

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P13/V0294/FUL</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION
<b>REGISTERED</b>	28 February 2013
<b>PARISH</b>	NORTH HINKSEY
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Eric Batts Debby Hallett
<b>APPLICANT</b>	BAPT LTD
<b>SITE</b>	Seacourt Tower Retail Park West Way Oxford (in the parish of North Hinksey) OX2 0JJ
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Part refurbishment and part redevelopment of existing retail park to allow for phased implementation including revised access, car parking, landscaping and removal of existing petrol station
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	None
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	448750/206439
<b>OFFICER</b>	Stuart Walker

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This application seeks planning permission to part refurbish and part redevelop the existing retail park. The proposal is an alternative scheme to one permitted in 2011, which proposed a total 13,522sqm of floor space within 11 units, the removal of the petrol station, and amendments to the car park and A420 access. This application retains the same amount of approved floor space, but now proposes to redevelop the site in phases due to lease complications with Homebase and provide a total of 10 units of varying size instead of the 11 units originally proposed.

1.2 The application comes to committee because North Hinksey Parish Council objects.

**2.0 PROPOSAL**

2.1 The site is located to the rear of the Seacourt Tower and Midland House office buildings. The site perimeter is largely defined by the A34 to the west and the A420 slip road to the east and north. The retail park was developed in the 1980s as part of the wider Seacourt estate including Seacourt Tower. Existing vehicular access is gained from West Way, with egress to West Way and the A420. The application proposes a two way access onto/off the A420.

2.2 The scheme is proposed to be delivered in two phases to enable Homebase to continue trading and to re-let the existing vacant retail space. Phase one proposes the sub-division and re-letting of the former Allied carpet / Habitat block. Phase two proposes the remodelling of Homebase, the additional new units, revised access arrangements and the removal of the petrol station.

2.3 Detailed statements have been submitted in support of the application which explain the refurbishment proposals in more detail, the likely retail impacts arising from the proposal, traffic impacts and flood risk. The applicants have also provided an assessment of how the development will meet BREEAM requirements set out in the council's adopted supplementary planning document on 'sustainable design and construction'. Copies of all of these reports are available to be viewed on the council's website.

2.4 A copy of the plans showing the location of the proposal and its design is **attached** at appendix 1.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 North Hinksey Parish Council objects. Their full comments are **attached** at appendix 2.

3.2 County Highways Officer: no objection

3.3 Drainage Engineer: no objection

3.4 Thames Water: no objection

3.5 Environment Agency: no objection

3.6 Environmental Health: no objection

3.7 Three letters of objection and two letters of comment have been received raising the following issues:

- Loss of petrol station
- Eventual loss of DIY store
- Traffic impact on local road network
- Car parking for retail customers only will adversely affect office workers in Seacourt Tower and Midland House and their ability to park on site
- Developers should be working in collaboration with the proposed Doric development at West Way

3.8 Cllr Debby Hallett: "It's understandable that residents don't want to lose the last remaining petrol station within miles. It's also understandable that this is a commercial decision and beyond the control of the planning department. However, it points out a policy problem: that in this day of green concerns and over-congestion of our roads, the removal of this petrol station has a large and negative impact on the community. Such an impact \*should\* be part of the concern and responsibility of Planning. That it is not is a policy problem. I agree with the resident who points out that this project and the West Way redevelopment are an example of a failure of joined up thinking. When I spoke to Doric about it at their open house, they were unaware of the Seacourt Retail property vacancies and plans. Is this something that, had we had an effective neighbourhood plan in place, could have been managed better? Could we have identified the petrol station as a vital community service? Anything the Vale can do to encourage the developers to keep the petrol station would be gratefully looked upon by those of us who will have to drive miles out of our way on the A34 or Botley Road to buy petrol once it closes. There's been no opportunity from the developers for a community consultation on the loss of this service, which is too bad."

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P12/V2620/A](#) - Approved (25/01/2013)  
Erection of new fascia signage.

