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Arun District Council
Planning Services
Civic Centre
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25 November 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

MARKS & SPENCER, UNIT D, BOGNOR REGIS RETAIL PARK, BOGNOR REGIS, PO22 9NF

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE SITING OF 1NO. REFRIGERATED STORAGE CONTAINER BETWEEN 01 NOVEMBER TO 31 JANUARY ANNUALLY

Marks and Spencer Plc is applying to Arun District Council for planning permission for the siting of one temporary storage container between 1st November to 31st January each year, to provide additional storage support for its store at Bognor Regis Retail Park, over the Christmas period.

The application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (PP-09288270) and the application fee has been paid. In addition to this cover letter, the following documentation has been submitted: -

- Planning application forms, including relevant ownership certificates;
- Manufacturer's container specification;
- Block Plan;
- Existing Site Plan (including site location plan); and
- Proposed Site Plan.

Context

Marks and Spencer has been working extremely hard since the start of the Covid-19 outbreak to respond to the increased demand for food supplies whilst making sure customers and employees health and well-being remain a priority.

In response to the Government's advice, a range of in-store social distance measures have been introduced in an effort to make shopping safer, including the installation of checkout screens, floor markings and enhanced cleaning measures.

With social distancing looking set to continue, Marks and Spencer is conscious of the extra pressure its store will experience over the Christmas period. The demand for goods at this time of year is normally significantly higher than at other times of the year. However, the demand and pressure on the store this year is likely to increase. As a result, there is a pressing need for additional temporary storage in order to maintain a seamless supply of goods for customers whilst enabling safe work practise.

Proposal

The Marks and Spencer store occupies a unit on the Bognor Regis retail park which is located approximately 3km to the north east of Bognor Regis town centre. It lies to the east of Shirpney Road within an established commercial area with a mix of uses comprising predominantly retail and service uses.

This application seeks permission for the installation of 1x 6m (20ft) refrigerated storage container over the Christmas trading period. As noted above, the temporary container is required to meet the store's operational requirements for what is expected to be an exceptionally busy time of the year, with a higher than average turnover of stock.

The Government has advised that food stores should avoid crowding and create adequate spacing between individuals. Having additional storage space on site will allow employees to replenish shelves before store opening and on a continual basis throughout the day in a safe environment whilst complying with social distance guidelines. Ensuring a full range of products available to customers throughout the day will help to minimise congestion in-store and contribute to a greater level of customer satisfaction, which is a priority in the success of any business.

The increased level of demand for goods over the Christmas period is a well-established pattern of shopping in the UK. Accordingly, the need for additional storage will invariably be an annual requirement. In seeking to address this, approval is being sought for an annual permission, with the likelihood of the storage container being in place for three to four weeks between November and January. It is difficult to provide precise dates at this time as delivery and collection times may vary from year to year.

Container Specification

It is proposed to locate the temporary storage container within the service yard. It has purposefully been located in this area so that it does not appear out of context. In addition, the proposed location is sufficiently close to the store and loading bay to enable staff members to safely collect and store goods.

The storage container will measure approximately 6m(L) x 2.4m(W) x 2.5m(H) and will be manufactured from steel and finished in white. As recognised within the manufacturer's specification, the container is of low noise and the most energy efficient available to date. The average noise level at 10m from side and front of a 6m (20ft) unit is 51db. The specification details of the container are provided as part of the information which accompanies this application.

The proposed siting of the temporary container will cause no obstruction to the store. It will not impact on access to and from the site, nor on the existing arrangements for delivery and service

vehicles. By virtue of the scale and temporary nature it is considered that the impact of the proposed container will be minimal on the existing store and its surroundings.

Flood Issues

According to the Environment Agency's Flood Map the site is located within Flood Zone 2, which has a 'medium' probability of flooding.

Given that this application seeks permission for the installation of a non-vulnerable use, on an area of existing hard-standing, the proposal will cause no additional harm to the risk of flooding in the area. The development proposal will not alter the permeability of the land and consequently will not increase the risk of flooding at the application site or wider area. It is therefore contended that the application proposal is entirely acceptable.

Conclusion

As a major retailer, Marks and Spencer experience an increase in demand for goods over the Christmas period. In order to respond to this seasonal demand, there is a need for additional storage in the form of a temporary container. The container will ensure the continual supply of goods, whilst maintaining a safe environment for customers and employees during a very busy and demanding time of the year.

I trust that you have sufficient information to determine this application, however, should you require anything further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Geraldine Graham
Town Planner

