

Application No: 11/1007M

Location: FORMER POLAR FORD, FENCE AVENUE, MACCLESFIELD, SK10 1LT

Proposal: Refurbishment of a Car Showroom into a Travis Perkins Showroom with New Ground Floor Extension together with Associated Servicing, Car and Bike Parking Facilities. The Application also Seeks Approval for the Demolition of an Existing Workshop Unit and the Construction of a New 10,000 sq ft Storage Unit, with Associated Servicing & Car Parking Facilities, Boundary Treatments Including Close Board Timber Fences, Palidin Fences & Palisade Fences

Applicant: Travis Perkins

Expiry Date: 27-Jul-2011

Date Report Prepared:28th July 2011

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION	Approve
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MAIN ISSUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Impact on residential amenity- Design- Impact on the highway and congestion
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REASON FOR REPORT

The proposal requires determination by the Northern Planning Committee under the terms of the Council's constitution.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The site lies on a parcel of land which lies to the southern side of Hurdsfield Road and to the north of Fence Avenue Industrial Estate. The site (which was formerly occupied by Polar Ford) has been vacant for approximately 2 years. There are residential properties to the north of the site (off The Crescent) and to the east (off Lansdowne Street). The units to the south and west are commercial in nature. There are currently 80 car parking spaces on the site. The existing buildings were erected in the late 1980's.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This proposal is for the change of use of the car showroom (fronting Hurdsfield Road), to a Travis Perkins retail unit, with a new ground floor side extension. In addition, the proposal seeks permission to demolish the existing unit to the south of the site (formerly used by the Ford garage for servicing and repairs) and the construction of a new 10 000 sq. ft. warehouse unit.

RELEVANT HISTORY

10/2702M - Erection of 2.4m high fencing and use of premises as a builder's merchant – Withdrawn 11/10/2010

53164P - Erection of vehicle body repair shop- approved - 1/6/1988

48451P - Car showroom and offices with canopy and parking – Approved - 25/3/1987

POLICIES

The Development Plan consists of the North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS), the saved policies of the Structure Plan Alteration: Cheshire 2016, and the saved policies of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan.

Regional Spatial Strategy

DP1 Spatial Principles)
DP2 Promote Sustainable Communities
DP3 Promote Sustainable Economic Development)
DP4 Making the best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure
DP5 Manage Travel Demand – Reduce the Need to Travel, and Increase Accessibility
W5 Retail Development

Of the remaining saved Structure Plan Policies, only policy T7: Parking is of relevance.

Local Plan Policy

BE1 Design Guidance
DC1 New Build
DC2 Alterations and extensions
DC3 Amenity
DC6 Circulation and Access
DC8 Landscape
E4 Industry
T1 Integrated Transport Policy

Other Material Considerations

PPS1 Sustainable Development
PPS4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth provide the key guidance for the assessment of this proposal

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Highways: The Strategic Highways Manager raises no highway objections to the proposed redevelopment, the boundary treatment fences are situated as to not interfere with visibility from side road junctions.

Environmental Health: Do not object to this application subject to conditions relating to: - days/opening hours, days and hours of deliveries, that no engine testing or noise generative maintenance is undertaken within the tool-hire compound area, and that materials which may produce dust and/or mechanical handling are sited in positions away from nearest residential properties.

Environment Agency: Comments are awaited

VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL

Not applicable.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

3 letters of objection have been received from local residents.

Comments are made with regards to the following: -

There is a stream which runs through the site. It divides what is described as the Northern and Southern sections of the site, mainly underground. This has flooded into the Northern section (The Hurdsfield Road part of the site once in the last ten years). On this occasion the showroom was filled with a foot of water. Concern is raised that this matter may have been overlooked and there would be a significant increase in the numbers of heavy goods vehicles passing over the area of the underground tunnel, which may cause damage to the interior of the tunnel. This could increase the flood risk to both the site and neighbouring properties.

The water course has fish and is visited by kingfishers and herons. No comment is made on their significance with respect to biodiversity.

An objection is made to an increase in heavy goods vehicles and deliveries entering the site from the Hurdsfield Road entrance, rather than using the existing Fence Avenue access.

The plans state that landscaping will be good quality, low maintenance and enhance the scheme from an occupant and public perspective.

A strong objection is made to the fencing around the site. There is an area of sloping land surrounding the site on both Lansdowne Street and Hurdsfield Road. It would be possible to place the fencing at the base of these slopes.

One of the residents welcomes the development and use of the site rather than it remaining vacant and no objection is made to its use by Travis Perkins. However, it is strongly recommended that the plans are revised to reduce the hazards to pedestrians and the impact of the fencing on local residential properties and vehicle safety.

