

DELEGATED

AGENDA NO.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE
6th DECEMBER 2006**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR
OF DEVELOPMENT AND
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES.**

06/3028/FUL

Former Wimpey Headquarters site, Bowesfield lane, Stockton.

Erection of 2 no. Three storey office blocks plus associated service access, car parking and landscaping, re-organisation of existing car parking and landscaping to existing office building.

Expiry date: 28th December 2006

Summary:

This application is one of three applications proposed for the site. All applications relate to the land which forms the former Wimpey Offices and depot/storage yard (06/3027/OUT, 06/3028/FUL and 06/3043/FUL).

The application site measures approximately 1.8 hectares and lies approximately 2 metres to the south of Stockton Town Centre and is prominently situated adjacent to the newly constructed South Stockton Link Road and the A66. An existing office block lies in the western edge of the site with the former storage and distribution yard/depot that occupies the majority of the eastern area of the site; existing landscaping surrounds the site in the form of a tree belt and landscaping mound.

Planning permission is sought for the erection for 2no. contemporary three-storey office buildings. Unit 1A 1,700 sq metres of floor space and Unit 2 would provide 2,100 sq metres.

Recommendations:

Planning application 06/3028/FUL to be delegated to the Head of Planning and Environment for approval subject to no adverse comments from statutory consultees, the following conditions and a commuted lump sum towards increased landscaping provision.

In the event there are still outstanding matters on 21st December 2006 the application be refused.

Approved Plans

Time limits

Materials

Drainage (foul and surface)

Landscaping Plan (hard construction)

Landscaping – Planting plan

Planting and Maintenance specification

Means of enclosure

Tree protection measures

Land Contamination

Construction Noise (8am-6pm Monday-Friday, 8am-1pm Saturday)

Proposed Levels

Lighting details

Covered cycle parking

Bin Storage

Heads of Terms

Commuted lump sum of £63,000 towards a strategic landscaping area outside the boundaries of the site.

Policy GP1, EN30 and EN32a of the adopted Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan, Planning Policy Guidance 4: Industrial, commercial development and small firms, Planning Policy Guidance No. 25: Development and Flood Risk, Planning policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities and Planning Policy Statement No.6: Planning For Town Centres are considered to be relevant to this decision.

Background:

1. This application is one of three applications proposed for the site. All applications relate to the land which forms the former Wimpey Offices and depot/storage yard to the rear of the site.
2. Application 06/3027/OUT seeks outline planning consent for development to the rear of the site and will form phases 3, 4 and 5 of the proposed development and involves space for smaller office space and an industrial campus.
3. Application 06/3043/FUL seeks planning permission for the rear element of the site with the construction of a three-storey headquarter office building and will replace phases 3 and 4 of the consent sought under the outline application.

The Proposal:

4. The application site measures approximately 1.8 hectares and lies approximately 2 metres to the south of Stockton Town Centre and is prominently situated adjacent to the newly constructed South Stockton Link Road, the A66 and is adjacent to Bowesfield Lane.
5. At present the site contains an existing office block in the west of the site with associated parking. There is an internal access to the former storage and distribution yard/depot that occupies the majority of the eastern area of the site. There is also some existing landscaping surrounding the site in the form of a tree belt and landscaping mound.
6. Planning permission is sought for the erection for 2no. contemporary three-storey office buildings, these are to be situated in the northern area of the site, one building facing towards the town centre with the other towards the South Stockton Link.
7. Unit 1A will measure approximately 37m x 16m and reach a maximum height of 12 metres and provide 1,700 sq metres of floor space. Unit 2 would measure approximately 45m x 16m, reach a height of 12 metres and provide 2,100 sq metres of floor space. Phase 1A/B and 2AB would also result in the

blocking up of the existing northern access to the site, with a new access created more centrally off Bovesfield Lane.

Consultations

8. The following Consultees were notified and any comments they made are below

Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy

The development should be designed and constructed in accordance with the Councils Design Guide and Specification (Residential and Industrial Estates Development) current edition, and to that end I comment as follows: -

Parking is adequate for these phases of the development, although there could be a turning area incorporated to north of the northern most spaces associated with phase 1a, in order to make leaving the spaces easier.

Secure and covered cycle storage for each phase should be as follows:

Phase 1a - 18 number cycle storage facilities

Phase 1b - 12 number cycle storage facilities

Phase 2a&2b - 12 number cycle storage facilities

Confirmation of the location of the refuse collection point is needed for unit 1b and other collection points not shown on the plan. A swept path analysis should also be undertaken showing that a refuse collection vehicle used by Stockton Borough Council can sufficiently manoeuvre within the site, without unacceptable amounts of reversing and or turning.

