

**DELEGATED**

**AGENDA NO  
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**10<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2007**

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

**07/2223/FUL**

**Westland Way, Preston Farm Industrial Estate, Stockton On Tees  
Erection of 7 no. Office blocks, access road, electrical substations and associated car  
parking and landscaping**

**Expiry Date: 24 October 2007**

#### **SUMMARY**

The application site lies within the Bowesfield Area of Stockton. The newly constructed South Stockton link road lies to the south of the site, whilst the A66 lies to the north. The site is derelict in its nature and is on one of the main approaches into Stockton Town Centre from the south.

Planning consent is sought for the erection of 7no. office blocks, access road, substation, car parking and landscaping. The office units are to be situated in the southern area of the site and will front onto the South Stockton Link. The proposed development is to include a mix of 3 and 4 storey offices and will provide a total of approximately 12,000m<sup>2</sup> of floor space.

The proposed development is considered not to result in an over supply of employment land, is visually acceptable and will improve the overall appearance of the former tip site. Concerns remain over the impact of the development on the highway network, although these will not be fully known until a revised transport assessment and travel plan have been submitted. On this basis the application is recommended to be delegated to the Head of Planning for approval subject to the Transport Assessment being acceptable.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Planning application 07/2223/FUL to be delegated to the Head of planning for approval with conditions subject to all outstanding highway safety and flood risk issues being resolved prior to the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2007, if the issues are not satisfactorily resolved by this date then the application be refused on highways grounds.**

***Approved Plans***

***Time limits***

***Materials***

***Drainage (foul and surface)***

***Landscaping Plan (hard construction)***

***Landscaping – Planting plan***

***Planting and Maintenance specification***

*Means of enclosure*  
*Proposed Levels*  
*Lighting details*  
*Covered cycle parking*  
*Bin Storage*  
*10% Renewable Energy*  
*Landfill Gas*  
*Oil Interceptor*  
*Storage for oils and fuels*  
*Land contamination*  
*Amendments to method statement*  
*Foundation design*

**Full details of the appropriate conditions will be provided in an update report**

## **PROPOSAL**

Planning consent is sought for the erection of 7no. office blocks, access road, substation, car parking and landscaping. The office units are to be situated in the southern area of the site and will front onto the South Stockton Link.

The proposed development is to include a mix of 3 and 4 storey offices and will provide a total of approximately 12,000m<sup>2</sup> of floor space.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

The following Consultations were notified and comments received are summarised below: -

### **Development And Regeneration**

Having looked at the documentation and subsequent revised information, whilst we would have no objections to the proposals, we would like to see that the quality of the buildings and their external environment is of a high standard, subject to comments received from the Urban Design Manager. This would be in keeping with the draft Development Brief proposals currently under development in conjunction with Spatial Planning.

### **North East Assembly**

The proposals for office development are considered appropriate in the context of the allocation of the site as employment land. This development would constitute redevelopment of previously developed land and contribute to the renewal and upgrading of an existing employment site, thus providing new jobs in an area that is relatively close to Stockton-on-Tees. The accessibility of the site by public transport and the linkages between this area and the town centre are not well developed and the local planning authority would need to be satisfied that adequate alternatives to the private car exist in terms of accessing the site, particularly from Stockton-on-Tees town centre.

There is some concern that the proposal does not include energy efficiency and embedded renewable energy measures. The inclusion of such measures in the design, construction and operation of the development would be supported. Such an approach would better reflect the objectives of regional planning policy.

### **One North East**

Whilst, One NorthEast has no objections to the application, in assessing the proposal, the Agency would urge the Local Planning Authority to give consideration to the implications of the proposed development upon the North Shore, Stockton riverside development, the proposals for which include the provision of 650,000 sq ft of prime office space. If minded to approve, the Local

Planning Authority must be satisfied that this application would not result in the saturation of the (B1) office market, which would be likely to have an adverse impact upon the established regeneration objectives at North Shore.

The Regional Economic Strategy promotes the need for quality of place within existing and proposed development. With this in mind, the Agency would request the Local Planning Authority to encourage the developer to pursue the highest standards of quality in the development of this site, e.g. BREEAM, Building for Life and Secured by Design.

In line with Government objectives<sup>1</sup> to generate 10% of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2010 the application should also provide details regarding the provision of renewable energy measures within the scheme

### **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 following conditions imposed on the development should it be approved.

Possible land contamination  
Remediation and validation  
Landfill gas

### **Highways Agency**

Thank you for your recent consultation dated 30 July regarding the above planning application.

I have reviewed the Traffic Assessment, which you forwarded to me in relation to the above proposal. However, the Assessment has not been carried out in accordance with current Government guidance as stated in

- Circular 02/2007 – Planning and Strategic Road Network
- Guidance on Transport Assessments

Both these documents indicate that the primary aims of a Transport Assessment are to reduce the need to travel and to provide measures to encourage sustainable travel. However, the Traffic Assessment prepared by Jacobs does not seek to achieve either of these aims and, as their approach is so fundamentally inappropriate, we are not in a position to respond on the acceptability of the development proposals.

### **NEDL**

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

### **The Environment Agency**

I refer to your e-mail which was received on 5 September 2007.

