

Application No: 12/4426N

Location: Land south of Pym's Lane, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 3PL

Proposal: Proposed development of the site to provide a permanent car park with a total of 1817 car parking spaces plus lorry parking for up to 14 HGV's

Applicant: Mr Garth Robert, Bentley Motor Limited

Expiry Date: 14-Feb-2013

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES

Principle of Development
Design Considerations and Landscaping
Parking, Highway Safety and Traffic Generation
Impact On Protected Species
Impact on Residential Amenity
Drainage and Flooding

REFERRAL

This application is to be determined by the Southern Committee as it is a major development of over 1000sqm.

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

This application relates to an 8ha site situated on the south side of Pym's Lane, Crewe. The site is rectangular in shape and is relatively flat with field boundaries defined by hedgerows and a post and rail fences.

The site is adjoined to the east by a large staff car park for Bentley Motors as well as 'The Legends Sports and Social Club'. The main production plant is further to the east across Sunnybank Road. On the opposite side of Pym's Lane to the north, is the Pym's Lane Waste Recycling Centre as well as other industrial and commercial units and associated parking further along. To the south is the Crewe to Chester railway line which runs within a cutting. There is a domestic property situated along the western boundary of the site and the proposed development would wrap around the rear garden of this dwelling.

The site falls entirely within the settlement boundary of Crewe as designated in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 and occupies part of a larger site waste allocation as designated in the Cheshire Waste Replacement Local Plan.

2. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought to provide a permanent car park with a total of 1817 car parking spaces plus lorry parking for up to 14 HGV's.

The proposed site will form the main car park for engineering staff and associates on the adjacent Bentley Motors site and will replace existing parking areas located around the existing Bentley works. The site will also house a holding area for HGV vehicles, such that these vehicles do not have to stand within the factory roadways when not in use. The site will also house a product marshalling area, to allow vehicles to be stored away from the production area prior to preparation for collection.

The new entrance to the site will give access to Pym's Lane on the north eastern corner of the site, this access will also give access to a proposed showroom, which was recently granted full planning permission (reference 12/4373N). This showroom is proposed adjacent to the marshalling area fronting Pym's Lane to the north of the site.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There is an extensive planning history for the Bentley Motors site. However, the only applications of relevance to this proposal are as follows:

P06/0022 - Outline Planning permission approved for Industrial Storage and Distribution (B1, B2 and B8) on 13th January 2006.

12/4373N - New build showroom with associated car parking approved on 6th February 2013

12/3418N – Full planning permission approved to develop site to provide a permanent car park with a total of 478 parking spaces on 30th November 2012

12/4319N – Resolved to grant full planning permission (subject to S106 Obligation) for the erection of a two storey temporary office accommodation with links to an existing building to accommodate existing staff relocated on site on 1st May 2013

4. PLANNING POLICIES

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

Local Plan Policy

BE.1 Amenity

BE.2 Design Standards

BE.3 Access and Parking
BE.4 Drainage, Utilities and Resources
TRAN.3 Pedestrians
TRAN.8 Existing Car Parks
TRAN.9 Car Parking Standards

Other Material Policy Considerations

The Cheshire Waste Local Plan

5. OBSERVATIONS OF CONSULTEES (EXTERNAL TO PLANNING)

Environmental Health

No objection subject to conditions relating to hours of construction / use, a scheme to minimise dust emissions during demolition / construction, contaminated land, external lighting and submission of an updated Green Travel Plan.

Highways

No objection, subject to provision of visibility splays at the proposed access and the provision of pedestrian facilities for users.

United Utilities (UU):

No objection provided that the site is drained in accordance with the submitted FRA, insofar as all surface water flows generated from this development to be discharged into the adjacent Leighton Brook watercourse must receive the prior consent of The Environment Agency.

Sport England

No objection given that the proposal is on agricultural land adjacent to the sports ground and does not affect the pitches or any other sports facilities.

Natural England:

No comment. The LPA should assess and take into account potential impacts on protected species and biodiversity.

Environment Agency:

No objection – subject to the following comments;

The submitted Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy suggest that proposals are to discharge surface water from the developed site to the existing drains situated through the Bentley Moors Sunnybank car park. This is in turn understood to be routed via the existing water treatment plant to the north of Pym's Lane, which outfalls to Leighton Brook via a combined public sewer. This is considered acceptable in principle. However, evidence should be provided at the detailed design stage to confirm that there is sufficient capacity within the

existing drainage network to accept the anticipated flows from the proposed development. The discharge of surface water should, wherever practicable, be by Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

Conditions requiring a scheme to limit surface water runoff and a scheme to manage the risk of flooding from overland flow of surface water are recommended.

6. VIEWS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

N/A

7. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

None received

8. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Main Issues

The main issues in the consideration of this application is the principle of the suitability of the site for use as a car park, the loss of a waste site allocation, the impact that the proposals would have on the character and appearance of the area, highways and parking, ecological considerations and neighbouring amenity.

