

TWC/2018/0159

Land adjacent Golden Bear Products Ltd, Hortonwood 40, Hortonwood, Telford, Shropshire

Erection of 2no. industrial units (Use Class B1(c), B2 and B8) ***Amended Plan and Application Form Received***

APPLICANT

Telford & Wrekin Council

RECEIVED

23/02/2018

PARISH

Hadley and Leegomery

WARD

Hadley and Leegomery

THIS APPLICATION IS BEFORE PLANNING COMMITTEE AS TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL ARE THE APPLICANT

1. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 It is recommended that DELEGATED AUTHORITY be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to GRANT FULL PLANNING PERMISSION subject to Condition(s) and Informative(s).

2. APPLICATION SITE

- 2.1 The application site is approximately rectangular in shape and is located within the North Telford Hortonwood, Donnington and Hadley Park Strategic Employment Area towards the north eastern edge of the urban area. With the exception of the north eastern tip of the site, it is formed of allocated employment site E6 in the adopted local plan. It extends to approximately 3.84 hectares in area.
- 2.2 Currently, the site remains undeveloped being relatively flat open ground in use as a paddock that also contains substantial numbers of trees and hedges, predominantly around the boundaries and its centre. Those within the site tend to follow a NW-SE axis and are a feature of the surrounding landscape. The western boundary to Hortonwood 40 is delineated by a post and rail fence and several trees. The site contains a small pond feature located in the south eastern corner.
- 2.3 The surrounding area is predominantly commercial in character being part of the allocated employment area at Hortonwood and dominated by large scale commercial and employment buildings. To the south sits Golden Bear Products (toy manufacturing), Epson (technology production including printers) opposite, Hauck Heat Treatment Ltd (metal heat treating) along Hortonwood 40.

3. APPLICATION DETAILS

- 3.1 The proposed development comprises erection of two substantial industrial buildings (Use Classes B1(c), B2 and B8), and associated car parking and

service areas. Total proposed floor space amounts to 6,772.5 sq. metres. Proposed access for this site is to be taken off Hortonwood 40 to the west.

- 3.2 The block plan shows the buildings set back from Horton Lane (to the east) across the car parking areas; each would be served by adjacent HGV turning and parking. Existing trees on the site are to be largely retained and protected during development with a section of hedgerow and trees within the rear area of the site scheduled for removal. Two ponds are proposed in the north eastern and south eastern areas of the site respectively. Additional landscaping around the ponds is proposed.
- 3.3 The buildings are labelled 12A and 12B. The larger of the two, 12A, is located in the northern part of the site close to the boundary with the adjacent business which is marked by a mature hedgerow. It will be dominated by open storage with ancillary ground and first floor reception and office space, meeting rooms, kitchen facilities and toilets. The floor space measures 3,797 sq. metres warehouse accommodation, and 526 sq. metres office accommodation. The building will be 63 metres wide, 66 metres in length and 9 metres in height to a flat roof. Materials include composite metal panelling in contrasting bands for the walls and roof with powder coated steel doors and powder coated aluminium windows.
- 3.4 Building 12B is smaller measuring 1,909sqm of warehouse accommodation, and 526 sq. metres of office accommodation, a width of just under 57 metres, a length of 47 metres; a height of 6.4 metres (at the rear) and 10 metres (at the front). It contains a similar series of uses and the external materials are also common, although it would have a mono-pitch roof rather than a flat one. It is located further south within the site.
- 3.5 The total number of car parking spaces to serve both buildings is 161, including 9 disability spaces and 6 motorcycle spaces. An additional 24 bicycle spaces will also be provided. Most of the car parking area is concentrated in the western and central parts of the site with the buildings set back from these areas.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

No relevant history.

5. RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS

- 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 5.2 Telford and Wrekin Local Plan 2011-2031

6. NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 Two letters of public objection have been received making the following observations:

- increased traffic using Horton Lane (particularly peak times) throughout the working day and perhaps at weekends. The Council has already determined that it is 'only suitable for local access purposes and not of the nature to be appropriate for through traffic,' use as shortcut/rat-run to avoid Hadley Park Roundabout, upcoming effects of the new Defence Fulfilment Centre and developments behind Cofresco (nee Wrap Film). May be appropriate for developers to contribute towards an integrated Traffic Management Solution for Horton Lane and Hortonwood;
- existing litter problem – worsened by more employment and traffic;
- deficiencies of plans - no scales, no dimensions, no building heights.

