

Application No: 15/0202C

Location: SPANSET LTD, TELFORD WAY, MIDDLEWICH, CW10 0HX

Proposal: Proposed refurbishment of existing training facilities, creation of new reception and classrooms and associated external alterations, additional 44 car parking spaces. Change of current building use from B1, B2 and B8 to mixed use.

Applicant: Peter Ward, Spanset Ltd

Expiry Date: 22-Apr-2015

## **SUMMARY**

The NPPF requires that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. Furthermore, it is advised that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. The acceptability of the proposal with regards to sustainability is dependent on the scheme meeting these requirements.

The principle of the development to change the use to include a non-residential training use (D1 Use), which already operates from the site is considered to be acceptable in this location subject to its adherence with other local plan policies.

It is considered that the application would deliver significant economic benefits assisting with the expansion of an existing business. No environmental or social issues would be created.

As such, it is considered that the development would represent a sustainable development and as such, is recommended for approval.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE subject to conditions**

## **REASON FOR REFERRAL**

The Cheshire East Council's Scheme of delegation advises that applications for commercial/industrial development between 1,000-9,999 square metres should be classified as a Small Scale Major Development and should be referred to Committee. This development seeks to change the use of an area of approximately 1,511 square metres.

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

The application site is positioned within the Middlewich Settlement Boundary and relates to an existing industrial/training use.

On 29<sup>th</sup> May 1990, planning permission was granted for the erection of the application unit for 'B1, B2 and B8 uses.'

Given that a non-residential training centre falls within the D1 use class, the application seeks the use to include this as well as the retention of the existing manufacturing and office elements.

As part of the development, the following alterations are sought;

#### Front elevation (north)

- Insertion of x3 large first floor windows within the principal elevation
- Replacement of double entrance door with window
- Creation of a ground floor new entrance to the building, which will include a canopy

#### Side elevation (west)

- Conversion of existing pedestrian door to a window
- Insertion of a pedestrian fire door

#### Landscaping changes

Forward of the location of the newly created entrance to the training facilities at the site, the application proposes to include a new paved area, remove 2 car parking spaces and make minor alterations to the landscaping

#### Car park

The proposal seeks the creation of a further 44 new car parking spaces to the rear of the application unit. Some of these parking spaces have already been created. Where the new parking spaces are proposed currently comprises of a lawn area.

### **SITE DESCRIPTION**

This application relates to Spanset Ltd, a height safety, lifting, load control and training company located on the southern side of Telford Way within the Midpoint 18 industrial estate, Middlewich within the Middlewich Settlement Zone Line.

The application site comprises of a rectangular shaped double-height building with a mixture of open brick and metal clad walls.

To the front of the site is a car park, to the rear numerous outbuildings and hard standing can be found which is also used for training purposes.

### **RELEVANT HISTORY**

**06/0706/FUL** - Installation of 21 metre training tower to complement existing height safety training facilities – Approved 21<sup>st</sup> September 2006

**04/0331/FUL** - Three storey steel framed building clad vertically on 3 sides with ground floor classroom for 'working at height' training – Approved 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2004

**32190/3** - Erection of steel clad portal frame building to be used as a service workshop – Approved 14<sup>th</sup> August 2000

**29696/3** - Erection of 30m freestanding tower for purposes of providing specialist high level training to the emergency services and others – Approved 10<sup>th</sup> February 1998

**23629/9** - Company sign and 3 no. Flag poles – Approved 10<sup>th</sup> September 1991

**20943/A** - Industrial unit for B1, B2 and B8 uses – Approved 29<sup>th</sup> May 1990

**20943/1** - Phase 3, use classes A2 and B1 to B8 inclusive – Approved 17<sup>th</sup> October 1989

## **NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICIES**

### **National policy**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Of particular relevance to this application are paragraphs; 17 (Core planning principles), 1-22 (Strong, competitive economy) and 56-68 (Good design)

### **Development Plan**

The Development Plan for this area is the Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review 2005.

The relevant Saved Policies are: PS4 (Towns), E10 (Re-use or Re-development of Existing Employment Sites), GR1 (General Criteria for Development), GR2 (Design), GR4 (Landscaping), GR6 (Amenity and Health) and GR9 (Highways & Parking)

The saved Local Plan policies are consistent with the NPPF and should be given full weight.

### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version (CELP)**

The following are considered relevant material considerations as indications of the emerging strategy:

SD1 (Sustainable Development in Cheshire East), SD2 (Sustainable Development Principles), SE1 (Design), SE2 (Efficient Use of Land), SE4 (The Landscape), EG3 (Existing and Allocated Employment Sites) and CO1 (Sustainable Travel and Transport)

## **CONSULTATIONS**

**Strategic Highways Manager** – No objections

**Coal Authority** – No objections

**Environmental Protection** – No objections, subject to an hours of construction informative

**Environment Agency - No objections**

## **VIEWS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL:**

Middlewich Town Council have not provided any comments at time of report

## **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

Neighbour notification letters were sent to adjoining occupants and a site notice posted. No letters have been received.