Residents had grown accustomed to the low set nature of the showroom building lying below the level of Hurdsfield road linked with the open amenity area in front of The Crescent offering a pleasant open area with good sight lines softening the boundary between the industrial and residential areas.

The neighbour at 12 Lansdowne Street acknowledges the applicant's proposed use of 3m high close board fencing along the boundary between the proposed sites working areas and no.12 as a means of reducing the impact of noise. However, they question the need for the continuation of this fence along Lansdowne Street where the writer understands it will be remote from the zones in which mechanical handling will take place and its effect on either noise or dust reduction minimal.

The proposed weekday opening hours of 07.30 to 17.00 are noted, however, attention should be drawn to the response of the Environmental Health department to the earlier application (10/2702M), in which it is recommended that whilst the site may open at 07.30. Heavy vehicle movements should not commence until 08.00.

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The applicant's submission includes a Design and Access Statement. This document is available online as a background paper. In addition, a letter has been received from the Agent which seeks to address concerns raised by residents.

1) Highways and Site Traffic Movement

The applicant is aware of the traffic issues on Hurdsfield Road and therefore, a left in, left out turn from this existing access is proposed, limiting its use to customer vehicles only.

In addition, the main bulk of goods that generate the majority of vehicular movement are located in and around the proposed unit to the rear of the site. This will ensure the access and egress of all Heavy Good Vehicles will occur off Fence Avenue.

2) Affects on Amenity and Visual Impact

In relation to the close boarded fence to Lansdowne Street, the agent understands that it was raised as a matter of concern by the Environmental Health Officer in relation to the previous application (ref: 10/2702M). The recommendation was *'the type of fencing which is on the boundaries of Lansdowne Street and particularly the shared boundary with 12 Lansdowne Street is close boarded fencing of a dense quality and as high as practicable.'* The applicant took these concerns on board and believed that they had provided a solution which addressed the matter. The applicant would like to revert to a green paladin style fence, 2.4m high, which they feel would be less oppressive. The applicants are happy to be guided by the Council on this matter.

Due to the difference in level between the street and the edge of the hard standing on site, the applicants are concerned that placing the fence at the bottom of the slope will defeat the objective of providing security to the site. A fence at the bottom of a slope could be easily breached. In addition, placing the fence away from the applicants boundary will create a potential 'no mans' land between the fence and the street.

On Hurdsfield Road the applicants are proposing Paladin fencing as opposed to Palisade. This fence will be colour coated green; it is less industrial and is normally associated with a higher quality development.

3) The Risk of Flooding

The applicants were unaware of any recent flooding issues. The applicants do not seek to significantly increase the amount of hard standing and will seek to improve surface water run-off/drainage discharge. Any new external areas, including those above and around the culvert will be engineered to withstand HGV movement. This area of site provides a connection point and any potential disruption/collapse in this area will not be tolerated by the applicants.

4) Arrangement of Site Accommodation

There will be an element of external storage to 'both parts' of the site. However, the scheme has been organised so that both heavier materials and 'heavier' vehicle movements are placed to the rear of the site, off Fence Avenue. The former Polar Ford site is merchandised as landscape and timber products, which many may be seasonal. The Trade Counter, which is the busiest element of any Travis Perkins (as all customers have to use it) is placed within the rear building, furthest away from the residential properties.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The vacant site comprises a former Ford motor dealership. The existing car showroom would be converted into a retail unit with a 550 sq. ft extension and the building to the rear of the site, would be demolished and a new 10 000 sq. ft. warehouse/showroom would be erected in its place. The proposals include customer car parking, service arrangements and boundary treatments. The new warehouse would be located to the rear of the site, which will allow the commercial activity to take place away from neighbouring residential properties.

The key issue to consider is whether the proposal complies with national and local plan policies. Other site planning issues relate to the impact on visual amenity (including the design of the building and impact on the street scene), the impact on neighbour amenity, the impact on highway safety/parking and flooding.

Policy

National Planning Policy Statement PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth provides the key guidance for the assessment of this proposal. National guidance in PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development and PPG13: Transport is also of relevance.

The site is located within an Employment Site on the Proposals Map of the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan. Policy E4 (Industry) is the relevant policy. This policy permits General Industry (B2), Warehousing (B8), High Technology (B1) and Light Industry in the Fence Avenue/Hurdsfield Road area.

Policies BE1, DC1, DC2, DC3, DC6, DC8, and T1 are also relevant.

Relevant policies of the RSS include: -DP1 (Spatial Principles); DP2 (Promote Sustainable Communities; DP3 (Promote Sustainable Economic Development); DP4 (Making the best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure); and DP5 (Manage Travel Demand – Reduce the Need to Travel, and Increase Accessibility).

