PLANNING AND
BUILDING CONTROL
20 JUN 2012

FORMER HAND CAR WASH, 635 ASHTON NEW ROAD, MANCHESTER M11 4RX
CHANGE OF USE TO A2 (FINANCIAL SERVICES).
DESIGN/ACCESS/PLANNING STATEMENT-PARKING PROVISION

Introduction

The proposed building is located at the currently vacant SITE 635 Ashton New Road Clayton Manchester,. The proposal is for a Change of Use from the existing hand car wash unit, to the new A2 (Financial Services) use class. The unit has been vacant for some time. The building is a single storey structure with associated car parking, which is accessed from Ashton New Road is one of the main arterial routes into Manchester Town Centre

Use

The proposal is for a Change of Use from the existing hand car wash unit to a new A2 (Financial Services) use class and signage application with associated works. The proposed use is a financial loan company, where clients drive their cars to the building and are provided with a loan based on the value of their car.

Amount and Location

The site is approximately 0.12 hectares in total and is located on Ashton NEW RD, Clayton, Manchester. The site has a large car park area and vehicular access from the main road. To the North of the site are some residential properties. To the west is a residential property, a dental surgery, a post office and a Conservative Club, To the East is a Taxi Rank, and retails units

To the South is vacant land. The site is located in a prominent position on this main road into Manchester Town Centre.

Layout and Design

The existing building is single storey brick and flat roof, previously used as a car wash. The existing buildings will stay and no additions are required The entrance and car parking is clearly visible from the main road and is located at the front of the unit.

Design

The proposed design is to retain the existing footprint and form and generally update its appearance with new glazing where required. Our aim is to retain the existing car parking and customer entrance as per the previous use, and refurbish the interior to provide a suitable layout for the use and processes of a financial services unit. New signage will be installed on the Ashton New Rd, replacing the existing Carwash signage with new wording and lettering.

In summary, the proposal will retain the existing building and not alter it appearance and will include some internal refurbishment. The main pedestrian entrance will be from the car park and the vehicular access will remain unaltered. The car parking will also remain unaltered. The vehicles can all turn within the large parking area as part of the site. This location is ideal for this type of business use as car parking is available on site; the business relies on cars being driven to the site and therefore this use is not suited to a city centre site.

Landscaping

The car parking remains, landscaping here there are no proposals to provide additional landscaping.

Access/Highways/ Parking/Disabled Access

The main pedestrian access to the building is from Ashton New Road. The vehicular entrance will remain unaltered. We are proposing to retain the existing public entrance into the building. The entrance door currently has a level threshold and complies with Part M of the Approved Document and planning guidelines. The rear staff entrance will also have a level threshold. With regards to highways issues, we feel there will not be any increase in traffic and parking issues for this proposal. There will be a disabled WC facility on site for both customer and staff use.

The existing use had 10 car parking spaces including 1 disabled space. We are proposing to maintain this number of spaces, which complies with the Parking Standards. We have additional space for a cycle parking, should this be a planning requirement. Our existing car parking spaces are 2.4m wide and 4.8m long and the disabled space can be 3.6m wide and 6.0m long.

Noise/ Flood Risk Assessment
There should be no more noise emitting from the proposed use than there was with the existing car wash facility. The site is not in a flood risk area.
Heritage and Archaeological/ Contamination
We believe there are no heritage issues and the site is not within an area of archaeological significance. We confirm the proposed site is not affected by known contamination.
Sustainability
The proposal is very sustainable as we are using an existing building and car parking. The site is very accessible via local public transport on a main road into the town centre. The building will be run in a sustainable manner, with fitted blinds where necessary to reduce solar gain. We are also proposing an energy efficient lighting and boiler system.
Planning Policy
The above application complies with Planning Policy R6 and R7 and relates to E3. With regards to R6, our proposal is best suited away from the city centre because the business relies on its clients owning a car. Loans will be provided based on the value of the vehicle. As city centres are trying to promote having less cars in the city centre, this use would not be best served in the city centre and therefore it will reduce the number of cars in the city if located here. The use would not affect the vitality and viability of the city centre. The site is well serviced by public transport and is very sustainable.
With regards to Policy R7, the proposal meets all the criteria, with regards to its scale, integrating with existing uses, not detrimental to the character of its surroundings, contributes to the surroundings by bringing a use to an empty building, and makes provisions for disabled, elderly and so on.
With regards to Policy E3, the development meets the criteria with regards to integrating with the existing pattern of development, not having a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and so on.

Business Concept

General: Due to planning authorities criteria, it is not always considered appropriate for A2 planning to be granted on sites outside of the centre of a town particularly when there are vacant units available. Due to the nature of how our business lends money it is rare to find town centre units with appropriate onsite parking/facilities and often therefore we seek to find units positioned outside of town centres. Due to the financial nature of the business we feel that it is appropriate to make the specific change of use applications under the A2 banding however in some cases planning authorities understanding the need for our very specific site criteria, have felt it more appropriate to grant us Sui Generis planning for our specific business of loaning money against vehicles. This has ensured that when the lease expires on the property, the site is not automatically suitable for other A2 uses and also means that precedents are not set for future planning policy that A2 will be allowed outside of town centres without the need to search for suitable units in the more appropriate/preferred areas. Operation: The business lends money to clients who use their vehicles as security. The client needs to be able to park at the branch for a period of an hour as a minimum whilst our trained store manager completes a full inspection of the vehicle. To be able to do this properly the manager needs to have sufficient space to assess the vehicle and as a result on street or car park parking is not suitable. This is one of the main reasons that we have chosen this site having searched throughout North East Manchester for other suitable locations that don't have these facilities. Security: As a result of the nature of the business, money is held on site and security for staff and for insurance purposes is paramount. Managers who inspect the vehicles must leave the premises with the client and carry out a detailed inspection outside of the store. The managers are equipped with remote panic alarms that can trigger the main alarm and police response but for this to work effectively and for insurance not to be invalidated the store manager must be in very close proximity to the store. This makes it unsuitable to use parking facilities other than those linked directly to the store. Business model: We have looked at business models where clients vehicles could be inspected off site but

as a business we are regulated by the Office of Fair Trading who provide us with a Consumer Credit Licence. The OFT regulate how this type of business is conducted and the guidelines to responsible lending make it clear that business should be conducted in a business environment, at a business premises and that providing loans to people in a non formal environment (for example someone's home) is not considered acceptable.

Conclusion

Our proposal is for a simple change of use. The building will be retained as existing and will include some new signage to the road and car park elevations. The pedestrian and vehicular access around the site will remain the same and the main entrance to the building will be reused from the previous use. Our proposal will bring into use a building that has been vacant for some time and will up lift the area at this busy location.

The use will provide employment, be sustainable, is in a sustainable location, is best suited to be out of the city centre and complies with relevant planning policy