Kerb radii for industrial developments should be a minimum of 12metres and road widths should be a minimum of 7.3metres wide, with a 1.8metre footway provided. Site lines should also be 9 x 90metres.

The site is also shown to connect Bovesfield Lane to Bovesfield Crescent by a direct through route. This must be severed in order that through traffic through the site is prevented.

I have no knowledge of flooding to this site and the applicant is advised to make there own enquiries.

Further details of the Bovesfield Crescent secondary access are required.

Traffic generation has been selected as mean values from the TRICS database. It is argued that the site is near to residential and town centre facilities. However, the site is 2 number miles from the Town Centre and at present there are limited properties within close proximity, therefore the TA must be re-submitted with the correct 85 %ile TRICS rates. The traffic distribution is acceptable.

Environmental Health Unit

Further to your memorandum regarding the above, I have no objection in principle to the development, however, I do have concerns regarding the following environmental issues and would recommend the conditions as detailed be imposed on the development should it be approved.

- ❑ Possible land contamination
- ❑ Construction Noise

Development Plans Officer

The site has an established use for B1 (office) given the existence of the former George Wimpey building. Given this existing use, office development on the site is considered to be acceptable in principle and off sets any policy objection based on the emerging RSS.

Landscape Officer

I refer to our meeting of 23 November 2006 regarding the above and comment as follows:

Whilst the principle of the application on this site is acceptable in landscape and visual terms the application fails to address the sites context or to provide sufficient mitigation of potential adverse impacts.

Drg B626 - 103 Proposed site Layout 1A / 1B The indicative layout is not acceptable. Whilst the drawing provides an illustration of a potential layout including proposed tree and shrub planting and retention of existing trees the application fails to provide any landscape buffer on important boundaries or provide contextual links with off site landscaping. In particular the layout provides no mitigation (landscaping) to the northern boundary of the former Wimpy Homes Headquarter building. This building being prominent in views afforded from the SSLR (1825 Way). This view will be opened up by the proposed removal of the existing and substantial Leylandii hedge. A significant landscape buffer is required along this boundary. This would mean a reduction in car parking provision unless off site planting can be achieved. Any reduction would have to be approved by our Highways Division.

Enclosure with palisade at 2,4m along the northern boundary is unacceptable in landscape and visual terms. Without the benefit of a landscape buffer no fencing should exceed 2.0m in height. Vertical bar fencing or mesh is the preferred method of enclosure.

With regard to the layout I make additional comments, which take into account the wider regeneration aims of the Council. There is an opportunity to integrate this site into its wider surroundings by landscaping the land between this application site and the SSLR. This landscaping would provide the necessary level of screening (integration of site into surroundings) for the development site. The existing access road to the former Wimpey Homes site should also be stopped up from the new site access road. The closure of this cul-de-sac section of access road to the former Wimpy Headquarter building would allow for significant off site landscape works to be undertaken at the pinch point between the new SSLR and the proposed refurbished building. Whilst beyond the red line of the application the removal of this road would provide a significant visual benefit to the site and its wider surrounding by the formation of buffer planting between the refurbished building and the busy SSLR corridor,

A Section 106 contribution should be sought for this work. The level of contribution for this off site work has been calculated at £63,000 at today's rates. These costs exclude any work associated with the stopping up of the highway, service divisions, if any and removal of existing carriageway.

Drq ASS/495 Topographical Survey Existing Line and level survey information has been provided but details of proposed levels have not been indicated. These new levels must take in to account the sites proximity to trees that are to be retained and existing highway network The Topographical Survey indicates a number of mature trees, which should be retained where possible in any new layout

Should approval be given to this application, conditions should be placed on the following:

Generally

Tree Retention. A tree survey shall be prepared in accordance with be BS 5837: 2005 Trees in Relation to Construction for approval by the LPA. All trees within the site and adjacent to the site should be fully recorded and where retained protected in accordance with BS 5837: 2005 and the applicant should also note:

- Protective fencing shall be erected at the limits of the Protection Zone;
- No changes in levels shall be permitted within the within the Protection Zones;
- Where tree roots are encountered, only hand digging will be allowed;
- Compaction to the root spread of the tree must be avoided;
- No storage of materials will be permitted within the Protection Zone;
- Excavations for any new service runs into the site must be located outside of the tree Protection Zones. Services must be routed away from all retained trees to prevent severance of roots during the excavation of trenches. Where this is not possible approved trenching methods shall be in accordance with NJUG10. Routes to be provided for our consideration prior to excavation.

