

Application No: 11/4222N

Location: PRG ENGINEERING, LIGHTWOOD GREEN AVENUE, AUDLEM

Proposal: Proposed Extension to Existing Industrial Building and Enlargement of Rear Parking and Vehicle Turning Area

Applicant: PRG Engineering

Expiry Date: 09-Jan-2012

#### **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

Approve with conditions

#### **MAIN ISSUES**

- Principle of Development
- Impact on Character and Appearance of Streetscene and Open Countryside
- Impact on the Amenity of Neighbouring properties
- Impact on Highway Safety

#### **REASON FOR REFERRAL**

This application was to be dealt with under the Council's scheme of delegation. However, the application has been called in by Cllr Rachel Bailey to ensure that Highways benefits are acceptable and to consider the impact of the loss of open countryside and the impact on the amenity of the neighbouring bungalow.

The application was deferred from the Southern Planning Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2012 for a further plan to be provided to demonstrate sufficient space for turning, parking and access within the site.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The application site is an industrial unit which is located within the Open Countryside as defined by the Local Plan Proposals Map. The building is an L shaped structure of part brick and part metal clad construction with a height of approximately 7m to ridge. Vehicular access is off Lightwood Green Avenue with an existing parking, turning and external storage

area to the rear. The application property is an isolated industrial premises located on an otherwise residential cul de sac.

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

This application proposes the construction of an extension to the existing building which would be sited to the rear of the existing building. The extension would be 11.5m in width, 19.2m in length, 5m to eaves and 6.2m to ridge. The extension would be constructed from part blockwork and part plastic coated steel cladding. The extension would be in General Industrial (B2) use.

The scheme also includes the change of use of paddock land to the rear of the property to allow additional land for HGV turning and parking. The amended plan shows that the scheme includes an extension of the curtilage into the paddock at a reduced depth of between 2m and 11.5m at a length of 64m.

In addition to the above, proposals include the widening of the existing point of access.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

**P05/0437** – Planning permission approved for Single Storey Extension To Workshop on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2005.

**P99/0962** – Planning permission approved for Extension on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2000.

**P96/0952** – Planning permission approved for Workshop extension on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1997.

**P94/0881** – Positive certificate issued for Certificate of proposed lawful use for general industrial purpose for the manufacture of agricultural and vehicle transportation trailers on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1995.

**7/11498** – Planning permission approved for New spray shop for wood treatment on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1984.

## **POLICIES**

### **Local Plan Policy**

- NE.2 (Open Countryside)
- BE.1 (Amenity)
- BE.2 (Design Standards)
- BE.3 (Access and Parking)
- BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources)
- BE.5 (Infrastructure)
- E.6 (Employment Development with Open Countryside)
- TRAN.9 (Car Parking Standards)

## **Other Considerations**

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

Draft National Planning Policy Framework (2011)

## **CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)**

**Environmental Health** – No objection subject to conditions

**Strategic Highways Manager** – This is an existing operation so the precedent of heavy traffic to and from the premises is set. The application seeks to provide access and turning into and within the site for the existing commercial buildings. Currently they can cause congestion on the public highway and there is merit in highways terms over the current arrangements. The proposals make good sense and would provide betterment in highways terms. Widening of the access can be carried out under section 184 licence. An additional plan showing access detail and turning movements would be useful. Therefore, no highways objections

## **VIEWS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

Two sets of comments received. Initial response states that they would like to raise concerns about access. Currently HGV's trying to enter/exit the site. Suggest a site meeting and a condition put into any approval to ensure that the applicant widens the access.

Second set of comments raise objection that:

- Concern over deliveries and site access
- Existing road very narrow and HGV's using Wood Avens Road to turn
- Damage to road surface
- Business expanded to HGV trailer construction and causing noise nuisance
- Concerns over flooding
- Odour issues
- Site unsuitable for further development

## **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

6 letters of objections received from 5 Lightwood Green Avenue, The Swallows, Aven House, The Holdings, Parish Council and Glenstone House (x2, one prepared by Geoff Allen Associates). The salient points being:

- Existing on street parking
- Existing road poor and HGV's use other roads to turn
- Further increase in activity would damage the road further
- Too many deliveries for road
- No footpath
- Site operates longer working hours than previously approved
- Noise has increased excessively due to nature of business
- Flooding in local area, more development would worsen this

