

3/09/0868/FP - Alterations to front façade of multi-storey car park involving the removal of a solid timber panel to be replaced by an 'open' metal screen at the north east elevation, at the multi-storey car park, Jackson Square, Bishop's Stortford for East Herts Council.

Date of Receipt: 11.06.2009

Type: Full

Parish: BISHOP'S STORTFORD

Ward: BISHOP'S STORTFORD - MEADS

Reason for report: Major application

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions-

1. Three year time limit (1T121)
2. Carried out in accordance (2E92)

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (East of England Plan May 2008, Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular policies ENV1 and BH5. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies is that permission should be granted.

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract.
- 1.2 The application site forms part of the existing Jackson Square multi storey car park. The car park occupies the ground and first floor levels of the building, with a number of retail units at second floor level.
- 1.3 The proposal involves altering part of the existing frontage of Jackson Square multi storey car park, by removing part of the existing timber cladding to the right of the existing vehicle entrance and replacing it with open metal screening at ground floor level. The applicant has outlined that the proposed development is to improve the visibility for pedestrians who are entering and exiting the car park.

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2.0 Site History

- 2.1 The Jackson Square Shopping Centre and associated multi storey car park was granted permission by the Development Control Committee under LPA references 3/02/0962/OP and 3/04/1435/RP.
- 2.2 Most recently, planning permission was granted by the Development Control Committee for alterations to the multi storey car park to provide additional vehicular and pedestrian exits in the west elevation under LPA reference 3/08/1662/FP.

3.0 Consultation Responses

- 3.1 County Highways do not wish to restrict the grant of permission and comment that the scheme is acceptable in a highway context. Highways also comment that inserting a door for pedestrians to use instead of the proposed open screen is an alternative solution.

4.0 Town Council Representations

- 4.1 Bishop's Stortford Town Council was consulted on the application and has no objections.

5.0 Other Representations

- 5.1 The application has been advertised by way of press notice and site notice. No letters of representation have been received.

6.0 Policy

- 6.1 The relevant policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review (April 2007) are:

ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
BH5	Extensions and Alterations to unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas

7.0 Considerations

- 7.1 In determining this application it is necessary to consider the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the building and the Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area, the surrounding street scene and the impact on the flow of traffic and pedestrians using the multi storey car park.

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- 7.2 It is noted that the proposal would not increase or alter the footprint of the existing multi storey car park. The proposed open metal screen that would replace the existing timber cladding would be 4.2metres wide and 2.1metres in height. The new façade consists of open metal screening, which would match existing metal screening at the front of the multi storey car park.
- 7.3 It is considered that the new open metal screening in terms of design and materials of construction is acceptable and would not have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the multi storey car park, the street scene or the Bishop's Stortford Conservation Area.
- 7.4 It is Officers opinion that the metal screening would improve safety for pedestrians entering and exiting the multi storey car park and would not impact upon vehicles entering the car park or the flow of traffic in the surrounding area. The consultation response from County Highways reiterates this.
- 7.5 It is also noted that County Highways offer an alternative solution to the proposal and suggest that a door for pedestrians is inserted in the front of the multi storey car park, rather than installing the open metal screening. However, this would result in the loss of a car parking space which may not be viewed favourably.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 In conclusion, the proposed alteration to the front of the multi storey car park would not significantly affect the external appearance of the building or impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is considered that the proposed new open metal screen would improve safety for pedestrians entering and exiting the car park. Accordingly, it is recommended that the application be approved subject to the conditions set out at the commencement of this report.