Detailed Landscape Planting Proposals Details of the proposed planting are required, along with hard landscaping proposals for approval by the LPA. Full details shall be provided to the following minimum standard:

- A detailed landscape plan for hard construction (floorscape and incidental buildings and street furniture)) indicating materials and construction methods;
- Boundary treatment details;
- A detailed planting plan indicating soil depths, plant species, numbers, densities, locations, and sizes,
- Detailed planting and maintenance specification for a period of 5 years;
- Street Lighting and lighting of buildings The following lighting details must be provided in due course for consideration for discharge of external works conditions:
 - *Design of Lighting Unit (manufacturer and reference code);*
 - *Length of lighting column;*
 - *Colour of light source and level of luminance;*
 - *Colour of columns;*
 - *Lighting colour and luminance levels, if any of external wall of buildings,*

Highways Agency

In order to determine the predicted impact of the proposed development on the trunk road network, Mayer Brown should provide the following additional information / analysis:

Details of the TEMPRO growth factors that have been used

Details of the committed developments used, including traffic forecasts and distribution

Check the status of the previous Bowesfield Farm and Bowesfield Park proposals (include as committed development if appropriate)

Trip generation should be based on 85th percentile trip rates

Full highway capacity assessment of the A66 Bowesfield Interchange, including merge / diverge assessments of the slip roads for 15 years after opening

Framework Travel Plan for the site

In addition to the above, the parking provision for the proposed headquarters should be reduced to comply with maximum parking standards for this area.

The Environment Agency

No objections, but request that planning conditions are imposed on any approval to cover the following issues;

* Surface water drainage

Northern Gas Networks

No objections

Northumbrian Water Limited

Require the developer to contact them with regards to connections to the water supply and foul/surface water discharge systems. Concerns are also raised in relation to the proximity of the development in relation to the main that runs through the site.

English Nature

Based on the information provided, Natural England advises that the above proposal is unlikely to have an adverse affect in respect of species especially protected by law.

Tees Archaeology Section

Thank you for the details of the above planning applications.

I hope you don't mind one response covering the three applications.

Our records show that this site was initially developed as the Richmond and Tees Bridge Ironworks in the late 19th century. These sites consisted of large foundry's fronting Bowesfield Lane with expansive waste heaps spreading out towards the river.

These industrial sites had been cleared by the early 1970s and it is unlikely that there are significant remains surviving. I therefore have no objection to the proposals and no further comments to make.

NEDL

No objections but refer the developer to the Health and Safety Executives publications on working with and in around electricity.

9. The application has been advertised on site and in the Local Press as well as individual letters being sent to neighbouring residents. The neighbour consultation period expired on the 23rd October 2006. No letters of objection have been received to the proposed development.

Planning Policy Considerations

10. Where an adopted or approved development plan contains relevant policies, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permissions shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan(s) for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the relevant Development Plans are the Tees Valley Structure Plan (TVSP) and the Stockton on Tees Local Plan (STLP).
11. The following planning policies are considered to be relevant to the consideration of this application:

Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan

Policy GP1:

Proposals for development will be assessed in relation to the policies of the Cleveland Structure Plan and the following criteria as appropriate:

- (i) The external appearance of the development and its relationship with the surrounding area;
- (ii) The effect on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties;
- (iii) The provision of satisfactory access and parking arrangements;
- (iv) The contribution of existing trees and landscape features;
- (v) The need for a high standard of landscaping;
- (vi) The desire to reduce opportunities for crime;
- (vii) The intention to make development as accessible as possible to everyone;
- (viii) The quality, character and sensitivity of existing landscapes and buildings;
- (ix) The effect upon wildlife habitats;
- (x) The effect upon the public rights of way network.

Policy EN 30

Development which affects sites of archaeological interest will not be permitted unless:

- (i.) An investigation of the site has been undertaken; and
- (ii.) An assessment has been made of the impact of the development upon the remains; and where appropriate;
- (iii.) Provision has been made for preservation 'in situ'. Where preservation is not appropriate, the local planning authority will require the applicant to make proper provision for the investigation and recording of the site before and

Policy EN32a

Proposals for new development will not be permitted within Flood Zones 2 or 3 as shown on the Proposals Map, or other areas identified as at risk of flooding, unless the applicant can demonstrate by means of a Flood Risk Assessment and sequential tests that:

- i) There is no alternative site at no risk or at lower risk of flooding; and
- ii) There will be no increased risk of flooding to the development; and
- iii) There will be no increase in risk of flooding elsewhere as a result of the development.