- Nature of business causing smell and breathing problems from spraying.
- Site is unsuitable – would cause development on Green Belt
- No indication given on plans about the widening of the access
- More suitable sites for business in the area
- Development would be clearly visible from Lightwood Green Avenue and from The Holdings and adjoining field
- Proposals would lead to further loss of amenity
- Proposals contrary to Policy E.6 as Policies BE.1, BE.2, BE.3 and BE.4 would not be satisfied.
- Proposed use is incompatible with neighbouring residential uses in principle
- Proposals would bring turning movements close to the side boundary of the property and increase in noise and fumes
- Spare bedroom of Glenstone faces the site at a distance of 600mm from a conifer hedge. Proposals would increase the already unacceptable noise disturbance.
- Pollution of local drainage systems from vehicles
- Proposals would not make a positive contribution or enhance built environment. Would not be of high standard design, does not respect the pattern and form of development.
- Significant incursion into open countryside and extended curtilage unrelated to any physical or existing boundary
- Without landscaping details it would be difficult to determine whether the visual impact could be ameliorated
- Proposals use substandard point of access and junction onto Whitchurch Road and therefore will not provide for public safety.
- Concern over impact to Great Crested Newts and loss of foraging land
- In terms of DNPPF the proposals do not re-use an existing resource but extend onto a non renewable resource
- Site not sustainably located near to existing facilities or public transport
- Increasing the usage of the site would increase number of journeys

Further Objection received from Landform Highways Planning Consultants (on behalf of Glenstone). The salient points being:

- Visibility splays onto Whitchurch Road should be 160m x 2.4m in each direction. Distances of 59m (and only 70m to centreline) can be achieved in the Whitchurch direction
- Junction radii (onto Whitchurch Road) are significantly below the 15m normally required for HGV manoeuvres
- Lightwood Green Avenue is 4.8m in length for 90m reducing to 4.2m for 35m fronting the site. A 4.2m wide carriageway is too narrow to allow a HGV and car to pass. Road therefore unsuitable.
- No footways
- Tracks submitted with application show a tighter turn than is possible for a HGV of this size to show that no access improvement is required. No outbound tracks shown
- The access will need to be widened by 6m and the vehicle crossing by 15m making a total crossing width of 23m.
- The area needed to provide the turning area is less than shown on the plans and requires only a small incursion into the Open Countryside
- Site is too small for current operation

## **APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Design and Access Statement

Additional Site Plan showing turning, parking and external storage.

Letter of comments in response to representations made.

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Principle of development**

This application site is located within the Open Countryside. Policy NE.2 of the Local Plan only allows for appropriate development in such locations. However, Policy E.6, which relates to employment development in the Open Countryside states that employment development will be restricted to appropriate small industries and developments which are within or adjacent to existing employment areas.

The proposed development is of a relatively modest scale, in relation to the existing development on the site, and would be sited within/adjacent to an existing employment site. Therefore the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in principle. The main considerations therefore, are whether the proposed development is of acceptable design as to not cause any harm to the character and appearance of the open countryside/streetscene, and whether the proposals would result in any demonstrable harm on the amenities of nearby residential properties or highway safety issues.

Emerging Policy contained within The Draft National Planning Policy Framework states that a positive approach should be adopted towards economic growth within rural areas, through supporting the sustainable growth of rural businesses.

### **Impact on the character and appearance of the streetscene and Open Countryside**

The proposals would include the construction of an extension to the rear of the existing building. The extension would be 11.5m in width, 19.2m in length, 5m to eaves and 6.2m to ridge. Its height would match the adjacent building. As the proposed development would be sited to the rear of the property views would be limited, however there would be glimpses of the proposed development from Lightwood Green Avenue. Notwithstanding this, it would be seen in the context of the existing industrial development and would not be prominent causing no significant demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene.

The design of the proposed extension would be block work and plastic coated metal cladding. This would be of the same appearance as the existing building and is therefore considered to be of appropriate design.

The scheme also includes an increase of the overall curtilage of the industrial building. The curtilage was previously shown to be extended into the existing paddock at a distance varying from 8m to 14m at a length of 64m. The additional plan submitted shows that such an

incursion into the open countryside would no longer be required and as such the projection into the paddock would now be between 11.5m and 2.5m in depth. Policy E.6 of the Local Plan allows for employment development adjacent to existing employment sites which this development would be. Furthermore, the proposals would not extend beyond an established boundary line further to the west and as such would not project significantly into the wider open countryside to cause adverse harm. In addition to this, it is considered that there are other highways benefits brought by the scheme which would outweigh any harm caused to the open countryside through the loss of part of the paddock as explored below.

However, it is considered that further details to ensure the acceptability of the proposal will be needed. This includes details to be submitted to show what the new boundary treatment would be, along with full details of an appropriate landscaping scheme to help to soften the impact of the proposals, and clarification over external storage. These can however be controlled via conditions.

