

Application No:	09/1285C
Location:	BAE Systems, Land Systems Munitions, Radway Green, Alsager, Near Crewe, CW2 5PJ
Proposal:	Proposed Manufacturing Building On The Former B Block Site, Including Ancillary Infrastructure Comprising Site Access Road, Security Gatehouse, Car Parking And An Internal Firing Range.
Applicant:	Mr K Mellis, BAE Systems Properties Ltd
Application Type:	Outline
Ward:	Doddington, Crewe & Nantwich and Alsager, Congleton
Registration Date:	6 May 2009
Earliest Determination Date:	10 July 2009
Expiry Date:	5 August 2009
Date report Prepared	3 July 2009
Constraints:	Site allocated in Congleton Local Plan First Review as Royal Ordnance Factory

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Subject to Conditions

MAIN ISSUES:

Impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Scale and mass of the building.

Development on contaminated land.

1. REASON FOR REPORT

The application is included on the agenda of the Southern Planning Committee as the scheme exceeds 1,000 m² floor area and is therefore a major development.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The site lies to the south of Alsager and forms part of the larger BAE complex at Radway Green. The site is identified in the Congleton Borough Local Plan under Policy E9 'Royal Ordnance Factory'.

The application site is located within an established manufacturing and assembly facility. In addition, there is an existing industrial estate located immediately west of the site.

The Royal Ordnance Factory at Radway Green was developed in 1939. The factory was established to produce small arms ammunition (SAA) and cartridges for HM Forces. Industrial production started at the site in 1940, although the site facilities were not fully completed until 1942.

The site originally comprised a number of buildings with production being based within four centrally located large open plan buildings, A, B, C and D blocks. In addition to the main production buildings, a number of firing ranges were constructed on the southern side of the site,

along with infrastructure, including gas works, a boiler house, administrative units and waste treatment facilities. To the east of the site, a number of bulk storage magazines were also constructed to store explosive material and finished munitions. To the north of the site, a substantial rail marshalling yard infrastructure yard was built to support site operations.

A line of Goat Willow lies to the south of the B block building and beyond the open air firing range lies open countryside.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The application seeks outline planning permission, with all matters reserved except access, for the development of a manufacturing building for the production of small arms munitions within the Radway Green site.

The proposal also involves ancillary development, including an indoor firing range, revised internal site access and lay-by, gatehouse, car parking, and landscaping.

The main components of the facility and the maximum development parameters are outlined below:

- New Factory Building – 21,000 sqm with a maximum height of 10m;
- Access and Car Parking – 15,500 sqm of hard standing;
- Storage and infrastructure facilities – 400 sqm with a maximum height of 4 metres;
- Gatehouse – 60 sqm with a maximum height of 4 metres;
- Indoor Firing Range – 800sq m, with a maximum height of 4 metres.

The general vehicular access is gained from Number 1 Road North, which runs directly from Radway Green Road (B5078). The B5078 connects directly with Junction 16 of the M6, which is located approximately 1.5km south of the site.

The site was formerly occupied by a similar sized building which has recently been demolished, Prior to the demolition work being undertaken, a survey was carried out to consider whether the property was inhabited by bats. The survey noted that whilst there was some potential for occupation, there was no evidence of use of the property by bats.

4. RELEVANT HISTORY

Approval was granted by Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council for the redevelopment of part of the adjoining employment site in 2008. Application P08/0131 was for the construction of 41 new small units for B1 B1(c) B2 & B8 uses including reconfiguration and rationalization of existing infrastructure and parking facilities.

Prior to the submission of this application, the applicants submitted a request for a screening and scoping opinion under Regulation 10 (2) and 10 (5) of the Town and County Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999.

After consideration of the site and the proposed development, it was confirmed that the scheme did not comprise development under Schedule 2 of the regulations and could therefore be considered under the normal planning regime.

5. POLICIES

Unusually, the site of the proposed building falls across the boundary between the former Congleton Borough Council and the former Crewe & Nantwich Council. However, following Local Government reorganisation in April 2009, the site is now wholly within the area covered by Cheshire East.

