

Design & Access Statement – Rock's Café to Go - Thornwood Service Station, High Road, Thornwood Common, Epping, CM16 6LZ. Re: Installation of plant and machinery relating to the introduction of a small commercial kitchen for the cooking of takeaway hot food. The kitchen is to be located towards the rear of the premises and in addition will involve the partial blocking up of the existing external door in order for the remaining space to act as an external serving counter.

Application Location & Background

This is a well-established Service Station & convenience store, the site was initially granted permission to be built in 1956 (EPR/0104/56) & has been operated by the current freeholders for some 3 years.

The premises are located within an area designated by Epping Forest district council as Green Belt.

The premises are close to Junction 7 of the M11 on the busy B1393, just north of Thornwood Common, and is a main link between the towns of Harlow and Epping. Approximately one mile north of the applicant premises is a McDonalds restaurant which has traded close to J7 for many years. The applicant premises have no trading hour restrictions.

The immediate surrounding area is rural in nature with a small number of residential dwellings in close proximity to the applicant premises which sits centrally in a large forecourt area with ample car parking for 20 vehicles including 6 cars at the petrol pumps. The building is a single storey convenience store structure with a pitched roof. The site has open fields at the back of the property which also form part of the freehold property and in front across the B1393 there are more fields protected by a hedgerow.

The premises trade 24 hours and have done so for at least 9 years. The premises were granted a 24 hour premises licence to sell alcohol for consumption off the premises and full late night refreshment (LNR) in 2011. The licence sadly lapsed due to an administrative issue. The 24 hour licence & LNR was successfully re-applied for again in 2019.

The applicant identified a redundant office located in the rear of the premises and wishes to apply for plant and machinery to be installed and to convert the space into a small commercial kitchen for the preparation, cooking & sale from the premises of takeaways foods such as breakfast buns and similar fare popular for motorists travelling the area.

The use class for takeaway was A5 however on the 1st September 2020 the government introduced new legislation to change use classes. One such change related to A5 which is now reclassified as Sui generis. This class is the same class that was and still is applicable to Service Stations. There is no requirement to apply for a full or partial change of use. Therefore this application seeks permission for the necessary plant and machinery appertaining to the new commercial kitchen activities.

The external door to the redundant room is to be partially bricked up to a height of 1.4m from the ground floor and will become an external direct serving point from the kitchen area. When not in use the kitchen area will be secured externally by the existing external shutter.

Planning History

- Acceptor unit/Telephone & Fire Ext housing unit - Ref. EPO/0049/73 –Decision: Grant – 18/1/73.
- Use of forecourt for display/sale of cars - Ref. EPO/0498/70– Decision: Refuse 28/8/70.
- Details of paraffin storage tank & electric pump Ref. EPO/0121/70 – Decision: Grant 3/3/70.
- Details of paraffin storage tank - Ref. EPO/0626/69 – Decision: Withdrawn 12/11/69
- Use of forecourt for display & sale of cars - Ref. EPO/0014/68 – Decision: Refuse: 12/1/68

- Erection of Dwelling (Rye Hill Road) Ref. EPO/0349/56 -Decision: Refuse: 28/11/56
- Erection of Petrol Filling Station – Ref. EPO/0104/56 – Decision: Grant with conditions 5/6/56
- Advert – Ref. A/EPO/003/56 – Decision: Grant 5/6/56

Planning policy

Planning matters fall within the remit of – *Combined Policies, Epping Forest District Council Local plan (1998) and alterations (2006) as published February 2008.*

We have identified the following Local planning policies as potentially relevant, in our opinion, to the application:

1. RP5A – adverse Environmental Impacts;
2. E4A – Protection of employment sites;
3. DBE2 – Effect on neighbouring properties;
4. DBE4 – Design in the green belt;
5. ST6 – Vehicle parking.

