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Focus DIY Store, Stroud

CLIENT

Industrial Sales Limited

PROJECT NAME

Focus DIY Store, Stroud, Gloucestershire

LOCATION

Stroud, Gloucestershire

SOLUTIONS IN PLANNING FOR

Planning Permission



The Proposal

Subdivision of an existing DIY store to create a new deep discount food store. The proposal included the retention of a 2350sqm DIY Store and the provision of 1300sqm for the new food store, with associated building alteration works.

The Problem

An initial assessment of the site's planning history identified a restrictive condition attached to the DIY Store planning consent restricting the use of the building for the purposes of a DIY retail store and garden centre only. At the time of submitting the planning application, the principal national planning policy was contained within PPS6: Planning for Town Centres. In light of the national guidance at the time, there was a requirement to undertake a full assessment of impact, including quantitative and qualitative need, in conjunction with both new proposals and applications to vary or remove planning conditions. In light of the requirement to fully assess impact, the physical works proposed and the creation of an additional unit, it was considered that there would be no benefit in pursuing the removal of the historic condition in the first instance. A full planning application was therefore prepared and submitted.

The emergence of PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth in December 2009 as the principal national planning policy guidance on the delivery of town centre uses, did little to alter the approach to assessing the retail impact of the proposal taken by the local planning authority, irrespective of the exclusion of the test of 'need'.

Whilst retail impact was a major consideration in the determination of this planning application, matters relating to the existing highways network and impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties were also important considerations.

The Solution

Hunter Page provided a lead consultancy role in preparing a detailed planning application, including the instruction, briefing and co-ordination of all design team members. A range of supporting documents were prepared by consultants, including a detailed Planning, Design and Access Statement by Hunter Page.

Input was provided into the preparation of a Retail Impact Assessment and associated sequential assessment of alternative sites. In doing so, it was necessary to provide a robust justification for discounting an alternative site within close proximity to the town centre. The preparation of a suitably worded planning condition to control the number of product lines to be provided within the food store was also necessary, this was done within appropriate working parameters for the retailer to ensure that there would not be any operational issues following implementation. Extensive discussions ensued with the LPA's retail consultants to ensure that all retail matters were fully tested and resolved.

Successful negotiations were also undertaken with the Local Planning Authority to address all relevant issues raised by local residents and to agree suitable Heads of Terms for an accompanying s106 legal agreement in accordance with the guidance contained within Circular 05/2005.

The Conclusion

An officer's recommendation to approve and subsequent resolution to grant planning permission at the Development Control Committee, subject to the completion of an appropriate legal agreement to secure reasonable highways improvements.