4.2 [P10/V2046](#) - Approved (28/07/2011)  
Part refurbishment and part redevelopment of existing retail park including revised access, car parking and landscaping. Removal of existing petrol filling station.

4.3 [P10/V0671/EX](#) - Other Outcome (02/07/2010)  
Application to extend the time limit of Application No: NHI/19996, for amendments to existing egress point to create an additional vehicular access from the A420 (left in, left out priority junction)

4.4 [P07/V1803](#) - Approved (17/04/2008)  
Proposed refurbishment of existing retail park, external alterations to retail units and additional retail mezzanine floor space with minor amendments to associated parking.

4.5 [P07/V0377](#) - Approved (09/08/2007)  
Amendments to existing egress point to create an additional vehicular access from the A420 (left in, left out priority junction)

## 5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies:

- DC1 - Design
- DC5 - Access
- DC6 - Landscaping
- DC9 - Impact of development on neighbouring uses
- S1 - New retail provision

5.2 Supplementary planning document 'sustainable design and construction'.

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

## 6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 *Retail impact and the sequential test*

Seacourt Retail Park is identified within the shopping chapter of the local plan as an established *out of centre* shopping facility within relative close proximity to Botley.

6.2 The total floor space is the same as previously permitted and the proposal is likely to generate the same turnover. Impacts, therefore, would not be materially different. As per the earlier scheme, the key issue is the introduction of smaller units and whether they would cause demonstrable harm to Botley district centre / Oxford city centre. This matter was assessed previously by an independent retail consultant who concluded: "There is unlikely to be a sustainable objection to the application on retail policy grounds". The proposal, therefore, is considered acceptable in retail policy terms. However, it is suggested that conditions are again imposed to restrict the sale of goods to non-food / drink and to ensure the units are not subdivided to a floor area size below 465sqm that could directly compete with shops in Oxford city centre and the Botley district centre.

6.3 *Impact on character / design / sustainability*

The modern design approach and external appearance of the refurbished / new buildings is considered appropriate in this location, and one which will visually enhance the site. External walls are proposed to be clad with modular composite panels set above a blue brick plinth with buff facing brickwork and glazed shop fronts on the principal elevations which will introduce a vertical emphasis in contrast to the horizontal character of the panels. Projecting brise soleil and steelwork framing is also proposed to aid articulation of the main façades and enable signage to be consistent in form across the site. Additional planting is proposed within the site and along the boundaries to enhance existing planting. As such, the visual impact of the proposed development is acceptable.

6.4 The scheme incorporates various sustainable elements with an aim to achieve a BREEAM 2011 rating of very good, all of which are welcomed in response to promoting sustainable design and construction.

6.5 *Loss of petrol station / impact on local businesses*

The majority of objection to this proposal relates to the loss of the petrol filling station. Whilst officers fully acknowledge the public support for retaining the petrol filling station, it cannot be considered as a building / facility in community use. It does not serve an immediate local community in the way that other community facilities do, such as a public house or village shop. A petrol filling station is not the type of local facility that community policies in the local plan seek to safeguard.

6.6 Furthermore, there is an alternative petrol filling station 1.9 miles away on Oxpens Road in Oxford and another one three miles away at the Pear Tree interchange on the A34/A40. Sainsbury's, at Heyford Hill also has fuelling facilities and is 4.5 miles away. Given the availability of fuel elsewhere, officers consider the loss of the petrol station is acceptable, and a refusal based on this ground would not be sustainable on appeal. The same principle applies to the Homebase DIY store – it is not a retail use that can be protected under current planning policy and its potential loss from this location is a commercial / market matter.

6.7 The sub-division of the existing units and reconfiguration of the car park is also not considered to cause any harmful impact on neighbouring commercial office uses within the vicinity of the site. Issues of allocated parking within the wider estate complex are essentially a civil matter between the applicants and their leaseholders.

