

Application No: 11/3855N

Location: Land at, WESTON ROAD, CREWE, CHESHIRE, CW1 6JS

Proposal: Demolition of Existing Office Building and Erection of Industrial Unit (Use Class B8 - Storage and Distribution) with Ancillary Trade Counter Floorspace and Associated Internal Road/Footways, Car Parking and Landscaping

Applicant: Rowlinson Group Limited

Expiry Date: 26-Jan-2012

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to conditions and S106 Legal Agreement

MAIN ISSUES:

- a) Principle of Development
- b) Retail & Impact on Town Centre
- c) Design & Layout
- d) Highways
- e) Residential Amenity

1. REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application proposes the creation of more than 1,000 square metres floorspace and is therefore a small scale major development.

2. DESCRIPTION AND SITE CONTEXT

The application site is situated off Weston Road in Crewe. The site is bounded by industrial and commercial properties in the Crewe Gates Industrial Estate. The site area is 0.4ha and the proposal includes the erection of a 1,152 m² gross B8 industrial unit with ancillary trade counter(s). The development is speculative and the single B8 industrial unit is designed to be subdivided into individual units flexible in size, forming a maximum of 3 units. The description of development for the application includes reference to the provision of ancillary trade counter(s). The floor plan indicates that one unit will have an approximate gross internal area of 621.2 m² and the other unit will be 530.4 m². This second unit (530.4 m²) could be subdivided. The site is within

the settlement boundary for Crewe as designated in the adopted Crewe and Nantwich Borough Local Plan 2011.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of an existing office building and the erection of an industrial unit (Use Class B8 – storage and distribution) with ancillary trade counter floorspace and associated internal road / footways and, car parking and landscaping.

4. RELEVANT HISTORY

P06/0330 - Change of Use from General Industry (Class B2) to General Industry and Storage and Distribution (Class B2 and B8) and Removal of Condition 7 attached to Planning Permission P97/0537 – Approved 05-Jun-2006

7/04974 - Generator room/store. – Approved 12-Feb-1979

7/05809 - Proposed tool room – Approved 23-Aug-1979

P97/0537 - Factory extension, portal framed buildings to rear and office extension – Approved 24-Jul-1997

7/10086 - Re-siting of polystyrene mouldings building – Approved 01-Jun-1983

7/19341 - Temporary siting of a portakabin. – Approved 28-Jan-1991

5. POLICIES

National Policy

PPS1	‘Delivering Sustainable Development’
PPG13	‘Transport’
PPS4	‘Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth’

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

DP1 Spatial Principles

DP2 Promote Sustainable Communities

DP4 Making the Best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure

DP5 Manage Travel Demand: Reduce the Need to Travel, and Increase Accessibility

DP9 Reduce Emissions and Adapt to Climate Change

Local Plan Policy

BE.1 – Amenity

BE.2 – Design Standards

BE.3 – Access and Parking

BE.4 – Drainage, Utilities and Resources

BE.5 – Infrastructure

E.4 – Development on Existing Employment Areas

S.1 – New Retail Development in Town Centres

S.10 – Major Shopping Proposals

Other Material Considerations

‘Planning for Growth’

‘Presumption in Favour of Economic Development’

Draft National Planning Policy Framework

6. CONSIDERATIONS (External to Planning)

Environmental Protection:

No objection subject to conditions restricting hours of construction and requiring details of lighting to be submitted and approved.

Highways:

No objection - Accessibility is good to this site for both HGV's and cars and there is adequate room for manoeuvring and parking of large vehicles. Visibility is acceptable at this location with a good level of off street parking. The access and parking should be conditioned in accordance with the submitted plans. Any alterations to the existing access must be carried out under a section 184 licence agreement.

8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

No comments received

9. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Supporting Planning Statement Incorporating a Design & Access Statement
Transport Assessment

10. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Policy

The site is an existing employment site within Crewe. The site is not allocated for any purpose in the Local Plan. However, Policy E.4 allows for the redevelopment of sites for employment purposes. All new development should meet the requirements of general policies BE.1 - BE.5.

