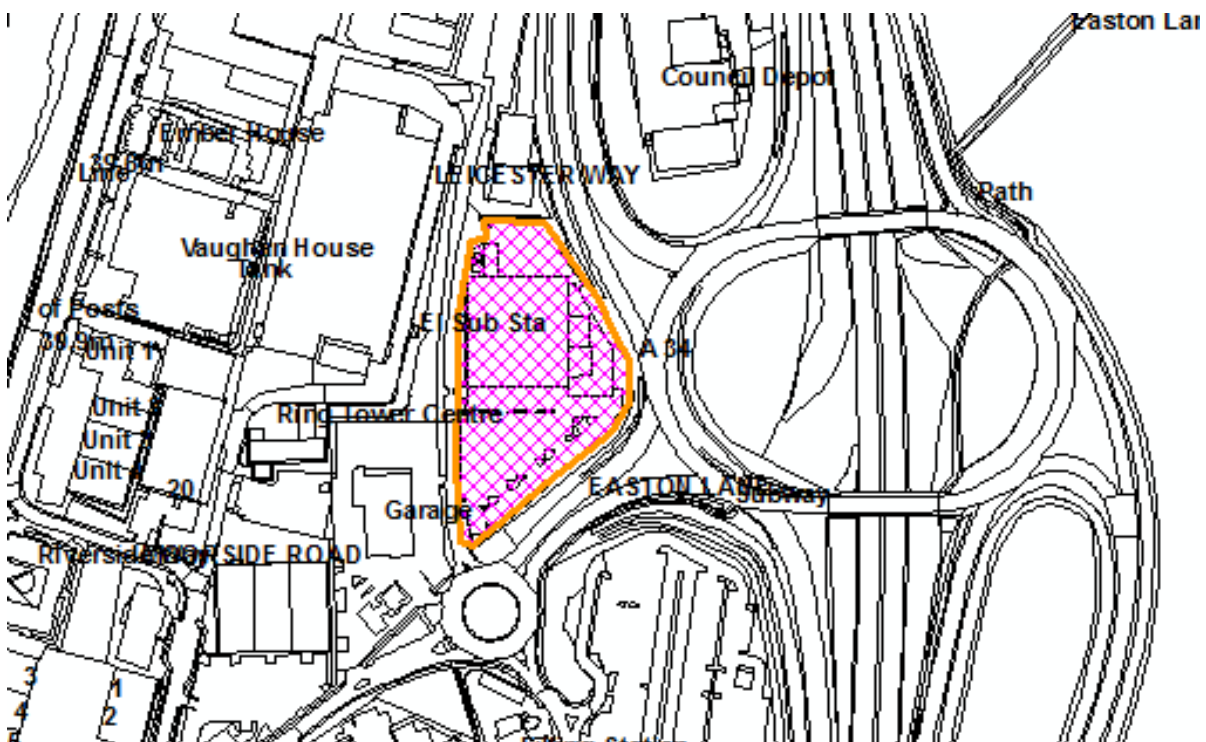


WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL  
PLANNING COMMITTEE

**Case No:** 19/01268/FUL  
**Proposal Description:** Construction of a pod unit falling within Class A1 / A3 / A5, bin store and plant area, provision of outside seating areas and other associated works  
**Address:** Homebase Ltd Easton Lane Winchester SO23 7UD  
**Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City:** St Bartholomew  
**Applicants Name:** -  
**Case Officer:** Mrs Megan Osborn  
**Date Valid:** 7 June 2019  
**Recommendation:** Application Refused

**Link to Planning Documents :** <https://planningapps.winchester.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PSQL0RBPMXQ00>

**Pre Application Advice:**



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## General Comments

**Application is reported to Committee as received 262 objections (including a petition), 16 support.**

**This application is for a standalone building 'pod' (A1, A3 or A5 use class) of 167 sqm (1,800 sqft). The proposed pod is likely to accommodate either a retail operator or a coffee shop operator. This application is referred to as Application 4.**

This is one of four applications on the same site, the others are listed below,

Application 1 19/01219/FUL– Variation of goods condition on application 14/02880/FUL to change from bulky goods to A1 retail.

Application 2 - 19/01267/FUL- (external changes and internal configuration changes) The covering of the existing garden centre and external alterations to the existing building, car park and service yard.

Application 3 - 19/01223/FUL- (reconfiguration of mezzanine) The Homebase unit already contains a mezzanine floor of 1,440 sqm (15,500 sqft). The proposal is to replace the mezzanine with a larger mezzanine. These mezzanine proposals result in an increase of 883 sqm (9,500 sqft).

## Site Description

The site is located off a roundabout from Easton Lane that serves the industrial estate of Winnall. Directly to the east of the site is a large roundabout that serves access to the M3, A272 and the A34. To the west of the site there is a car garage and the road accessing the Homebase site leads onto other industrial units to the north. Tesco Extra is located to the south of the site on the other side of the roundabout.