## **APPRAISAL**

The key issues are:

- The principle of the development
- The impact of the design
- The impact upon neighbouring amenity
- The impact upon highway safety

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

The National Planning Policy Framework definition of sustainable development is:

*“Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don’t mean worse lives for future generations. Development means growth. We must accommodate the new ways by which we will earn our living in a competitive world. We must house a rising population, which is living longer and wants to make new choices. We must respond to the changes that new technologies offer us. Our lives, and the places in which we live them, can be better, but they will certainly be worse if things stagnate. Sustainable development is about change for the better, and not only in our built environment”*

The NPPF determines that sustainable development includes three dimensions:- economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

**an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

**an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy

**a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality

built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being;

These roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent.

### **Economic Role**

Policy PS4 of the Local Plan advises that within the settlement zone lines, there is a general presumption in favour of development providing it is in keeping with the towns scale and character and does not conflict with other policies in the Local Plan.

Policy E3 of the Local Plan refers to employment development in towns. It is advised that development will be permitted provided that; the proposal does not utilise a site which is allocated or committed for any other purpose in the Local Plan; the proposal is appropriate to the local character in terms of its use, intensity, scale and appearance; the proposal complies with Policy GR1 and that the proposal accords with other relevant local plan policies.

The site is not committed for any particular purpose within the local plan. However, historically this site was committed for employment development as part of the Midpoint 18 site. As the proposal seeks to regularise and expand its existing training facilities within this partial industrial / part training company, an employment use shall continue to operate.

The site is surrounded by industrial and commercial development. As such, the change of use of this site from B1, B2 and B8 use to B1, B2, B8 and D1 mixed use would be appropriate subject to its adherence with other relevant local plan policies.

With regards to intensity, scale and appearance, the only additional built form sought includes the provision of an entrance canopy and the laying of hard standing. As such, in terms of these considerations, the development would be in keeping with the general intensity of the surrounding sites.

It is advised within the submission that the proposed physical alterations would be constructed from materials to match the existing building. This would include; double-glazed thermally broken aluminium framed fenestration to match the existing in terms of colour. No details of the canopy material have been provided.

Subject to this detail being secured via condition, the design would not appear incongruous within its setting.

As a result of the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would adhere with Policies PS4 and E3 of the Local Plan and be acceptable in principle.

Paragraph 19 of the NPPF advises that '*significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.*' As such, the NPPF largely supports the principle of the development and the above Local Plan Policies that apply in this case.

As such, it is considered that the development would be economically sustainable.

### **Environmental role**

## Landscape, Trees and Ecology

Given that the development relates to an existing employment site, enclosed by employment development on 3 sides and given the minor scale of the built form proposed, it is not considered that there would be any wider landscape issues created by the proposed development.

With regards to the landscaping of the site itself, the development will result in the disruption and reduction of an area of existing soft landscape to the front of the building and an area of grass to the rear. The Council's Landscape Officer has advised that the works will not have significant wider landscape impacts. However, it has been recommended that in the event of approval a condition is recommended to ensure that the frontage is restored/replanted via the implementation of landscaping conditions.

The Council's Ecologist has advised that he does not anticipate there being any significant ecological issues associated with the proposed development.

## Highways

The application proposes to remove 2 existing parking spaces to the front of the site and erect a further 44 new parking spaces to the rear. The parking spaces to the rear would be accessed via an existing driveway along the east of the building.

The Strategic Highways Manager (SHM) has reviewed the application and has advised that the proposed additional off-street parking is sufficient to serve a full attendance of delegates as well as training staff. In this respect, the proposal is considered to meet appropriate parking standards.

The access route is unchanged and satisfactory for the development.

As such, the SHM raises no objections and it is considered that the proposed development would adhere with Policy GR9 of the Local Plan and no highways issues would be created.

No significant issues relating to tree, ecology, flood risk and drainage issues would be created by the proposed development.

As such, subject to the inclusion of landscaping conditions, it is considered that the proposed development would be environmentally sustainable.

## **Social Role**

Given the location of the site within an industrial estate, there are no neighbouring residential properties within close proximity. As such, no issues with regards to loss of privacy, light or visual intrusion would be created.

In terms of environmental disturbance, the Council's Environmental Protection Team have advised that they have no objections, subject to an hours of construction informative.

The application does not create any social concerns and is therefore considered to be socially sustainable.

## **Planning Balance**

The site is designated as being within the Settlement Zone Line of Middlewich where there is a presumption in favour of development so long that that the site is not utilised for any other purpose in the Local Plan and provided that the development it is in keeping with the local character and scale and does not conflict with other policies of the local plan.

The NPPF supports economic growth.

From an economic sustainability perspective, the scheme will assist in the growth and expansion of an existing employment site. In addition, the proposal would create local benefits in the local area during construction and will provide local employment opportunities. As such, it is considered that the scheme is economically sustainable.

From an environmental sustainability perspective, the scheme will not create any impacts with regards to; landscape, trees, ecology, flooding or drainage subject to landscaping conditions and would also be of an acceptable design, subject to a number of conditions. It is also considered that no new highway safety or parking, issues would be created. As such, it is considered that the site is environmentally sustainable.

From a social perspective, no issues would be created.

As such, it is considered that the development would be sustainable and is therefore recommended for approval.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE subject to conditions;**

- 1. Time (3 years)**
- 2. Plans**
- 3. Materials to match existing**
- 4. Landscaping (details)**
- 5. Landscaping (Implementation)**

**Informatives:**

- 1. NPPF**
- 2. Hours of construction**

**In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Strategic & Economic Planning, in consultation with the Chair (or in his absence the Vice Chair) of Southern Planning Committee, to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.**

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