

Planning Reference No:	10/2481N
Application Address:	Meadow Bank, Groby Road, Crewe, CW1 4NA
Proposal:	Proposed Rebuilding of Industrial Units following Fire Damage to the Existing Units
Applicant:	Mr Beeson
Application Type:	Full Planning
Grid Reference:	371317 357497
Ward:	Crewe East
Earliest Determination Date:	10 th August 2010
Expiry Dated:	22 nd September 2010
Date of Officer's Site Visit:	19 th July 2010
Date Report Prepared:	17 th August 2010
Constraints:	Open Countryside

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of Development
- Impact on Streetscene/Open Countryside
- Impact on Amenity of adjacent properties
- Impact on highway safety
- Contaminated Land - Gas

1. REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is to be determined by the Southern Planning Committee as it forms industrial floorspace that exceeds 1000sqm.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site forms an industrial unit which is largely constructed from plastic coated profile metal sheets with brick faced offices to the front elevation. The building is currently unusable as it has been significantly damaged by fire. The building is approximately 29.5m deep at a width of 32m, a 14.3m wide by 5.3m deep office block is sited to the front elevation. The height to eaves and ridge is 6.4m and 11m respectively. The site is in an untidy state with external storage occurring on all sides of the building. However, this may be a consequence of the building's condition. Existing operations are being carried out from portacabins. The site is located to the north-east of Crewe on Groby Road, which is within the Open Countryside as defined by the Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council Local Plan 2011 Proposals Map. There is a public footpath crossing the field to the south which also passes the rear of the site. To the south, north and west are well established vegetated boundaries of varying heights, while the eastern boundary is defined by a 2m height post and wire fence with the site clearly visible.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This application proposes the redevelopment of the existing building with a structure that would be 37m in depth, 32m in width and a maximum height of 8.5m, the scheme also proposes an office section to the front of the building which would project by 5.2m and be 14.2m in width. The whole building would be larger than the existing structure by 248sqm. It is proposed that the building would be used for a General Industrial B2 use.

4. RELEVANT HISTORY

P03/0942 – Planning permission was approved for the alteration of Condition 6 on P95/0186 to permit storage and parking of vehicles on land to the rear of the building was approved on 9th January 2004.

P02/1411 – A retrospective planning application for the Change of Use of the building to a food drying plant was found to be Permitted Development on 10th March 2003.

P02/0289 – A planning application was withdrawn for the removal of condition 5 (opening hours) attached to P95/0186 on 15th April 2002.

P95/0186 – Planning permission was approved for a Factory/Warehouse Building on 1st June 1995.

P94/0694 – Planning permission was refused for Factory, warehouse and distribution centre on 17th November 1994.

P91/0013 – Planning permission was approved for Change of use storage/maintenance depot 13th November 1991.

7/13135 – Planning permission was approved for the Replacement of flat roof with tiles pitched roof on 12th May 1986.

7/12308 – Planning permission was approved for Extension to form storage/warehousing area on 3rd September 1995.

7/08957 – Planning permission was approved for a vehicle maintenance building on 10th June 1982.

7/08956 – Planning permission was approved for an extension to slaughter house on 10th June 1982.

7/08601 – Planning permission was approved for an Extension of an existing boiler house on 10th December 1981.

7/03836 – Planning permission was approved for Workshop for storage of general work tools on 4th May 1978.

7/03755 – Planning permission was approved for Addition office accommodation on 4th May 1978.

5. POLICIES

The development plan is the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011 (LP).

The relevant development plan policies are:

Local Plan Policy

BE.1 Amenity
BE.2 Design Standards
BE.3 Access and Parking
BE.4 Drainage, Utilities and Resources
BE.5 Infrastructure
BE.6 Development on Potentially Contaminated Land
NE.2 Open Countryside
NE.17 Pollution Control
E.4 Development on Existing Employment Areas
E.6 Employment Development within Open Countryside Locations

National Policy

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth
PPG13: Transport
PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control

6. CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Strategic Highways Manager: No highways objections

Environmental Health: No objections subject to comments:

- Due to proximity to neighbours and potential for noise the building along with equipment to be acoustically attenuated in accordance with a scheme to be submitted
- No noisy work outside the premises
- Noisy work inside – doors and windows to be closed
- Hours of working - 8am-6pm Monday to Saturday
- Scheme of external lighting to be submitted and approved
- Hours of construction to be restricted

Environmental Health (Contaminated Land): No objection to the above application subject to the following comments:

- Risk from a potentially gassing source as it is located adjacent to Maw Green Landfill Site
- Prior to the commencement of development, a full gas survey should be undertaken so the gas regime of the site can be determined to ensure that suitable gas protection measures are installed into the building, if required.
- Results and protection measures to be submitted and approved by LPA and any protection measures carried out.

