

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Harriet Sanders.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/01248/FP	Installation of 3 parcel Lockers. (Development already carried out).	Land In Front Of 11 The Parade Southfields Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 4NB

Submitted Plan Nos

KS0253-01 KS0253-02 KS0253-03A

ETC6	Local Centres
D1	Sustainable design
SP1	Sustainable development in North Herts
SP4	Town Centres,Local Centres,CommunityShop
SP9	Design and Sustainability
T1	Assessment of transport matters

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 10/03115/1 – Single storey extension to provide entrance lobby and blocking up of front and rear entrances to alleyway at Middlefield Court. CP 09/03/2011.

3.0 **Representations**

3.1 Neighbour consultation was carried out – no comments received.

3.2 Consultation – Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation – no comment received at the time of writing this report.

4.0 **Planning Considerations**

4.1 **Site and Surroundings**

4.1.1 The site is located outside no 11, The Parade and adjacent to Middlefields Court apartment block. The Parade is a local neighbourhood shopping parade in the north part of Letchworth Garden City.

4.2 **Proposal**

4.2.1 Retrospective consent is sought for the installation of 3 parcel lockers.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The key material considerations when assessing the planning merits of the proposal are:

- Principle of development.
- Design and appearance and siting.
- Potential impact on neighbour amenity.
- Access, highways and parking.

Principle of development

4.3.2 The site is located within the town of Letchworth Garden City. Policy S4 of the NPPF specifies that:

“Development proposals within settlements should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework.”

4.3.3 NPPF policy TC2 sets out that substantial weight should be given to the benefits of supporting the overall vitality and viability of centres and improving or retaining access to local shops and other facilities which provide day-to-day services for the local community. This is reflected in Local Plan policy ETC6: Local Centres where planning permission will be granted for shops and services and where the centre would continue to provide a range of services, meeting day to day needs and the vitality and viability of the centre would be maintained.

4.3.4 The lockers provide a facility for sending and receiving parcels and are an appropriate use with in this area, contributing to the vitality and viability of the local centre. The provision of the lockers meets the policy requirements above and are acceptable in principle at this site which is identified as a local centre in the Local Plan.

Design and Appearance and Siting

4.3.5 NPPF policy DP3 requires proposals to respond to their context so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings. Policy D1 of the Local Plan states that development will be granted provided the design of the development appropriately and positively responds to the site’s local context together with other criteria to encourage a positive and sustainable form of development.

4.3.6 The three lockers are of an acceptable design and appearance in this location and relate adequately to the retail/commercial character of the ground floor units at the parade. The design and appearance is acceptable.

- 4.3.7 The siting of the three parcel boxes is partially in front of Unit 11 (Laundrette), and adjacent to the side elevation of the ground floor of Middlefields Court apartment block. The parcel boxes project into the pedestrianised area under the canopy that runs across the front of The Parade. It is understood that this area of land is not highways land. Whilst the lockers project into this area, ample space around the lockers remains due to the generous amount of footpath between the shops frontages and the road.

Parcel Box 1

- 4.3.8 Parcel box 1 obscures almost half of the frontage of Unit 11 which is currently used as a laundrette. It was noted on the site visit that the area which is obscured externally by the parcel box is partitioned off internally and appears to be used as a storage area. Whilst this may be acceptable for the current occupiers of Unit 11, the siting of parcel box 1 across half of the shop frontage comprises the flexibility of the space for future occupiers and could be detrimental to the longer term vitality and viability of the unit and the wider local centre. It is not acceptable for the siting of a development to compromise the future use of an existing commercial unit.
- 4.3.9 In addition, the siting of parcel box 1 across part of the shopfront of unit 11 results in harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene in The Parade through the loss of an active shopfront and interaction with the streetscene.

