

Application No. 18/00405/COU
17-19 The Parade, Oadby, Leicestershire, LE2 5BB

Ward Councillor's Representations - Cllr D M Carter

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on this application. As may be seen from the officer report, I requested that this application to be brought to this committee in order to consider its merits and its potential impact.

The justification for the proposal appears to be that it will:

- Increase the footfall in this area of the town and, therefore, benefit other businesses in the direct vicinity; and
- Enhance the look and feel of the area.

I believe that there is an alternative view that this development will have a negative impact on the area.

The application has three elements:

- Self-service laundrette;
- Drop off service; and
- Commercial laundry providing service washes for those who do not attend the premises.

From discussion with the case officer and the comments of the Town Centre manager, the contention is made that the self-service laundry will attract customers who will visit other local businesses in the direct vicinity whilst they are waiting for their wash to be completed.

From personal observation, I do not believe that there is a demand for a self-service laundrette in the area. Until recently there was a self-service laundrette within a couple of hundred yards of this location which has closed down through lack of demand. The applicant has failed to provide any evidence of demand for a self-service facility and indeed they state that customers 'generally come in 1-2 times a week to drop off their laundry and then collect later in the week.'

Rather than self -service, I think that the vast majority of the business of the ground floor facility will be 'drop-off and go', rather than a destination. This has the potential to exacerbate parking problems in the immediate area. The proposed location is directly opposite the junction of The Parade and Chestnut Avenue where there is already an issue with vehicles parking on the corner, opposite Lloyds Bank, and on the pavements.

From the officer's report it is clear that the Town Centre Manager and current customers of Clarendon Laundry are supportive of this proposal. However, it is worth noting who are objecting to it. Whilst the adjacent Chestnuts Coffee shop are named in the report, the 333 signatories to letter of objection include the proprietors of the following businesses who are all in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development:

- Sweet Tooth;
- Oadby Barbers;
- Mustard Gift shop; and
- The Post Office.

Does the application have the support of the Oadby Town Centre Association, who represent the local independent traders?

In the original refusal it states that 'the very prominent location of the proposed ground floor laundrette would have a harmful effect on the primary frontage of The Parade as a whole'. What has significantly changed? The ground floor has two large glazed frontages starting 19" from the ground, which provide a 'shop window' to the premises within. A café, furniture shop or food store will seek to provide an attractive display to draw customers in and hence enhance the street scene. Compare that to the sight of rows of industrial machinery which will not visually enhance the area.

Concern was expressed in the earlier refusal regarding how the proposed commercial laundry could be serviced, other than via the ground floor frontage to the street, thus disrupting the free flow of pedestrian and vehicle traffic in the proximity and aggravating the threat to retail vitality and viability. It is worth noting that access to the service yard behind the proposed commercial laundry is via the small service yard on the opposite side of the pedestrian walkway between the shops. Once in the service yard, there is parking for approximately 13 cars however, six spaces are reserved for bank employees and customers whilst the remaining spaces are unallocated and expected to serve six businesses. On a recent site visit, the current spaces were fully occupied. I understand that the landlord has no intention to allocate any further spaces for dedicated use.

I note from the report that one of the previous reasons for refusal of this application was an outstanding, but as yet un-executed planning permission for the construction of new homes immediately above the proposed first floor laundry which would be hampered by the noise and disturbance from the proposed commercial laundry. How has this objection been addressed?

In conclusion, I do not believe that this proposal has demonstrated that it will bring significant regenerative benefits as per Town Centre Area Action Plan Policy 3 as quoted on p.42.