Principle of Development

This application proposes the creation of a car park with 1817 car parking spaces plus lorry parking for up to 14 HGV's. In terms of the local plan, the site is within the settlement boundary where development is acceptable provided that it is compatible with surrounding uses and accords with other relevant local plan policies.

In terms of compatibility, the use of this land is for a purpose which is ancillary to the adjacent employment use at Bentley Motors and is therefore considered to be acceptable and complimentary in principle when considering the proposal against the Crewe Local Plan. Additionally, this end of the Pym's Lane area is predominantly commercial / industrial and therefore in land use terms, the proposal would not conflict with neighbouring uses.

Nonetheless, owing to its location near to the Pym's Lane Household Waste and Recycling Centre, the site comprises part of a waste allocation (WM16A) in The Cheshire Waste Local Plan. As such, the site has been considered suitable in principle for the development of a range of waste management facilities with the purpose of forming part of an integrated network of sites capable of making adequate provision for waste arising within Cheshire. Thus, the loss of this allocation for potential future waste management uses needs to be considered.

The Council's Spatial Plans section has confirmed that whilst the site subject of this application is within a waste allocation, the site is not actually safeguarded for waste use. Coupled with the recently approved application for the proposed showroom, the proposal would see the total loss of this allocation.

The Council's Waste Strategy Manager has confirmed that they are not aware of any future plans to extend the adjacent Pym's Lane Household Waste and Recycling facility into the allocation relating to this site and as such it is considered that its loss would not impact on the borough's strategic provision of waste sites. This is supported by the fact that since the site was identified; no further progress has been made in terms of considering the potential of bringing forward the site for waste uses. Additionally, it is unlikely that the site would be capable of being delivered for waste given that it is already within the ownership of Bentley Motors.

Furthermore, the former Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council previously approved an application (reference P06/0022) for the redevelopment of the site for industrial storage and distribution. As such, the loss of this allocation has been considered and accepted previously and there are no material changes at this current time, that would change this position. The site has traditionally been recognised as an 'owner-specific' employment site and has been held as a potential expansion site for Rolls Royce and subsequently Bentley Motors, hence why it was included in the settlement boundary.

It is also important to acknowledge that the proposals will assist in the economic growth of Bentley Motors, a large local employer who are seeking to improve and reconfigure their facilities and existing parking arrangements which currently limit future expansion. This proposal would enable Bentley Motors to work more effectively and efficiently within the main production areas of the plant to enable future growth. As such, there are clear benefits arising from the scheme that would support job creation and the economic growth of the locality and the Borough. It is considered that such benefits would outweigh the loss of the site for potential waste uses and would accord with the overarching aims of the NPPF in terms of supporting sustainable economic development. The principle of this development is therefore considered to be acceptable and in line with local and national policy.

Design and Landscaping Considerations

The proposed car park will be set back from the Pym's Lane road frontage which is already defined by a mix of post and rail fence and hedgerows. The proposed access is to be located at the location of an existing field access from Pym's Lane where there is some soft landscaping between the site boundary and Pym's Lane. The proposed entry would give access to a new circulation road, which will permit access to the car parking and HGV standings areas at the rear of the site (south). A mini-roundabout will be sited 15m from the northern boundary which provides a possible access to a proposed showroom to the northwest and to the land to the east which is currently the existing Sunny Bank Road Car Park.

The proposed layout would be respectful of existing site boundaries and neighbouring uses and the larger HGV vehicles would be accommodated towards the far rear extent of the site where they would be less evident. Having regard to pattern and character of the existing development in the area, and given that the proposal will not introduce any buildings or built structures, in design terms, it is not considered that the proposals will cause detrimental harm to the visual appearance of the site.

With respect to the impact on the wider area, there are no landscape designations on the site itself. In the Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment, the site lies within the Landscape character type 7: East Lowland Plain, specifically in the Wimboldsley Character Area 5. The site is typical of the character type of a predominantly flat, large scale landscape. The Council's Landscape Officer considers that the site has the landscape capacity to accommodate the proposed development provided that details of any proposed peripheral mounding and a detailed landscape scheme are secured by condition. However, it was recommended that greater consideration be given to retention of an existing mid-site hedgerow.

Where proposed development is likely to result in the loss of existing agricultural hedgerows which are more than 30 years old, it is considered that they should be assessed against the criteria in the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 in order to ascertain if they qualify as 'Important'. Should any hedgerows be found to be 'Important' under any of the criteria in the Regulations, this would be a significant material consideration in the determination of the application.

The criteria in Part II of Schedule 1 identify hedgerows of significant archaeological, historical or wildlife value for which planting is no substitute. The hedgerow to be removed is within the centre of the field and due to the separation with Pym's Lane and Middlewich Road, does not significantly contribute to enclosing the field. It is not of archaeological or historical value and in terms of wildlife, other planting could mitigate for the loss. As such, whilst the agent has confirmed that the hedgerow cannot be incorporated into the scheme, amended plans have been secured which will allow more planting to be introduced to the site boundaries with some internal planting as well. Consequently, it is considered that the loss of the hedgerow could be compensated for.

