

Planning Committee

26 May 2021



Application No.	21/00442/FUL		
Site Address	West Wing, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 1XB		
Applicant	Spelthorne Borough Council		
Proposal	Minor changes to public realm outside West Wing, including replacement of vehicle barrier and bollards, and installation of new post box.		
Ward	Staines		
Called-in	This proposal is being referred to the Planning Committee because the applicant is Spelthorne Borough Council.		
Officer	Matthew Clapham		
Application Dates	Valid: 17/03/2021	Expiry: 12/05/2021	Target: Extension of time agreed.
Executive Summary	<p>The site is located in Staines-upon-Thames and comprises a part three storey and part four storey purpose built office block used as Spelthorne Council Offices. The West Wing was constructed in the 1980s and is an extension to the original building. The site is located approximately 350m from Staines train station.</p> <p>Approval has been granted under Class O of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) 2015 to convert the West Wing to 25 residential flats without the need obtain planning permission (Ref. 18/01267/PDO) and work to enable the conversion is nearing completion.</p> <p>The proposed alterations include the installation of a stand-alone post box for the flats, the installation of bollards and a new vehicle recognition system barrier and alterations to the parking layout.</p>		
Recommended Decision	This application is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.		

MAIN REPORT

1. Development Plan

1.1 The following policy in the Council's Core Strategy and Policies DPD 2009 is considered relevant to this proposal:

- EN1 (Design of New Development)

Also relevant is the Supplementary Planning Document on the Design of Residential Extension and New Residential Development 2011.

Guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) is also relevant.

2. Relevant Planning History

18/01257/PDO	Prior Approval for the change of use from office (Use Class B1 a) to residential comprising 25 flats	Approved 17.13.2018
PLAN/W/DE4 82/589	Erection of a four storey office extension	Grant Conditional 20.10.1982

3. Description of Current Proposal

- 3.1 The application site is the West Wing which is attached to the existing Spelthorne Borough Council Office Building. It is located in Knowle Green, close to the Magistrates and Crown Courts, the Spelthorne Leisure Centre, Staines Preparatory School and a doctors' surgery. The land is owned by the Council and is designated as Protected Open Urban Space.
- 3.2 The application is seeking to install a stand-alone post box for the flats, the installation of bollards and a new vehicle recognition system barrier and alterations to the parking layout. These proposals are part of the residential development for 25 flats which was approved as a prior approval determination under 18/01267/PDO.
- 3.3 For clarity, the matters under consideration for this application are the new post boxes, the new entrance barrier and the new stainless steel bollards. The entrance barrier has already been installed as have 10 of the bollards. As such, these matters are retrospective. The remaining 5 proposed bollards, located alongside the entrance barrier are proposed.
- 3.4 A number of elements of the scheme as shown on the site layout plan are permitted development, including the relocation of the bench, the 'making good' and repainting of the existing railings on the disabled access ramp and the improvement and repair to the hardstanding and laying down of turf and the white lining.

- 3.5 The underground refuse stores and cycle storage area shown on the plans were approved as part of the Prior Approval application. The Electric Charging points may be carried out under Permitted Development.
- 3.6 A Copy of the site layout and elevation of the post boxes are attached as Appendices.

4. Consultations

The following table shows the consultees and their responses.

Consultee	Comment
Environmental Health (contamination)	No objections.

5. Public Consultation

- 5.1 To date no representations have been received

6. Planning Issues

- Design and appearance
- Impact on neighbouring properties

7. Planning Considerations

Design and Appearance

- 7.1 The design and appearance of the proposed alterations are acceptable. The post box measures 1.5m in height and 0.36 in depth, is of stainless steel in a silver / grey colour and will be located close to the entrance door. It comprises 27 post boxes, 9 in each column to service the 25 flats.
- 7.2 The new barrier replaces an existing barrier and is relocated further into the site to facilitate the provision of 25 separate parking spaces for the residents of the West Wing and to maintain an independent parking area from that of the allocated office parking for the Council Offices.
- 7.3 The proposed steel bollards provide safety and security measures to ensure vehicles do not access the pedestrian area.
- 7.4 As such, the proposals are considered to have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Impact on neighbouring properties

- 7.5 The small scale alterations to the public realm, would not adversely impact on surrounding properties.

Equalities Act 2010

- 7.6 This planning application has been considered in light of the Equality Act 2010 and associated Public Sector Equality Duty, where the Council is required to have due regard to:
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.7 The question in every case is whether the decision maker has in substance had due regard to the relevant statutory need, to see whether the duty has been performed. The Council's obligation is to have due regard to the need to achieve these goals in making its decisions.
- 7.8 The space between the two bollards at the front of the access path leading to the disabled access ramp has been widened to 1.2m which exceeds the required minimum of 0.75m.

Human Rights Act 1998

- 7.9 This planning application has been considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 7.10 Under Article 6 the applicants (and those third parties who have made representations) have the right to a fair hearing and to this end full consideration will be given to their comments.
- 7.11 Article 8 and Protocol 1 of the First Article confer a right to respect private and family life and a right to the protection of property, i.e. peaceful enjoyment of one's possessions which could include a person's home, and other land and business assets.
- 7.12 In taking account of the Council policy as set out in the Spelthorne Local Plan and the NPPF and all material planning considerations, Officers have concluded on balance that the rights conferred upon the applicant/ objectors/ residents/ other interested party by Article 8 and Article 1 of the First Protocol may be interfered with, since such interference is in accordance with the law and is justified in the public interest. Any restriction of these rights posed by the approval of the application is legitimate since it is proportionate to the wider benefits of such a decision, is based upon the merits of the proposal, and falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town & Country Planning Acts.

Local Finance Considerations

- 7.13 Under S155 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016, Local Planning Authorities are required to ensure that potential financial benefits of certain development proposals are made public when a Local Planning Authority is

considering whether or not to grant planning permission for planning applications which are being determined by the Council's Planning Committee. A financial benefit must be recorded regardless of whether it is material to the Local Planning Authority's decision on a planning application, but planning officers are required to indicate their opinion as to whether the benefit is material to the application or not. No CIL payments, financial contributions or Council Tax payments would be generated by this proposal.

Conclusions

- 7.14 The design and style of the proposed post box, barrier and bollards and the marking out of the parking area are acceptable to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. No adverse impacts would affect the amenity of neighbouring premises.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 GRANT subject to the following conditions: -

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

Reason:- This condition is required by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing no's SLB COM 2 127 FS 9H3W; 1320/PL/7000 rev C and Product Data Sheet Com 2 steel door and the Standard Ral Colour Finish Chart received 17.03.2021.

Reason:- For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning

3. The post box shall be finished in window grey as detailed in the submitted standard rail colour finish chart.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance

INFORMATIVES

1. Working in a positive/proactive manner

In assessing this application, officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner consistent with the requirements of the NPPF. This included the following:-

- a) Provided pre-application advice to seek to resolve problems before the application was submitted and to foster the delivery of sustainable development.
- b) Provided feedback through the validation process including information on the website, to correct identified problems to ensure that the application was correct and could be registered;

- c) Have suggested/accepted/negotiated amendments to the scheme to resolve identified problems with the proposal and to seek to foster sustainable development.
- d) Have proactively communicated with the applicant through the process to advise progress, timescales or recommendation.