of 5.94ha and contains the Garden Centre development and associated car parking, which recently opened on 5th February 2010.

The northern boundary is edged by an existing drainage dyke. To the north and west of the site are the Dogsthorpe Landfill site and a Household Waste Recycling Centre. Eye village lies to the north east. Trees and shrubs bound the site to its Paston Parkway frontage. Immediately to the east of the site is a petrol filling station containing a Somerfield convenience food store and a Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) restaurant. The site is separated from existing residential areas by Paston Parkway and Parnwell Way.

The site is accessed via a vehicular access road leading off Eye/Peterborough Road. A footpath along the southern boundary from the roundabout provides further access to the site.

5 PLANNING HISTORY

Application Number	Description	Date	Decision
05/01274/OUT	Erection of garden centre building (5777sqm), plant area (5110sqm), garden centre concessions buildings (5498sqm), cafe/kiosk (465sqm), car parking, service area, improvements to service road and access to Eye Road, entrance totem sign, footway/cycleway access, recycling collection area and landscaping	07.03.2006	Withdrawn
07/00011/OUT	Erection of garden centre comprising plant area (8915sqm), garden centre building with restaurant (8000sqm), cafe/kiosk (250sqm), car parking, landscaping, service area and recycling collection together with improvements to access road and access to Eye Road, new bus stops and associated footway/cycleway access	31.03.2008	Permitted
08/00989/REM	Reserved matters application for the appearance only of the garden centre development pursuant to outline planning application 07/00011/OUT, and alterations to the approved subdivision as per C6 of 07/00011/OUT	30.09.2008	Permitted
08/01586/REM	Reserved matters application for the landscaping only of the garden centre development pursuant to outline planning application 07/00011/OUT	26.06.2009	Permitted
08/00925/WCPP	Amendment to condition C6 of planning permission 07/00011/OUT to allow the insertion of a mezzanine floor totalling 270sqm.	18.11.2008	Permitted
08/01297/FUL	Canopy over external sales and display area for garden centre	16.01.2009	Permitted
09/00062/WCPP	Variation of Condition 5 of Planning Permission Ref: 07/00011/OUT amending the range of goods and services permitted on site	05.06.2009	Permitted
09/00314/ADV	Non-illuminated traffic direction sign and illuminated entrance, tenant's directory and 6 no. banner advertisements	04.06.2009	Permitted
09/00444/ADV	Internally illuminated fascia sign	19.06.2009	Permitted
09/00673/FUL	Internal subdivision of 2 garden centre cafe units and management store into 2 garden centre retail units and management store with associated minor external alterations	22.09.2009	Permitted
09/00836/WCPP	Variation of condition 5 of planning permission 07/00011/OUT (restriction on unit sizes) in connection with construction of garden centre comprising plant area (8915sqm), garden centre building with restaurant (8000sqm), cafe/kiosk (250sqm), car parking, landscaping, service area and recycling collection together with improvements to access road and access to Eye Road, new bus stops and associated footway/cycleway access	01.10.2009	Permitted
09/01073/FUL	Side extension to cafe to form ground floor toilets and staircase and internal mezzanine sitting area	17.11.2009	Permitted

6 CONSULTATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS

INTERNAL

Head of Transport and Engineering – No objection. A transport assessment and travel plan supported the original planning application, to determine the car parking provision on site and encourage the use of alternative modes of transport other than private car. The bus stops and pedestrian cycle crossing points associated with the original permission have not as yet been implemented, as they have been incorporated into the Junction 8 Improvements scheme (due to start in April), to prevent abortive works. Until these works are completed, the majority of the trips to the site will be by private vehicle. Therefore the additional car parking is considered to be acceptable subject to the Travel Plan originally submitted being fully implemented.

EXTERNAL

Police Architectural Liaison Officer – No objection.

Eye Parish Council - Clarification is required on whether this application is retrospective or not. The Parish are of the opinion that applicants should make their application for permission before work commences. The traffic management at the site needs investigation as the impact on residents leaving and entering the village is tremendous. Eye Parish expressed these traffic concerns at the initial planning stage and unfortunately the traffic problems anticipated have proved to be correct.

NEIGHBOURS

None received.

COUNCILLORS

Cllr Sanders – Concerned about the impact of this development on traffic management and traffic flow, in view of the severe traffic mis-management on site, highlighted in the press. Clarification is required on whether this application is retrospective or not.

