

Application No: 25/0943/FUL  
Application Type: Full Planning  
Location: Yard Space Frances Street, Crewe, Cheshire East, CW2 6HF  
Proposal: The proposal involves the installation of a containerised self-storage facility on land at Frances Street, Crewe, CW2 6HF.  
Applicant: Ms Jen Lawson, LOCK STOCK SELF STORAGE LIMITED

Expiry Date: 03 June 2025

### **Summary**

This is a site which was recently within an industrial use within the settlement boundary of Crewe. As such the proposed use is considered to be acceptable in principle.

The impact of the site in design and layout terms is considered to be acceptable on this former industrial site.

The impact on residential amenity is considered to be acceptable.

Highway safety and parking implications are considered to be acceptable.

### **Summary recommendation**

Approve subject to conditions

## **1. REASON FOR REFERRAL**

1.1. The application was called in to Southern Planning Committee by Cllr Dawn Clark on the following grounds:

*“Concerns re the use proposed and the issues re traffic and concerns raised by residents. Impact on air quality, noise 24/7 for residents.”*

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

2.1. The application site comprises a vacant area of hardstanding which formerly housed a large printworks. The buildings on site were destroyed by fire and demolished in 2024. The site is designated as being within the settlement boundary of Crewe and the surrounding area is predominantly residential.

## **3. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL**

3.1. The application proposes the use of the site as a containerised self-storage facility. Vehicular access will be taken from the junction of Catherine Street and Frances Street.

3.2. Internally the containers will be arranged in a grid pattern with vehicular and pedestrian circulation routes around the site.

#### **4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1. 24/2259N – Prior approval for the demolition of former printworks consisting of up and over warehouses and a two-storey office to the front – Withdrawn

4.2. 7/09408 – Alterations to fire escape – Approved 7<sup>th</sup> October 1982

#### **5. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY**

5.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published by the Government in March 2012 and has since been through several revisions. It sets out the planning policies for England and how these should be applied in the determination of planning applications and the preparation of development plans. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF is a material consideration which should be taken into account for the purposes of decision making.

#### **6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY**

6.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires decisions on planning applications to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (2010 – 2030) was adopted in July 2017. The Site Allocations and Development Policies Documents was adopted in December 2022. The policies of the Development Plan relevant to this application are set out below, including relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies where applicable to the application site.

#### **6.2. Relevant policies of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS) and Cheshire East Site Allocations and Development Plan Policies Document (SADPD)**

SADPD Policy PG 9: Settlement boundaries  
SADPD Policy GEN 1: Design principles  
SADPD Policy ENV 12: Air Quality  
SADPD Policy ENV 14: Light Pollution  
SADPD Policy ENV 15: New development and existing uses  
SADPD Policy ENV 16: Surface water management and flood risk  
SADPD Policy HOU 12: Amenity  
SADPD Policy INF 3: Highway safety and access

CELPS Policy MP 1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
CELPS Policy SD 1: Sustainable development in Cheshire East  
CELPS Policy SD 2: Sustainable development principles  
CELPS Policy EG 1: Economic prosperity  
CELPS Policy EG 3: Existing and allocated employment sites  
CELPS Policy SE 1: Design  
CELPS Policy SE 12: Pollution, land contamination and land instability  
CELPS Policy SE 13: Flood risk and water management  
CELPS Policy SE 2: Efficient use of land  
CELPS Policy SE 8: Renewable and low carbon energy  
CELPS Policy SE 9: Energy efficient development  
CELPS Policy CO 1: Sustainable travel and transport

#### **6.3. Neighbourhood Plan**

There is no neighbourhood plan for Crewe.

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

**7.1. Environmental Protection** – No objection subject to contaminated land conditions

**7.2. Crewe Town Council** – Object on the following grounds:

- Loss of amenity for the neighbouring residences due to light pollution
- Loss of amenity for neighbouring residences due to noise and disturbance, specifically associated with the 24 hour and 7 days a week operational model proposed.
- Concerns relating to inadequate highways access for traffic access to the site on a non-scheduled basis as well as impact of on street parking in the area causing traffic flow issues.
- The onsite parking capacity does not demonstrate adequacy and may lead to additional on street parking pressures in the access streets.

**7.3. Head of Strategic Transport** – No objection.

## **8. REPRESENTATIONS**

**8.1.** At the time of report writing, six representations have been received. They express concerns about the following issues:

- Increase in traffic causing danger for children
- On-street parking
- Light pollution
- Loss of privacy
- Air pollution
- Noise and disturbance
- Industrial appearance
- Increased risk of crime
- Site should be used for housing
- Lack of consultation
- No evidence of need

## **9. OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### *Principle of the development*

**9.1.** The site was formerly occupied by a printworks, and this former industrial use existed on the site for a number of years. Whilst it is not ideal to have commercial uses adjacent to residential properties, in this case the former industrial use of the site represents a material planning consideration. The use as proposed is considered to be acceptable in principle on this former industrial site.

**9.2.** Objectors have asked why the site could not be used for alternative uses such as housing, a community garden, playground or residents parking. Whilst it is acknowledged that these alternative uses would be preferable, the land is in private ownership and not in the control of the Council. As such it cannot dictate the uses of the site that are applied for. The matters to be assessed here are whether the storage use and containers are acceptable in terms of the design, amenity and highways implications.

