

Application No: 17/3356C

Location: Congleton Plastics, VAREY ROAD, CONGLETON, CW12 1HD

Proposal: Change of use to B2/B8 use and limited demolition and extension to premises for ancillary office use

Applicant: Lee Mar Estates

Expiry Date: 06-Oct-2017

SUMMARY:

The proposed B2/B8 use would utilise an existing, vacant employment site within the Eaton Bank Industrial estate within the Congleton Settlement Zone Line.

The scheme would bring economic benefits to the area by using a currently vacant site that offers none.

The proposal is compatible with the surrounding development and the design, scale and form of the associated extension would be functional without appearing incongruous.

Subject to conditions, the impact on neighbouring residential amenity, ecology, trees or flooding and drainage would not be significant. Satisfactory access and parking provision can be provided

The application is therefore recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to conditions

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site relates to a large industrial site located on the western side of Varey Road within the Eaton Bank Industrial Estate, Congleton within the Congleton Settlement Zone Line.

The site comprises a single building of several blocks which total 6,520sqm internal floor space with areas of external hardstanding for parking and loading. The premises are currently vacant, formerly housing Congleton Plastics.

The application site also lies within the radius of an Air Quality Management Area.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for the change of use of this industrial site to B2/B8 use and also seeks to add a small extension of 70sqm to the front of the existing building in order to provide ancillary office space.

A section of acoustic fencing to the rear of the site (at the foot of the wooded hill to the west) is also proposed as noise mitigation.

The permission is sought in order to allow for the relocation of a significant existing Cheshire East based employer, a wall paper manufacturer, who requires more appropriate alternative premises.

RELEVANT HISTORY

23786/3 - proposed erection of 5 storage silos for plastic granules – Approved 12th November 1991

22010/3 - proposed office and ancillaries – Approved 27th March 1990

19160/3 - offices and production building – Approved 8th December 1987

18879/3 - alterations to car park previously approved – Approved 4th August 1987

17925/3 - warehouse for storage of manufactured products, associated service yard and additional car parking – Approved 9th September 1986

17548/3 - Proposed Enclosing Existing Yard Area To Form Additional Production Area – Approved 11th August 1986

14998/3 - lean to building to house pumps, electric switchgear etc – Approve 1st June 1983

14587/3 - industrial units – Approved 7th December 1982

14301/3 - warehouse, parking area and access road – Approved 24th August 1982

8504/3 - add production and warehousing and office accommodation – Approved 6th February 1979

8412/3 - Building To Accommodate Heat Extract Units- Approved 16th January 1979

0945/3 - steel framed portal building for warehouse –Approved 20th November 1974

POLICIES

It should be noted that the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy was formally adopted on 27th July 2017. There are however policies within the legacy local plans that still apply and have not yet been replaced. These policies are set out below.

Development Plan

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

MP1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development, PG1 – Overall Development Strategy, PG2 – Settlement Hierarchy, PG7 – Spatial Distribution of Development, EG1 – Economic Prosperity, EG3 – Existing and Allocated Employment Sites, EG5 – Promoting a Town Centre First Approach to Retail and Commerce, SD1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East, SD2 - Sustainable Development Principles, SE1 - Design, SE2 - Efficient Use of Land, SE3 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity, SE4 – The Landscape, SE5 – Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands, SE6 – Green Infrastructure, SE7 – The Historic Environment, SE8 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy, SE9 - Energy Efficient Development, SE11 – Sustainable Management of Waste, SE12 - Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability, SE13 – Flood Risk and Water Management, CO1 – Sustainable Transport and Travel, CO4 – Travel Plans and Transport Assessments, IN1 – Infrastructure IN2 – Developer Contributions

Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review 2005

PS4 – Towns, GR6 – Amenity and Health, GR9 – Accessibility, Servicing and Parking Provision, GR13 – Public Transport Measures, GR14 – Cycling Measures, GR15 – Pedestrian Measures, GR16 – Footpath, Bridleway and Cycleway Networks, GR17 – Car Parking, GR18 – Traffic Generation, GR20 – Public Utilities, NR2 – Wildlife and Nature Conservation (Statutory sites), NR3 – Wildlife and Nature Conservation (Habitats), NR4 - Wildlife and Nature Conservation (Non-statutory sites)

