

Application No: 17/3374N

Location: BASFORD WEST DEVELOPMENT SITE, CREWE, CHESHIRE

Proposal: Approval of reserved matters (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale), pursuant to 14/0378N for phase 1 of the Basford West development site, Crewe Road, Crewe

Applicant: Goodman

Expiry Date: 03-Oct-2017

SUMMARY

This is a reserved matters application pursuant to outline planning permission 14/0378N. It relates to the approval of details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for a warehouse and distribution unit which constitutes Phase 1 of employment development within the Basford West strategic development site.

The site is an integral part of the area known as Basford West which is identified for residential and employment development by the CELPs under Policy LPS 3. The provision of employment development is the principle overriding objective of the Basford West site and the delivery of the employment elements of the site are considered to be of vital importance to the delivery of "All Change for Crewe".

The principle of significant employment development and associated infrastructure has been established under outline planning approval 14/0378N, and therefore it is considered critical that this viable scheme is progressed.

The proposal is considered to be of acceptable siting and design, subject to compliance with the conditions of the outline approval, and further conditions including the need to ensure the provision of landscaping, ecological mitigation measures and suitable footpath link.

On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposal represents sustainable development in accordance with the Development Plan and is recommended for approval.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approval subject to conditions

PROPOSAL

This is a reserved matters application pursuant to outline planning permission 14/0378N. It relates to the approval of details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for development constituting Phase 1 of employment development within the Basford West strategic development site.

The proposed development comprises a warehouse and distribution development (Class B8). This large building will have a maximum height of 18m and provide a total floor space of 22,010 sq. metres. It will incorporate warehouse facilities and also ancillary office accommodation (1010 sq.m) split over the first and second floors of the building within it's the north western corner.

The building is orientated to ensure its glazed office element faces towards Jack Mills Way. Its warehouse elevations will be constructed with trapezoidal profiled metal cladding used in both vertical and horizontal orientations and of contrasting colours.

The proposal also includes the provision of landscaped planting areas including areas of water balancing / attenuation ponds and ecological mitigation. A footpath connection to link with future phases of the employment area is also proposed to run alongside the southern site boundary with A500.

Vehicular access to the development is from the first roundabout junction onto Jack Mills Way, close to the A500. The development provides 184 car parking spaces, parking for 43 HGVS and service yards. Docking facilities will be provided with service yards to the long side of the buildings creating separate goods-in and despatch facilities.

The commercial vehicle entrance to the unit has double lanes to provide waiting space for 2 of the largest heavy goods vehicles. A manned security gatehouse is proposed to control incoming and outgoing goods vehicles. In addition, the proposals also include 2.4m high security fencing, cycle storage facilities, smoking shelters, galvanised steel water storage tanks (10m diameter x 6.0m high) for a fire fighting sprinkler system, and the potential provision of vehicle wash and refuelling facilities (subject to future occupier application).

SITE

The application site forms Phase 1 of the approved outline planning permission for employment development at Basford West Strategic Development Site (14/0378N), located approximately 2.5km to the south of Crewe Town Centre.

The site is located to east of John Mills Way, which is the spine road, running north/south through the strategic development site and was a component of the two Basford West planning permissions (13/0336N and 14/0378N).

Access to the site is from the southern roundabout of Jack Mills Way.

Land to west of the application site is approved for mixed uses and is screened by landscaped bunding and drainage ponds. Land on the western side of Jack Mills Way has detailed approval for residential development which is currently being implemented by Taylor Wimpey.

