

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

DATE: **15th JUNE 2022**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER (PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY)**

SUBJECT: **FULL APPLICATION – CONVERSION AND EXTENSION OF INDUSTRIAL UNIT TO OFFICE AND WAREHOUSE**

APPLICATION NUMBER: **063312**

APPLICANT: **ZEBRA PRODUCTS LTD**

SITE: **BALING WIRE PRODUCTS NORTHOP COUNTRY PARK**

APPLICATION VALID DATE: **30/7/21**

LOCAL MEMBERS: **COUNCILLOR M BATEMAN**

TOWN/COMMUNITY COUNCIL: **NORTHOP COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

REASON FOR COMMITTEE: **MEMBER REQUEST GIVEN CONCERNS ABOUT OVERDEVELOPMENT ,ADEQUACY OF HIGHWAYS AND IMPACT ON RESIDENTS.**

SITE VISIT: **NO**

Consideration of this application was deferred at the 30th March 2022 Planning Committee, to allow further assessment in relation to the imposition of conditions to secure i) the undertaking of an arboricultural survey to secure the retention of key trees/hedgerows on the site, ii) the undertaking of an ecological survey to secure and safeguard the presence of any protected species and their habitats iii) the submission of a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and iv) a scheme for the provision and securing on site staff parking. The report has been updated accordingly.

1.00 SUMMARY

1.01 This full application proposes the conversion and extension of an existing industrial building located within Northop Country Park, into an office and warehouse.

1.02 The building currently has the benefit of planning permission for an extension to it and its use for warehousing and offices, this being permitted under 057593 in 2018. This current application proposes a revised scheme subsequent to the earlier permission.

2.00 RECOMMENDATION: TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:-

- 2.01
1. Time limit on commencement
 - 2 In accordance with approved plans
 - 3 Materials to be submitted and approved
 - 4 Site / Finished Floor Levels to be submitted and approved
 - 5 Operating times 0900-17.30 hrs Monday – Friday. No working on Saturdays / Sundays or Bank and Public Holidays
 - 6 Staff Numbers limited to 20
 - 6 Foul /surface water drainage scheme to be submitted and approved
 - 7 Details of security lighting to be submitted and approved
 - 8 Scheme for Giant Hogweed Management to be submitted and approved
 - 9 No manufacturing to be undertaken at the site
 - 10 Scheme of landscaping to be submitted with accompanying arboricultural survey to secure the retention of trees/ hedgerows on site boundaries
 - 11 Construction Traffic Management Plan to be submitted and approved.
 - 12 Scheme for on –site staff parking to be submitted and approved.
 - 13 Ecological survey to be undertaken with appropriate mitigation where required

3.00 CONSULTATIONS

3.01 Local Member
Councillor M Bateman
Request Planning Committee determination. Preliminary concerns relate to overdevelopment, access constraints, and impact on living conditions of residents.

Northop Community Council

Object for the following reasons:

- Intensification of heavy vehicular movements
- Impact on the historical parks and garden setting
- Impact on landscape

- Impact on occupiers of nearby residential properties

Highway Development Control Manager

Raises no objection - subject to a restriction controlling maximum staff numbers and recognising that visibility at the junction of the country park with the highway network is safeguarded by a management company . Support the imposition of conditions to secure the submission of a CTMP and on site staff car parking.

Community And Business Protection

No adverse comments

Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru

Request that any permission includes the imposition of a condition requiring the submission and approval of a foul drainage scheme.

Welsh Historic Gardens Trust

No objection

Council Ecologist

Acknowledge the need for Giant Hogweed Management on the site and support the undertaking of an ecological survey.. Request these issues be secured by the imposition of conditions.

