

Application No: 12/4087N

Location: T I MIDWOOD & CO, GREEN LANE, WARDLE, CHESHIRE, CW5 6BJ

Proposal: The erection of a replacement storage and distribution unit, including details of access, appearance, layout and scale (details of landscaping reserved for subsequent approval), following the demolition of the existing building on the site.

Applicant: T I Midwood and Co Ltd

Expiry Date: 19-Dec-2012

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES:

- Key Issues;
- Policy Position;
- Employment Site;
- Design;
- Amenity;
- Drainage;
- Contaminated Land; and
- Highways

REFERRAL

This application is to be determined by the Southern Planning Committee as the floor area of the proposed building exceeds 1000sqm.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The site lies outside a defined settlement boundary and is therefore classed as open countryside for planning policy purposes. The application site currently comprises an existing warehouse, which will be demolished in order to make way for the proposal. Located immediately to north is another warehouse and office block and to the south is a smaller office block. The applicants business supplies screws and fixings to the construction industry. Adjacent to the applicants property are a number of disused former aircraft hangers used during WWII. In addition, to the aircraft hangers the application site is flanked on both sides by other industrial buildings. To the south of the site is Green Lane, which provides access both to the applicant's site and a number of other commercial premises including a skip hire company and a timber yard.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This is an outline application but the only matter which is reserved for future consideration is landscaping. Therefore the application will consider access, appearance, layout and scale. The proposal is for the erection of a replacement storage and distribution unit at T I Midwood & Co., Green Lane, Wardle.

RELEVANT HISTORY

09/3543N - Proposed Internal Layout Changes, Revised Elevations and Parking Layout to the Storage Unit with Internal Office Space and Service Area – Approved – 23rd December 2009
P08/0318 - Erection of a New Storage Unit with Internal Office Space and Servicing Area as an Extension to the Existing Buildings – Approved – 21st July 2008
P01/0055 - Single Storey Office Extension and Conservatory/Covered Walkway – Approved – 21st March 2001
P92/0161 – Single Storey Office Extension – Approved – 21st May 1992
P93/0147 – Storage Warehouse – Approved – 15th April 1993
7/15960 – Proposed Offices – Approved – 13th September 1988

POLICIES

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

Local Policy

NE.2 (Open Countryside);
NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats)
NE.9 (Protected Species)
NE.17 (Pollution Control)
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)
E.4 (Development on Existing Employment Areas)
E.6 (Employment Development within Open Countryside)
TRAN.1 (Public Transport)
TRAN.3 (Pedestrians)
TRAN.5 (Provision for Cyclists)
TRAN.9 (Car Parking Standards)

CONSIDERATIONS (External to Planning)

Environmental Health: No objection subject to conditions relating to external lighting and acoustic attenuation.

Contaminated Land: No objection subject to a contaminated land condition.

VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL

No comments received at the time of writing this report

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

No representations received

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Design and Access Statement
Supporting Statement

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Key Issues

The main consideration is whether the proposal is appropriately designed and of a scale to not have a detrimental impact on the open countryside, of amenity of nearby residents, highway safety, protected species or any other material consideration.

Policy Position

The proposal is located within the Open Countryside and will be assessed against Policy NE.2 (Open Countryside) which restricts development other than that required for agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation or other uses appropriate to the rural area.

Policy E.6 (Employment Development within Open Countryside) allows for 'small scale' employment development in rural areas in order to diversify the rural economy. It is noted that the floor area of the proposed building measures approximately 1590sqm. However, the proposed building is replacing an existing warehouse whose floor area measures approximately 1537sqm. According to the applicants Design and Access Statement the current warehouse is not fit for purpose and is in a poor condition.

Whilst, Policy E.6 of the Local Plan (Employment Development within the Open Countryside) restricts employment development to 'small scale' employment development in rural areas in order to diversify the rural economy. It is considered that given the proposed building is more or less a like for like replacement the proposal is not contrary to advice advocated within Policy E.6 (Employment Development within the Open Countryside).

Furthermore, according to the NPPF:

'The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system' (para 19).

The guidance goes on to state that:

‘To help achieve economic growth, local planning should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st Century’.

In relation to supporting a prosperous rural economy:

‘planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development’.

The NPPF still sets its face against the development of new greenfield industrial developments in rural areas, and brownfield sites should be used in the first instance. The application site is a brownfield piece of land. The National Planning Policy Framework is more up to date than the Local Plan which does not have specific policies with regards to large scale developments of this type and size within the Open Countryside. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with advice advocated in the NPPF.

The National Planning Policy Framework also promotes sustainable modes of transport. Transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development, but also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. The NPPF goes on to state that smarter use of technologies can reduce the need to travel. The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel.

In practical terms, this means that new industrial development should be located where the number of vehicle journeys generated is minimised. This means that an employment site should be accessible by a realistic choice of transport, walking and cycling. However, the NPPF recognises that this aim may not be wholly achievable in rural areas. It specifically states:

‘The Government recognises that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas’.

