

PLANNING COMMITTEE 30 JANUARY 2014

Present :- Councillor Theresa Higgins (Chairman)
Councillors Peter Chillingworth*, Sonia Lewis*,
Cyril Liddy*, Jackie Maclean, Philip Oxford and
Laura Sykes*

Substitute Members :- Councillor Peter Higgins for Councillor Helen Chuah
Councillor Michael Lilley for Councillor Stephen Ford

(* Committee members who attended the formal site visit.)

108. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 January 2014 were confirmed as a correct record.

109. 132184 Co-operative Superstore, 118 Abbots Road, Colchester

The Committee considered an application to vary condition 14 of planning permission 97/0648 to allow the Co-operative Superstore, 118 Abbots Road to trade between 7:00am – 11:00pm Monday to Saturday, 7:00am – 11:00pm Sundays and 7:00am – 9:00pm Bank Holidays. The Committee had before it a report in which all the information was set out.

Ms Sue Jackson, Principal Planning Officer, presented the report and assisted the Committee in its deliberations. She explained that the applicant had submitted a late amendment to the application, proposing that the Sunday opening hours remain as 10.00 am - 4.00 pm as in the existing permission

Stuart Willsher, East of England Co-Operative Society, addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Planning Committee Procedure Rule 8 in support of the application. Since the supermarket had opened in 1997 it had become a valued and successful local supermarket. It was looking to extend its opening hours in order to continue to provide a high level of service to its local customers and in order to compete with other local stores, which had longer opening hours. For example, the Tesco's store on Magdalen Street had opening hours of 7.00am-midnight daily. He confirmed that the application had been amended to keep Sunday opening hours as 10.00am – 4.00 pm and that the applicants were happy to accept a temporary permission. Environmental Control had no objections. The issues about anti-social behaviour in the car park raised by objectors were no longer an issue as the applicant had taken appropriate action to resolve them.

Councillor Blandon attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. Local residents had concerns about the extended opening hours. When permission was originally granted, the store had permission to open until 10.00 pm. However, as a consequence of anti-social behaviour in the car park, the Co-op had

agreed to an earlier closing time of 9.00pm. Local residents were concerned that extended opening hours could lead to a recurrence of these problems. The site also had an entrance from Dorchester End and residents of Dorchester End were concerned that their amenity would be disturbed by customers travelling to and from the store in the evening. She asked the Committee to consider amending the hours of operation so that the store would close at 10.00pm on weekdays and Saturdays and so that Bank Holiday hours matched the hours now proposed for Sundays.

Whilst the Committee appreciated the concerns expressed on behalf of residents, it also recognised the desire of the applicant to extend its opening hours so they were in line with similar stores in the area. The Committee also felt that extended opening hours would help accommodate different shopping habits and requirements among local residents. The Committee considered that a temporary permission as proposed would help balance residential amenity and customer need. In addition the Co-Operative Society had proved itself to be responsible in its approach and in its relationships with residents. The Committee was confident that it would act to deal appropriately with any issues impacting on residential amenity that may arise.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that the application be approved, subject to the conditions and informatives set out in the report with condition 1 being amended to read as follows:-

1 - Non-Standard Condition/Reason

Retail sales shall not be carried out at any time outside of the hours of

7:00am - 11:00pm Monday to Saturday,

10:00am - 4:00pm Sundays, and

7:00am - 9:00pm Bank Holidays.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to the scope of this permission and in the interests of proper planning.

110. 132801 & 132802 Town Hall, High Street, Colchester

The Committee considered applications for alterations to the lower ground floor of the Town Hall, High Street to relocate the Colchester Borough Council CCTV monitoring centre. The application also included the relocation of the emergency generator into the external courtyard at the basement floor and the installation of a new exhaust flue from the generator and the air con duct. The Committee had before it a report in which all the information was set out.

The Committee made a site visit in order to assess the impact of the proposal upon the building and the suitability of the proposal for the site.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that:

(a) in respect of application 132801, the application be approved, subject to the conditions and informatives set out in the report.

(b) in respect of application 132802, that subject to confirmation from the Secretary of State that Colchester Borough Council can determine the application, the Head of Commercial Services be authorised to issue a delegated permission subject to the conditions set out in the report.