

Application No: 14/4644N

Location: Site Of Bristol Street Motors, MACON WAY, CREWE, CHESHIRE

Proposal: The erection of a single unit Class A1 retail development with associated car parking, landscaping and infrastructure.

Applicant: Andrew Bird, Maconstone Ltd.

Expiry Date: 28-Nov-2014

**SUMMARY:**

The proposal will contribute to economic sustainability through the provision of a new retail unit and creation of jobs. There would be no adverse social implications of the proposal. In terms of environmental sustainability, the proposal would be acceptable in terms of amenity and although the design and layout are not of exceptional quality, it is not considered that a refusal on these grounds could be sustained and that any concerns in this regard are outweighed by the economic benefits of the proposal and the environmental benefits of bringing a vacant and derelict site back into use. The scheme, it is considered to represent sustainable development and is in accordance with the relevant policies of the development and accordingly it is recommended for approval.

**SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:**

**Approve subject to conditions**

**PROPOSAL:**

The application relates to approval of reserved matters for the construction of a single Class A1 retail unit with associated parking, landscaping and infrastructure.

A separate application for variation of conditions relating to sale of bulky goods (14/4901N refers) is currently under consideration. Members should note that this is a separate application which should be considered on its own merits and that this application relates purely to the design and layout of the proposed building.

**SITE DESCRIPTION:**

The site consists of an 8.1 hectare area comprising of a cleared site formerly occupied by single storey general industrial, car dealership buildings, formerly known as Bristol Street Motors, and is bounded to the west by railway lines filtering into Crewe railway station, to the

north and south by commercial premises. A number of residential properties stand on the opposite side of Macon Way.

#### **RELEVANT HISTORY:**

12/0316N (2012) Outline Planning Permission Approved for Proposed new build, non-food retail unit, up to 3715 sq.m (Use Class A1), including access and associated infrastructure.

#### **NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY**

##### **National Policy:**

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

##### **Development Plan:**

The Development Plan for this area is the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011. The site is located within the Crewe Settlement Boundary.

The relevant Saved Policies are: -

BE.1 (Amenity)  
BE.2 (Design Standards)  
BE.3 (Access and Parking)  
BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources)  
BE.5 (Infrastructure)  
TRAN.1 (Public Transport)  
TRAN.3 (Pedestrians)  
TRAN.4 (Access for the Disabled)  
TRAN.5 (Provision for Cyclists)  
TRAN.6 (Cycle Routes)  
TRAN.9 (Car Parking Standards)  
S.10 (Major Shopping Proposals)  
S.12.2 (Mixed Use Regeneration Areas) Mill Street, Crewe  
E.7 (Existing Employment Sites)

The saved Local Plan policies are consistent with the NPPF and should be given full weight.

#### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version (CELP)**

The following are considered relevant material considerations as indications of the emerging strategy:

Policy MP 1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
Policy SD 1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East  
Policy SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles  
Policy EG 1 Economic Prosperity

Policy EG 5 Promoting a Town Centre First Approach to Retail and Commerce  
Policy SE 1 Design  
Policy CO 1 Sustainable Travel and Transport  
Policy CO 4 Travel Plans and Transport Assessments

## **CONSULTATIONS:**

**Highways:** The Head of Strategic Infrastructure does not have a specific objection to the development but does require a revised parking layout.

**Environmental Health:** It is recommended that planning permission is approved subject to planning conditions relating to the control of air pollution and dust.

Phase I and II contaminated land investigations have been submitted and this has demonstrated that no remedial works are required. However, it is recommended that a watching brief is conducted during site clearance, with particular care taken in the western area where investigation was not possible due to the location of a water mains.

**Network Rail** – Network Rail would draw the councils attention to the following Rail Accident Investigation Branch report into 'Penetration and obstruction of a tunnel between Old Street and Essex Road stations, London 8 March 2013', which concluded:

*5 The intent of this recommendation is to ensure that the planning approval process reduces the risk to railway infrastructure due to adjacent developments.*

The Department for Communities and Local Government should introduce a process to ensure that Railway Infrastructure Managers are made aware of all planning applications in the vicinity of railway infrastructure. This process should at least meet the intent of the statutory consultation process (paragraphs 97f and 101).

Network Rail has a statutory obligation to ensure the availability of safe train paths and as such we are required to take an active interest in any development adjacent to our infrastructure that potentially could affect the safe operation of the railway.

Network Rail requests that the developer submit a risk assessment and method statement (RAMS) for the proposal to Network Rail Asset Protection, once the proposal has entered the development and construction phase including the felling of the trees.

