

PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER:P06/0948

Type of approval sought	Full Planning Permission
Ward	Netherton, Woodside & St. Andrew's
Applicant	The Ar-Rahman Care Trust
Location:	65, HALESOWEN ROAD, NETHERTON, DUDLEY, WEST MIDLANDS
Proposal	CHANGE OF USE FROM POST OFFICE TO ADVICE AND INFORMATION CENTRE (A2)
Recommendation Summary:	APPROVE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

1. The site is located within the Netherton Local Shopping Centre. The application site is currently a post office with a flat above and sits within a row of retail units. Immediately opposite the site is a block of residential apartments (Festival Court). The unit has highway pedestrian barriers immediately outside of the premises with a pelican crossing located immediately to the north.

PROPOSAL

2. The proposal seeks to change the use of a post office to an advice and information centre on childcare related issues for local residents (A2). The unit would be run by one person with the premises attracting between 6/7 people per day seeking advice and information. The post office would be retained within the local centre since it is relocating to 79 Halesowen Road.

HISTORY

3.

APPLICATION No.	PROPOSAL	DECISION	DATE
77/584	Change of use to Post Office with storage space over.	Approved with conditions	25/05/77
78/1140	Installation of shop front	Approved with conditions	19/06/78

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

4. The application was advertised by way of neighbour letters being sent to the occupiers of forty-two properties being within close proximity to the site. The latest date for comments was the 7th June 2006. One letter has been received raising concerns

that the proposals would involve the loss of a retail unit within the centre stating that the use would be better located within the Savoy Centre.

OTHER CONSULTATION

5. The Head of Traffic and Road Safety and the Head of Public Protection have no adverse comments to make in relation to the proposed development.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

6. Adopted Dudley Unitary Development Plan

Policy CR1	Hierarchy of Town Centres and Regeneration Areas
Policy CR3	Local Shopping Areas
Policy CR4	Protected Frontages

ASSESSMENT

7. The site is located within Netherton Local Centre and forms part of the protected retail frontage. The adopted UDP seeks to ensure that local centres are sustained and enhanced with

the protection of their vitality and viability being of paramount importance.

8. In the case of changes of use from A1 (retail) to A2 (financial and professional services) within protected frontages it is important that the proposed development does not result in a significant loss of A1 retail space within the centre overall. Whilst the proposals will involve the loss of an A1 retail unit, the post office will be retained within the protected frontage of the local centre since it is relocating to 79 Halesowen Road.
9. Given that the post office would be retained within the centre, the function, vitality and viability of the centre would not be adversely affected since a key local service in the form of the post office would be retained within the centre.
10. Whilst the proposals would retain the post office it would involve the loss of a retail unit overall within the centre. The proposals would not result in a bunching of non-retail units within this particular part of the local centre and the centre would still on balance contain a high proportion of A1 retail units. This ensures that the overall retail function of the centre would not be undermined by the proposed development.

CONCLUSION

11. The proposals would involve the loss of an A1 retail unit within the Protected Frontage of the Netherton Local Centre. Given the high proportion of A1 retail uses within the centre and that the proposals would not involve in a significant bunching of non retail units the proposals would ensure that the overall retail function of the centre is retained as well as its vitality and viability. In addition, the proposals would involve the relocation of the post office to 79 Halesowen Road thereby ensuring that a key local service is retained within the centre.

RECOMMENDATION

12. It is recommended that planning permission is approved subject to the following conditions:

Conditions and/or reasons:

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