7. VIEWS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

N/A

8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

One letter of objection received from 108 Groby Road, objecting on the grounds that:

- Building is out of character with the area and should have been sited on an industrial estate
- Concerned that Highways have raised no objections as the land is not sufficient for the loading or unloading of vehicles which have previously been carried out on the highway which contributes to highway danger
- Object to the operating hours – should not have to put up with nuisance at weekends

9. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Design and Access Statement submitted, the salient points being:

- Increased size by 248sqm
- Building to be built on existing footprint with same access
- Pre-application discussions held with LPA
- Existing building destroyed by fire in December 2009
- Two bay portal framed structure with cladding
- Floor area is 1332sqm
- On same footprint as destroyed building
- Height will be 8.5m
- Proposals do not affect the landscaping arrangements
- Building will be clad with profiled and flat sheeting in various shades of grey
- Office building will be clad to match the existing so that it appears as one building rather than an “add-on”

10. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

Within Open Countryside locations Local Plan Policy E.6 restricts employment development to appropriate small scale developments within or adjacent to existing employment areas. The proposed development which would comprise a total of 1332sqm of employment floorspace cannot be considered to be smallscale. However, this is not the only consideration in this instance. The application site has been in employment use for over 20 years and there is an existing large-scale structure on the site which, although the building has been fire damaged, is largely in tact. Therefore, a replacement building of the proposed scale in this Open Countryside location is considered to be acceptable.

Impact on Streetscene/Open Countryside

The site is located within the Open Countryside and a building of the proposed scale has the potential to cause harm to its character and appearance. Views of the building are afforded along Groby Road when approached from both the south and north. There is an existing structure in place which this proposal seeks to replace. The proposal

would be of a reduced total height to ridge of 8.5m which is 2.5m lower than existing although its footprint would be slightly larger with a greater depth which is increased by 7.5m. It is considered that the reduction in ridge height would help to reduce the prominence of the building in the Open Countryside, whilst its increase in depth would be sited to the rear with the front building line remaining as is. As the proposed development would replace an untidy structure it is considered that there would be improvements to the overall character and appearance. To ensure that the building is of appropriate design and appearance details of the materials to be used should be submitted and agreed by the LPA.

Views of the building would be possible from the public footpath which crosses the field to the south and then passes the rear of the site. The rear boundary is only defined by a 2m high post and wire fence. An opportunity exists to improve the landscaping of the site particularly along its rear (eastern) boundary. This would help to reduce the impact of the proposed building from public vantage points along this footpath.

Discussions with the applicant's agent have confirmed that it is proposed to have external storage on the site. Planning permission P03/0952 allowed for the external storage of vehicles on land to the rear of the premises at a height of up to 3m. It is not considered that external storage across the whole of the site would be acceptable because it would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Open Countryside. No indication of where the applicant wishes external storage to be sited has been submitted on any plan. It is therefore considered that a condition requiring details to where external storage is to be sited should be submitted and agreed. The land to the rear of the site has previously been accepted as a suitable location for external storage as this is sited away from Groby Road. Improved landscaping along the rear (eastern) boundary would help to reduce the visual impact from the public footpath. A condition restricting the height of external storage to 3m is also considered to be necessary and reasonable.

The existing on site operations are being carried out in portakabins. It is considered that there will be no need for these structures once the development has been completed and therefore a condition requiring their removal is also considered to be appropriate.

Industrial buildings benefit from Permitted Development Rights for extensions and alterations and there would be scope within this site for some further development under those provisions. Given the Open Countryside location of the site and the fact that this would be a large building the removal of Permitted Development Rights is considered to be appropriate.