Employment Site

The approved use of the site is currently as a storage and distribution centre. Therefore considered to be in “employment use” and must therefore be considered in relation to Policy E7 of the Local Plan, which deals with loss of existing employment sites. However, given that the proposed use will maintain the current level of employment (35) and the applicant hopes that in the near future additional jobs will be created, it is not considered that there would be any conflict with Policy E7.

Design

The main thrust of the Local Plan policies is to achieve a high standard of design, respect the pattern, character and form of the surrounding area, not adversely affect the street scene by reason of scale, height, proportions or materials used.

Development Control guidance advocated within the National Planning Policy Framework places a greater emphasis upon Local Planning Authorities to deliver good designs and not to

accept proposals that fail to provide opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area. It specifically states *'Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'*. (Para 64). It is considered that this proposal does not detract from the character and appearance of the area and is in accordance with advice stated within NPPF.

According to the applicants Design and Access Statement the proposed layout of the application site has been principally influenced by the design constraints imposed by the road infrastructure, site boundary conditions and neighbouring land uses. According to the submitted plans the footprint of the proposed warehouse is roughly rectangular in shape and measures approximately 53m wide by 30m deep, which equates to a floor area 1590msq. The building is approximately 7.5m high to the eaves and 10m high to the highest part of the roof. The proposed warehouse will be located on a similar footprint to the warehouse which will be demolished. The ridge of the proposed warehouse will run parallel to the ridge of the remaining warehouses and office block. The proposed warehouse is approximately 2m lower than the existing office block, which is located to the north of the application site.

The proposed warehouse will be constructed out of plastic coated steel sheets under a steel portal frame building, which will be secured by condition, in the event that planning permission is approved. Located on the eastern elevation is a large roller shutter door and a personnel door on the western elevation. It is considered that the apertures are in keeping with the host property and will not appear as alien or incongruous features. Internally the building will be used as a warehouse.

As described above the proposed warehouse building would be more closely related to the adjacent industrial development to the west and east. The existing commercial development features large manufacture and storage buildings which are of utilitarian appearance and therefore the proposed warehouse development would not appear unduly conspicuous against this backdrop and the proposal is in accordance with policy BE.2 (Design Standards).

Amenity

Policy BE.1 (Amenity) states that development will be permitted provided that the development:

- is compatible with surrounding land uses,
- does not prejudice the amenity of future or neighbouring occupiers,
- does not prejudice the safe movement of traffic
- does not cause an increase in air, noise, water pollution

which might have an adverse impact on the use of land for other purposes.

It is considered that the redevelopment of the site for industrial purposes is considered to be compatible with the surrounding land uses. The proposal is unlikely to result in noise, air or water pollution. However, a principle consideration in determining this application is its effect upon the amenity of adjacent occupants and in this respect Policy BE.1 requires that development does not have a prejudicial impact on the amenity of occupiers in an adjacent property.

The nearest residential property is approximately 500m away and it is considered given the intervening buildings and vegetation and the separation distances will help to mitigate any negative externalities. Overall, the proposal will not prejudice the amenity of occupiers of adjacent properties by reason of noise and disturbance, visual intrusion, overlooking or over shadowing, and appropriate boundary treatment will help to mitigate any negative externalities caused by the proposed development.

Drainage

Development on sites such as this generally reduces the permeability of at least part of the site and changes the site's response to rainfall.

The NPPF states that in order to satisfactorily manage flood risk in new development, appropriate surface water drainage arrangements are required. The guidance also states that surface water arising from a developed site should, as far as possible, be managed in a sustainable manner to mimic the surface water flows arising from the site prior to the proposed development.

It is possible to condition the submission of a satisfactory drainage scheme in order to ensure that any surface water runoff generated by the development is sufficiently discharged. This will probably require the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) which include source control measures, infiltration devices as well as filter strips and swales which mimic natural drainage patterns.

Contaminated Land

Although a warehouse is not a sensitive end use, there is potential for contamination on the land given the historic use of the site. It is suggested that a Phase I Contaminated Land survey be carried out in line with the advice contained in NPPF. This can be secured by condition.

Highways

The response from the Highways Officer has not been received at the time of writing this application. Members will be informed via the update report once comments from Highways have been received.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

It is considered having regard to the pattern of existing development in the area and other material considerations, it is concluded that the proposed development would be in accordance with policies E.4 (Development on Existing Employment Areas), E.6 (Employment Development within the Open Countryside), E.7 (Existing Employment Sites) BE.1 (Amenity), BE.2 (Design), BE.3 (Access and Parking) and TRAN.9 (Car Parking Standards) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011, and that it would not materially harm the character or appearance of the area or the privacy and living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and would be acceptable in terms of highway safety.

Approve subject to conditions:

- 1. Standard Time Limit**
- 2. Plan References**
- 3. Materials**
- 4. Drainage**
- 5. Landscaping Submitted**
- 6. Landscaping Implemented**
- 7. Car parking and turning areas to be made available prior to the first occupation of the building**
- 8. No External Storage**
- 9. Travel Plan**
- 10. External Lighting**
- 11. Surfacing Materials**
- 12. Acoustic Attenuation**
- 13. Contaminated Land**

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