The southern site boundary adjoins the A500.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 14/0378N Outline planning application for B2 (general industry) and B8 (storage and distribution) comprising 1,042,500 sq ft with ancillary offices and maximum storey height of 18m, and associated works including construction of new spine road with access from Crewe Road and A500, creation of footpaths, drainage including formation of swales, foul pumping station, substation, earthworks to form landscaped bunds and landscaping – Approved 18/07/2017
- 15/2943N Reserved Matters application pursuant to outline planning permission ref. 13/0336N for the construction of 370 dwellings, associated on site highways infrastructure, car parking and pedestrian routes, formal and informal open space provision and associated works. Approved 24/09/2015
- 17/1071N Construction of road to provide access to approved development plots within Basford West Development site. – Approved 07/04/2017
- 17/1360N Erection of a Pub/Restaurant including managers flat, car parking and ancillary works – Approved 06/07/2017

POLICY

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Adopted Version (CELP)

LPS3 Basford West, Crewe
 MP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 PG1 Overall Development Strategy
 PG7 Spatial Distribution of Development
 SD1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
 SD2 Sustainable Development Principles
 EG1 Economic Prosperity
 EG3 Existing and Allocated Employment Sites
 SE1 Design
 SE2 Efficient Use of Land
 SE3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
 SE4 The Landscape
 SE5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
 SE6 Green Infrastructure
 SE9 Energy Efficient Development
 SE12 Pollution, Land contamination and land instability
 SE13 Flood risk and water management
 CO1 Sustainable Travel and Transport
 CO2 Enabling Business Growth Through Transport Infrastructure
 CO4 Travel plans and transport assessments

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

Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan

NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats)
NE.9 (Protected Species)
NE.10 (New Woodland Planting and Landscaping)
NE17 (Pollution control)
NE.20 (Flood Prevention)
BE.1 (Amenity)
BE.3 (Access and Parking)
BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources)
BE.5 (Infrastructure)
TRAN.3 (Pedestrians)
TRAN.4 Access for the Disabled)
TRAN.5 (Cycling)
TRAN.6 (Cycle Routes)
RT.9 (Footpaths and Bridleways)

Weston and Basford Neighbourhood Plan

Regulation 19 - Referendum vote in favour

LC2 - Landscape Quality, Countryside and Open Views
LC3 - Woodland, Trees, Hedgerows and Walls
LC5 - Footpaths
D2 - Environmental Sustainability of buildings
D3 - Employment Development
D5- Adapting to climate change
T1 - Footpaths, Cycle ways and Bridleways
T2 - Traffic Congestion
T3 - Improving Air Quality
T6 - Cycle parking

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
National Planning Practice Guidance

CONSULTATIONS

Environmental Health – No objection

Highways Officer - No objection

Environment Agency - No objection

United Utilities – No objection subject to condition requiring details of management arrangements for the sustainable drainage system.

Flood Risk – No objection in principle, but further clarification required of details of site drainage system.

Public Rights of Way - No objection subject to details of pedestrian route along southern site boundary and signage scheme for route

VIEWS OF WESTON PARISH COUNCIL

No objection, but considers that the screen planting on the southern boundary of the site (Shavington Bypass A500) should be strengthened and should include evergreen species”.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

None Received.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

The key issues to be considered in the determination of this application are set out below.

Background

The site is an integral part of the area known as Basford West which is approximately 52 hectares in size and identified for residential and employment development by the CELPs under Policy PS 3.

The site is also identified in the Weston and Basford Neighbourhood Plan as a strategic allocation. The Neighbourhood Plan has passed its referendum stage and can be given full weight.

The principle of developing this area has been accepted in previous Development Plans. The strategic site is a development plan allocation for regional and strategic employment identified in the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan and known as Basford West. An outline planning application (ref P03/1071) for employment uses and associated works was granted permission on 13 May 2008

Outline planning approval (14/0378N) was granted on the eastern portion of the Basford west site for 96,851 square metres of B2 and B8 uses on 18 July 2014. In addition outline approval was granted in August 2013 (13/0336N) on the remaining western part of the site, for residential development (up to 370 units), offices, local centre, restaurant, hotel, car showroom and new spine road. Reserved matters approval for up to 370 dwellings, local centre (A1), public house (A3/4), hotel (C1) and car showroom was subsequently granted on 24 September 2015.

