

Application No: 13/1573N

Location: Huntsbank Business Park, Crewe Road, Wistaston, Crewe, CW2 6QT

Proposal: Demolition of Existing Warehouse / Showroom and Adjoining Single-Storey Brick Office Structure forming Unit 1. New Build Extension to Adjacent Industrial Buildings to Provide Two New Units to Replace Unit 1.

Applicant: W M Ewington, W M Ewington & Co Ltd

Expiry Date: 11-Jun-2013

#### **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE subject to conditions**

#### **MAIN ISSUES**

**Principle of Development**

**Design Considerations**

**Parking, Highway Safety and Traffic Generation**

**Impact on Residential Amenity**

**Impact on Trees**

#### **REFERRAL**

This application has been called in for determination by the Southern Planning Committee by Cllr Margaret Simon for the following reason:

“Inappropriate use of a unit on a small business park which is primarily used for industrial employment and which has minimal retail activity”.

#### **1. SITE DESCRIPTION**

This application relates to Unit 1 on Huntsbank Business Park, Crewe Road, Wistaton. The Unit is currently in use as an A1 Retail Tile Showroom with an associated warehouse. The unit is set back from Crewe Road and is adjoined to the rear by other commercial units and offices which form the remaining part of the Huntsbank Business Park.

Whilst the surrounding area is predominantly residential, the site sits in-between a Telephone Exchange and Huntsbank Farm. To the rear of the business park, there are open agricultural

fields. The site falls within the settlement boundary as designated in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011.

## **2. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

Full planning permission is sought to demolish Unit 1 comprising of the existing Tile warehouse / showroom and to replace it with 2 new units with increased parking and rationalisation of the site access arrangements. The proposed 2 new units would offer 807 square metres floorspace.

## **3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

P02/1017 - Change of Use of Showroom to A1 Retail – Refused 09-Jan-2003

P03/0250 – Certificate of Lawfulness for Use of Unit 1 as Class A1 Retail – Granted 26-Jun-2003

## **4. PLANNING POLICIES**

### **National Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework

### **Local Plan Policy**

BE.1 Amenity  
BE.2 Design Standards  
BE.3 Access and Parking  
BE.4 Drainage, Utilities and Resources  
TRAN.3 Pedestrians  
TRAN.8 Existing Car Parks  
TRAN.9 Car Parking Standards  
S.10 Major Shopping Proposals

## **5. OBSERVATIONS OF CONSULTEES (EXTERNAL TO PLANNING)**

### **Environmental Health**

No objection subject to conditions relating to hours of construction / use, floor floating, details of external lighting, the acoustic enclosures of fans / compressors and contaminated land.

### **Highways**

No objection - It is considered that the potential impacts of the development in terms of highway access cannot be regarded as “severe” within the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

## **Environment Agency**

No objection

## **6. VIEWS OF THE WISTASTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Object on the following grounds:

- 1) The junction already has traffic problems and many minor accidents (which are unreported). The extra volume of traffic to the new premises would exacerbate this problem.
- 1) At the crossroads junction of Crewe Road with Church Lane and roads into village of Willaston, traffic queues e.g. buses and lorries to join the main road. This would be exacerbated by the extra volume of traffic.
- 2) Congestion hotspot because of vehicles accessing from Huntsbank Business park, Nursery, allotments and residents driveways amid above will add to congestion.
- 3) Adjoining residential property, 354 Crewe Road, will suffer from noise due to increased use and out of hours traffic. Delivery traffic will reverse and unload alongside 354 Crewe Road.
- 4) A reversing lorry could hit the wall where very young children at the neighbouring nursery play on the other.

## **7. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

Letters have been received from 59 addresses objecting to this proposal on the following grounds:

- Proposal would introduce marked change in the use of the site
- Increased traffic congestion
- Increased road accidents. Crewe Road is an accident black spot
- Danger to pedestrians and cyclists and children at neighbouring nursery
- Many major junctions within 100 metre of the site
- There are already too many convenience stores in the area
- Would impact on existing stores in Willaston, Wistaston and Wells Green
- Displacement of parking onto the highway
- Hours of opening should be restricted
- Potentially large delivery vehicles
- Potential noise and light pollution early in the morning and late at night
- Potential litter and anti-social behaviour if alcohol were to be sold

## **8. OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Main Issues**

The main issues to consider in determining this application is; the suitability of the site for retail use (both non-food and food), the impact that the proposals would have on the character and appearance of the area, highways and parking and neighbouring amenity.