As this proposal calls for hard standing area / parking of vehicles area near the boundary with the operational railway, Network Rail would very strongly recommend the installation of suitable high kerbs or crash barriers (e.g. Armco Safety Barriers). A suitable small earth bund, which could be managed by the applicant, would also be acceptable. This is to prevent vehicles from accidentally driving or rolling onto the railway or damaging lineside fencing.

**United Utilities** - No objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of a drainage condition.

**Crewe Town Council** – No objection

## **REPRESENTATIONS:**

Neighbour notification letters were sent to all adjoining occupants and a site notice erected.

One letter of support has been submitted making the following points:

- This long overdue development and look forward to seeing an improved visual aspect to this area of Macon Way.
- It may be appropriate if those who have damaged the service road be requested to compensate East Cheshire Council. Access The service road fronting the new development site is seriously congested with parked cars throughout weekdays. The full length is occupied with parked cars from approx. 8.30 am until 6.00 pm.
- HGV's and cars cannot pass, and may need to reverse back into Macon Way. HGV's cannot enter from either end without mounting the curb stones and grass. Cars are parked across entrance.
- HGV's have restricted manoeuvring area into each property.
- Plumb Centre HGV's have damaged curb stones & grass.
- Restricted access for Emergency services.
- Degrading of visual status for Macon way.
- Damage to underground services at North end of service road.
- Police claim it is difficult to control the above.
- action required yellow lines both sides of service road access
- This section of Macon way is looking more like an undesirable inner city area, totally due to lack of commitment!

## **APPRAISAL:**

The principle of retail development on this site has been established by the previous outline consent on this site. Consequently, the principle of the development has already been established and this application does not present an opportunity to re-examine those issues. The main issues in the consideration of the reserved matters, therefore, are the acceptable of the proposed access, layout of the site, the scale and appearance of the building and the landscaping.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

#### **Access**

It is important to ensure that adequate parking and servicing facilities are available within the site and that a safe access can be achieved into and out of the site which does not result in an unacceptable level of congestion or queuing at any of the existing roundabouts. The impact of the additional traffic generated on the wider highway network must also be taken into account.

The traffic impact generated by the retail floorspace was considered, along with the other matters relating to the principle of the development at the outline stage. Therefore, this application does not present an opportunity to re-open issues relating to traffic generation.

Details of the point of access were also agreed at the outline stage, although, internal site layout, parking and servicing provision are relevant.

According to the Design and Access Statement:

*The emerging Local Plan for Cheshire East calls for A1 class non food retail to have 1 parking space per 20m/sq of floor space and 6% of spaces be designated disabled bays.*

*The following parking space standards have been provided;*

- 7 designated disabled bays.
- 2 designated family spaces.
- 142 standard parking spaces.

*This provides a total of 151 parking spaces to the Class A1 retail unit, which has a gross floor area of 2113 sq/m.*

*The majority of the spaces have been provided to the front of the unit and site. A loading and yard area has been provided to the rear of the unit and the 34 parking spaces provided along this stretch of boundary to the south of the site would be ideal as designated staff parking. The loading/ unloading area and yard is large enough to also provide a turning head large enough to accommodate articulated Lorries turning.*

*Once the development is completed the access and parking layouts will be maintained through the imposition of planning conditions requiring the access to remain in accordance with the approved plans and for the parking spaces to be maintained.*

*In terms of movement within the site, the proposed site layout is fairly straight forward. A single vehicular access point into the site is provided with a simple car parking layout plan immediately upon entering the site. A Turning head is provided set back within the site and an area for loading/ unloading of deliveries. This is located far enough away from propose customer access that deliveries etc would not impact upon customer access to create a vehicular back log into, within or from the site.*

*Generally parking is provided in a perpendicular formation with disabled parking bays and family spaces located near to the main entrance. Additional parking is located to the rear of the site which would be suitable for staff parking or customer parking to the garden centre access.*

In the absence of any objection from the Strategic Highways Manager, it is not considered that a refusal on the grounds the access and parking arrangements could be sustained.

However, he has commented that there is an excess of parking provision and that some spaces could be removed to provide additional landscaping. Furthermore, better pedestrian access could be provided within the car park to the spaces to the rear of the building. He also recommends that the disabled and family parking provision be amended. This could be secured by a condition requiring a revised parking layout to be submitted and approved.