Principle of Development

The principle of employment development and the point of access has therefore been established following the approval of the outline application 14/0378N in July 2014.

This application relates to the approval of the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for Phase 1 of the employment development.

Design and Context

Outline planning approval established the principle of siting large industrial building within the Basford West site, and within approved parameters including the maximum building height is limited to 18 metres across the site.

CELPS Policy SE1 advises that new development will only be permitted so long as it would achieve a high standard of design. In particular development should have due regard to the site and wider setting in respect to layout, movement and connections, scale and height, landscape character, townscape character and in their appearance both in terms of architectural quality and materials. These requirements are reflected by Policy D3 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The proposal seeks the erection of a large commercial/industrial unit within the south-western corner of the approved Basford West employment area. It will accommodate a warehouse and distribution unit which falls within Use Class B8, together with an ancillary office accommodation.

The unit consists of a long spanning steel portal frame, creating large column free internal areas, for maximum flexibility of the internal space. Importantly, the proposed height of the building is within the maximum 18.0m set within the outline approved parameters. This is required to achieve a clear internal height to the underside of the steel structure of 15.0m for appropriate pallet rack storage and thereby creating units which are commercially viable

The first and second floor office elements are accommodated within the north western corner of the building, and its predominantly glazed frontage faces towards the Jack Mills Way where it would be visible from the roundabout junction. The warehouse elevations are constructed with trapezoidal profiled metal cladding used in both vertical and horizontal orientations of a colour scheme of silver metallic, slate grey, anthracite and white.

Together with the office element, the different profiles and contrasting colours of the cladding materials add visual interest, and help reduce the overall massing of this large building. In addition the roof design has a series of shallow curved profiles designed to soften the buildings profile and further reduce its visual impact.

To further assist with the visual impact of the development, landscaped bunds are already provided along the Jack Mills Way, and also provide a screen to the western boundary. Landscaping in the form of a bund and woodland planting will also be provided along the southern boundary with the A500.

As a result of the above, it is considered that the layout, form, scale and appearance of the proposal would be acceptable given the context of this large development site, and would therefore accord with Policy SE. 1 of the Local Plan.

Landscape

The outline planning approval determined that a scheme for woodland/landscape and SUDs (sustainable urban drainage) area, sited between the employment land and the housing area on the western side of Jack Mills Way was acceptable, and would achieve the highest degree of buffering without significantly compromising the viability of the scheme. This scheme has since been implemented and is considered to provide a robust landscape structure for the development and an appropriate landscape for this important gateway into Crewe.

The width of the landscaping/bunds/SUDs alongside Jack Mills Way was agreed on the basis that the buildings within the employment area would have a maximum height of 18m. This was subsequently set out in the outline approval (14/0378N) and the proposed unit accords with these parameters.

The outline approval also allows for the provision of a landscaped bund alongside the southern site boundary with the A500. To maximise the effectiveness of landscaping alongside the A500 site boundary, amended plans have been submitted. This has repositioned the landscaped bund closer to the proposed building, re-routed the footpath link to run alongside the A500 boundary and also include a more robust woodland planting mix. The Council's Landscape Officer considers that the revised plan will create better space for the proposed footpath, and allow for more effective planting with larger woodland trees to be achieved. Filter views and help soften the appearance of the development from the south. As approximately a third of the planting mix of amended landscape proposals will comprise of evergreen tree species, this is considered to satisfactorily address the concerns raised by Weston Parish Council.

The outline approval (14/0378N) includes several conditions relating to the overall provision of landscaping within the wider site. However it is considered that conditions are required to be attached to this Reserved Matters approval for the detailed specification of construction of the bunding and to ensure that subsequent implementation of the planting scheme.

Highways

The outline application was approved on the basis of a Transport Assessment which related to the entire Basford West development site, including both the residential elements and employment area. A key infrastructure requirement of the outline approval was the provision of a spine road (Jack Mills Way) serving the scheme, which linked the A500 with Crewe Road, Gresty (B5071). This road link was fully completed and operational in July 2015.