4.00 PUBLICITY

4.01 Site, Notice, Neighbour Notification

31 letters of objection received from members of Northop Country Park Residents Association, the main points of which without satisfactory controls or conditions being imposed relate to:

- a drainage condition imposed on a previous application 057593 remains outstanding
- increased vehicular movements would impact on highway safety
- impact on living conditions of existing residents through increased vehicular movements / security lighting.
- presence of Giant Hogweed within the site

5.00 SITE HISTORY

5.01 051664 – Sub-division of existing workshop to provide 2 No units to serve golf course and 4 No small starter business units. Approved 6/3/2014

057593 – Conversion and extension of industrial unit to offices and warehouse. Permitted 8/2/2018

6.00 PLANNING POLICIES

6.01 Flintshire Unitary Development Plan

STR1 – New Development

STR3 – Employment

GEN1 – General Requirements for Development

GEN3 – Development in the Open Countryside

D1 – Design Quality, Location and Layout

D2 – Design

L1 – Landscape Character

HE5 – Protection of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Importance

AC13 – Access and Traffic Impact

AC18 – Parking Provision and New Development

EM4 – Location of Other Employment Development

EM5 – Expansion of Existing Concerns

EWP13 – Nuisance

Policy IMP1 – Planning Conditions and Planning Obligations

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGN)

SPGN2 – Landscaping

SPGN11 – Parking Standards

National Planning Policies and Guidance

Planning Policy Wales PPW – Edition 11

Future Wales : The National Plan 2020-2040

Technical Advice Note 11- Noise

Technical Advice Note 12 – Design

Technical Advice Note 18 – Transport

Technical Advice Note 23 – Economic Development

7.00 PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.01 Introduction / Site Description

The building /site the subject of this application is located within Northop Country Park, to the south of the A55 North Wales Expressway, and north west of Rhos y Chellis Cottages. The site lies adjacent to the first hole on Northop Hall Golf Course and is just within the setting of Soughton Hall Historic Park and Garden.

7.02 The existing building is of a modern design, constructed with facing brick elevations a profiled clad roof, with large door openings and 2 No open storage bays on its north western elevation. The existing building measures approximately 37.5 m x 14.7 m x 6.1m (high) and is screened by an embankment and mature conifer trees There is a large level tarmac area to the front and side of the existing building and open store bays. It has a combined ground /first floor space of approximately 647m²

7.03 Background of Planning History

It is important to note that the site currently has an extant planning permission for conversion and extension of the building into offices and a warehouse. This was permitted under 057593 in February 2018, for a building measuring approximately 40.7m x 14.7m x 6.1m (high) with ground /first floor use comprising a total of 860m².

7.04 Proposed Development

The plans submitted as part of this application propose an L-shaped extension to the southern gable and rear elevations of the building to facilitate increased office / warehouse space above that previously permitted under 057593. This would result in the building measuring approximately 44.6m x 19.2m x 6.1m (high) and an increase in the combined ground /first floor space to 1344m². The building is intended to accommodate 20 employees as per that proposed under 057593.

7.05 Main Planning Considerations

- i) Principle of development
- ii) Scale / design and impact on character of the site and surroundings
- iii) Adequacy of access
- iv) impact on living conditions of occupiers of existing properties
- v) Giant Hogweed Management.

7.06 Principle of Development

The principle of the use of the building the subject of this application as a warehouse/ office, has been established by virtue of 057593, although development has not commenced in accordance with this permission.

7.07 The acceptability of the current application which primarily involves the further enlargement of the building subsequent to 057593, has to be undertaken having regard to this background history and Policies EM4 /EM5 of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan. This involves an assessment of the appropriateness of the scale /design of the building relative to the site and its surroundings, together with the adequacy of highways, impact on the living conditions of occupiers of nearby residential properties and ecology. These issues are addressed in further detail below

Scale / Design

7.08 The proposal would result in an approximate 57% increase in both the footprint and usable floor space of the building from that previously permitted under 057593. The maximum height of the building at approximately 6.1m remains unaltered, and consistent with its initial construction and the earlier scheme referenced.

7.09 It is considered in visual terms the position of the proposed extensions to the side /rear of the existing building maintain the design ethos and form of the building both in its original form and as previously permitted under 057593. This in combination with improvements to its design elements including fenestration/ repositioned openings, use of materials and existing screening on the site boundaries would help to assimilate the development into the site and wider surroundings in particular the Historic Parks and Gardens

Adequacy of Access

7.10 The concerns / objections received in relation to the adequacy of the access to serve the development are duly noted. Consultation on the application has been undertaken with the Highway Development Control Manager who advises that the roads within the country park are not adopted by the Highway Authority being the subject of separate private ownership / management. The proposal has however been assessed having regard to i) the context of the background planning history (ii) concerns relating to the potential increase in the size of vehicles required to serve a larger on site warehouse building and (iii) the adequacy of the access at its junction with the adopted highway where there are concerns that an established hedgerow is impacting on the ability to secure and safeguard adequate visibility.