Regional Spatial Strategy

Policy DP 4: Make the Best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure

National Planning Guidance

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development

PPG4: Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms

PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control

PPG24: Planning and Noise

Local Plan Policy

Congleton Borough Local Plan

PS8: Open Countryside

GR2 & GR3: Design

GR4 & GR5: Landscape

NR1: Trees and Woodland

E5: Employment Development in the Open Countryside

E9: Royal Ordnance Factory

Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council

NE2: Open Countryside NE5: Nature Conservation and Habitats

NE9: Protected Species

NE20: Flood Prevention

BE1: Amenity

BE2: Design Standards

BE6: Development on Potentially Contaminated Land

E4: Development on Existing Employment Area

E7: Existing Employment Sites

In both Plans, Green Belt land is identified as being approximately 300m beyond the southern site boundary.

Other Material Considerations

No other material considerations.

6. CONSIDERATIONS (External to Planning)

Highways:

At the time of the preparation of the report, no comments had been received.

Environmental Health:

The applicant submitted a detailed assessment of Ground and Groundwater Conditions which has been considered by the Council.

The Environmental Health Officer has not raised any objection to the proposal in principle but has suggested a series of conditions relating to the control of noise and the protection of air quality.

Ecology

In respect of wildlife, the Ecologist commented on the need for survey work to address breeding birds and Great Crested Newts given the proximity of trees to the site and the presence of ponds within 500m of the site. This information has since been submitted and acknowledged as confirming the development would not have a detrimental impact on Great Crested Newts.

Also, due to the fact that the scheme is outline and there is a degree of uncertainty about the final form of development, a scheme may come forward which could potentially result in less harm to trees and scrub on the site

Although some trees would have to be removed to facilitate development, much of the planting in the area is self set and of low quality and accordingly no objection is raised on this point although conditions are recommended to ensure appropriate landscaping is provided following development.

7. VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL

Alsager Town Council have confirmed they have no objections to the proposal. At the time of writing the report, no comment has been received from Doddington and District Parish Council.

8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Environment Agency

The Environment Agency have considered the application. Although they have no objection in principle to the development, they have suggested a series of conditions requiring the submission of the following:

- A scheme for the provision and implementation of a surface water regulation
- A scheme for the management of overland flow from surcharging of the site's surface water drainage
- A scheme to dispose of foul and surface water
- A scheme to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site
- Details to ensure the base of any infiltration device maintains at least a one metre unsaturated zone above any water table

Natural England

Natural England examined the submitted information and concluded that additional work was required in respect of the possibility of bats on the site.

United Utilities

No objection in principle to the development but have commented that the development could have an impact upon their infrastructure within the Radway Green site. Accordingly, measures

should be put in place to ensure the equipment is protected and measures put in place to maintain access to the equipment.

Neighbours

No representations have been received from neighbours.

10. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

In support of the proposal, the applicants have submitted the following information:

- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- Ecological Surveys including bats, Great Crested Newts, breeding birds, invertebrates, reptiles and a Phase I habitat survey
- Landscape surveys
- Groundwater conditions report
- Contamination Desk Study
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Outline Remediation Strategy

11. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

In essence, the principle of redevelopment of the building is supported through the Regional Spatial Strategy by Policy DP 4 "Make the Best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure"

This policy sets out a sequential hierarchy for the selection of development sites and as a priority identifies the redevelopment of sites with existing infrastructure before moving on to other locations.

Congleton Local Plan Policy E9 also supports in general the proposal and states:

"Planning permission will be granted for those applications seeking approval for the re-use or redevelopment of buildings and land within the existing confines of the Royal Ordnance Factory at Radway Green, as defined on the inset map, for those uses falling within use classes B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order 1988, subject to compliance with those criteria set out in policy [GR1](#)."

The requirements of Policy GR1 relate to all development and seek to ensure that the proposed development is of a suitable design and character whilst not resulting in a detrimental impact on the surrounding area or neighbouring occupiers.