6.8 *Access, traffic and highways*

Seacourt Retail Park is considered to be in a sustainable location, being close to good public transport facilities along West Way that has good links to and from the city centre as well as to other parts of Oxford. The Seacourt Park & Ride site is also situated nearby. There are also cycle lanes and good footway links in the vicinity. In the light of this, the reduction in the number of spaces by 26 to provide a total of 362 is considered acceptable. Furthermore, dedicated cycle parking is proposed within the site and pedestrian and cycle access is acceptable. However, a condition is suggested to restrict the use of the parking areas to customers and staff in order to ensure adequate parking for the retail uses is maintained given the heavily used car parks at the nearby offices.

6.9 The proposed access onto the A420 is acceptable in highway safety terms. Similarly, the internal traffic flow layout within the site is considered to improve internal circulation in terms of highway safety. In terms of traffic generation, the proposal is considered acceptable. Traffic levels will be partially offset by the removal of the petrol filling station. The county engineer has assessed the accompanying transport statement and raises no objection to the proposal.

6.10 *Drainage*

Thames Water, the Environment Agency and the council's drainage engineer raise no objection to the proposal subject to the scheme being carried out in accordance with the submitted detailed flood risk assessment. In respect of surface water run-off, hard surface areas have been designed to be permeable and a full sustainable urban drainage scheme (SUDS) is proposed. Consequently, the scheme is acceptable in terms of drainage.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 The proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of the development plan and the national planning policy framework. The scheme is acceptable in terms of its retail impact, layout and design, traffic generation, parking and highway safety and flood risk.

**8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**8.1 Grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:**

**1 : TL1 – Time limit**

**2 : Approved plans**

**3 : MC2 – Materials**

**4 : The units hereby permitted as shown on the approved plans shall not be used for the retail sale of food or drink without the prior grant of planning permission.**

**5 : At no time shall the site contain more than 10 retail units, of which none shall be smaller than 465 sq metres gross floor area.**

**6 : Any mezzanine floor space inserted in the units hereby permitted shall not exceed a cumulative gross total floor space of 5,135 sq metres.**

**7 : There shall be no open storage of goods or materials without the prior grant of planning permission.**

**8 : Landscaping scheme in accordance with specified plan**

**9 : LS2 – Landscaping scheme (implementation)**

**10 : LS4 – Tree protection**

**11 : HY6 – Access, parking and turning space in accordance with specified plans**

**12 : Cycle parking in accordance with specified plans**

**13 : The service yard hereby approved shall remain clear of obstruction and be available for servicing vehicle turning and manoeuvring at all times.**

**14 : The management of the car parking areas shall be permanently administered in accordance with the management plan (as detailed in the transport statement) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.**

**15 : Prior to the commencement of development a Framework Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the approved Framework Travel Plan unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.**

**16 : Prior to the commencement of development a detailed scheme for external lighting shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The approved lighting shall be installed prior to the first occupation of the development or to each unit to which it relates.**

**17: The development permitted by this planning permission shall only be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the approved drainage strategy and supplementary flood risk assessment rev A by PCS consulting engineers Ltd.**

**18 : The development permitted shall not be commenced until such time as a**

scheme to dispose of surface water has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The drainage scheme shall be SUDS compliant and fully implemented prior to first occupation of any new building.

19: Prior to each phase of development hereby approved, no development (or such other date or stage in development as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) shall take place until a scheme that includes the following components to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site shall each been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority:

- 1) A preliminary risk assessment which has identified:
  - all previous uses
  - potential contaminants associated with those uses
  - a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors
  - potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.

- 2) A site investigation scheme, based on (1) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site.

- 3) The results of the site investigation and the detailed risk assessment referred to in (2) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.

- 4) A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in (3) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

Any changes to these components require the express consent of the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

20: No occupation of each phase of development shall take place until a verification report demonstrating completion of the works set out in the approved remediation strategy and the effectiveness of the remediation shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority. The report shall include results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met. It shall also include any plan (a long-term monitoring and maintenance plan) for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action, as identified in the verification plan. The long term monitoring and maintenance plan shall be implemented as approved.

21: If during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site, then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted a remediation strategy to the local planning authority detailing how the unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with and obtained written approval from the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.

**Vale of White Horse District Council – Committee Report – 22 May 2013**

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