

DELEGATED

**AGENDA NO
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

DATE 30th JANUARY 2008

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

07/2147/FUL

Crofton Road, Stockton

Erection of 5 no. office blocks with associated external works (demolition of existing buildings)

Expiry Date 8 February 2008

SUMMARY

Planning permission is sought for an office development of five, three storey units, with access roads and associated car parking, cycle storage and landscaping. The proposal has been significantly changed from that originally submitted by the deletion of a cafe building from the scheme, resulting in changes to the site layout and the floor area of the office buildings.

The proposed units would be on an existing industrial estate within the built up area of Stockton. The industrial estate has a mixture of Business (B1), General Industrial (B2) and Storage or Distribution (B8) uses and is not allocated for any purpose in the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan. The change from a coach garage (sui generis) to an office use (B1) is acceptable in principle at this location.

The application is supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) which is based on a different floor area from that stated in the application form and is not based on the scheme as now proposed with the deletion of the café. Furthermore the TA has not been drawn up in accordance with Department for Transport Guidance and lacks information that is required. The TA has not taken into account all committed development in the area, all junctions between Portrack interchange and North Shore gyratory, trip generation and network peak hour flows, the breakdown of car driver/passenger numbers or the likely distribution of the development traffic onto the wider road system.

The lack of an acceptable TA means that the applicants have not demonstrated that there would not be an adverse impact from the traffic generated by the scheme on the wider highway network and surrounding junctions. The development does not therefore satisfy the concerns of the Highway Agency or the Head of Technical Services and the application is opposed on highway grounds. The proposal therefore conflicts with Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan policies GP1 and TR15 and Stockton-on-Tees Core Strategy Policy 2 (CS2) - Transport.

The proposed layout, scale and form of the five brick office blocks with access roads, car and cycle parking, bin storage and landscaping details have not been designed so as to create a satisfactorily functioning scheme. To achieve the amount of car parking required the access roads are lined with parking places which would restrict access to bin storage areas, cycle parking and bring pedestrians into conflict with planting beds and trees for the landscaping. The site would not

function satisfactorily and the proposal is therefore in conflict with Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan policies GP1 and TR15 and Stockton-on-Tees Core Strategy Policy 2 (CS2) - Transport.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning application 07/2147/FUL be Refused for the following reasons:-

- 01. The applicants have not demonstrated through a Transport Assessment that the traffic generated by the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the wider highway network and surrounding junctions. Furthermore the scheme has not been supported by a Travel Plan. The development therefore conflicts with Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan policies GP1 and TR15, Stockton-on-Tees Core Strategy Policy 2 (CS2) – Transport and PPG13: Transport - March 2001.***
- 02. The proposed scheme layout has not provided an acceptable layout regarding the provision of car parking, bicycle storage, position of storage bins and landscaping. The development therefore conflicts with Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan policies GP1 and TR15, Stockton-on-Tees Core Strategy Policy 2 (CS2) – Transport and PPG13: Transport - March 2001.***

BACKGROUND

1. The site is located about a kilometre to the east of the town centre of Stockton on an industrial estate to the south of Portrack Lane, which is a main arterial route connecting the town with the A19 trunk road. The industrial estate lies within the Limits to Development as defined by the Local Plan and within a designated Urban Development Area. The industrial estate contains a variety of industrial and warehouse distribution units of various sizes. At the southern end of Crofton Road is the land allocated at North Shore for mixed use development under Local Plan policy 17(a).
2. The application site of 5445sqm was last used as a coach garage and yard. The site is currently enclosed by a 3m high steel palisade fence up to the highway boundary in the same way as a number of other units in Crofton Road. The existing buildings on site are portal framed steel clad sheds, portacabins and steel storage containers. Steel clad portal framed sheds are prevalent on the industrial estate and some other industrial units in the area are of red brick, such as those immediately to the north of the application site. There are two kerbed road access entrances into the site from Crofton Road which is also provided with designated cycle and foot paths along the highway frontage to the site.
3. Planning permission was granted conditionally by application reference No.93/1572/P for the erection of a portal framed steel clad shed for use as a coach garage on the site.
4. The scheme has been changed from that first submitted with the deletion of a café building from the scheme. The plans have also been altered to show additional car parking to the specification of the Urban Design highway advice and to make the site layout and floor plans consistent regarding the size of the office buildings. These drawings are currently the subject of further consultation and publicity and the date for expiry of comments is 6 February 2008.
5. A Traffic Assessment was provided with the original scheme which at the time of report writing has not been updated to reflect the scheme as now envisaged and to incorporate the further information required by the Highway Agency and Urban Design Engineers. A Travel Plan has also not been provided.