7 REASONING

a) Introduction

Planning permission was granted for the 'erection of garden centre comprising plant area (8915sqm), garden centre building with restaurant (8000sqm), cafe/kiosk (250sqm), car parking, landscaping, service area and recycling collection together with improvements to access road and access to Eye Road, new bus stops and associated footway/cycleway access' in March 2008. A total of 412 car parking spaces were approved on site, 362 standard spaces, 25 disabled, 25 parent and child (12 of the total spaces were for staff).

The applicant has carried out the development for two reasons. Firstly, to provide additional car parking to cater for customer vehicles at busy periods, including the weekend. Secondly, because of the concerns that the originally proposed picnic area would attract birds due to the availability of food, and this could cause potential nuisance and damage to the site, customers and their vehicles.

b) The need for additional customer parking

The supporting additional parking provision assessment, states that as products sold at garden centres are often large, heavy and/or delicate in nature, most customers choose to visit garden centres by car. It states that the duration of customer visits to garden centres are typically longer than at other non-food retail destinations, and as a result, the level of parking demand can be higher. Due to both these factors, the additional car parking subject of this application has been identified as being required to cater for customer vehicles at busy periods of operation, particularly at weekends. As the applicant anticipated that the opening weekend of the development would generate unusually high volumes of traffic, this car parking was provided on site before the opening of the development and before planning permission was sought. Hence the retrospective nature of this application.

The original Transport Assessment proposed car parking in line with maximum standards for non-food retail, as there are no specific Peterborough City Council standards for garden centres.

A travel plan was also secured to encourage people to use alternative modes other than the private car. It is accepted the travel plan measures, due to the site location and nature of customers purchasing bulky garden centre products, will be more appropriate for staff rather than customers. The implementation of the bus stops and pedestrian/cycle crossing points secured by the original planning consent to encourage less reliance on the private car, have been delayed due to the larger Junction 8 Highway scheme improvement works. These works will now be part of the Junction 8 works which are intended to start in April, to prevent them having been installed and then removed shortly afterwards, to allow for the implementation of Junction 8 works. Given this, it is likely that until the Junction 8 works are complete, the majority of the trips to the site will be by private cars. Therefore the case for additional car parking can be seen as acceptable in principle. It is not considered appropriate to review the provision of the additional car parking spaces following the provision of the bus stop and crossing points because of the nature of the goods sold at the site.

In terms of the picnic area, there was never a planning requirement for this to be provided. The amenity value of this picnic site for customers of the site would be limited due to its proximity to the landfill site, the potential nuisance from birds, and due to its positioning surrounded by car parking and access roads. Therefore the loss of the picnic area on site is considered to be acceptable.

c) **Impact on the traffic network**

The level of traffic generation associated with the Garden Centre development was established through a submitted Transport Assessment submitted at the time planning consent was originally granted. As this planning application is for additional car parking spaces only, and does not involve any additional increase in sales floorspace, this specific proposal would not in itself generate any additional traffic to the site. It would however accommodate those vehicles already choosing to visit the site and already on the highway network, which at busy periods may have to be turned away due to lack of car parking spaces. It is therefore concluded, because the proposal does not generate any additional traffic to the site, that there could be no justification that this proposal would cause any additional harmful impact to the transportation network. On this basis the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy T1.

The problems with traffic flow and management, of cars entering and leaving the Garden Centre over their opening weekend, was as a result of the traffic signals not being properly installed and tested by the developer's engineers. If the software controlling the timing of the traffic signals had been properly set up, there would not have been the bottle neck of cars both inside and outside the site. It is understood that these technical problems have now been resolved and that the traffic flow and management is now operating effectively.

It should be noted that until the Junction 8 Highway works are completed, there will be traffic flow disruption in the vicinity of the site, but this will be short term disruption, to allow the long term increased traffic capacity of the area.

8 CONCLUSIONS

The proposal is acceptable having been assessed in the light of all material considerations, including weighting against relevant policies of the development plan and specifically:

The additional 20% increase in car parking on site is considered to be acceptable, and would assist in providing for the demand in customer parking, particularly at busy periods. The Travel Plan already approved should be fully implemented to help encourage the use of sustainable travel modes, where possible. As the proposal does not create additional retail floorspace therefore it would not in itself generate any additional traffic, as so could not be deemed harmful impact to the transportation network. The proposal is therefore acceptable in accordance with policies T1 and T10 of the Local Plan.

9 RECOMMENDATION

The Head of Planning Services recommends that this application is **APPROVED** unconditionally, having been assessed in the light of all material considerations, including weighing against relevant policies of the development plan.

Copy to Councillors Sanders, Dobbs, Ash, Miners, Saltmarsh