



PLANNING COMMITTEE: 1 June 2010
DIRECTORATE: Planning and Regeneration
HEAD OF PLANNING: Susan Bridge

N/2010/0375: Change of use of post office (Class A1) to educational, cultural and community centre (Class D1)
26 - 28 Newnham Road

WARD: St David

APPLICANT: U.K. Turkish Islamic Cultural Centre Trust
AGENT: N/A

REFERRED BY: Head of Planning
REASON: Building owned by Borough Council

DEPARTURE: No

APPLICATION FOR DETERMINATION:

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 **APPROVAL** subject to conditions and for the following reason:

The proposal would bring a vacant building back into use supporting the vitality and viability of the Local Centre and provide a community facility without harm to the amenity of nearby residents in accordance with Policies E20 and R9 of the Northampton Local Plan and the aims and objectives of PPS4 and PPG24.

2. THE PROPOSAL

2.1 It is proposed to change to the use of this former post office to an educational, cultural and community centre (Class D1). The application applies to the ground floor and basement only.

2.2 The applicant has indicated that the educational element of the proposed use would be a supporting facility within the National Curriculum. The premises would also be used as a small community centre for the Turkish community.

- 2.3 The Borough Council owns the premises and its property service has indicated that it is proposed to offer a 10 year lease to the applicants.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The application site is a vacant shop unit. It consists of the ground floor of the building with a front room of approximately 80 square metres and smaller ancillary rooms to the rear and basement. There is a self-contained flat located on the first floor, which is not part of the application site. The building is located within a small parade of shop units which form a local centre as identified in the Northampton Local Plan.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 None relevant.

5. PLANNING POLICY

5.1 Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The current Development Plan comprises of the East Midlands Regional Plan, the saved policies of the Northamptonshire County Structure Plan and Northampton Local Plan 1997.

5.2 National Policies:

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
PPG13 - Transport
PPG24 – Planning And Noise

5.3 Northampton Borough Local Plan

E19 – Impact on Amenities
E20 – New Development
R9 – Retail Uses Within Local Centre

5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Northamptonshire County Parking Standards SPG 2003
Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

6. CONSULTATIONS / REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 **Public Protection (NBC)** - No objection with conditions relating to the control of noise and hours of opening.
- 6.2 **Highway Authority (NCC)** — No objections

6.3 No neighbour comments received at the time of drafting the report.

7. APPRAISAL

- 7.1 It is noted that the proposal would result in the loss of a commercial property (albeit a vacant one), within an established local centre. However, it is recognised that PPS4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth outlines that economic development can include the provision of community facilities. Furthermore, PPS4 encourages the establishment of community facilities within centres in order to meet the needs of the local population.
- 7.2 As this former post office has been vacant for approximately 3 years, this proposal would bring the building back into use, bring life and activity to the local centre. The loss of a retail use is acceptable as there is still a healthy mix of retail and commercial uses and level of occupation within the centre (i.e. all of the other units are occupied with a mix of two shops, a hot food takeaway and a bookmakers). Therefore, although the proposal would result in the loss of a business property, it is in accordance with PPS4.
- 7.3 The room formerly used as the post office is only approximately 80 square metres in area and it is envisaged that up to 20 children would utilize this facility. The building would also be used as a community centre for the Turkish Islamic community from time to time.
- 7.4 The applicant has indicated that that there would be no amplified sound or musical instruments in use and that doors would remain closed during use of the building. They have also advised that the facility would be mainly for ladies in its group to help them develop their skills in language and social relations, but that male members of the group would also use it. They have also indicated that they would like to use the premises between 10am and 10pm.
- 7.5 The Council's environmental health service (Public Protection) has advised that due to the potential for noise and disruption from the use of the premises and from users arriving and leaving they recommend that any approval is subject to a condition restricting opening of opening to 9pm.
- 7.6 Due to the relatively small number of people that can be accommodated within this building, the proposed use should not be detrimental to the amenity of nearby residents as long as there are conditions attached to the planning permission to secure adequate control of noise and hours of opening. It should also be noted that the premises are located in a local centre which is characterised by the regular coming and going of people. For these reasons and subject to conditional controls the proposed change of use would comply with the requirements of PPG24 – Planning and Noise.

- 7.7 Although there is no on-site parking provision, there are car parking and drop off facilities available outside the premises on Newnham Road. Furthermore, the premises currently can be used for retail purposes which have similar parking requirements as the proposed use.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The new use is an acceptable as it will provide a good community facility without having a detrimental impact on the vitality of the local centre or amenity of nearby residents.

- 8.2 Although the proposal would result in the loss of a shop use within a Local Centre, it would bring the premises back into use providing a good community facility that would enhance the function of the centre in accordance with PPS4 without harm to the amenity of nearby residents in accordance with PPG24.

9. CONDITIONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. A scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority which specifies the sources of noise on the site whether from fixed plant or equipment or noise generated within the building and the provisions to be made for its control and the approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the commencement of the use hereby permitted and retained thereafter.

Reason: To protect the amenities of nearby occupants from noise and vibration amenity in accordance with the advice contained in PPG24 Planning and Noise.

3. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the property shall only be open between the hours of 08:30 to 21:00 Mondays to Saturdays and 09:00 to 19:00 on Sundays, Bank Holidays and Public Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and in accordance with PPG24 – Planning and Noise.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 None

12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

- 12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.

Position:	Name/Signature:	Date:
Author:	Geoff Wyatt	12/05/10
Development Control Manager Agreed:	Gareth Jones	17/05/10



Name: **Planning**
 Date: **20th May 2010**
 Scale: **1:1250**
 Dept: **Planning**
 Project: **Location Plan**

Title
Post Office. 26-28 Newnham Road

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