### **Principle of Development**

The application proposes a new A1 Food Retail unit of 430 square metres floor area, and the redevelopment of an existing unit to provide 377 square metres floor area of A1 Non Food Retail. The proposed uses would serve to partially replace a Tile Showroom and warehouse which comprises of approximately 459 square metres floor area.

The site is located within the settlement boundary for Crewe where there is a presumption in favour of new development. Policy S10 deals with shopping proposals and sets out a number of criteria which must be met for “major” developments, which the plan defines as those exceeding 2,500 sq.m, situated in out of centre locations.

This proposal is for the addition of only 348 sq.m of additional A1 retail floor space and therefore there is no requirement to meet the tests set out in Policy S10. The Local Plan covers the period to 2011 and the policies have been saved. As a result the proposal is in accordance with the up-to-date development plan.

Notwithstanding this point, even in cases where the proposal is not in accordance with the development plan, the NPPF (para 26) states that a full impact assessment is only required for proposals in excess of 2,500sq.m or where there is likely to be a significant impact on an existing centre. The proposal represents a very small increase in floorspace in addition to the current retail showroom and warehouse uses. The proposal is for 2 small units and therefore any impact cannot be considered to be “significant”.

The scale of the retail use would be limited within the confines of the existing building and the use is therefore not of a scale which is considered to cause threat to the vitality of nearby villages or towns – namely Crewe or Nantwich. However, to ensure that future retail at the site remains appropriate, it is considered reasonable to prevent future removal of the partition or subdivision and to limit the quantum of food retail use.

It is also important to note that the proposal will facilitate economic growth and will also create jobs both in the 2 units and in the construction industry and all the associated supply networks. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has made it clear that he will take the principles in this statement into account when determining applications that come before him for decision. In particular he will attach significant weight to the need to secure economic growth and employment.

## **Character and Design**

The proposed units would replace the existing building forming Unit 1 which gable fronted and has some asymmetrical addition spanning off at an angle to the rear of the main showroom. The building is clad predominantly in profile sheeting and is of no great architectural merit.

This proposal would introduce a wider structure but would consequently be set further back from Crewe Road. In terms of massing, the proposed building would be broken up with the units staggered and one lower in height than the other. The general massing and scale would reflect that which is already in place on the site as viewed from Crewe Road.

In terms of architectural detail, the frontage would be predominantly glazed and would be broken up with metal cladding and a lower course of facing brick. In visual terms, it is considered that the proposed building would improve the visual appearance of the Crewe Road frontage and the Huntsbank Business Park. Overall, it is considered that the proposal complies with policy BE.2 (Design Standards) and advice advocated within National Planning Policy Framework.

## **Parking, Highway Safety and Traffic Generation**

Policy BE.3 deals with access and parking and states that development will only be permitted where proposals provide:

- safe pedestrian access
- the provision of any off street parking
- manoeuvring and operational space should be designed to minimise visual impact
- safe vehicular access and egress arrangements

During the consultation period, the Strategic Highways Manager objected to this proposal on the grounds that the proposal would provide insufficient parking, and concerns relating to the proposed site access arrangements. Since then, comprehensive discussions have taken place between the local authority and the applicant. Amendments have been made to the in and out access arrangements to the site additional parking so that 30 spaces are provided instead of the 20 originally proposed.

The Strategic Highways Manager considers that the provision of 30 spaces is sufficient to accommodate the combined demand of a 2 units proposed if they were to be used as “convenience” food store and a non-food retail unit. This represents an increase from the 20 spaces that were originally proposed within the supporting Transport Statement. The additional parking has been created from a reorganisation of the proposed layout and the creation of space to the rear of the proposed store. Whilst this provision does not fully accord with the recommended Cheshire East standards for both food and non-food retail (circa 50), it is considered to be sufficient for the purpose of accommodating the peak demands of a “convenience” food store, where customer turnover is high and periods of occupation (therefore parking accumulation) are lower than would be expected at a larger food store.