The site itself has parking to the east of the building with small amounts of landscaped areas. There is a service area to the west of the building. The Homebase unit is currently 4,850 sq.m. (52,186 sq.ft), including 1,440 sq.m of mezzanine floorspace. Plus, there is an external garden centre of 1,189 sq.m (12,800 sq.ft).

## Proposal

The proposal is for a separate building (pod) of 167sqm to be located in the existing car park area of the site to the south of the main building currently being used by Homebase. The proposed pod has specifically be applied for and A1, A3 or A5 use and it would have the flexibility to operate within all three uses, this is not for an application for a class E use class under the new regulations.

No breakdown is provided of the proportions of the different uses. The plans and elevations show a standalone building that is not a drive-thru experience and also that it may be subdivided into two. No details of the internal layout are shown. Some outdoor seating and car parking is shown. In their supporting statement, the applicants state this is to provide visitors with a 'food and beverage offer' and increases dwell time and

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attraction of customers to the wider retail park, stating that this type of facility is common on out of centre retail parks. No further information is provided on the nature of the proposal.

The building is designed as a simple and contemporary addition to the existing retail unit. Materials will be similar to the refurbished Homebase unit.

As well as the pod building, the application proposals include a screened refuse area, new area of paving, and areas of outdoor seating.

### **Relevant Planning History**

The Homebase unit (originally Texas Homecare) was built pursuant to an outline permission granted in December 1993 (ref: W11725/01). The permission contained a goods condition (condition no. 2) which restricted the sale of goods to DIY, furniture / carpets and electricals. This goods condition was amended in 1999 (ref: 99/01798/FUL) to allow for the additional sale of leisure goods, motorcycles / bicycles and accessories and stationary items.

More recently, in March 2015, the goods condition was further amended so as to allow for the sale of non-food goods by a catalogue retailer for up to 185 sq.m of the existing sales area of the unit (ref:14/02880/FUL). Accordingly, the up-to-date goods condition is now as follows:

“The use of the premises shall be limited to the retailing of electrical goods, including domestic appliances; goods for home improvements, maintenance, repair or decoration; DIY and builders merchant products, including ironmonger, plumbing goods or timber; furniture; furnishings; floor covering and carpets; goods for garden improvements and maintenance, including plants; leisure goods; boats, motorcycles, bicycles and accessories; or stationery items; the sale of non-food goods by a catalogue retailer for up to 185 sq.m of the existing sales area, and for no other purpose set out in Class A1 of the Schedule of the Town and Country Planning Act (Use Classes) Order 1987”.

The current application is one of four on the site, although each will be considered under their own merits.

The Homebase unit is currently 4,850 sq.m. (52,186 sq.ft), including 1,440 sq.m of mezzanine floorspace. Plus, there is an external garden centre of 1,189 sq.m (12,800 sq.ft).

### **Consultations**

Service Lead for Built Environment:

Strategic Planning:

Objection to A1 use class, see principle of development below

Engineers: Highways:

No objection to the application, see full assessment below.

Service Lead for Environment:

Environmental Health:

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No adverse comments

Service Lead for Economy:

Economic Development

It is not found that the case has been proven for dividing the site into three separate units or for creating additional employment opportunities and therefore cannot support this application at this stage.

Economic development updated their comments due to the long period of time since submission to this application being seen at committee:

The COVID-19 pandemic has created challenging trading conditions for high streets around the country with two national lockdowns and increasing competition from internet sales. This has resulted in the vacancy rate for Winchester High Street increasing from 6.9% in January to 9.1% in September 2020 and the closure of city centre retail businesses such as Laura Ashley, Whittards and Edinburgh Woollen Mill.

At this time it is even more crucial to support the vitality of Winchester High Street.

The retail study and the impact of COVID-19 on Winchester High Street have re-enforced The position of being unable to support this application.

**Representations:**

City of Winchester Trust: a reply was made with 'No comment'

263 reps were received, including 1 petition objecting to the application for the following reasons:

- The loss of Homebase would force people out of town to Eastleigh.
- You would lose shops from the high street.
- It is good to have DIY store out of town.
- This would kill retail in Winchester city centre.
- The retail assessment dismisses Aldi.
- The carbon footprint would increase as people would have to travel to Southampton.
- The traffic would increase if this change is made.
- More trade would be done on line
- Loss of employment

16 letters of support received.

- This will produce more jobs.  
This would expand the retail mix in this area.
- Four stores will be better than one.

**Relevant Planning Policy:**

Winchester Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy

DS1, WT1, WT2, CP8

Winchester District Local Plan Part 2

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WIN1, WIN2, WIN4, WIN11, DM7

National Planning Policy Guidance/Statements:

National Planning Policy Framework  
National Planning Practice Guidance  
National Design Guide

Supplementary Planning Guidance  
Retail need & capacity assessment August 2020

**Planning Considerations**

Principle of development

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Paragraph 47 of the NPPF requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The application site is located within the settlement boundary of Winchester where there is a presumption in favour of new development provided it is in accordance with the relevant policies of the development plan.

The development does not fall under Schedule I or Schedule II of the 2017 Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, therefore an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required.