7. STATUTORY CONSULTEES

- 7.1 Hadley and Leegomery Parish Council: **No objection.**
- 7.2 Highways: **Support** subject to Conditions necessitating provision of visibility splays, parking and turning areas, construction details of hard surfaced areas, a Travel Plan (with a monitoring sum associated of £5000) and details of any site enclosure.
- 7.3 Public Protection: **Support** subject to conditions restricting demolition and construction operational hours, provision of a noise / acoustic survey prior to occupation, restriction on the hours of operation, and the submission of an external lighting plan.
- 7.4 Drainage: **Support** the scheme subject to a condition requiring a detailed design for surface water drainage to be submitted with a restricted runoff rate of 5.59 litres/second.
- 7.5 Ecology: **Support** subject to conditions for works to be undertaken in accordance with protected species survey, the erection of artificial nesting and/or roosting boxes, provision of a lighting plan, a requirement to obtain a European Protected Species Licence, the submission of a Habitat Creation and Management Plan, and a pre-commencement badger inspection.
- 7.6 Arboricultural: **Support** subject to conditions for a landscape design, tree protection, tree replacement, and soil levels.
- 7.7 Shropshire Fire Service: **Comment** provided guiding the developer towards the Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's Fire Safety Guidance for Commercial and Domestic Planning Applications.
- 7.8 West Mercia Police: **Comment** provided around measures to design out crime from the scheme.

8. APPRAISAL

- 8.1 Having regard to the development plan policy and other material considerations including comments received during the consultation process, the planning application raises the following main issues:

- Principle of Development
- Design and Visual Impact
- Highway Safety
- Impact upon Residential Amenity
- Drainage and Flood Risk
- Ecology
- Other Matters

Principle of Development

- 8.2 Related to the principle of the proposal, of particular significance is the fact that this site has been allocated in the adopted Local Plan as a key employment site (E6). The allocation covers almost entirely the 3.8ha site and is allocated for a mix of B Class uses, the remaining area comprises whiteland.
- 8.3 In respect of paragraph 11 of the NPPF, the proposals accord with an up-to-date development plan and should be approved without delay. Hortonwood is identified as one of the key locations for the majority of employment and jobs in Telford and is an important employment area which has scope for expansion under policy EC1 forming part of North Telford (Donnington, Hadley Park and Hortonwood). In principle, therefore, the proposed development complies with the development plan and is sustainable development.

Design and Visual Impact

- 8.4 Policy BE1 of the adopted Local Plan is concerned with securing high quality design in new development. It is criteria based and expects new development to be influenced by and respond positively to its context, demonstrating an integrated approach to design and layout, respecting landscape and creating a sense of place. New development should be energy efficient and promote sustainable building techniques.
- 8.5 The buildings have been designed to reflect similar development within the Hortonwood locality. They are substantial structures of a form following the proposed function as industrial or storage and distribution centres. However, in order to reduce the perceived massing of the buildings, it is proposed that materials are used in coloured bands to emphasise horizontality thereby reducing the perceived height of the buildings, with 12B to have a mono-pitch roof to further add variety. Both units are setback from the roadside to create a sense of greater separation from the public boundaries, with a notable level of landscaping retained along the frontage, and as a backdrop to help soften the impact of the development.
- 8.6 The layout of the site focusses car parking and service vehicle parking to the west (front) of the site in front of both buildings with landscaping arranged around the edges, including feature ponds that will also assist with sustainable drainage for the site.

Highway Safety

- 8.7 The application has been accompanied by a Transport Assessment (TA) based on the Telford Strategic Transport Model (TSTM), designed to keep total associated traffic generation forecasts within values established as part of the Transport Growth Strategy. This calculates the following trips for this particular development: 113 during AM peak and 97 during the PM peak.
- 8.8 All access to and from the site will be via a new bellmouth junction with 15m radii and having dropped kerbs with tactile paving, located along Hortonwood 40 200m north of the roundabout junction with Hortonwood 30. Visibility splays measuring 2.4m x 120m will be provided in each direction, commensurate with a 40mph speed limit highway.
- 8.9 All car parking would be accessed directly off the new access road within the site with service vehicles accommodated within prescribed areas at the northern and southern areas of the site.
- 8.10 A total of 161 car parking spaces will be provided inclusive of 9 disabled spaces located close to the two buildings along with dedicated motorcycle and cycle spaces.
- 8.11 Building 12A would have 3 HGV service bays and 5 HGV parking bays and Building 12B would have 2 HGV service bays and 4 HGV parking bays, each with dedicated turning spaces to allow HGVs to enter and leave the site in forward gear.
- 8.12 Staff who opt to cycle to work will be provided with changing facilities. There are cycle ways, cycle paths and other traffic free routes available to and within the Hortonwood Employment Area that provide for safe and convenient routes between the site and nearby residential areas.
- 8.13 Due to the scale and location of the Hortonwood Employment Area, it is acknowledged that walking to and from work at the site is unlikely to be attractive as a mode of transport for the purposes of commuting. It is, however, likely to be used to access local food and retail outlets by employees.
- 8.14 The site is not on a bus route and the nearest bus stops are between 1.5km and 2km away from the site. Use of bus travel as a mode of transport is likely to be limited as a result.
- 8.15 The nearest rail stations are at least 4.5km away from the site. It is not likely that rail travel will feature highly as a mode of transport unless combined with taxi services or cycle travelling.
- 8.16 The traffic flows have been modelled for a number of different scenarios, depending on the make-up of B Class Uses at the site, with Class B1c generating less (60 compared to 113) trips in the AM peak and 45 less in the PM peak than the TSTM forecasts.

