

Planning Reference No:	10/1492N
Application Address:	Fields Farm, Sydney Road, Crewe
Proposal:	Construction of a Noise Attenuation/Screening Bund
Applicant:	VWJ Earthmoving Ltd
Application Type:	Full Planning
Grid Reference:	372447 355844
Ward:	Doddington
Earliest Determination Date:	14 th June 2010
Expiry Dated:	23 rd June 2010
Date of Officer's Site Visit:	9 th June 2010
Date Report Prepared:	15 th June 2010
Constraints:	Green Gap & Open Countryside

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve with conditions

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle
- Amenity
- Design
- Highways
- Ecology

1. REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application was to be dealt with under the Council's delegation scheme. However Cllr Hammond has requested it is referred to Committee for the following reason;

'The Committee need to consider concerns regarding the effects of the proposal upon the visual character and amenity of the surrounding open countryside due to the location of the site within the Green Gap. This particularly relates to Policies NE.2 and NE.4'

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site is located within the Crewe-Haslington Green Gap and the Open Countryside. Fields Farm consists of a modern detached dwelling, a traditional brick barn, and a number of smaller stable buildings, with a manege located to the east of the dwelling. Directly to the east of the site is the A534 Haslington Bypass and this boundary is currently formed by a 2 metre high timber fence and sparse vegetation. The area is relatively open with some variation in land levels.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The proposal relates to the construction of a 1.5 metre high noise attenuation/screening bund that would be sited onto the boundary with the A534. The bund would be 135 metres in length.

4. RELEVANT HISTORY

10/0748N – Barn conversion to create one dwelling (extension to time limit condition) – Refused 22nd April 2010

P04/1393 - Barn Conversion to Create One Dwelling – Approved 28th February 2005

P04/0939 - Change of Use from Agricultural Use to Commercial Premises – Refused 29th September 2004

P03/0336 - Demolition of Existing House and Replacement Detached Dwelling – Approved 22nd August 2003

P02/1186 - Change of Use from Agricultural Use to Offices and Storage – Refused 30th December 2002

5. POLICIES

Local Plan policy

NE.2 – Open Countryside

NE.4 – Green Gaps

NE.9 – Protected Species

BE.1 – Amenity

BE.2 – Design Standards

BE.3 – Access and Parking

6. CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Ecology: Do not anticipate there being any significant ecological issues associated with the proposed development, recommends the use of native landscaping only.

Highways: Providing that the bund does not restrict the existing visibility splays, the highways authority has no objections.

7. VIEWS OF THE PARRISH COUNCIL

Crewe Green Parish Council: The Parish Council have no objection to the proposals on condition that the bund is constructed with inert material and that the proposed planting scheme is implemented within the first planting season following the creation of the bund.

Haslington Parish Council: No comments received at the time of writing this report

8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

No representations received

9. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Supporting Statement (Produced by the applicant)

- The applicant understands that when the A534 was constructed the adjacent landowners had the option of a bund or fencing. The current tenant opted for fencing and the fencing is not very high, is not double thickness, is not acoustic fencing and there is no planting

- The A534 is a major route linking Crewe and the M6. The road carries a high volume of traffic during all times of the day and there is a high level of noise pollution

- Due to the level of the fencing, 4 x 4 vehicles and HGV's can clearly see over the boundary fence which causes a security risk
- As the area of land immediately adjacent to the A534 is a paddock; there is a concern that when young cattle and horses are on the paddock traffic noise may scare the animals and they may escape onto the main road
- The proposed bund would provide an acceptable environmental improvement and a substantial improvement to Fields Farm in terms of noise pollution and as a visual improvement
- The bund is to have a 1 in 2 slope and there would be a post and rail fence constructed with landscaping that would be sympathetic to the surrounding landscaping
- The bund is to be formed of imported inert subsoil/clay (spoil) material, the work is likely to take less than 12 months
- The only excavation work involved in this proposal is the temporary removal of topsoil
- No watercourses are affected and the site is not part of a flood plain. Drainage of the proposal will be by the falls formed by the structure which will be collected by the existing watercourses
- Road access to the site is good as haulage vehicles will approach the site via Sydney Road, Crewe then travel down the drive approximately 0.5 miles long of which there are 2 passing points
- The landscaping will be implemented in the first available planting season and will integrate into the existing landscaping along the road and will include a diverse mix of grassland, hedges and tree planting

10. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The application site is located within the Open Countryside and Green Gap and the principal issue is whether the development would result in the erosion of the physical gaps between the built up areas or adversely affect the visual character of the landscape. The proposed development will need to comply with policies BE.1, BE.2, BE.3, NE.2, NE.4 and NE.9.

Amenity

The application site is located in an isolated position with no near neighbouring residential properties. Given the scale of the proposal and its location it is considered that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact upon residential amenity.

Design

In terms of development within the Green Gap, policy NE.4 states that the construction of new buildings or the change of use of the existing buildings or land should meet the following criteria;

- it should not result in the erosion of the physical gaps between the built up areas
- it should not adversely affect the visual character of the landscape

Once the bund has been completed it would be finished with a landscaping scheme which would be conditioned to include native species only. It is not

considered that the construction of a landscaped bund of 1.5 metres in height would result in the erosion of the physical gaps between the built up areas.

The land levels vary on the adjacent land to the north and south of the site and it is accepted that there are other areas of landscaped mounding along the A534. Given the variation in land levels adjacent to the site it is not considered that a 1.5m high bund would harm the visual character of the landscape especially when the landscaping scheme becomes established.

The proposal is also subject to Policy NE.2 and it is not considered that the development would have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the open countryside.

Highways

The proposal would not impact upon highway visibility and as a result the Highway Authority has raised no objection to the proposed development. The development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of its highway safety implications.

Ecology

It is not considered that this development would impact upon protected species and this view is supported by the Council's ecologist. A condition will be attached to ensure that the landscaping scheme is made up of native species only and that if any protected species are found during construction works that a qualified ecologist is contacted.

11. CONCLUSIONS

The proposal would not result in erosion of the physical gaps between the built up areas and would not adversely affect the character of the landscape. The development would not raise any amenity, highway safety or ecological issues and is therefore considered to be acceptable.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

Approve subject to the following conditions;

- 1. Standard 3 years**
- 2. Development in accordance with the approved plans**
- 3. Landscaping scheme including native species only to be submitted**
- 4. Landscaping to be completed**
- 5. Details of fencing required to be submitted and approved**
- 6. Works to stop if protected species are found**

Location Plan