Where permission is granted for development in flood risk areas, or for development that would increase the risk of flooding, appropriate flood alleviation or mitigation measures, to be funded by the developer, must be undertaken.

The following planning policy documents are also considered to be relevant to this decision:

Planning Policy Guidance 4: Industrial, commercial development and small firms
Planning Policy Guidance No. 25: Development and Flood Risk
Planning policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities
Planning Policy Statement No.6: Planning For Town Centres

Material Planning Considerations

12. The main planning considerations of this application are the impact on planning policy, the character of the area, and amenity of the neighbouring properties, access and highway safety, flood, risk and archaeological interest.

Principle of development;

13. The application site lies within the limits to development and can be classed as previously developed land. The site is currently unallocated under the adopted 1997 Local Plan.

14. While not being specifically allocated for employment use within the adopted Local Plan the site is situated within Bowesfield Lane Industrial estate. Part of the wider Bowesfield Lane Industrial estate is allocated under policy IN2 (k) for General Industrial (B2) and Storage and Distribution uses (B8).

15. Both Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6) and the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) encourage specific uses to be located within defined centres and that developers should apply a sequential approach if there are no suitable sites within town centres. However, the site has an existing Office (B1) use and although the site lies outside Stockton Town Centre the principle of further B1 use on the site is considered to be acceptable subject to policies GP1, EN30 and EN32a of the adopted Local Plan.

Character of the area;

16. The proposed offices are of a modern and contemporary design and given the existing and derelict nature of the site from its previous uses it is considered that the proposed development would enhance and improve not only the application site but the surrounding area as a whole, particularly with the units fronting towards the town centre, A66 and the South Stockton Link Road.

17. With the site also occupying a prominent position adjacent to the South Stockton Link Road and the A66 the need for use of high quality materials to ensure that the scheme and design is successful can be controlled via a planning condition.

18. Given the above the proposed development is considered to be visually acceptable and is in accordance with policy GP1 of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

Landscaping features

19. Overall it is considered that the proposed development is visually acceptable although could be better integrated into the site via the retention of existing planting and by introducing additional vegetation. Various pieces of additional information are also required although these can be addressed via planning conditions and legal agreements to ensure that the necessary external landscaping is provided.

Amenity;

20. Given the commercial nature of the proposed development, the site and the surrounding premises it is considered that the surroundings will not have a detrimental impact on the future workers of the proposed building, nor will the headquarters office have such an impact on the surrounding sites and users that the proposed development would justify a refusal under the criteria laid out in policy GP1.

Access and Highway Safety;

21. Both the Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy and the Highways Agency have requested that additional information be supplied in order the impacts of the proposed development can be fully considered. The applicant's have been made aware of the additional requirements and are working towards submitting the additional information in the near future.

22. In light of the current situation it is considered that the Highways issues can most probably be resolved, however, should either of the statutory consultees raise any significant issues this may be sufficient enough to justify a refusal of the application.

Flood Risk;

23. The Environment Agency have been consulted on this application and have commented that they are satisfied that the proposed development does not pose any significant impacts on flood risk, although planning condition is suggested in relation to surface water run off. On the whole the proposed development is therefore judged to be in accordance with policy EN32a of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

Archaeological Interest;

24. Although the site was developed as the Richmond and Tees Bridge Ironworks in the late 19th century, these industrial sites had been cleared by the early 1970s and it is unlikely that there are significant remains surviving. The development therefore poses little impact on archaeological remains and is in accordance with policy EN30 of the Local Plan.

Conclusion.

25. In conclusion it is considered that the proposed development is visually acceptable, would have to regenerate the site and is in accordance with policies GP1, EN30 and EN32a of the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan and is consequently recommended for approval subject to the outstanding highways issues being resolved.

Corporate Director of Development & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer: Simon Grundy
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Financial Implications

As report.

Environmental Implications

As Report

Community Safety Implications

N/A

Human Rights Implications

The provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

Background Papers

Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan

Regional Spatial Strategy

Tees Valley Structure Plan

Planning Policy Guidance 4: Industrial, commercial development and small firms

Planning Policy Guidance No. 25: Development and Flood Risk

Planning policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities

Planning Policy Statement No.6: Planning For Town Centres

Ward and Ward Councillors

Parkfield and Oxbridge Ward

Councillors C. Coombs and R Rix