

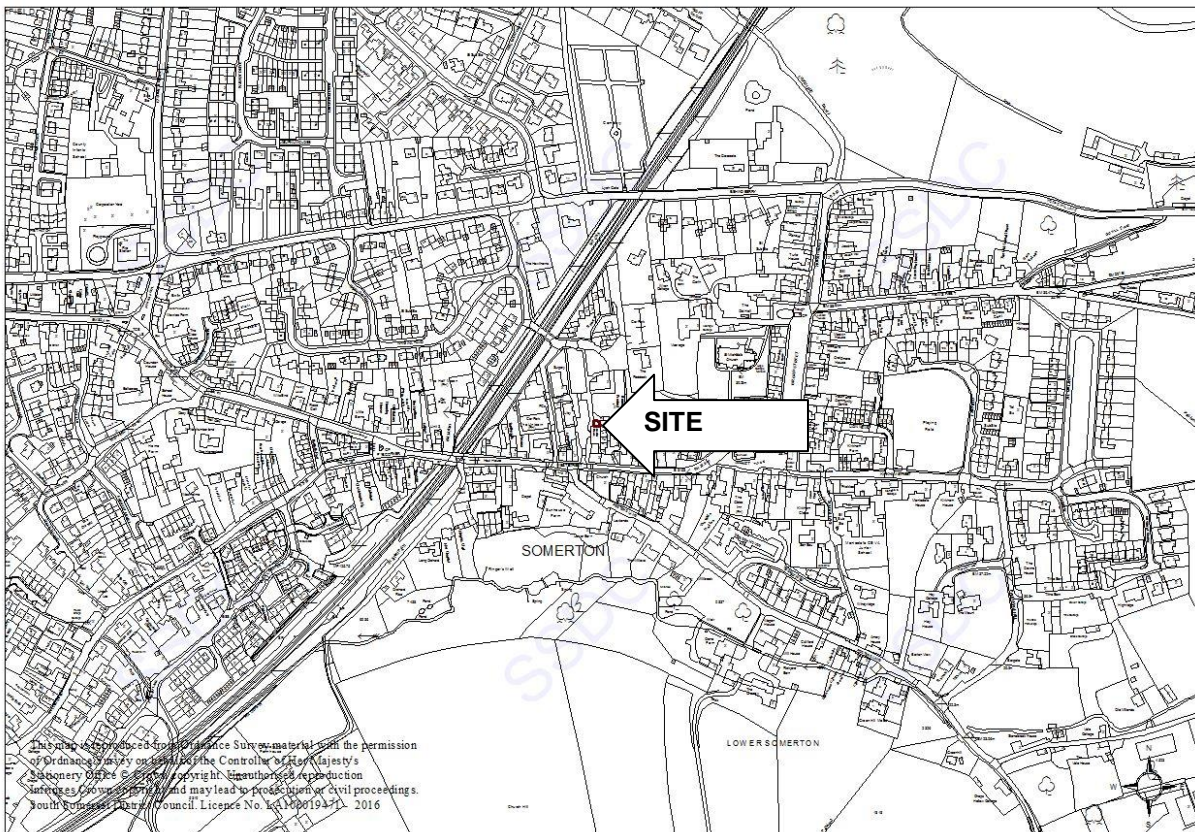
Officer Report On Planning Application: 16/00933/FUL