The application site is located approx. 250m from the South Downs National Park

Government policy relating to National Parks is set out in English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) updated February 2019. The Circular and NPPF confirm that National Parks have the highest status of protection, and the NPPF states at paragraph 172 that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in national parks and that the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations and should be given great weight in National Parks.

The development will not adversely affect any land within the National Park and is in accordance with Section 11a of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Due to the nature of the development and the distance between the application site and the River Itchen SAC, an Appropriate Assessment under the Conservation of Habitats & Species (Amendment) Regulations 2011 is not required.

Winchester District Local Plan Part 1

DS1 – Development Strategy and Principles

Sets out the ‘town centres first’ approach to retail, leisure or other development proposals that are high attractors of people. It sets out a hierarchy of centres with Winchester at the top as a Sub-regional town centre.

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WT1 – Development Strategy for Winchester Town

Sets out detailed strategy for Winchester Town, which supports the provision of additional retail floorspace through existing planned development at Silver Hill and future provision of 9,000 sqm to 2031 to support Winchester's role as a sub-regional shopping centre.

WT1 expands on this by promoting the town centre as the preferred location for new development that attracts high visitor numbers, including retail.

CP8 - Economic Growth and Diversification

CP8 supports economic development where it complies with strategic policies.

Winchester District Local Plan Part 2:

WIN2 - Town Centre

WIN2i) supports developments within the defined town centre that 'contribute to maintaining Winchester's role within the hierarchy of retail centres and promote the town centre as the natural destination for visitors and shoppers'.

WIN11 – Winnall

The application site is within the area subject to Policy WIN11 Winnall, and specifically sub-area 11.2. In this location employment generating uses outside of the traditional B class uses may be permitted. A series of criteria i) – v) are listed in respect of this. In respect of v) the policy states that where a new town centre use is proposed, evidence should be provided that the use requires an out-of-centre location and that sequential approach has been applied.

DM7 – Town, District and Local Centres

DM7 states that town centre uses that attract large numbers of people should be located within the identified boundaries of town, district and local centres. Relevant uses are listed, including all A1 - A5 (retail) classes. DM7 also states that such proposals outside defined centres will be subject to a sequential test and should avoid harmful impacts on those centres. DM7 also states that small scale town centre uses of up to 278 sqm may be approved where they provide a local facility or service.

Assessment of Proposal

DS1, WT1, WIN2, WIN11 and DM7 all emphasise the importance of Winchester Town Centre as the prime location for main town centre uses under the 'town centres first' sequential approach. There is no floorspace threshold for the application of the sequential test. However, it has been general practice to consider 'coffee shops' on retail parks on their own merits and seek sequential test as appropriate and in a proportional manner.

Although the DM7 allowance was primarily aimed at small convenience stores etc, it would also allow for other types of small scale town centre uses where appropriate. If the proposal didn't include a use class proposal for A1 use (retail) then this proposal may be acceptable, however a purely A1 shop would likely become a destination in its own right and therefore would be unacceptable with regards to the thrust of the Local Plan Policy. The applicant has been made aware that A3 and A5 uses would be acceptable, however requested that an A1 use class proposal to be considered under this application.

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Impact on character of area and neighbouring property

When considering the structure of the proposed pod alone it is considered that this would not result in any detrimental harm on the character of the surrounding area given its design and scale. The structure would also have now material planning harm on any surrounding amenities.

Therefore it is considered that this proposal is acceptable in terms of policies DM15, DM16, DM17 and DM18 of the LPP2.

Highways/Parking

No highway objection to this proposal. Hampshire County Council were consulted on this application and they grouped all four applications for the Homebase site together providing one response for them all. The applicant was asked to provide more robust and specific figures for the trips generated for each individual proposed uses on this site and it was concluded that this would not result in additional harm to the surrounding highway network. The amount of parking on the site is sufficient for any additional customers the additional units may attract.

The development is in accordance with the NPPF Section 9, policy CP10 of the local Plan Part 1 and DM18 of the local Plan Part 2.

Conclusion

It is considered the pod it is unacceptable as this would be contrary to policies DS1, WT1, WIN2, WIN11 and DM7.

**Recommendation**

Application Refused subject to the following condition(s):

**Conditions**

01 The proposed pod is contrary to policies DS1 and WT1, WT2 of the LPP1 and policies WIN1, WIN2, WIN11 and DM7 of the LPP2 and paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF in that the proposal is for a town centre use which would expand retail uses in a location which is not defined, or proposed, as a town or local centre and therefore it would result in demonstrable harm on the public or private investment in the town centre or local centres.

**Informatives:**

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF Winchester City Council (WCC) take a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. WCC work with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by;

- offering a pre-application advice service and,
- updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.

In this instance the applicant was updated of any issues after the initial site visit and a meeting was held and the applicant has been updated on the progress of the application throughout the process.

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02. The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies and proposals:-

Local Plan Part 1 - Joint Core Strategy: DS1, WT1, WT2, CP8

Local Plan Part 2 - Joint Core Strategy: Development Management and Site Allocations:  
WIN1, WIN2, WIN4, WIN11, DM7