In the Crewe & Nantwich Local Plan, there is no site specific allocation although Policy E4 does give guidance on the redevelopment of existing employment sites as follows:

"Proposals for new employment development, for the re-use, re-development or intensification of the use of land within existing employment areas will be permitted, (in accordance with policies BE.1 - BE.5)."

The supporting Policies BE1 to BE5 echo the aims of the Congleton Policy GR1 although greater detail is provided on the requirements that a development has to meet to be deemed acceptable.

Highways

At the time of the preparation of the Officers report, no comments have been received from the Highways Officer. However, as the proposed development is on the site of the existing B block and the net additional floor space to be created will amount to only 400 m², approximately a 4% increase on the previous building footprint of 20,500 m², it is unlikely that the new scheme will generate significant different levels of highways activity to that currently experienced. Furthermore, the site is within an existing industrial area which already benefits from appropriate infrastructure for heavy goods vehicles.

Design

Although this scheme is outline only, indicative elevations and floor plans have been submitted. The new building will have a similar size as the existing structure as already indicated with a total floor area of 20,900 m².

The new structure is to be a similar height to the existing building at 10.0m. However, whilst the scale of the previous building was offset to a certain degree by the form of the roof which comprised a series of ridges with valleys in between, the new building is to benefit from a portal frame construction which will result in a constant roof height.

This revised form, however, will allow an upper floor to be inserted into the building to allow more use to be made of the space inside.

The building is to be predominantly clad in a profile sheeting system which is to be offset by a section of masonry walling around the main entrance and high level glass block sections to allow light in at the upper level.

A series of openings are also proposed around the building to facilitate loading vehicles.

Amenity

Due to the location of the building within the existing complex and the distance to neighbouring properties, the new structure will not result in any change or detriment to existing amenity levels. Consideration has been given to the requirement to control the hours of work but due to the relatively removed nature of the site and the activity undertaken, as well as the existing established use which is not restricted, it is felt that such a condition would not be necessary in this instance.

Ecology

Further to the comments of the Ecologist, the applicants have submitted information to show that the existing building was not occupied by bats as a roost prior to its demolition.

Whilst it would be desirable to retain as much of the surrounding landscaping for wildlife, it should be noted that this application is outline only and sets out the maximum extent of development that the applicant would wish to undertake on the site. It is at the reserved matters stage that the final

design and detail of the scheme will be considered. This outline application if approved would establish that development would not have a detrimental impact on protected species contrary to the guidance of the EU Habitats Directive.

12. CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Having considered the potential impact of the development and the similarity in terms of scale and mass of the proposed development to the building that previously existed on site, it is felt that the proposed scheme is in accordance with both local planning policy as expressed through the Borough of Crewe & Nantwich Local Plan 2005 and the Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review 2005 and national planning policy. Accordingly, this scheme is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

13. RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Time limit on outline permission.**
- 2. Submission of reserved matters.**
- 3. Details of materials to be submitted.**
- 4. Drainage and surfacing of hard standing areas.**
- 5. Landscaping - submission of details.**
- 6. Landscaping conditions - implementation.**
- 7. Decontamination of land.**
- 8. Decontamination validation report.**
- 9. Submission of a scheme for the provision and implementation of a surface water regulation system**
- 10. Submission of a scheme for the management of overland flow from surcharging of the site's surface water drainage system**
- 11. Submission of a scheme to dispose of foul and surface water**
- 12. The following components of a scheme to deal with the risks associated with contamination shall be submitted:**
- 13. The site shall be remediated in accordance with the approved remediation strategy and method statement, with no deviation from the strategy without prior written agreement from the Local Planning Authority;**
- 14. A verification plan providing details that the works set out within the remediation strategy are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.**
- 15. Implementation of ecological reports**
- 16. Protection for breeding birds.**
- 17. Tree protection.**
- 18. Tree pruning / felling specification.**
- 19. Prohibition on burning materials on site.**
- 20. Limit on hours of work for piling operations.**

Informatives

- Protection of water table**
- Protection of existing United Utilities services on site.**
- No disturbance to nesting birds during the breeding season**

Location Plan