The Council's Highway Engineer considered that the proposal allows for satisfactory access to the site from Jack Mills Way and also subsequent phases of the Basford West employment area. The highway engineer does not consider that traffic movements generated by this development will have an adverse impact on highway safety or traffic management on the local highway network.

The Highway Engineer has also advised that the design of the access road meets the required highway standards to serve an industrial development and has raised no concerns

regarding the internal layout of the site. There are two access points to the site, a western access serving the staff car parking and the eastern access for HGV vehicles. The Highway Engineer considers that these arrangements are acceptable and also the proposed level of car parking provision on site accords with CEC standards with appropriate disabled spaces provided. Whilst the number of car parking spaces to be provided within the development has been optimised, a condition of the outline approval requires the provision of a travel plan with the aim of balancing the need to provide sufficient operational car parking without encouraging excessive car use.

Ecology

Background

The EC Habitats Directive 1992 requires the UK to maintain a system of strict protection for protected species and their habitats. The Directive only allows disturbance, or deterioration or destruction of breeding sites or resting places

- (a) in the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, and provided that there is
- (b) no satisfactory alternative and
- (b) no detriment to the maintenance of the species population at favourable conservation status in their natural range

The UK has implemented the Directive in the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 2010 (as amended) which contain two layers of protection (i) a requirement on Local Planning Authorities (“LPAs”) to have regard to the Directive’s requirements above, and (ii) a licensing system administered by Natural England and supported by criminal sanctions.

Local Plan Policy NE.5 states *“the Local Planning Authority will protect, conserve, and enhance the natural conservation resource.”*

Circular 6/2005 advises LPAs to give due weight to the presence of protected species on a development site to reflect EC requirements. “This may potentially justify a refusal of planning permission.”

The NPPF advises LPAs to conserve and enhance biodiversity: if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts) or adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for, planning permission should be refused.

Natural England’s standing advice is that, if a (conditioned) development appears to fail the three tests in the Habitats Directive, then LPAs should consider whether Natural England is likely to grant a licence: if unlikely, then the LPA should refuse permission: if likely, then the LPA can conclude that no impediment to planning permission arises under the Directive and Regulations.

The Basford West Site has been subject to protected species surveys, and mitigation strategies have been implemented on-site in respect of bats, badgers and great crested newts. Ecological mitigation areas have been established on the western part of the broader site and most recently alongside Jack Mills Way. The outline approval (14/0378N) established that no additional significant impacts associated with any of these species are anticipated in respect of the site and details of habitat creation and associated infrastructure are provided. These elements of the Basford West development were also approved in detail in respect of 13/0336N for the adjacent residential/mixed use development and 12/1959N for the 'Mercer land' in the far south eastern corner of the employment area.

As regards this reserved matters application, and in accordance with Condition 45 of the outline approval, a detailed habitat management plan has been submitted in support proposals. Whilst relating to the whole Basford West development, it includes specific proposals for GCN mitigation on this site, as set out below.

Great Crested newts (GCN)

Several Great Crested Newts (GCN) ponds are proposed alongside the southern boundary of the site, adjacent to the landscaped bund. To ensure the suitability of these ponds for use by GCN, the Council's Ecologist recommends that a condition should be imposed requiring the submission of the detailed design of the ponds prior to the commencement of development.

During the determination of adjacent application 17/1360N for the development of a public house as part of a mixed uses scheme on land to the west, it became apparent that great crested newts had colonised two of the SUDS pond adjacent to this proposed development as a result of a breached amphibian exclusion fence. However the applicant's ecological consultant has confirmed that great crested newts have now been excluded and removed from the two SUDS ponds. The Council's Ecologist is satisfied that the proposed development is not reasonable likely to affect Great Crested Newts.