- 8.17 Parking demand for the site has been calculated as being around 91 spaces for a B1c use. The scheme proposes 161 spaces which represents a 46% spare capacity. The site includes cycling provision amounting to 24 spaces. This differs from the parking standards of the local plan whereby provision of 90 stands is identified. Officers consider that the amount proposed here is reasonable in this location, and has not been objected to by the Highways Authority in this respect.
- 8.18 The TA has also calculated the cumulative impact on the highway network arising from all five concurrent proposed sites within Hortonwood, as required by Policy C3. It is forecast that the five sites will generate a total of 428 two-way trips in the AM peak and 325 two-way trips in the PM peak, equating to 47 fewer two-way trips in the AM peak and 85 fewer in the PM peak than assumed in the TSTM.
- 8.19 Assessment of localised impacts on the Hortonwood (40/30/1 and 50/30/37) roundabouts identifies that both junctions are forecast to function well within the normal design threshold for capacity with minor queuing and delays. The traffic generated by this proposal and that generated by the other four proposals should be adequately accommodated by the Transport Growth Strategy with a contribution to the Strategic Network secured through a S278 Highways Act arrangement amounting to £59,400.01 from the site. There is unlikely to be any material impact upon the normal operation of the surrounding transport network.
- 8.20 The impact of the development on the residences of Horton Lane - through use as a shortcut and as a rat run to access both the development and forthcoming committed employment sites on Hortonwood - is cited in local representations to the proposal. Officers are aware that this is a longstanding issue. The Network & Transport Management arm of the Authority have confirmed that around 2009 there was discussions about a scheme of experimental closure of Horton Lane, the evidence behind this did recognise that traffic flow had increased on the lane since 2004 and did have a tidal direction related to the industrial estate; the scheme was nonetheless rejected locally.
- 8.21 In the interim period, this has been reviewed a few times leading to a consultation in 2016 regarding closure to through traffic or calming which did not show support for either option. In 2017, the request to close the lane was bought back to the table by the Ward member and the Parish Council, however the parish subsequently removed their support and this combined with public feeling, meant that the Council did not continue to pursue a scheme. Horton Lane is not on the Council's Highways Capital Programme at this time so it is unlikely to be revisited from a highway perspective in the near future.
- 8.22 The Local Planning Authority is mindful that the application relates to an allocated employment site where development is anticipated to come forward of such a scale to deliver the Local Plan strategy. Technical solutions have been put forward on a number of occasions to address the problem, with no

consensus existing at the present time, and the application has not been objected to by the Local Highways Authority in this respect.

- 8.23 The TA has been considered by Highways, who have no objection in principle to the proposals, subject to conditions and monies towards off-site infrastructure improvements as referenced above. This would be together with enhanced footway/cycle linkage alongside Hortonwood 60 amounting to £13,559 (subject to refinement prior to Planning Committee), and Travel Plan monitoring of £5,000 provided through a forward funding mechanism. The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with Policies C3, C4 and C5 of the adopted Local Plan.

Impact upon Residential Amenity

- 8.24 Policy BE1 expects new development to respect and respond to its context and, amongst other things, demonstrates that there will be no significant adverse impact on nearby properties by noise, dust, odour or light pollution.
- 8.25 The vast majority of the site is an allocated strategic employment site (E6) and the discourse that led to its allocation considered a range of issues, including the potential impact on local residential amenity.
- 8.26 The site is located within an enclave of commercial businesses. The nearest residential property is located on Horton Lane, approximately 350m away as the crow flies. Given the distance involved and the presence of intervening buildings and landscape features, there is unlikely to be any adverse impact on residential amenity arising from the proposed development.