PROPOSAL

6. The proposal is to clear the site of its steel sheds and erect five office blocks with associated access roads, parking and tree planting. The existing steel palisade fence surrounding the site would remain with its two gated entrances onto Crofton Road.
7. The proposed scheme shows that the two existing vehicular entrances would be linked by an access road along the length of the site with eastward spurs at the northern and southern ends. These internal roads would be lined with parking bays, either end on or side parking. Two office units would be positioned parallel with and next to Crofton Road and the other three would be positioned along the other side of the internal road adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site. Cycle parking in the form of open racks and bin stores are indicated adjacent to each office unit. The landscaping in the form of tree planting is indicated scattered throughout the site where space is not used for parking.
8. The five office units would each be three storeys in height. The latest scheme revisions show that each level would be of 261sqm floor area, giving a combined gross floor area of 3915sqm for the whole development. Each floor level within the units would be accessible by a lift and an internal staircase. In addition each unit would have an external staircase at one end linking all floors. The proposed materials are brick and tile. The windows would be grouped to line up into vertical panels of glass from ground level to eaves height.

CONSULTATIONS

9. Adjoining occupiers were individually notified of the application and it has been advertised on site. The following Consultations were notified and any comments received are set out below:-

10. Councillors

No response received.

11. Urban Design Engineers

General Summary

Urban Design requires revised information as detailed below.

Highways Comments

First response

The Transport Assessment submitted is not in line with the latest guidance from the DfT, issued in March 2007. The Transport Assessment should include all committed development, and all junctions between Portrack interchange and North Shore gyratory should be considered.

A Travel Plan for the site is also required in line with the new guidance.

Car parking standards for office developments in the location state that there should be 103 spaces provided. The submitted plans show 98 spaces, but only 4.8m between the parking rows, which is inadequate to allow vehicles to manoeuvre in/out of spaces. Therefore the car parking shown is insufficient.

Highways Comments

Second response

The amended plans show 111 car parking spaces, which is in accordance with SPD3: Parking Provision for New Developments, however there are 4 spaces, close to the second access from Crofton Road, which have trees either too close or within the space itself. This needs to be amended.

3 of the 4 bin stores shown are behind car parking spaces, trees or building canopies making them inaccessible, particularly once the car parking spaces are in use. These need to be relocated.

Cycle parking has been shown to the rear of the block adjacent to the travelling crane, this is an unacceptable location. Cycle parking should be close to the building entrance, covered and secure.

Transport Assessment comments remain as previous.

Landscape & Visual Comments

I would not object to the principle of the application and development of the site, especially the provision of a high quality external environment for the workers and visitors to the site; however the locations of buildings and planning of the site could consider achieving this in other ways.

The design and access statement refers to providing 'a balance between the office work areas and external amenity space' – the latter as shown on drawing 746-07-002 appears to comprise largely access road and car parking. This is not valuable amenity space, and presents as unbroken areas of parking. It should be noted that the use of contrasting but complementary high quality materials could go some way to improving the latter, however the lack of space and sheer amount of hard areas in the central core is concerning.

In addition to the concerns above and the request to supply information relating to proposed access road treatments as outlined, and boundary treatments, full hard and soft landscape details should be provided to the following minimum standard:

- A detailed landscape plan indicating proposals for hard construction indicating materials and construction methods.
- Detailed treatments of the enclosures to all boundaries.

A detailed planting plan indicating soil depths, plant species, numbers, densities, locations, and sizes, planting methods, maintenance and management.

Built Environment Comments

No comments.

12. Environmental Health Unit

No comments.

Further to your memorandum regarding the above, I have no objection to this application.

13. Northumbrian Water Limited

Thank you for consulting Northumbrian Water on the above proposed development. We have the following comments to make:

The application has been examined and Northumbrian Water has no objections to the proposed development.

It is important that Northumbrian Water is informed of the local planning authority's decision on this application. Please send a copy of the decision notice.

14. NEDL

(Summarised)

The enclosed Mains Records only give the approximate location of known Northern Electric apparatus in the area. Great care is therefore needed and all cables and overhead lines must be assumed to be live.