Siting of Parcel Box 2 and Parcel Box 3

- 4.3.10 The siting of parcel boxes 2 and 3 obscures the windows of the ground floor of Middlefields Court facing towards The Parade. The obscuring of the windows will result in harm to residential amenity which is discussed in more detail below.
- 4.3.10 As such, the siting of parcel box 1, 2 and 3 do not respond positively to their local context, could cause harm to the vitality and viability of the Local Centre and will cause harm to residential amenity. The siting of the parcel lockers therefore fails to meet the requirements of NPPF Policy DP3, TC2 and P3 and Local Plan policy D1, ETC6 and D3.
- 4.3.11 The parcel boxes do create areas where visibility by passersby is obscured. This could give rise to unsafe environments. However, the area appears to be well lit with a reasonable degree of activity on the street.

Impact on Neighbour Amenity

- 4.3.12 NPPF policy P3 refers to living conditions and pollution and subsection 2(b) states that development proposals should “*Not give rise to, or contribute to, an unacceptable level of access to daylight and sunlight for neighbouring residents and occupiers*”.
- 4.3.13 Policy D3 of the Local Plan permits development that does not result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and where necessary encourages the use of mitigation measures to reduce these impacts.

- 4.3.14 The Planning Statement submitted in support of the application states that the windows on the wall of Middlefields Court facing towards The Parade serve the communal postal collection area. The applicant states that the windows have no through vision and that the artificial lighting of the room will be fixed.
- 4.3.15 From the site visit it was not possible to confirm the use of the area served by the windows. However, the windows clearly provide light to some part of the internal area of Middlefields Court which is in residential use. Whilst the area does not appear to be living space, it clearly forms part of the residential block and is likely to be part of the communal area of the apartment block and possibly the communal postal collection room.
- 4.3.16 The siting of parcel box 2 obscuring part of one window and the siting of parcel box 3 obscuring one of the windows in full will have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of the users of this room. This is contrary to NPPF policy P3 and Local Plan policy D3.

Access, highways and parking

- 4.3.17 The parcel boxes are sited adjacent to shop frontage and side elevation and do not significantly obstruct the pedestrianised area, with adequate room to move around them.
- 4.3.16 The boxes are sited in a sustainable location. There is adequate parking provision if required.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The proposed parcel boxes are acceptable in principle in the local centre location. However, the siting of parcel box 1 across part of the shopfront of unit 11 results in harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene in The Parade. It is not acceptable for the siting of a development to compromise the future use of an existing commercial unit. As such, the siting of parcel box 1 does not respond positively to its local context and could cause harm to the vitality and viability of the Local Centre and fails to meet the requirements of NPPF Policy DP3 and TC2 and Local Plan policy D1 and ETC6.
- 4.4.2 The siting of parcel box 2 and 3 result in loss of light to the ground floor area of Middlefields Court, resulting in a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of the residents of Middlefields Court contrary to NPPF Policy P3 and Local Plan policy D3.
- 4.4.3 NPPF policy S4 requires development proposals in settlements to be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in the NPPF. It is considered that for the reasons set out above, the adverse effects arising from the siting of the parcel boxes 1, 2 and 3 outweigh the benefits of the proposal and as such it is recommended that the proposal should be refused.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 That planning permission be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. The siting of parcel box 1 across part of the shopfront of unit 11 results in harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene in The Parade. It is not acceptable for the siting of a development to compromise the future use of an existing commercial unit. As such, the siting of parcel box 1 does not respond positively to its local context and could cause harm to the vitality and viability of the Local Centre and fails to meet the requirements of NPPF Policy DP3 and TC2 and Local Plan policy D1 and ETC6.
2. The siting of parcel box 2 and 3 result in loss of light to the ground floor area of Middlefields Court, resulting in a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of the residents of Middlefields Court contrary to NPPF Policy P3 and Local Plan policy D3.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been refused for this proposal for the clear reasons set out in this decision notice. The Council has not acted proactively through positive engagement with the applicant as in the Council's view the proposal is unacceptable in principle and the fundamental objections cannot be overcome through dialogue. Since no solutions can be found the Council has complied with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed  Anne McDonald	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 18 September 2026	