Impact on the Amenity of adjacent properties

General industrial development as proposed has the potential to cause nuisance to neighbouring properties particularly through noise and disturbance. Policy BE.1 (Amenity) states that development should not have an adverse impact on adjoining properties through noise and disturbance. There are residential properties located 55m to the west (building to building) and over 100m to the south of the site. Applications should not be refused if there are conditions which can overcome the potential impact. In this instance, Environmental Health have not objected to the proposals but have suggested a number of conditions to help reduce the noise and disturbance impact that would be caused by this development. These include; details of acoustic attenuation, restriction of external noisy works, windows and doors to be closed during carrying out

of noisy works, and a restriction of operating hours. It is considered that through the implementation of these restrictions the proposed development would not have a significantly detrimental impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties through noise and disturbance. It should also be noted that, until recently, there has been an industrial activity occurring on the site which ceased following fire damage to the building in December 2009. Whilst the objections raised in relation to the proposed operating hours are noted, it is considered that the requirements of the proposed conditions would reduce the harm on neighbouring properties.

The impact of light pollution is also an important consideration in this open countryside location where harm could be more prominent. No details of external lighting have been submitted however it is likely that this would be required, particularly in the winter months. It is therefore suggested that a condition is attached to any permission for details to be submitted prior to the installation of any external lighting.

The building is proposed for B2 (General Industry). The Use Classes Order allows for the change of use of B2 to B1 (Business) and B8 (Storage and Distribution). A change of use to B8 is restricted to no more than 235m². A business use and small scale storage and distribution use, as permitted, would be acceptable in this location and it is therefore considered to be unnecessary to restrict the use of the building.

Impact on Highway Safety

Concern has been raised by a local resident that loading and unloading would take place on the public highway rather than within the site. A condition requiring all loading and unloading to take place within the application site could overcome this concern. The existing access arrangements appear to be substandard and there is an opportunity to improve visibility to the north. It is suggested that a condition requiring improved access is necessary to allow HGV's to safely enter and exit the site. Whilst the Highways Authority have raised no objection to the proposed development, this is not binding advice and further discussions with the Strategic Highways Manager will be carried out prior to Committee.

Contaminated Land – Gas

Adjacent to the site to its rear is the Maw Green Landfill site. The Council's Contaminated Land Officer is concerned that there is a risk to the proposed development from a potential gassing source. They have therefore suggested that a gas survey be carried out prior to the commencement of development to determine whether there would be any risk to the proposed development or neighbouring properties. That survey would also outline suggested measures to mitigate against any risk. Given the concern that the Contaminated Land Officer has with regards to the proposed development it is considered to be expedient to attach a condition requiring this survey to be carried out to ensure that the site is suitable for its end use. Policy BE.6 states that where there is good reason to believe that contamination may be present a site assessment should be required. This approach is further advocated by PPS23. A condition requiring this to be carried out is considered to be reasonable in this instance.

11. CONCLUSIONS

The proposed development involves the redevelopment of an existing industrial building which has been fire damaged. It is considered that the proposed replacement building

would have no greater impact on the character and appearance of the open countryside to that which exists and can be conditioned to further reduce its impact. Furthermore, as conditioned, the development would have no significantly detrimental impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties, highway safety and contaminated land.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Standard Time Limit**
- 2. Approved Plans**
- 3. Materials to be submitted and agreed**
- 4. Plan showing area of external storage to be submitted and agreed**
- 5. Any external storage not to exceed 3m in height**
- 6. Details of landscaping to be submitted – details to include landscaping screening for eastern boundary**
- 7. Landscape Implementation**
- 8. Removal of Permitted Development Rights for Industrial and Warehouse Development (Part 8 Class A)**
- 9. Operating Hours restricted to 8am – 6pm and shall not be open on Sundays or BH Mondays**
- 10. Scheme of acoustic attenuation for building and equipment to be submitted and agreed**
- 11. No noisy works to be carried out externally**
 - 12. All windows and doors shall be shut when noisy works are being carried out internally**
- 13. Prior to installation of any external lighting details shall be submitted and agreed by LPA**
- 14. Hours of construction of proposed development restricted to 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 2pm on Saturdays and not at all on a Sunday or BH Monday**
- 15. Prior to the commencement of development a full gas survey to be carried out and be submitted and agreed by LPA. Protection measures to be carried out.**
- 16. Within 3 months of the building first becoming occupied the existing portacabins to be removed from site. No further cabins shall be erected without express consent of LPA.**
- 17. Loading and unloading to be carried out within the site edge red and not on the public highway**
- 18. Details of improved access to be submitted and approved by LPA**

Location Plan: Licence No 100049045