15. Northern Gas Networks

(Summarised)

United Utilities has no objections to these proposals, however there may be apparatus in the area that may be at risk during construction works and should the planning application be approved, then we require the promoter of these works to contact us directly to discuss our requirements in detail. Should diversionary works be required these will be fully chargeable. We enclose an extract from our mains record of the area covered by your proposals together with a comprehensive list of precautions for your guidance.

The area of your enquiry contains national transmission gas apparatus. For information regarding these pipelines please contact them at the address below.

16. Spatial Plans Manager

No response received.

17. Highways Agency

We are writing with reference to your consultation letter dated 30 November 2007, and our telephone conversation earlier today regarding the above mentioned planning application.

As discussed the Transport Assessment (TA) prepared by Local Transport Projects (LTP) assesses the impact from a B1 development having a GFA of 3,525sq.m, whereas the planning application form is applying for a GFA of 6,195sq.m B1. We cannot therefore accept the conclusions of the TA at this stage until the exact area of B1 development is clarified.

Therefore due to the current discrepancies between the application form and the TA, we would request that you do not determine this planning application at this time.

However, in order to provide some guidance to the applicant, we enclose our initial comments on the submitted TA as follows, although we would reserve the right to make further comments should the final GFA differ from that currently assessed.

Introduction

The Transport Assessment states the proposed development will comprise of:

- Five Office units – 3525m² GFA in total; and
- One Café unit – 165m² GFA.

Site Assessment

The site assessment considers the local roads on the network adjacent to the development site—with reference to pedestrian, cycle and public transport facilities.

The site is considered to be accessible by a variety of modes, with the potential to encourage employees to consider travel to and from the site by modes other than single occupancy car trips. However, the report would benefit from a map – to provide a representation of the location and routes of cycle / pedestrian and public transport facilities.

Trip Generation

The current use of the site generates 40 trips throughout the day, of which 5 occurred in the AM peak period and 5 in the PM peak period.

Office trips were calculated using the TRICS 2007(b) database. However, it is not clear from the report whether an average or eighty fifth percentile person trip rate has been adopted, and the TRICS output data has not been provided in order to verify the trip generation proposed.

Current guidance contained in the DfT GTA indicates that trip generation should be based on person trip rates for a range of similar sites where information is available with regard to

development size, location and accessibility etc. It is not possible to verify the range of sites used in the TRICS assessment for the proposed development from the information provided. Where information from a range of comparable sites is not available then 85th percentile trip rates should be adopted.

Trip rates for the office use have been derived for a 12 hour period from 07.00 – 19.00 and for the AM and PM peak periods (08.30 – 09.30 and 16.00 – 17.00 respectively). The peak periods adopted for the office trip generation do not correspond to the network peak hours identified from the traffic count data. The assessment should consider the worst case combination of network peak hour flows and development generated traffic in order to ensure a robust assessment. Overall, however, we would consider that the trip rates and trip generation for the office development appear low.

Whilst vehicle trip rates have been used to calculate the traffic generation of the development an assessment of the number of trips generated by alternative modes has also been made using multi modal survey data from TRICS.

Trip rates for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users have been derived and the multi modal survey data indicates that the predicted mode share for pedestrians is 48% of development trips which is considered to be extremely high whilst vehicle occupants represent 31% of the trips to the site (no breakdown of car driver/ passenger is provided). Further consideration of the proposed modal split of trips to the site should therefore be given. A comparison of the proposed modal split against existing journey to work mode share data for the adjacent wards should be provided in order to verify the proposed mode split.

Café trips were generated based upon assumptions made by the consultant. It is assumed that the café will only be frequented by employees of the associated office developments; therefore no vehicle trips are associated with the café. There are predicted to be trips associated with staff and deliveries, a total of 10 two way trips over a twelve hour period (0700-1900). However in order for the proposed trip generation to be verified further information needs to be provided on the number of staff, shift patterns, operating hours, delivery frequency and parking associated with these vehicle trips.

In order to assess the impact of the development traffic, the vehicle trips associated with the existing use of the site have been subtracted from the total trip generation for the proposed use in order to identify the new trips on the network. This approach is accepted; however the trip generation of the office should be reviewed before assessing the impact on the wider network.

Potential Impact of the Development

The report does not identify the likely distribution of the development traffic onto the wider network, and we would require an indication of the likely impact from the development upon the adjacent Strategic Highway Network. Although clearly the impact assessment will need to be revised using agreed trip generation for the office development.