The In / Out access arrangement with Crewe Road have been swapped, such that access will now be concentrated at the southern end of the site, further away from the Church Lane junction, therefore reducing turning conflicts on Crewe Road. Egress from the site will be

conducted from the northern end of the site. It is considered that this arrangement also reduces the potential for conflict with the adjacent telephone exchange site. With respect to visibility, the identified visibility splays can be accommodated and are acceptable.

With respect to concerns identified regarding road traffic accidents nearby, the applicant's highway consultant has provided additional information with regard to personal injury accidents within the vicinity of the site entrance for the preceeding three years. The data shows that there is no significant existing issue regarding collisions that may be further exacerbated by the intensification of activity at this site. As such there is no clear argument that the proposal will lead to greater highway safety concerns.

The NPPF is explicit in respect of assessing highway matters as part of proposed developments. Paragraph 32 states that:

*'Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are **severe**.'*

Taking into account the above, the highway impacts arising from the development would not be 'severe' and therefore it is considered that the proposal is accordance with policies BE.3 (Access and Parking) and TRAN.9 (Car Parking Standards) of the Local Plan.

### **Impact on Residential 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 and 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 not considered that the proposal would have materially greater impact than the present authorised uses at the site, which comprise of A1, B1, B2 and B8. This proposal would result in the provision of A1 Retail only. It is not considered that the nature of the proposed use will adversely impact on residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Whilst Unit 1 has no planning controls over the hours of opening or use, there is likely to be a greater turnover of vehicles which may have the potential to impact on neighbours if the units were to be open at unsociable hours. Also, there will be additional floorspace. It is recommended therefore that hours operation are conditioned.

In terms of built development, the proposed building would achieve adequate separation with the nearest neighbours so as to ensure that no material harm results in respect of loss of light, visual intrusion or increased direct overlooking. As such, the scheme is deemed to be compliant with local plan policy BE.1.

### **Trees**

There are trees to south west of site on Crewe Road frontage that are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The Councils Tree Officer has confirmed that these trees should not be directly affected by development provided that there is appropriate tree protection. This should be secured by condition.

## **10. REASONS FOR APPROVAL**

Owing to the limited size and scale of the proposal, and the present authorised retail floorspace, the proposal will not have a significant detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of nearby town centres and is therefore deemed to be acceptable in principle.

It is considered that there is sufficient space within the application site for the development to site comfortably in the area without causing harm to the character and appearance of the streetscene or the amenities of nearby residents. The proposal would result in the removal of an unattractive building and would improve the general appearance of the site and the area.

The proposed development can be satisfactorily accessed without significant harm to highway safety and as amended, adequate parking provision will be provided. The proposal is in compliance with the NPPF and relevant Local Plan Policies and is therefore recommended for approval.

## **11. RECOMMENDATION**

**(A) APPROVE subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Standard 3 year time limit**
- 2. Approved Plans**
- 3. Details of Materials to be submitted and approved in writing**
- 4. Details of any external lighting to be submitted and approved in writing**
- 5. Details of bin storage areas to be submitted and approved in writing**
- 6. Opening hours to be between 0700 to 2200 hours**
- 7. Deliveries to be to between 0700 to 1900 hours**
- 8. Restrict Food Retail Floor Space to maximum of 377 sq m**
- 9. Restrict the Use and goods sold in Unit 1b to Non-food**
- 10. No subdivision of the units**
- 11. Access to be formed in accordance with the approved plans**
- 12. Car parking and turning areas to be constructed and made available prior to the units being occupied**
- 13. Contaminated Land Report**
- 14. Pile foundations**
- 15. Noise Control – Hours of Construction**
- 16. Floor Floating method statement to be submitted**
- 17. Acoustic Enclosure of fans and compressors**
- 18. Tree Protection Condition**
- 19. Details of Boundary Treatments to be submitted**

**(B) 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 and Housing is delegated authority to do so, provided that he does not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.**

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