Provided that existing boundary hedges are supplemented and retained, the nature of the proposal i.e. no built structures, will mean that the proposal will not appear intrusive within from views of Pym's Lane. This additional planting will need to be secured by condition. It is recommended that native species planting is incorporated to offset the loss of the grassland in the interests of nature conservation. As such, it is considered that the proposal would be respectful to the surrounding landscape.

Parking, Highway Safety and Traffic Generation

Policy BE.3 deals with access and parking and states that development will only be permitted where proposals provide:

- safe pedestrian access
- the provision of any off street parking
- manoeuvring and operational space should be designed to minimise visual impact
- safe vehicular access and egress arrangements

The development will increase parking available to the Bentley factory plant which access to the site to be provided directly off Pym's Lane. The new access can provide the required level of visibility to the facilities proposed although there is need to remove two existing trees in order for the visibility splays of 2.4m x 120m to be achieved. The Strategic Highways Manager has no objections to the car parking layout and quantum of spaces proposed.

Pedestrian access to the site will be taken midway along the site through the adjacent sports and social club which will provide safer and shorter routes to the main production plant rather than around onto Pym's Lane. The Strategic Highways Manager has recommended the provision of a footway and a pedestrian crossing/s further along Pym's Lane, but it is considered that these would not be required as a consequence of this development. This proposal will not encourage pedestrian movement across Pym's Lane as it is on the same side of the road as the plant. Accordingly, the provision of such would not meet the CIL tests of being necessary and reasonably related to the development to be permitted.

Members will recall that these crossing/s would be needed to mitigate for the impacts of the proposed office accommodation considered under planning reference 12/4319N and as such, will be secured as part of that development. The scheme is found to be in compliance with local plan policy BE.3.

Impact on Protected Species

The Council's Nature Conservation has considered the application. Having regard to the surroundings, the Nature Conservation Officer considers that whilst the proposal will result in the loss of some grassland, the impact will only be at the local level. A suitably managed native species planting would help towards compensating for the loss of biodiversity associated with the proposed development. This will be secured as part of the landscaping scheme. There may be potential for breeding birds and therefore a condition relating to breeding birds is recommended. Consequently, the scheme is deemed acceptable in terms of nature conservation considerations.

Impact on Residential Amenity

The nearest residential properties front onto Middlewich Road to the West and include Brassey Bank, Bridge Farm and Oakleigh Farm. The latter would be mostly affected by the proposal given that the application site wraps around three of its boundaries. However, the proposal is for a surface level car park without the addition of any built structures and therefore there would be no visual intrusion or loss of light. In terms of the use, provided that the boundaries are dealt with properly, which could be secured by condition, the proposal would not materially harm neighbouring residential amenity. The scheme is therefore deemed to be compliant with local plan policy BE.1.

Drainage and Flooding

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been carried out to determine the impact of the proposed development on flooding. In accordance with the NPPF and local policy, the FRA has considered the impact on the surface water regime in the area should development occur. The Environment Agency has confirmed that the redevelopment of the site is considered to be acceptable with the use of appropriate conditions. Conditions requiring a scheme to limit surface water runoff and a scheme to manage the risk of flooding from overland flow of surface water are recommended. With the imposition of such conditions, the impact that the development would have on flood risk would be acceptable.

10. REASONS FOR APPROVAL

The principle of the development is compatible with surrounding land uses and would facilitate the delivery of new jobs and economic growth for Bentley Motors, a large local employer. Whilst the site does form part of a waste allocation in the Cheshire Waste Replacement Local Plan, it is considered that this loss would not impact on the borough's strategic provision of waste sites, and would not be capable of being delivered due to ownership issues. In any event, it is concluded that the benefits of the scheme would outweigh this loss. The design of the proposals would not impact detrimentally on the character or appearance of the site subject to appropriate landscaping. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact upon residential amenity, highways and parking and it therefore complies with the relevant local plan policy requirements and accordingly is recommended for approval.

11. RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:-

- 1. Standard 3 year time limit**
- 2. Accordance with Approved / Amended Plans**
- 3. to be submitted**
- 4. Landscaping submission – to include native species and details of any mounding**
- 5. Landscaping implementation**
- 6. Breeding bird survey to be carried out prior to commencement of any works during nesting season**
- 7. Construction of Access in accordance with approved plans**
- 8. Hours of construction limited**
- 9. Hours of operation limited**
- 10. Submission of scheme to minimise dust emissions during demolition / construction**
- 11. Details of lighting to be submitted prior to first use**
- 12. Drainage details to be carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment**
- 13. Scheme to limit surface water runoff**
- 14. scheme to manage the risk of flooding from overland flow of surface water**
- 15. Levels and ground modelling works**

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