7.11 Having regard to the above, it is considered by the Highway Development Control Manager that there is no objection to the development from both highway capacity and safety perspectives as a) the road network is capable of accommodating an increase in vehicle size and b) maintenance of the hedgerow within the visibility splay is secured by the applicant through a management company with the fall - back position being the council's street scene department in the event of urgent maintenance being required to secure highway safety.

7.12 In addition, and in further consideration of the proposal subsequent to its deferral at the 30/3/22 Planning Committee the Highway Development Control Manager has no objection to the imposition of additional planning conditions to secure (i) the submission of a Construction Traffic Management Plan and (ii) a scheme for marking /identification of staff parking facilities within the site.

Impact on Living Conditions

7.13 Of particular importance in consideration of this application is to ensure that the living conditions of occupiers of existing residential properties located in proximity to the site are safeguarded. The nearest residential properties to the site are Rhos y Chellis Cottages located approximately 46.5m to the south west, the properties being screened from the development by a substantial high leylandi hedge around the southern/eastern site boundaries. It is also considered that the existing landscaping can be

supplemented with further landscaping on the western site boundary to help soften the visual impact of the development and assimilate it into the site and wider surroundings. This can be secured by condition.

- 7.14 Consultation on the application has been undertaken with the Pollution Control Officer who has raised no objection to the development, this being consistent with the response previously received in relation to application 057593.
- 7.15 It is however considered necessary to recognise the relationship of the site to existing residential development and secure control over the retention of the afore -mentioned hedgerow which acts as a visual screen. In addition the previously permitted hours of operation of the site were conditioned to between 0800-1800hrs Monday – Friday and 0800-1200hrs on Saturdays. There was to be no site operations on Sundays or Bank and Public Holidays. This current application however proposes a reduction in site operations to between 0900-1730hrs from Monday – Friday with no weekend workings or operations during Bank or Public Holidays. This offers a significant improvement over the situation that currently exists, as the previous permission remains extant. The reduction in hours as proposed with additional controls over security lighting can be secured by condition as referenced in paragraph 2.01 of this report.

Giant Hogweed / Ecology

- 7.16 The Council's Ecologist supports the undertaking of an ecological survey of the site given that it has remained vacant for some time, and is aware of issues and concerns relating to the presence and increased growth of Giant Hogweed within the Country Park Measures are currently in place to seek to address this matter both on the application site and wider area.
- 7.17 It is considered that there is a need for a blanket approach to seek to control its spread, but care is required when securing its removal in the interest of health and safety this being undertaken in a managed environment. It is considered that this should be the subject of the imposition of a condition consistent with other developments within the locality where this approach has been adopted.

8.00 CONCLUSION

- 8.01 The proposed increase in the size and associated amendment to the design of the building subsequent to planning permission 057593, is acceptable in the context of the site and wider landscape. It is a scheme that would be supported on its own merits at officer level notwithstanding the previous permission issued under 057593. It is important to note that there are no objections to the development from highway / pollution control perspectives or from the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust.

8.02 Whilst the previous permission for development of the site remains extant, the opportunity is afforded as part of this application to secure an improvement in the design of the building and impose additional conditions pursuant to 057593. These relate to reduced working hours, security lighting, the retention / supplementation of existing landscaping, and submission of a Construction Traffic Management Plan, with a scheme for staff parking within the site. The combination of these additional controls will it is considered help to secure the living conditions of occupiers of nearby residential properties. There is also the opportunity to undertake a further ecological survey of the site and control the management of Giant Hogweed on the site.

8.03 Having regard to the above, it is considered that the application as submitted offers an improvement to that previously permitted under 057593, and it is recommended that permission be granted subject to the conditions referenced in paragraph 2.01 of this report.

9.01 Other Considerations

The Council has had due regard to its duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable increase in crime and disorder as a result of the recommended decision.

The Council has acted in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998 including Article 8 of the Convention and in a manner which is necessary in a democratic society in furtherance of the legitimate aims of the Act and the Convention.

The Council has had due regard to its public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

The Council has had due regard to its duty under Section 3 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of wellbeing objectives as a result of the recommended decision.

LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Planning Application & Supporting Documents
National & Local Planning Policy
Responses to Consultation
Responses to Publicity

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