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The relevant paragraphs include;

14 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development, 17 – Core planning principles, 56-68 - Requiring good design, 69-78 - Promoting healthy communities

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Head of Strategic Infrastructure (HSI) - No objections

Environmental Protection – No objections, subject to a number of conditions including; Implementation of noise mitigation measures within acoustic report, the inclusion of an hours of delivery restriction, the prior submission/approval of a dust mitigation scheme and the prior submission/approval of a travel plan for future staff. Informatives in relation to hours of construction and contaminated land are also sought.

Flood Risk Manager – No objections, subject to the drainage of the new extension being drained into the existing surface water drainage system.

Congleton Town Council – No objections

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:

Consultation letters, a site notice and an advert in the local newspaper were taken out to advertise the application.

In response, at the time of writing this report, 6 letters of objection/concern had been received. The main issues raised include;

- Amenity – noise pollution, air pollution
- Design – safety of proposed cladding material
- Highway safety – congestion, access for emergency vehicles
- Impact upon trees

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of development

The site is located within an existing employment area within the Congleton Settlement Zone Line as defined by Saved policy PS4 of the Congleton Borough Local Plan.

Congleton is identified as a Key Service Centre within the CELPS (Policy PG2). Within such locations, development of scale, location and nature that recognises the distinctiveness of the town will be supported.

Policy SD1 of the CELPS advises that in Key Service Centres, investment and growth will be prioritised and that the re-use of existing buildings should be encouraged.

Policy EG1 of the CELPS states that proposals for employment development (specifically B1, B2 and B8 uses) will be supported in principle in Key Service Centres. This policy goes on to state that on non-allocated employment sites, proposals will be supported where they are in the right location and support the strategy, role and function of the town.

Policy EG3 of the CELPS relates to existing and allocated employment sites. This policy states that such sites will be protected for employment uses unless certain criteria are satisfied. As the proposal would result in the site remaining in employment use, although

a different employment use than at present, the proposal is considered to adhere with this policy.

As the proposal relates to the re-use of an existing, vacant employment site with an alternative employment use, a use supported in this location by the CELPS, subject to its adherence with all other relevant policies, it is considered that the proposal would be deemed to be acceptable in principle.

Design

Policy SE1 of the CELPS advises that the proposal should make a positive contribution of their surroundings in terms of; sense of place, design quality, sustainable architecture, liveability/workability and safety.

The application seeks the change of use of the wider site and a limited amount of new development. The new development would comprise of a small extension of 70sqm to the front of the existing building (fronting Varey Road) in order to provide ancillary office space.

The extension would be single-storey to reflect the existing facility and measure 6.5 metres in depth, 11.6 metres in width and would comprise of a flat roof, 3.67 metres in height at its maximum point. It is advised within the submission that the extension would be finished in dark grey cladding.

Whilst the design or finish is not ideal in design terms, it must be acknowledged that the character of the street is one of industrial premises with differing designed frontages. The buildings are utilitarian in form and are designed for functionality rather than form.

The proposed acoustic fence to the rear (west) of the site would be well screened from public vantage points and raises no particular design concerns.

It is considered that the proposed design of the scheme is acceptable. As such, it is considered that the proposed design would adhere with Policy SE1 of the CELPS.

Amenity and Health

Policy GR6 (Amenity and Health) states that development will be permitted provided that the proposal would not have an unduly detrimental effect on amenity due to loss of privacy, loss of sunlight and daylight, visual intrusion, environmental disturbance or pollution, traffic generation, access and parking.

The area is predominately industrial in character being positioned within the Eaton Bank Industrial Estate. The closest existing neighbouring dwellings are located over 100 metres from the proposed extension. As such, no concerns are raised with the proposal in relation to loss of privacy, light or visual intrusion.

The closest existing neighbouring dwellings to the wider site which would be utilised for the re-located business would be the occupiers of the properties on Wiltshire Drive which would be approximately 57 metres away, albeit at a significantly higher level.