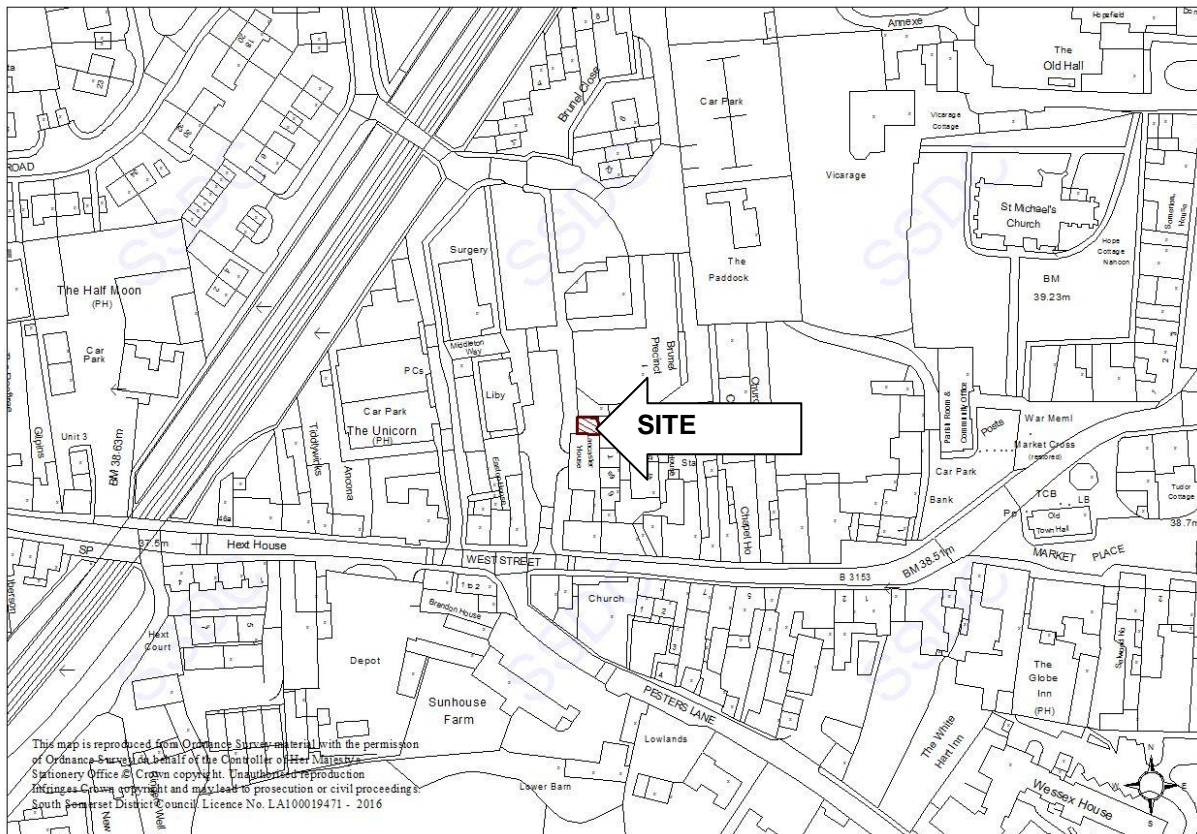
Proposal :	Erection of a new retail unit (Revised Scheme)
Site Address:	Brunel Shopping Precinct, West Street, Somerton.
Parish:	Somerton
WESSEX Ward (SSDC Members)	Cllr Stephen Page Cllr Dean Ruddle
Recommending Case Officer:	Nicholas Head Tel: (01935) 462167 Email: nick.head@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date :	27th April 2016
Applicant :	The Ruddle Group Ltd
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Joanna Fryer Home Orchard, Littleton, Somerton TA11 6NR
Application Type :	Minor Retail less than 1,000 sq.m or 1ha

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The application is referred to Committee as a Ward Member is a director of the applicant company.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL





The site is located centrally within the town centre of Somerton, adjoining the Brunel Shopping Centre on its western side. It falls within the Conservation Area and the Primary Shopping area. The site currently is an open paved area, partially covered by a steel staircase leading up to the access to the flats above the supermarket. Immediately south of the site, separated by a raised stone planter, as a car private car park. The portion of the building immediately to the east of the site contains a ground floor shop with first floor (loft) storage space.

In a previous application, permission was granted for the erection of a 25 sq m shop, and new external staircase to replace the access stairs to the upper storey flats. A reassessment of relevant building regulations has led to an amended design of the proposal, removing the external staircase. A revised permission is now sought for a slightly enlarged shop (31 sq m).

HISTORY

15/05004/FUL - Erection of a new retail unit (between Williams supermarket and Lancaster House) - permitted with conditions

POLICY

The South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028) was adopted on the 5th March 2015. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the adopted local plan now forms part of the development plan. As such, decisions on the award of planning permission should be made in accordance with this development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Legislation and national policy are clear that the starting point for decision-making is the development plan, where development that accords

with an up-to-date local plan should be approved, and proposed development that conflicts should be refused, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policies of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028)

SD1 Sustainable Development
SS1 Settlement Strategy
EP9 Retail Hierarchy
EP11 Location of Main Town Centre Uses (The Sequential Approach)
EP12 Floorspace Threshold for Impact Assessments
TA5 Transport Impact of New Development
TA6 Parking Standards
EQ2 General Development
EQ3 Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012):

1. Building a strong, competitive economy
2. Ensuring the vitality of town centres
3. Supporting a prosperous rural economy
4. Promoting sustainable transport
7. Requiring good design
8. Promoting healthy communities
12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

National Planning Practice Guidance - Department of Communities and Local Government, 2014.

Policy-related Material Considerations

Somerset County Council Parking Strategy, March 2012 and September 2013.
Somerset County Council Highways Standing Advice, June 2013.

South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy (2008-2026)

CONSULTATIONS

Somerton Town Council: The application is supported.

Highways Authority: Standing Advice Applies.

SSDC Highways Consultant: *No significant highways issues for such a small-scale retail unit. Proposal unlikely to generate a need for significant additional car parking, and any parking requirements are likely to be met by the existing town centre public car parking provision.*

SSDC Conservation Officer: No objection.

SSDC Environmental Protection Officer: (Previous application): No observations.

SSDC Economic Development Officer: (Previous application): No comment received.

County Archaeologist: No objections.

Natural England: (Previous application): No comments.

Police Liaison: *Bollards with the intention of preventing vehicle access should be placed no more than 1.2m apart. I would ask that additional bollard/s are placed between the existing to comply with this standard*

REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Development

Policy EP11 of the Local Plan seeks to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre. The site falls within the defined town centre, and the defined Primary Shopping Area, and is therefore an appropriate place for additional retail floorspace, subject to compliance with other policies and material considerations.