Travel Plan

The report does not refer to the provision of a Travel Plan for the site. Given the size of the development it is recommended that a Travel Plan be provided in order to encourage staff and visitors to the site use sustainable modes of transport and minimise single occupancy car trips to the site.

The Travel Plan should consider a range of measures to encourage the use of sustainable modes and propose a range of objectives and targets to be achieved. The Travel Plan should also include a programme of monitoring in order to identify progress against the targets and objectives and to address any failures to achieve the proposed targets.

Summary

We have reviewed the Transport Assessment produced by Local Transport Projects in support of the proposed office and café development on Crofton Road, Portrack in Stockton. The assessment has demonstrated the proposed development has a relatively good level of accessibility, in terms of vehicular access, as well as access by more sustainable modes of travel such as cycling, walking and public transport.

However, there are a number of issues to be addressed before the results of the assessment are accepted and these can be summarised as follows:

- The GFA of the B1 development must be clarified before the TA can be properly assessed,
- TRICS data should be provided in order to support the proposed trip generation rates for the office,
- Further details of the operation of the café should be provided in order to confirm the assumptions made regarding its trip generation,
- Further assessment of the proposed mode share for the development should be carried out to verify the modal split adopted,
- The impact assessment should be revised based on agreed trip generation for the site, and
- A Travel Plan should be produced for the site.

It should be restated that the above comments are based upon the B1 office development having a GFA of 3,525sq.m, and we may have further comments should this figure be amended.

I trust that the above is clear and clarifies the current position of the Highways Agency regarding this planning application, and would again restate that we would request that you do not determine this application at this time. However, if you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me.

PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATION

18. 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) the Stockton on Tees Local Plan (STLP), the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan Alteration Number 1 and the Stockton-on-Tees Core Strategy Preferred Options September 2007.*
19. 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 TR15

The design of highways required in connection with new development and changes of use will provide for all the traffic generated by the development, while the provision of off-street parking will normally be required to accord with the standards set out in the Stockton on Tees Borough Council Design Guide and Specification, Edition No 1.

Alteration Number 1 to the Adopted Local Plan

Policy S2

Proposals for new, or extensions to existing, major retail development outside the Primary Shopping Area within Stockton Town Centre and beyond the boundaries of the District and Local Centres, as illustrated on Proposals Map, will not be permitted unless : -

- i) there is clearly defined need for the proposed development in the catchment area it seeks to serve ; and
- ii) it can be clearly demonstrated that there are no other sequentially preferable sites or premises which are available, suitable and viable to accommodate the identified need the proposed development seeks to serve, starting from sites : -
 - 1) within the Primary Shopping Area within Stockton Town Centre or within the boundaries of the various District or Local Centres defined under Policy S1; followed by
 - 2) on the edge of the Primary Shopping Area within Stockton Town Centre or on the edge of the boundaries of the District and Local Centres within the Borough, then
 - 3) in out-of-centre locations which are well served by a choice of means of transport, close to an existing centre, and which have a high likelihood of forming links with the centre; and only then
 - 4) in other out of centre locations;
- iii) the proposal would not have an adverse impact, either individually or cumulatively with other committed developments, upon any proposed strategy for a centre, or the vitality and viability of any centre within the local retail hierarchy set out in Policy S1 or nearby centres adjoining the Borough; and
- iv) the proposal would be appropriate in scale and function to the centre to which it relates
- v) the proposed development would be accessible by a choice of means of transport, including public transport, cycling and walking, and
- vi) the proposed development would assist in reducing the need to travel by car, as well as overall travel demand.

Proposals for other key town centre uses in locations which lie beyond the Town, District and Local Centre boundaries defined on the Proposals Map will also be required to satisfy the above criteria. In relation to Criterion (ii), other Town Centre use proposals should be accompanied by evidence which demonstrates that there are no sequentially preferable development opportunities either within and/or on the edge of defined boundaries of the Town, District and Local Centres in the Borough.

