

Application No:	09/4074N
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:	Reserved Matters
Ward:	Doddington, Crewe & Nantwich and Alsager, Congleton
Registration Date:	
Earliest Determination Date:	
Expiry Date:	
Date report Prepared	27 January 2010
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.

REASON FOR REPORT

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

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.

At the Strategic Planning Board Meeting on 19 August 2009, outline approval was granted for the redevelopment of the manufacturing building subject to conditions (ref. 09/1285C). This current applications seeks approval for the matters that were reserved as part of the earlier scheme with the exception of the details for the replacement firing range. This element of the scheme will be subject to a separate application at a later date.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

As indicated, the application is for the approval of a number of reserved matters and seeks permission for the development of a manufacturing building, associated site access road, a security gatehouse, car parking, landscaping and ancillary infrastructure.

As set out in the outline application, 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.

RELEVANT HISTORY

Application P08/0131 was granted consent by Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council for the redevelopment of part of the adjoining employment site in 2008. This scheme was for the construction of 41 new small units for B1, B1(c), B2 and B8 uses.

Prior to the submission of the outline 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 under consideration did not comprise development under Schedule 2 of the regulations and could therefore be considered under the normal planning regime.

Of particular relevance is the recent approval in August 2009 for application 09/1285C which is the outline consent under which these reserved matters are being considered.

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

PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth

PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control
PPG24: Planning and Noise

Local Plan Policies

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.

CONSIDERATIONS (External to Planning)

Highways:

The Strategic Highways and Transportation Manager has viewed the above application and considered the evidence in the Traffic Statement provided by Cass Associates, via a scope agreed with CEC Highway Authority engineers.

The Traffic Statement clearly defines the traffic implications of the proposed development and demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Strategic Transport and Highways Manager that the traffic generation from the development will not have any material impact on the local highway infrastructure.

In fact the Traffic Statement gives evidence demonstrating that there is likely to be a reduction in trips from the site, and therefore once the proposed development is operating at intended levels, there will in fact be betterment in local highway terms.

The Strategic Highways Manager therefore recommends that the Local Planning Authority secure by condition the following:

- A construction management plan.
- A Travel Plan for the proposed development, within 6 months of commencement of development.

Environmental Health:

At the time of writing, no comments have been received.

In respect of the outline application, the Environmental Health Officer did not raise any objection to the proposal in principle but suggested a series of conditions relating to the control of noise and the protection of air quality. These were placed on the outline application decision notice.

Nature Conservation Officer

No objection to the scheme although it has been suggested that when the future application for the firing range is submitted, the location of the range is reconsidered to ensure the development does not conflict with a nearby area of rough habitat/ scrubland.

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.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Environment Agency

The Environment Agency have considered the application.

No objection is raised although an informative is recommended in respect of seeking to utilise native species in the landscaping scheme.

A series of conditions were placed on the outline approval in respect of flooding and contamination based on the Agencies comments on the earlier scheme.

Natural England

No comments received at the time of writing.

Neighbours

No representations have been received from neighbours.

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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

- Design and Access Statement
- Traffic Statement
- Planning Statement
- Ecological Surveys including bats, breeding birds, invertebrates, reptiles and a Phase I habitat survey
- Landscape specification
- Construction management plan including assessment of viability of use of rail link

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principal of Development

The principal of development of the building has already been accepted through the approval granted to the outline application in August last year.

In addition to the support the application received through Policy DP 4 "Make the Best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure" in the Regional Spatial Strategy, the proposal is also in compliance with the aims of the new PPS4 "Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth".

Policy EC10 of PPS4 indicates that Councils should take a positive approach to economic development proposal especially if they are sustainable in terms addressing climate change and minimising carbon usage and are also accessible by a range of travel modes.

Highways

In addition to the request for a site management plan, a Travel Plan has also been requested. Whilst this recommendation would normally be considered as a possible condition, it is felt given the enhanced weight given to sustainability by PPS4, the requirement for a Travel Plan is now felt to be essential. Accordingly, this is put forward as a condition.

Design

The building is similar in appearance to that shown on the indicative drawings that accompanied the outline application and has a floor area of approximately 19,100 m sq. A brick clad two storey office element is to be provided on the western end of the building. The main part of the property would be similar to many other employment premises being of portal framed construction with a single apex.

Few openings are to be provided in the factory with loading bays situated on the northern element facing towards the access road within the site.

The proposed gatehouse at the entrance to the car park is of a similar design to the building and office block element being flat roofed.

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.

Ecology

No objection is raised in respect of ecology and conditions on the outline scheme ensure the scheme will be undertaken in accordance with the earlier ecology reports and protect breeding birds.

Site Management

The applicants have submitted a detailed site management plan. Not only does this explain the methods the developer will use to construct the property but how the site compound will work and importantly, site security measures.

This approach should ensure that development does not impact on the public highways or neighbours.

Rail Access

A condition was placed on the outline application requiring the site management plan to show how usage could be made of the adjacent rail line.

The applicants have considered this in their Site Management Statement but have found it not to be viable for four specific reasons. These are firstly, the use a rail head would require specialist staff and incur a security risk which would be problematic on a munitions factory, secondly, the cost of bringing the rail head into use would be prohibitively expensive. Thirdly the cost of continual use post development would be expensive and result in difficulty in ensuring delivery to clients many of whom are not directly on the rail network and finally, the provision of a rail head would bring about significant time delays.

Although the site produced millions of bullets and other munitions each year, these are very small items but very dense in weight. Accordingly, the shipments leaving the site are often partially empty not due to inefficiencies in the process but weight restrictions on the vehicles.

Whilst the argument that the use of rail would necessitate employing specialist staff carries little weight in supporting the applicants case not to proceed with this element of the development, the other concerns especially the ability to maintain deliveries to clients, it is felt that the applicants have provided sufficient evidence to show that the use of rail in this instance would not be economically viable nor would it fully meet clients needs for flexibility of delivery.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

After consideration, it is felt that the proposed development will not have a detrimental impact on the character of the surrounding area or neighboring properties. Furthermore, as the development is in accordance with national and local planning policy and the parameters set in the outline application, it is recommended that approval subject to conditions be granted.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve subject to conditions.

Conditions

Time Limits: Reserved Matters

Development in accordance with approved plans

Travel Plan to be submitted and implemented

Development to be undertaken in accordance with submitted site management scheme