Drainage and Flood Risk

- 8.27 The application has been accompanied by a comprehensive Flood Risk assessment (FRA). This explains how the Telford Development Corporation laid out the infrastructure for the wider employment area including a system of public foul and surface water sewers and the Hortonwood Channel (Crow Brook), which is a strategic drain serving the employment area and part of Telford to the south. The Crow Brook was diverted when the Hortonwood Channel was created in the 1980s and flows in a westerly direction behind a bund.
- 8.28 The application site falls entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk of fluvial, reservoir and overland flow, but is at moderate risk of groundwater flooding. There have been instances of surface water flooding affecting small areas of the site, which need to be taken into account when designing the drainage system for the development. The development will incorporate SuDS, including ponds, which will provide attenuation and surface water treatment in line with the Council's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.
- 8.29 The soil type on the site suggests that infiltration rates are low and therefore soakaways are unlikely to be effective. Accordingly, local public sewers should be regarded as the most appropriate points of surface water drainage. The assessment identifies that a gravity connection to the public foul and

surface water sewers to the west of the site should be possible, with restricted run-off rates.

- 8.30 The FRA has been assessed by Drainage Engineers and have recommended a planning condition requiring the submission of a surface water drainage scheme. Subject to this, there is no objection from a drainage and flood risk point of view and the development accords with Policies ER11 and ER12 of the adopted Local Plan.

Ecology

- 8.31 The application has been accompanied by an Ecological Survey Update and a Bat Survey. Twelve trees on the site have been assessed as having some bat roost potential, and whilst no bats were observed exiting trees during the survey, the need to control the timing of felling works through condition is identified. The on-site pond was found to support a small Great Crested Newts breeding population, together with pond 2 to the north. The site is therefore identified as having local value for GCN and a Natural England mitigation license required.
- 8.32 The site was assessed to offer low potential for reptile species but that suitable habitat will be lost through the creation of a new pond, with the need for an Ecological Clerk of Works to oversee a staged cut of all long grassland areas at a suitable time of year, and habitat destructive searches of the site undertaken.
- 8.33 The habitats with greatest potential for breeding birds the hedges and mature tree lines have been assessed, the areas of pasture were not extensive and not considered suitable for ground nesting, it is recommended that all woody vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season. Mitigation for the impact of the development is requested through a series of conditions including the submission of a habitat creation and management plan to compensate for development taking place on the site; the proposal is considered to satisfy the requirements of Policy NE1 relating to Biodiversity and geodiversity.

Impact on Trees

- 8.34 The proposal presents retention of an avenue of trees along Hortonwood 40, together with clusters of retained trees towards the northern corner and southern edge. The Arboricultural report does however raise concern as to the location of the pond and the scope for construction vehicles to access the area entailed. The applicant has confirmed that a sufficient route would be available through the groundcover landscaping at the eastern edge of the site, with replacement planting set out in a landscaping design, with a condition further requested by Arboricultural related to the wider site and the mitigation of the loss of an old hedgerow and a number of trees. The level of retained landscaping, subject to necessary protection through the construction phase controlled through condition, is considered a particularly positive aspect of this proposal and duly compliant with Policy NE2 relating to Trees, hedgerows and woodlands.

Other Matters

- 8.35 Deficiencies of the plans is also identified as a concern, it is noted that the drawings are scaled (as set out in the key), and in turn, are not required to have written measurements on them. With reference to buildings missing from the plans, and particularly the MOD Fulfilment Centre, Officers confirm that basemaps represent Ordnance Survey data and is often reliant upon a catch up scenario. Notably, here the plans would not encompass the application site of the centre referenced due to its distance from the site.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposed development will deliver a contemporary form of development on the site. The two buildings are setback within the site in the context of a bank of retained road frontage trees which then wrap around the southern 12B building, and the rear of building 12A interspersed with the two new water features. HGV parking and turning areas would either sit behind an existing building or the proposed southern unit away from the nearest residences (350m+). Drainage, ecology and tree mitigation will be controlled through condition, with enhancement to the pedestrian / cycle network together with improvements to the A442, secured through provisions of the S278 Highways Act to ensure highway safety is protected.
- 9.2 The proposed use and development is consistent with the character and function of this strategic employment area, and will deliver job opportunities for the local population on a designated employment site as set out in the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan and the NPPF.

10. DETAILED RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 Based on the conclusions above, it is recommended that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT FULL PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to:
- (a) The following Condition(s) and Informative(s) (with authority to finalise Condition(s) to be delegated to Development Management Service Delivery Manager.

Condition(s)

Time limit Full
Samples of materials
Surface water drainage scheme
Landscaping Design
Trees – protective fencing
Trees - replacements
Habitat Creation and Management Plan
European Protected Species Licence
Lighting plan (ecology)
Parking, Loading, Unloading and Turning
Cycle parking / storage

Site enclosure
Travel Plan
Soil - levels
Works in accordance with ecological survey
Erection of artificial nesting/roosting boxes
Badger inspection

Informative(s)

Highways
Nesting wild birds
Works to protected trees – Bats
Site Clearance
Fire Authority
West Mercia Police