
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 November 2020

by R. Jones BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/W/20/3248437

**Moleside Service Station, 3-5 Esher Road, Hersham, Walton-on-Thames.
Surrey KT12 4JZ**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Photo-Me International Plc against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2019/3400, dated 22 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as "retrospective application for modular self-service laundrette facility."
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a modular self-service laundrette facility at Moleside Service Station, 3-5 Esher Road, Hersham, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 4JZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2019/3400, dated 22 November 2019, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following condition:
 - 1) The applicant shall carry out a noise impact assessment carried out by a qualified acoustic consultant who is a member of the Institute of Acoustics in accordance with BS 4142:2014 + A1:2019. Within 30 days of this decision, the results of this assessment shall be submitted in writing to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority detailing any measures to control noise from the operation of the washing/drying units. Any installed noise mitigation measures shall be carried out and retained thereafter.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the banner heading above has been taken from the Council's decision notice and appeal form as it provides a more concise, accurate description than the planning application form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a petrol filling station (PFS) located off a busy roundabout on the A244 Esher Road. The modular self-service laundrette facility (the laundrette facility) has been located on part of the forecourt adjoining the flank elevation of the shop close to the PFS vehicular exit. In addition to the PFS pumps, canopy and signage, there is a car valeting centre at the rear of the site. I saw from my site visit that the laundrette facility is viewed in the immediate context of these commercial uses and I did not find it an alien feature. The laundrette facility comprises three washing and drying drums finished in silver grey surrounded by a partly clad, partly glazed canopy. Although an 'off the shelf' facility not designed specifically for the appeal site, the materials nonetheless reflect those of the PFS and the Volkswagen car dealership opposite helping it integrate with its surroundings.
5. The laundrette facility would project forward of the PFS building by around 2.3m, but its height is below the feature grey cladding surround of the PFS façade and it therefore appears of an appropriate scale that is not unduly prominent. I noted that the laundrette facility is visible in the street scene, but because of its roadside location, set back behind the PFS forecourt and exit lane, it does not appear incongruous and assimilates well with the prevailing commercial character of the area.
6. As a consequence, the laundrette facility does not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. There is therefore no conflict with Policy CS5 or CS17 of the Elmbridge Core Strategy (2011) or Policy DM2 of the Elmbridge Local Plan Development Management Plan (2015) because it is well designed, integrates with, and reflects the local character. There would also be no conflict with the general design guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conditions

7. The Council has suggested a condition specifying the approved plans. However, as the development is complete, I do not consider the condition or a standard condition limiting the lifespan of the planning permission is necessary. Because of the location of the laundrette facility close to the flat above the adjacent café and the potential hours of use, a condition requiring submission of a noise assessment is required in the interests of the living conditions of neighbours.

Conclusions

8. For the reasons given above, and taking all other matters in account, the appeal should be allowed.

R. Jones

INSPECTOR