## **Layout**

The proposed store would be set back from the Macon Way frontage, and is separated from it by a large surface carpark. Consequently, the extent of hard-surfacing to the front of the building would create a car-dominated frontage and would do little to enhance this part of Macon Way. However, it is acknowledged that the constraints of the site are such that it would be impractical to relocate parking to the rear of the building as this would conflict with the proposed HGV turning and service yard area as well as the proposed external garden centre area to the rear. Some overspill parking is proposed to the rear.

### **Appearance & Scale**

As originally submitted the elevational design of the buildings was considered to be uninspired and typical of many similar out-of-town retail developments. As such it would also have done little to enhance the quality of the built environment in this locality. However, a number of improvements have been secured to the scheme, including the introduction of a brickwork plinth and higher quality materials which are more in keeping with the existing units at the nearby Grand Junction Retail Park.

Furthermore, it is an improvement over the derelict garage buildings which are currently on site, and it would not appear out of character, when viewed alongside the adjacent industrial premises and leisure centre building. Therefore, although this scheme represents a missed opportunity to create an area of new high quality townscape, it is not considered that a refusal on design grounds could be sustained, particularly given the poor architectural quality of the neighbouring industrial and commercial buildings on Macon Way.

### **Amenity**

A distance of over 60m will be maintained between the proposed building and the dwellings on the opposite side of the road. It is therefore considered that there will be no adverse effect on the living conditions of these properties as a result of overshadowing or loss of privacy.

### **Landscape**

The site has significant areas of hard standing and there are a number of immature trees around the periphery.

It is not clear from the proposals if any existing vegetation is to be retained and the proposed layout provides limited opportunity for soft landscape works. Whilst the plan shows some tree symbols, the specification provides only for a single species ground cover plant. The landscape officer considers the submission needs to make clear the impact on existing vegetation and the specification for new landscape works could be improved. This could be secured by condition.

### **Air Quality**

The Environmental Health Officer has recommended that a Travel Plan condition be added to any consent. However, Travel Plan condition was imposed on the outline consent and details have been submitted. It is noted that a number of shortcomings have been identified in the travel plan but these can be addressed through the separate discharge of conditions

application which has been submitted rather than through the addition of further conditions on the reserved matters approval, which would not be appropriate given that the reserved matters relates to the design and layout of the building rather than the principle of the use.

Similarly, further Air Quality Impacts Studies have been requested. The outline consent included a condition requiring an Air Quality Impact Assessment to be submitted with the reserved matters application. This has been done as a separate discharge of conditions application. The Environmental Health Officer has commented that he disagrees with the conclusions of this report. He has commented that the approval of the outline planning permission 12/0616 identified that Section 106 funding would be provided for traffic management improvements in the area. Additional funding should be agreed to provide for air quality impacts studies to ensure that the improvements are not contrary to the generic objectives of Air Quality Action Plans which should seek to improve air pollution in AQMAs.

Section 106 contributions should be sought at the outline stage, as they relate to the principle of development rather than the detail of the building design and layout. However, the existing Air Quality Impact Assessment could be amended to include consideration of the traffic management improvements through the discharge of conditions process.

Finally, a Dust Control condition has been recommended requiring a scheme to minimise dust emissions arising from demolition / construction activities on the site to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of all dust suppression measures and the methods to monitor emissions of dust arising from the development. This is considered to be appropriate given that it relates to the construction of the building for which detailed reserved matters approval is being sought.

### **Social Sustainability**

There are no implications for social sustainability.

### **Economic Sustainability**

Although the principle of the development has been established, the approval of the reserved matters will allow the new retail unit to be realised which will be of economic benefit to the town through the provision of a new business with associated job creation.

### **S106 contributions:**

No Section 106 contributions will be necessary for this development.

### **Planning Balance**

The proposal will contribute to economic sustainability through the provision of a new retail unit and creation of jobs. There would be no adverse social implications of the proposal. In terms of environmental sustainability, the proposal would be acceptable in terms of amenity and although the design and layout are not of exceptional quality, it is not considered that a refusal on these grounds could be sustained and that any concerns in this regard are outweighed by the economic benefits of the proposal and the environmental benefits of bringing a vacant and derelict site back into use. The scheme, it is considered to represent

sustainable development and is in accordance with the relevant policies of the development and accordingly it is recommended for approval.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE subject to conditions:**

- 1. Materials**
- 2. Approved Plans**
- 3. Submission / approval and implementation of Landscaping Scheme**
- 4. Implementation of landscaping**
- 5. Submission / approval and implementation of risk assessment and method statement**
- 6. Submission / approval and implementation of revised parking layout**
- 7. Submission / approval and implementation of scheme of Dust Control**
- 8. Submission / approval and implementation of details of crash barrier to protect railway.**



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