Provision of features for breeding birds including house sparrow

In accordance with Condition 44 of the outline approval, proposals have been submitted for the provision of features for breeding birds. However the Bird Box Strategy has been revised to relocate some of the bird boxes away from the south facing elevation of the building, satisfactorily addressing concerns raised by the Council's Ecologist.

Updated badger survey

An acceptable updated badger survey has been submitted in accordance with condition 47 of the outline approval. However, the Council's Ecologist recommends that a condition should be attached which requires the submission of a further updated badger survey, if development has not commenced by October 2018.

Amenity

The impact of noise arising from the operation of the Employment Area was considered during the determination of the outline application. The Environmental Health

Officer has confirmed that the conditions imposed at the outline stage as regards noise impact are sufficient to safeguard amenity.

It was determined at the outline stage that operational noise levels from the employment development were at acceptable levels in the day and night-time periods at the adjacent residential development beyond Jack Mills Way and all existing residential properties. Conditions were imposed on the outline approval requiring the submission of a noise assessment to be undertaken for each unit and a noise mitigation scheme implemented prior to the commencement in use of buildings.

It was considered that mechanical services plant would need to be located well away from the nearby residential units to meet noise level requirements and a condition was imposed on the outline approval to secure this. Furthermore, proposed noise mitigation measures including the 3m high bonding alongside Jack Mills Way, which has since been provided, would reduce the effects of both road traffic and operational noise.

The outline approval also includes conditions requiring an environmental management plan covering noise and disturbance, waste management and dust generation during construction as well as details of floor floating operations to reduce the impact of noise and vibration on neighbouring sensitive properties. Conditions also control construction hours and the future provision of lighting within the site.

Air Quality

The Environmental Health Officer has raised no objections to the proposals on the basis that air quality issues were fully addressed at the outline stage (14/0378N) given the agreed assumptions and estimates of traffic movements as set out in the transport assessment. Conditions for the implementation of a low emission strategy, provision of electric vehicle infrastructure and the approval of a travel plan for each phase, were imposed on the outline approval to mitigate air quality impact.

Flood Risk

No objections are raised to the proposal by the Environment Agency or United Utilities as flooding and drainage matters were fully considered at the outline stage. A series of planning conditions relating to on-site drainage and in respect to the provision of sustainable urban drainage methods, are attached to the outline approval.

Whilst drainage arrangements are considered acceptable in principle, the Council's Flood Risk manager requested further clarification for why the drainage design had been amended to omit a swale feature to the north of unit. In addition hydraulic calculations and associated modelling have also been requested. The applicant has provided additional information setting out that the previously proposed swale feature provided drainage storage, over and above that provided within the SUDS network along Jack Mills Way and is not therefore required. This information is currently being assessed by the Flood Risk Manager and an update of the position will be provided.

CONCLUSION

The site is an integral part of the area known as Basford West which has identified for residential and employment development by the CELPs under Policy LPS 3. The provision of employment development is the principle overriding objective of the Basford West site, and the delivery of the employment elements of the site are considered to be of vital importance to the delivery of “All Change for Crewe”.

The principle of significant employment development and associated infrastructure has been established under outline planning approval 14/0378N, and therefore it is considered critical that this viable scheme is progressed .

The proposal is considered to be of an acceptable scale, layout and design and includes appropriate landscaping. This combined with compliance with the conditions of the outline approval and further conditions to ensure the provision of landscaping, ecological mitigation measures and suitable footpath link ensures its overall acceptability.

On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposal represents sustainable development in accordance with the Development Plan and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE Subject to the following conditions:

- 1. To comply with outline permission**
- 2. Development in accord with approved plans**
- 3. Materials**
- 4. Implementation of Ecological Mitigation and Habitat Management Plan**
- 5 Details of GCN ponds**
- 6 Detailed specification of bunding alongside A500**
- 7 Implementation of landscaping**
- 8. Details of footpath link and signage**

In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Board'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 (Regulation) has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the Strategic Planning Board, provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Board's decision.