The Council's Environmental Protection Unit have advised that they have no objections in consideration of matters of air or land pollution, subject to a number of conditions including; the prior submission/approval of a dust mitigation method statement and the prior submission/approval of a Travel Plan.

Matters of noise pollution were of particular concern to residents and the Environmental Protection Officer. In order to address this concern, an acoustic report has been prepared proposing mitigation in the form of an acoustic fence (at the rear of the site). Furthermore, the applicant has agreed to an hours of delivery restriction to ensure any night-time noise is kept to a minimum. These conditions address the Council's Environmental Protection Officer's concerns, subject to their implementation.

As such, subject to the above, it is not considered that the proposal would create any significant amenity concerns and would adhere to Policy GR6 of the Congleton Local Plan.

Highways

The existing access arrangements to the site shall remain unchanged.

At present there are 11 car parking spaces fronting the building and this will be reduced to 4 to allow the building of the office accommodation. Although there is a reduction in parking, the Council's Head of Strategic Infrastructure (HSI) has advised that there are other parking areas on the site that provide adequate parking. Therefore, the Council's HSI has advised that the proposals raise no highway concerns and no objections are raised.

Flooding & drainage

The Council's Flood Risk Manager has reviewed the proposals and advised that he has no objections, subject to the drainage from the proposed new extension being drained into the existing surface water drainage system.

Nature Conservation

The Council's Nature Conservation Officer has reviewed the proposals and advised that should planning permission be approved, a condition to protect breeding birds be imposed.

With regards to the proposed acoustic fence, the Council's Nature Conservation Officer has advised that because the proposed location of the acoustic fence borders an area of Deciduous Woodland (a national inventory priority habitat), he would need to be satisfied that this would be constructed inside the service yard on the existing hard-

standing and not within the woodland itself. As such subject to a condition seeking the prior approval of a more detailed plan to reflect this, no nature conservation objections are raised.

Trees

Although the proposed extension would not create any forestry concerns due to its large distance away from any existing trees, the proposed acoustic fence would be at the foot of, and be within close proximity to woodland.

The Council's Forestry Officer has reviewed the proposals and advised that assuming the fencing will be supported on individual posts secured into the ground by concreted spot holes; providing the holes are either excavated by hand or arguer any direct damage should be limited. It would appear an amount of lateral pruning to establish the fence line will also be required, the extent of which is also difficult to determine from the detail submitted.

As such, should the application be approved, the Council's Forestry Officer has recommended a condition that no development shall take place until details of an Engineer designed construction method statement for the implementation of the acoustic fencing within the Root Protection Areas of the adjacent tree cover has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Furthermore, a condition seeking the prior approval of any tree pruning and felling should be submitted.

Subject to these conditions, it is considered that the proposal would not create any significant tree concerns.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposed B2/B8 use would utilise an existing, vacant employment site within the Eaton Bank Industrial estate within the Congleton Settlement Zone Line. The scheme would bring economic benefits to the area by using a currently vacant site that offers none.

The proposal is compatible with the surrounding development and the design, scale and form of the associated extension would be functional without appearing incongruous. Subject to conditions, the impact on neighbouring residential amenity, ecology, trees or flooding and drainage would not be significant. Satisfactory access and parking provision can be provided

The application is considered to constitute a sustainable form of development and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE subject to the following conditions

1. Standard (3 years)

- 2. Plans**
- 3. Materials as per application**
- 4. Approved extension shall be drained into the existing surface water drainage system.**
- 5. Deliveries to and from the site shall be restricted to Monday to Friday 07.00 hours to 20.00 hours' – with no deliveries on Saturdays and Sundays**
- 6. Implementation of noise mitigation scheme**
- 7. Prior submission/approval of a dust management plan**
- 8. Prior submission/approval of staff travel plan**
- 9. Prior submission/approval of a scaled plan of the proposed acoustic fence detailing that it would be constructed within the confines of the existing site on existing hardstanding**
- 10. Prior submission/approval of a construction method statement of the proposed acoustic fence**
- 11. Prior submission/approval of a tree pruning/felling specification**

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning (Regulation) in consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) of the Southern Planning Committee to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.