We addressed the above policies at 1, 3 & 4 by instructing a ventilation consultant to assist with the kitchen design as well as the route and specification of the ventilation ducting and flue system together with the necessary odour filtration equipment and noise suppression. These details include the risk assessment and are all incorporated with the application documentation at appendix's 1-5 inclusive.

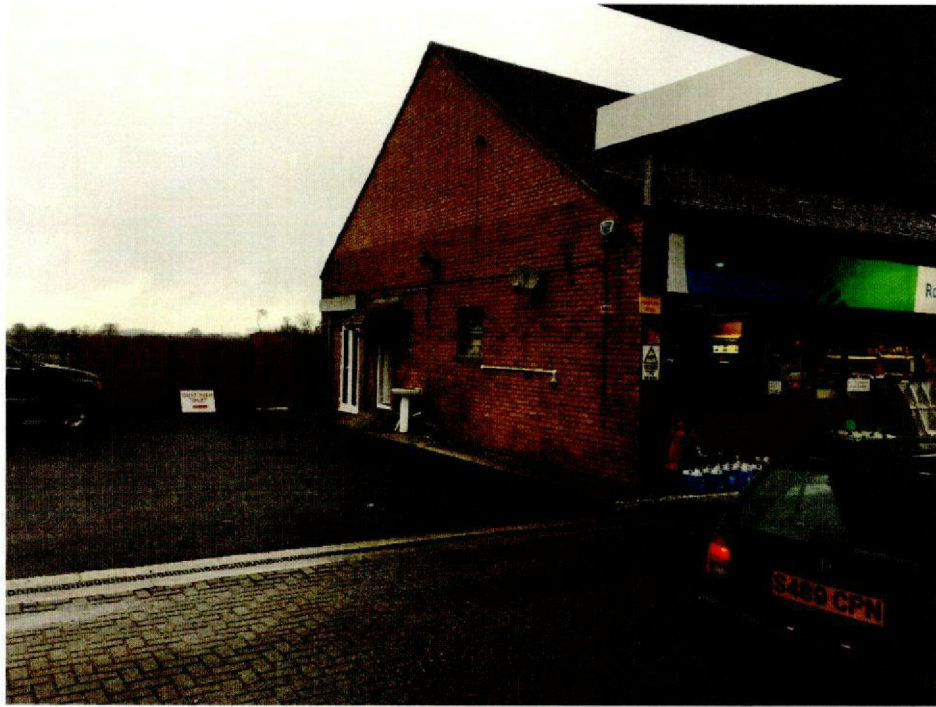
Regarding point 2 – we noted within the application that the premises will employ further staff to meet the new needs of the business and in these difficult times which especially hit employees working in the hospitality sector this new amenity will provide a useful service to local road users, assist in ensuring the long term viability of a valuable local facility and provide much needed additional employment.

In answer to point 5 this generously proportioned site has ample space to cope with any additional custom In terms of parking requirements the new operation may generate – please see parking availability at figs 3, 4, 5 & 6. The new kitchen is designed to be a modestly sized operation and the additional demand is unlikely to take over as the main site use as has already been mentioned the site offers a good range of shop good and fuel. The additional amenity is effectively responding to existing customers requesting hot food to eat on the go without the waits/delays experienced at other local facilities.