Design

The show room would be refurbished. The windows and roof would be repainted. The extension to the showroom would be constructed from materials similar to that of the main building – vertical cladding for the walls and roof.

The proposed warehouse would be sympathetic in appearance to other warehouses in the vicinity on the Fence Avenue estate. External walls would be constructed from brick at the base with profiled cladding on the higher part of the walls. The roof would also be constructed from vertical cladding.

Consideration has been given to the boundary details which have been submitted. These include a 2.4m high Paladin fence to the Hurdsfield Road boundary, which would extend to the west of the site. It is proposed to erect a 3m high close boarded timber fence to the boundary with Lansdowne Street and to the boundary of no. 12 Lansdowne Street. Discussions are ongoing with the applicants agent with regard to the treatment along Hurdsfield Road, as officers would prefer to see the fence erected at the lower part of the bank, and not adjacent to the brick wall, which lies adjacent to the pavement. The agent is concerned that this could lead to breaches in security. It is understood that the requirement for a 3m high close boarded timber fence adjacent to Lansdowne Street and around the perimeter of no. 12 Lansdowne Street was at the recommendation of the Environmental Health Officer. It is important to achieve a balance between minimising disturbance to residents by way of noise, against the physical impact of a fence 3m in height. Officers are liaising with Environmental Health to see whether a compromise can be reached. Members will be updated in relation to both of these issues in due course.

Notwithstanding the reference to the boundary treatment issue above, it is considered overall that the proposals would have an acceptable impact on the surrounding area given the context of the locality.

Highways

The Strategic Highways Engineer raises no objections to the proposed access arrangements and appropriate visibility splays would be provided.

The concerns which were raised from residents in relation to how vehicles would access the site would appear to have been addressed. The existing left in, left out arrangement is still proposed and its use would be limited to customers vehicles only. As a result, all heavy goods access would be from Fence Avenue.

20 car parking spaces would be provided for customers, with 2 additional disabled parking spaces. 6 bicycle spaces would also be provided. 6 staff parking spaces would be provided adjacent to the warehouse.

It is considered that the proposed access and parking arrangements are acceptable, and should not result in a highway safety issue, or any adverse impact on residential amenity.

Amenity

The proposal is replacing one commercial activity (a car garage and showroom) with a retail showroom and builders merchants. The site is allocated for industrial uses and the Environmental Health Officer is confident that with certain safeguarding measures, the use can take place without any adverse impact on neighbouring properties. The nearest residential property is no. 12 Lansdowne Street. The area of the site to the south of this property would be conditioned so as to prevent the storage of materials in that area that may produce dust or require mechanical handling.

It is not considered that the proposal will raise any significant amenity issues.

Ecology

The proposal includes the demolition of an existing industrial building. It is initially not considered that the building to be demolished would provide a suitable habitat for bats, however, the Nature Conservation Officers formal comments are still awaited.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

If approved, the proposal would generate a requirement for a commuted sum payment towards off site open space and recreation / sports facilities in the area, which would need to be secured by via a legal agreement. The formal comments of the Green Space Parks Officer are however awaited and therefore, further comments on this matter and possible Heads of Terms for a Legal Agreement will follow in an update report.

The comments expressed by residents are noted. It is considered that the applicants have addressed the highways related concerns raised, restricting vehicular/HGV movements and that conditions can be attached to address any noise disturbance to neighbouring properties. Further details have been requested in relation to boundary treatment to ensure that a sensitive solution is found. The applicants are now aware of the stream which runs through the site. The Environment Agency has been consulted and they should be able to provide advice in relation to any flood risk issues.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

The proposed redevelopment of this site should bring a previously vacant site back into a suitable use. The proposal is not considered to have an adverse impact on neighbour amenity and the design is acceptable. There should be no adverse impact on highway safety. It is not considered that the proposed development would have a significant impact on the town centre and the development meets the relevant policy tests set out in PPS4 and the development plan. Therefore, planning permission should be granted.

Application for Full Planning

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to following conditions

1. Commencement of development (3 years)
2. Development in accord with revised plans
3. No external storage
4. Construction of access
5. Provision of car parking
6. Details of materials to be submitted
7. Turning facility
8. Cycle parking
9. Opening hours 07.30 to 17.00. No Sunday opening or bank holidays
10. Delivery hours 08.00 to 17.00 No Sunday opening or bank holidays

11. No engine testing, banging out of concrete mixers or noise generative maintenance is undertaken within the tool hire compound area
12. Materials which may produce dust and / or require mechanical handling to be sited in positions as far away as possible from the nearest residential properties
13. Boundary details to be submitted