Stockton-on-Tees Core Strategy Preferred Options

Draft Core Strategy Policy 2 (CS2) – Transport

The Council's Preferred Options is to improve accessibility and widen transport choice by:

1. Minimising the need to travel and reducing car dependency, by ensuring that all new development is adequately serviced by an attractive choice of transport modes, including public transport, footpaths and cycle routes to provide alternatives to the use of the private car;
2. Ensuring that all significant development proposals are supported by travel plans, which incorporate measurable targets to reduce the percentage of journeys made by car during peak

- periods and set out how additional traffic movements will be managed to ensure the increasing use of more sustainable forms of transport;
3. Protecting essential infrastructure that will facilitate sustainable freight movements, particularly by rail and water in the vicinity of Teesport;
 4. Promoting and supporting initiatives related to the improvement of public transport both within the Borough and within the Tees Valley sub-region, including proposals for:
 - i. The Tees Valley Metro;
 - ii. The 'Super Core' and 'Core' Route Corridors proposed within the Tees Valley Major Bus Schemes;
 - iii. Improved interchange facilities at the existing stations of Eaglescliffe and Yarm;
 - iv. The introduction of new railway stations at Old Billingham and Roseworth;
 - v. Pedestrian and cycle routes linking Ingleby Barwick with Thornaby, Preston Park, Eaglescliffe and Yarm, together with other necessary sustainable transport infrastructure;
 5. Promoting improvements to the road network, in the following locations:
 - i. In the vicinity of Stockton, Billingham and Thornaby town centres, to support the regeneration of these areas;
 - ii. To the east of Billingham (East Billingham Transport Corridor) to remove heavy goods vehicles from residential areas;
 - iii. To support the Stockton-Middlesbrough Initiative
Or to facilitate development as a result of the following:
 - iv. A19/A66/A174 Development Study;
 - v. Ingleby Barwick Traffic Study.
 6. Supporting the implementation of a demand management strategy for the sub-regional road network, including the harmonisation of on and off-street car parking charges and consideration of the need for road user charging;
 7. Ensuring that the number of parking spaces provided for new developments does not exceed the levels set out in the Supplementary Planning Document 'Parking Provision for New Developments';
 8. Working in partnership with the Highways Agency, Network Rail, other public transport providers, and neighbouring Local Authorities to improve accessibility within and beyond the Borough, in order to develop a sustainable transport network and to widen choice of modes of travel;

In implementing transport proposals, it will be necessary to ensure that there is no resulting adverse impact on the ecology necessary to maintain the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast Special Protection Area/Ramsar site in a favourable condition.

National Planning Policy Advice

PPS1: Delivering sustainable development - February 2005

PPG 4: Industrial, Commercial development and small firms - November 1992

PPS6: Planning for town centres - March 2005

PPG13: Transport - March 2001

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

20. The main planning considerations of this application relate to the principle of the development at this location and the impact of the proposed development on the locality in terms of vehicular access and highway safety, the site characteristics and detailed design and whether it satisfies the requirements of the Local Plan Policies and Government Guidance. These are considered as follows:

The Principle of the Development

21. The proposed office units would be on an existing industrial estate which is outside the defined town centre but within the built up area of Stockton. Alteration No.1 to the adopted

Local Plan policy S2 relates to office development which is considered to be a town centre use. Office development site selection is therefore expected to follow a sequential process. Town centre locations are expected to be considered first followed by edge of centre locations and then by out of centre sites. The proposed site is defined an out of centre location as it is more than 300m from the edge of the town centre.

22. The Government advice in PPS 6: Planning for Town Centres is that the use of public transport, walking and cycling should be encouraged so that private car journeys are reduced. The applicant has not demonstrated the need for the development or that there are no more central sites available or that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on the existing centres. This advice is followed through into Alteration Number 1 to the Adopted Local Plan as Policy S2. The proposal does not comply with the above advice and policy S2.
23. However, Members may wish to take into account that this is an existing business premises on an industrial estate. The industrial estate has a mixture of Business (B1), General Industrial (B2) and Storage or Distribution (B8) uses but there are no specific site allocation policies in the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan. The existing use as a coach garage is not in any Use Class for planning purposes and is therefore termed 'sui generis'. The proposal is to create office units which will not provide services for visiting members of the public. This is a B1 Business use which can be considered appropriate to an industrial estate.
24. Where out of centre locations are proposed preference will be given to sites which are well served by a choice of means of transport. The site is within 300m of Portrack Lane which is well served by public transport and there are bus stops within 370m of the site.
25. The proposed use of the site is therefore acceptable in principle.