The information received in this e-mail regarding the surface water run off from the site, is satisfactory for us to remove our initial objection to the proposed development.

It is noted that 75% of the hardstanding area will drain to the sewer, with the remaining 25% being stored on site. The drained water will discharge into the River Tees, which can cope with any additional discharge from the site.

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<sup>1</sup> As set out in PPS 22 (Aug. 2004) and its review published June 2006

The recommended conditions on our letter dated 22 August 2007, still apply to this planning application.

These conditions relate to:

Oil Interceptor  
Storage for oils and fuels  
Land contamination  
Amendments to method statement  
Foundation design

**Urban Design;**

Urban Design objects to this application on the basis that insufficient information has been provided in the Transport Assessment. It is understood that the applicant is attempting to resolve these issues, however until requested information is provided Urban Design cannot support the application.

*Highways Comments*

The Transport Assessment provided with this development has not been carried out to current guidelines and therefore cannot be accepted, as evidence of what impact the development will have on the surrounding highway network. Until the TA is revised, Urban design cannot support this application.

Other comments are made in respect of cycle parking and a travel plan

*Landscape & Visual Comments*

I refer to plans ref. W991/33 and W991/34 and make the following comments:

We have no objections development and support it in principle, as it will improve a brown field site that is somewhat of an eyesore on this road corridor. The basic layout is acceptable but make comments regarding the detailed landscape:

*Built Environment Comments*

No comments.

**PUBLICITY**

The application was advertised through a site notice and advert in a local paper, neighbours were notified and no objections to the proposal were received

**PLANNING POLICY**

The relevant development plan in this case is the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

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).

The following planning policies are considered to be relevant to the consideration of this application: -

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;
- (y.) 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 IN1

Land is allocated for business and general industrial uses (classes b1 and b2) at the following locations:

- (a.) Holme House Farm 41ha
- (b.) Teesside industrial Estate, Thornaby 39ha
- (c.) Preston Farm Industrial estate, Stockton 49ha

#### 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.

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.

### **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The application site lies within the Bowesfield Area of Stockton. The newly constructed South Stockton link road lies to the south of the site, whilst the A66 lies to the north. The existing Gypsy site (Mount Pleasant Grange) lies to the east of the site whilst over offices and the soccer sensations site lie to the east.

The site was formerly used as a tipping site for the skip freight business and is now derelict in its nature and is unsightly on one of the main approaches into Stockton Town Centre from the south.

### **MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The main planning considerations of this application are the impacts on Planning policies, the character of the area, amenity of neighbouring residents, landscape features, flood risk and access and highway safety.

#### **Principle of development;**

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. The site is specifically allocated for employment use within the adopted Local Plan under policy IN1 (C)

Preston Farm Industrial Estate, and is allocated for Business (B1) and General Industrial (B2) uses. Redevelopment of the site for Office use is therefore in accordance with the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

The North East Assembly and Government Office North East have stated that they are no objections in principle to the proposed development in light of the site being allocated and previously developed land and that generally the development accords with RPG1 and RSS policies.

A development brief for the wider Bowesfield Area, and including the application site (although not yet adopted) has also been compiled by the Council's Regeneration department for B1 (Business) and C3 (Non-residential Institutions) uses. It is therefore considered that redevelopment of the site will not result in an over supply of Office space in the Stockton Area.

**Character of the area;**

The proposed design of the office units are of a modern, 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.

The site also occupies a prominent position adjacent to the South Stockton Link Road and the A66 and would play an important role in the regeneration of this currently vacant brownfield site. The need for use of high quality materials to ensure that the scheme and design is successful cannot be ignored although can be addressed via a planning condition.

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.

**Amenity;**

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.

**Flood Risk;**

The Environment Agency have provided comments in relation to the application they have removed their initial objection to the application following the receipt of further information although have suggested that several planning conditions be imposed on the development.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with policy EN32a of the Local Plan Alteration and does not pose any significant flood risk issues.

**Access and highway safety;**

Discussions have taken place between the applicant's highways consultant, the Council's highways officers, the Highways Agency and the case officer regarding the submitted Transport Assessment, the new requirements and the need for a travel plan. The Highway consultants have been liaising with the Council officers and the Highways Agency and are aware of the requirements and the timescales for submitting the information.

In light of the current situation it is considered that the Highways issues can most probably be resolved. On the basis that the revised Transport Assessment and Travel plan are acceptable and show that the development does not have an unacceptable impact on the highway network the application is recommended for approval. However, should the transport assessment be unacceptable then the application is to be refused.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion the proposed development is considered not to result in an over supply of employment land, is visually acceptable and will improve the overall appearance of the former tip site. Concerns remain of the impact of the development on the highway network, although these will not be fully known until a revised transport assessment and travel plan have been submitted. On this basis the application is recommended to be delegated to the Head of Planning for approval subject to the Transport Assessment being acceptable.

However, should this issue not be resolved prior to the 13-week expiry date the application should be refused.

**Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services**  
**Contact Officer Mr Simon Grundy Telephone No 01642 528550**

## **WARD AND WARD COUNCILLORS**

**Ward** Parkfield And Oxbridge  
**Ward Councillors** Councillor M Javed and R Rix

## **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