## **Design**

- 9.3. The application proposes the siting of storage containers within the site for use as self-storage. The containers would be bottle green. Whilst utilitarian in appearance, this is a former industrial site and the containers would not exceed 2.6m in height, as such it is not considered that they would create an oppressive outlook for the surrounding residential properties. In addition, the proposed containers would be significantly lower than the former buildings which covered nearly the entire site.
- 9.4. There is also perimeter fencing, a gated entrance, CCTV and lighting columns, all of which would be of a design that reflects their function. Given that the site is a former industrial site accommodated large buildings which covered the entire site, it is not considered that the proposed development would have an overbearing impact in design terms on the neighbouring residential properties.
- 9.5. The issue of the advertisements proposed will be dealt with as part of a separate application for advertisement consent.
- 9.6. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policies SD 2 and SE1 of the CELPS, Policy GEN1 of the SADPD

## **Amenity**

- 9.7. As discussed above, the site is a former industrial site, and this is a material planning consideration.
- 9.8. Lighting is proposed as part of the development. This would be directed down into the site and not towards neighbouring properties. It would work on a motion sensor and would dim to 100 lumens until triggered when it would brighten to 1.600 lumens, remaining at this level for a period of 20 seconds, before returning to 100 lumens. Environmental Protection officers are satisfied that the levels of luminance and the siting of the lighting columns would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residential properties.
- 9.9. In terms of privacy, it is not considered that customers accessing the site to place items into storage, or to collect them would compromise privacy levels to nearby residential properties.
- 9.10. In terms of outlook, as discussed in the design section of this report, the proposed development would be low level and significantly reduced in terms of the previous use on the site.
- 9.11. The site would be used for secure storage and there would be no industrial processes taking place within the site. It is not considered that any noise generated from loading or unloading the proposed containers on the site would exceed that of the previous use on the site. In addition, Environmental protection officers have raised no objections in terms of noise.
- 9.12. In terms of land contamination, Environmental Protection officers requested that a Phase I Preliminary Risk Assessment be submitted. This did not identify any significant potential contaminant linkages. This is subject to the recommendations in the report being adhered to. This can be controlled by condition.
- 9.13. It is not considered that the proposal would have an adverse impact on air quality and Environmental Protection officers have raised no objections.
- 9.14. The hours of opening applied for are for a 24-hour operation as this is the business model of the applicant. There were no restrictions on the opening hours of the previous use, and it

is considered that the proposed use would not generate as much noise as the former printworks. Environmental Protection officers do not consider that this would lead to a statutory nuisance and raise no objection to it.

9.15. A search on sites where the company operates currently, it appears that they are largely in industrial areas, but with some in very close proximity to residential properties. Given the nature of the proposed use (self-storage), it is considered that a 24-hour operation would not lead to significant noise generation to the detriment of neighbouring residential properties.

9.16. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy HOU12 of the SADPD and Policy SE12 of the CELPS.

## **Highways**

9.17. The site is within a residential area with access off Frances Street/Catherine Street which consists of terraced properties with on-street parking. The site was an industrial/warehousing site with ancillary offices, and the buildings associated with this have been demolished.

9.18. To gauge the number of vehicle trips the site will generate, the applicant has carried out traffic surveys of another site they operate which compares in size to the application site. When comparing this with other similar sites the number of vehicle movements during the busiest hour would be around 20 (10 in, 10 out), with almost all of these being cars and LGVs.

9.19. Customers could enter the site either from Gresty Road/Chambers Street/Edward Street and onto Catherine Street. Customers could the exit onto Catherine Street and then onto Frances Street/Wood Street/Gresty Road. A number of these are one-way streets which would reduce vehicle conflict and although Catherine Street is two-way, there are parking restrictions and side streets to provide passing areas.

9.20. Any development in this location to replace the previous industrial site will generate traffic movement. Given the limited additional vehicle numbers this proposal will generate, the number of access points, and the existing one-way systems, the traffic generation and access to the site does not raise a highways concern.

9.21. The access point will have adequate visibility and the gate into the site will be set back from the highway to allow a vehicle to fully rest within the site. The access point will have sufficient width for 2-way vehicle movement.

9.22. The proposal will not generate a significant number of vehicle movements and the access to the site is acceptable, and parking and sufficient manoeuvring area will be available within the site. No objection is raised by the Head of Strategic Highways.

9.23. The issue of on-street parking has been raised. However, given that visitors to the site would be delivering to or collecting items from the containers, it is highly unlikely that they would park on the street and then carry the items into the site.

9.24. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with saved Policy INF3 of the SADPD.

## **Other Matters**

9.25. Objectors have raised the issue of an increased risk of crime as the site has recently been subject to this. Given that CCTV and motion sensor lighting would be installed if the application is approved, it is considered that the risk of crime would not be an issue that would warrant the refusal of this application.

## **10. PLANNING BALANCE/CONCLUSION**

10.1. This is a site which was recently within an industrial use within the settlement boundary of Crewe. As such the proposed use is considered to be acceptable in principle.

10.2. The impact of the site in design and layout terms is considered to be acceptable on this former industrial site.

10.3. The impact on residential amenity is considered to be acceptable.

10.4. Highway safety and parking implications are considered to be acceptable.

## **11. RECOMMENDATION**

**Approve subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Commencement of development**
- 2. Materials in accordance with the application**
- 3. Approved drawings**
- 4. Remediation Strategy**
- 5. Verification Report**
- 6. Unexpected contamination**
- 7. Containers shall not be stacked and shall be single-storey only.**
- 8. Lighting to be carried out in accordance with submitted details.**

**In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions / informatives / planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Head of Planning has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Southern Planning Committee, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.**