### **Impact on the Amenity of Nearby Properties**

The proposed development would bring built form closer to an existing bungalow to the rear of the site. This dwelling is within the ownership of the applicants but understood to be privately rented out. The proposed building would be sited at a distance of 15m from windows at the front of the bungalow, however it would not be set immediately to its front. In terms of spacing standards (which are generally applied between dwellings) there is an accepted spacing standard of 13.5m between principal windows and blank elevations. This proposal would therefore satisfy that accepted spacing standard and would not result in any significant harm on the amenities of that property through loss of daylight.

The proposed development would be sited 5m from the boundary with the dwelling to the rear, between which would be an existing single storey structure. The proposed development is therefore unlikely to cause any demonstrable harm through overbearing. The proposed built development would not cause any harm to the amenities of the properties to the north and south of the site through overbearing or loss of daylight.

Concern has been raised from the property to the south, Glenstone House, that the proposals would cause further harm to their amenities. This property is sited very close to the boundary of the application site (at a distance of 600mm), and it is understood that there is a bedroom window facing the boundary. This is an existing relationship between that property and the application site. There is an existing hours of operation condition on the site which restricts the site operating at unsociable hours. Whilst there likely to be an increase in activity at the site resulting from the proposed development, the additional impact would not be so significant to justify a refusal of this scheme do to the existing relationship, scale of proposals and restriction of hours of operation.

Furthermore, no objections have been raised from Environmental Health and have not suggested noise mitigation measures. This is because this is an existing noise generating employment site. As this is only an extension to an existing premises it is considered that it would be unreasonable to alter the operations of the whole unit in terms of hours of operation or hours of deliveries.

## **Impact on Highway Safety**

The application proposals include the widening of the existing access to allow greater ease of access for HGV's visiting the site. The scheme also includes an increase in the level of turning space within the site so that HGV's can enter and exit the site in a forward gear. It is understood that at present HGV's when making deliveries often block Lightwood Green Avenue. This appears to be a significant benefit to the scheme and could be considered to provide weight against any harm that may be caused on the character and appearance of the Open Countryside.

The Strategic Highways Manager has raised no objection to the proposed development. The Strategic Highways Manager notes that this is an existing operation and therefore the precedent of HGV movements to and from the site is set. The existing site arrangements cause HGV to park on and congest the public highway. The proposed development would widen the access and allow for access and egress in a forward gear through the provision of a suitable turning area. As such the proposals would provide highways betterment. The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy BE.3 of the Local Plan.

## **Impact on Protected Species**

The proposed development does not fall within any of the criteria within the "*Guidance on Local Requirements for the Validation of Planning Applications: Biodiversity and Geodiversity Conservation Statements*". Therefore there is no requirement to consider the impact on Protected Species further as the proposals are likely to cause no impact on Protected Species.

## **Drainage and Flooding Issues**

Concern has been raised with regard to the impact that the proposed development could have on Drainage and Flooding issues, the concerns of neighbours is noted. However, it is considered that any additional drainage issues which could arise from this development could be mitigated through a satisfactory drainage condition for surface water run-off. The site is not located within Flood Zone 2 or 3 which are at greater risk of flooding than the application site.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION**

The proposed development forms employment development which is adjacent to an existing employment site within the Open Countryside. The scale of the proposed development is considered to be appropriate and is therefore acceptable. The design of the proposed extension is considered to be acceptable and there would not be any significant harm caused to the amenity of neighbouring properties. It is considered that any harm to the Open Countryside through an increase in curtilage would in this instance be balanced by the benefits which would arise from improvements to Highway safety. The proposal is therefore in compliance with Policies NE.2 (Open Countryside), BE.1 (Amenity), BE.2 (Design Standards), BE.3 (Access and Parking), BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources), BE.5 (Infrastructure), E.6 (Employment Development with Open Countryside) and TRAN.9 (Car Parking Standards) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Approve subjection to the following conditions:**

- 1) Standard Time Limit (3 years)**
- 2) Development to be carried out in accordance with the Approved Plans**
- 3) Materials to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority**
- 4) Details of Surfacing Materials to be submitted**
- 5) External storage to be limited to extent shown on approved plan**
- 6) Details of Boundary treatment and road side gate to be submitted and approved**
- 7) Detailed Landscaping scheme to be submitted**
- 8) Landscaping scheme to be implemented**
- 9) Car Parking Layout to be carried out in compliance with approved plan**
- 10) Proposed access improvements to be carried out to an adoptable standard and implemented prior to first occupation of extension**
- 11) Details of any lighting to be submitted prior to implementation**
- 12) Details of drainage to be submitted and approved**