The description of development for the application includes a reference to the provision of ancillary trade counter(s). The application site itself is outside of Crewe Town Centre (as defined on the proposals map of the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan 2011) Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4) requires retail uses to undergo a sequential test and in certain circumstances an impact assessment in order to protect the vitality and viability of existing centres.

Policy EC14 of PPS4 states that town centre policies such as the requirement for a sequential test for planning applications apply for retail uses outside of existing centres unless they are ancillary to other uses. In these circumstances, policy EC19 of PPS4 advocates the effective and

appropriate use of conditions for main town centre uses to ensure that retail ancillary elements of the scheme remain that way.

Principle of Development

The change of use from the current office use to B8 use is acceptable in principle. However, the ancillary trade counter(s) needs to be strictly controlled. This is to ensure that the proposed use of the B8 unit does not result in the creation of a retail outlet or number of retail outlets outside of the town centre, which, on this scale, would require closer consideration.

There is no definition of “trade counter” in legislation, circulars and guidance. It is often considered however that the term generally refers to a discrete small area, separated from the remaining function of the unit where specialist purchases are made from either a small display or a computer. It is important that the trade counter element is a small discrete area and is subsidiary to the main function of the building. The internal floorplan does not indicate the precise extent of the trade counter as the industrial unit(s) are speculative.

To ensure that the trade counter remains ancillary to the main use of the industrial unit(s), it is recommended that an appropriately worded condition is attached to any approval. This should include prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority an internal floor plan indicating the extent and location of the trade counter (also including the customer access and the relationship of the sales counter with the remaining floor area). This will ensure that the trade counter will be kept as an ancillary element to protect the vitality and viability of the Crewe town centre in compliance with PPS 4.

To ensure that the product range on sale is as stated by the application, it is recommended that an appropriately worded condition is attached to any approval to restrict the sale of goods to non food goods and for the avoidance of doubt, sales of other goods such as clothing, footwear, leisure goods and non-bulky electrical goods for domestic use will not be permitted. This is to restrict the range of goods to protect the vitality and viability of Crewe Town Centre and in accordance with the provisions of PPS4.

Design & Layout

The building is of a modern design which fronts onto Weston Road. Although the building would appear rather utilitarian it is considered to be appropriate in this context and a condition will be attached to ensure that the materials match those existing. The building would be seen alongside the adjacent buildings on the site and the site would also benefit from the removal of the existing building which is of a poor state of repair. The proposed building would have a ridge height of 8.4 metres and would be commensurate with the size and scale of the units at either side. The building would be set back into the site with the car park in front and the existing landscape buffer separating Weston Road with the access road would remain. The proposal would not appear overly prominent in the street scene.

Highways

The proposed development would include the provision of 36 car parking spaces and the Highways Authority has raised no objection to the development. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of its highways/parking implications.

Residential Amenity

The area is predominantly commercial and industrial with no residential properties in the immediate vicinity.

11. CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR THE DECISION

In conclusion, it is considered that the development of this site within the Crewe Settlement Boundary is in principle acceptable and in accordance with Policy E.4. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact upon the highway network with appropriate car-parking provision. The proposal will have minimal impact upon the street scene and neighbouring amenity and subject to conditions, the trade counter element of the scheme is considered to be acceptable.

12. RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

- 1. Commence development within 3 years**
- 2. Development in accordance with approved drawings**
- 3. Submission of details/samples of external materials**
- 4. Implementation of detailed access and junction plans**
- 5. Car parking to be provided in accordance with the approved plan prior to the development being brought into use**
- 6. Cycle Parking details to be submitted and agreed**
- 7. Drainage details to be submitted and agreed**
- 8. External lighting details to be submitted and agreed**
- 9. No external storage**
- 10. No mezzanine floors**
- 11. Trade Counters details to be submitted and agreed**
- 12. Restriction on the sale of goods to non - food goods.**
- 13. Prevent sub-division of any of the units**
- 14. Bin Storage details to be submitted and agreed**
- 15. Limits on hours of construction including delivery vehicles.**