Proposals in such localities are required to be of a scale appropriate to the size and function of the town centre and suitable to help to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the centre. Parking should be considered in the context of the town centre.

The principle of small-scale new retail floorspace is accepted.

Visual Impact

The context of the new extension is the existing shopping centre, which is a modern stone building with tiled roof. The proposal would create a contrasting, flat-roof cube of an extension, over the current paved pedestrian area. The elevations to north and east are glazed, the southern elevation, broken by the new staircase up to the flat entrance, is to be finished in natural timber applied in vertical strips.

The proposal is set against buildings of no particular design distinction, even using faux pitched-roof sections over part of the supermarket section. The applicant remarks that it is the intention to create a more 'honest' distinctive modern addition to the existing complex, and it is accepted that, subject to appropriate finishes and materials, this approach does make a positive contribution to the setting, representing something new which nevertheless blends with the existing.

The proposal would replace the existing metal staircase arrangement, which wastes the space beneath it, and contributes poorly to the appearance of the complex as a whole. The revised design, including a window on the south elevation and removing the staircase, is considered to represent a further improvement on the already approved scheme.

The proposal is considered to be visually acceptable, enhancing the general setting and the conservation area.

Listed Buildings

There are listed buildings along West Street. However, these front the street and are partially screened from the site by other structures. It is not considered that their setting would not be

negatively affected by this proposal.

Impact on Residential Amenity

The building does not directly relate in any way to the existing nearby flats. It is not considered that there is any amenity harm represented by the proposal.

Parking

The proposal would increase the existing floorspace in the centre by 31 sq m. In the context of the existing shopping centre, and the town centre as a whole, this is an insignificant change. It is not considered that it could be regarded as changing shopping or movement patterns within the town centre, or dramatically increase parking demand, as any retail activity in the shop would be against the background of a complex existing pattern of shopping throughout the town centre. The Somerset Parking Strategy suggests a ratio of 1 parking bay per 20 sq m for food retail uses. However, there is no obligatory minimum stipulated. Under the circumstances, it is considered that there is adequate parking available within the town centre as a whole, and particularly within the immediate vicinity of the shopping centre. Given that the use of the premises would be part of larger shopping trips in the town centre, it is not considered that the lack of one additional parking bay would indicate a refusal of the application.

Highway Safety

The proposed shop would exist, as stated above, in the context of a large, vibrant existing shopping complex. It is not considered that the additional 31 sq m would in any way affect the existing traffic flows, or harm the safety of the various access points to the parking areas from the public highway.

Comments of Police Liaison Officer

It is not considered that the addition of this extra shop area affects the current arrangement of pedestrian routes and relationship to parking that would justify requiring changes to the overall operation of the shopping precinct. An informative note to the applicant is proposed for inclusion in the decision notice.

EIA Regulations

Not relevant.

Conclusion

The proposal seeks to make use of under-utilised space within the existing shopping precinct to create an additional 31 sq m of retail floorspace. Such development would enhance the vitality of the shopping centre and the town centre generally. No amenity or highway safety harm has been identified. The design is considered acceptable in the context of the conservation area and the general setting. The proposal is recommended for approval.

S.106 AGREEMENT

Not relevant.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant permission.

FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

01. The proposal, by reason of its scale, design and materials, respects the character and appearance of the setting, and causes no demonstrable harm to residential amenity. The addition of this small single unit of retail accommodation would enhance the vitality of the existing shopping centre and the town centre, and cause no harm to highway safety. In these respects, the proposal accords with the aims of the NPPF and Policies SD1, EQ2, EQ3, TA5 and TA6 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

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

Reason: To accord with the provisions of section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: the drawings ref. DRSO-GA numbers 001, 201B and 202B.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

03. No development hereby permitted shall be commenced unless particulars of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

- a) details of the materials (including the provision of samples where appropriate) to be used for external walls, including design details of timber cladding;
- b) full design details and material and external finish to be used for all windows and external doors;
- c) details (including dimensions and materials) of the sign boards shown on the submitted elevation drawing ref. DRSO-GA202B;
- d) details of rainwater goods.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area and to accord with the NPPF and Policies EQ2 and EQ3 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

04. The subject land including any building thereon shall be used for retail (A1) use and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in any use class of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason: To safeguard the vitality of the shopping area and the character of the setting, in accordance with the aims of the NPPF and Policies SD1, EQ2 and EQ3 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

Informatives:

01. The applicant's attention is drawn to the comments and recommendations of the Police Liaison Officer in his letter dated 15 march 2016, which can be seen on the application file on the Council's website.
 02. The applicant's attention is drawn to the possible need to apply for separate advertisement consent for the signage attached to the proposed building. Details to be submitted prior to commencement will enable final checking as to whether these signs would have deemed consent, or need consent under the The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.
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