Vehicular Access and Highway Safety

26. The scale and nature of the application has required the submission of a Transport Assessment (TA) to address the highway implications of the proposals. The TA which has been supplied at the time of the original submission of the application does not correspond with the scheme as now proposed. The submitted TA was based on a different Gross Floor Area (3525sqm office and 165sqm café) for the development from that stated in the application form (6195sqm office and 166sqm café). Neither is the TA supplied based on the floor area of the office buildings as now proposed (3915sqm office), nor does it reflect that the café has been deleted from the scheme.
27. The Urban Design Highway Engineers and the Highways Agency have advised that the TA has not been drawn up in accordance with the appropriate Department for Transport Guidance. The TA has not taken into account all committed development in the area, all junctions between Portrack interchange and North Shore gyratory, trip generation and network peak hour flows and the breakdown of car driver/passenger numbers or the likely distribution of the development traffic onto the wider road system. The lack of an acceptable TA means that the applicants have not demonstrated that there would not be an adverse impact from the traffic generated by the scheme on the wider highway network and surrounding junctions.
28. Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan policy GP1 requires proposals to be assessed against a range of criteria including "(iii). The provision of satisfactory access and parking arrangements". This does not just mean only those formed within the site, as the preamble to the policy states that: *"The input of traffic generated by a particular development will not be assessed solely in relation to the ability of the site to accommodate movement and manoeuvring, but the effect on highways and environments distant from the site will also be taken into account."* In order for this assessment to be made it is essential that a TA of the appropriate standard is received

prior to the making of a decision and which addresses the issues raised by the particular development proposed. Such a TA has not been submitted with the application. The lack of an acceptable TA means that the development does not satisfy the concerns of the Highway Agency or the Head of Technical Services and the application is opposed on highway grounds. The proposals therefore conflict with Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan policies GP1 (iii) and TR15.

29. Policy TR15 also requires the design of highways to provide for all traffic generated by the development. Off street parking is required to comply with Supplementary Planning Document 3: Parking Provision for New Developments which was adopted by the Council in November 2006. The latest superseding plans submitted on 16 January 2008 are not acceptable to the Urban Design Highway Engineers (see Second response) as regards site layout for the following reasons: four parking spaces, close to the second access from Crofton Road, have trees either too close or within the parking space itself; three of the four bin stores shown are behind car parking spaces, trees or building canopies making them inaccessible, particularly once the car parking spaces are in use; cycle parking has been shown to the rear of the block instead of by the entrance to the office, this is an unacceptable location; cycle parking should be close to the building entrance, covered and secure and; the bin stores need to be relocated and this could have a knock on effect to other aspects of the site layout. The proposals are therefore unacceptable and conflict with policies GP1 and TR15.
30. The latest plans received on 15 January 2008 are still the subject of consultation and an update report will be made for the Committee date.
31. Stockton-on-Tees Draft Core Strategy Policy 2 (CS2) – Transport has not been adopted but indicates the policy approach that the Council is intending to adopt in future. The policy aims to minimise the need to travel and reduce car dependency and that all significant development proposals are supported by Travel Plans. These are intended to reduce car journeys and increase the use of more sustainable forms of transport. The Urban Design Engineers and Highway Agency have asked for a Travel Plan in relation to the proposed development but one has not been received.

Site Characteristics and Detailed Design

32. The proposals would involve the clearance of the existing building structures from the site. The steel sheds, portacabins and steel containers on site are of no architectural or visual merit and their removal would not adversely affect the appearance of the area. The existing steel palisade fence around the site and along the Crofton Road frontage is not an attractive feature and visually separates the public and private realms. The retention of the fencing may be desirable from a security point of view but the scheme would visually benefit from its removal.
33. Building materials for the office units are proposed to be brick walling with windows grouped into vertical glass panels from ground level to eaves height. This would divide the elevations into a visually striking alternating pattern of vertical panels of glass and brickwork. The shallow pitched hipped roofs would be covered in tiling. The design of the five brick office blocks result in a reasonably attractive development for this location. The proposed offices would be of a higher quality of design than most of the structures on the industrial estate.
34. The proposals would involve the erection of five office units either side of a new access road linking the existing accesses into the site from Crofton Road. The office units would be spaced out and separated by car and cycle parking, bin stores and landscape tree planting. The detailed layout would result in the roads being lined with parked cars with very little space between for landscaping and access for operational servicing of the offices. A bin store and cycle rack is shown next to the building but there is only restricted access past the parked

Ward Councillor Councillor D. W. Coleman

Ward Stockton Town Centre
Ward Councillor Councillor P. Kirton