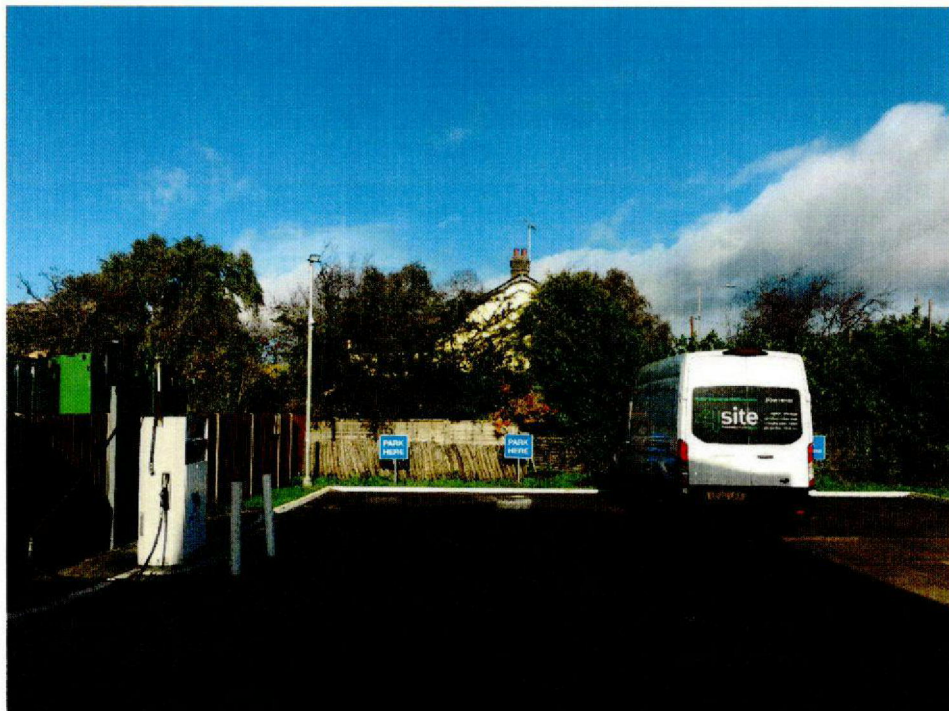
Existing Shop Frontage – Fig 1



South Facing elevation Fig 2



Car parking spaces – North facing side forecourt – Fig 3



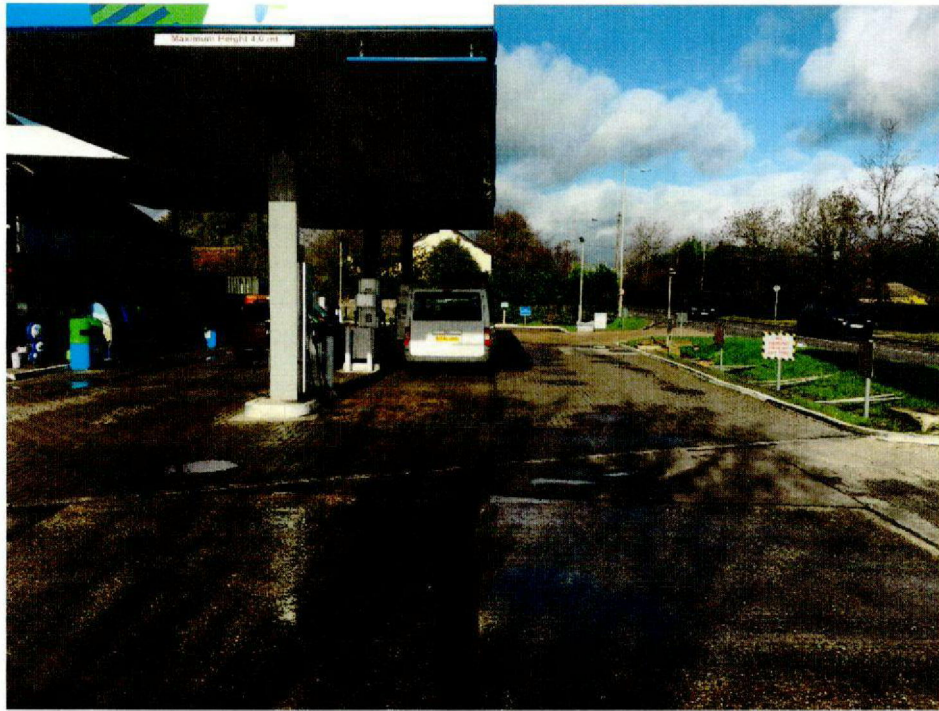
West Facing forecourt Car park spaces - Fig 4



South Facing Forecourt car parking spaces – Fig 5



Forecourt fuel pump car park spaces – Fig 6



End