



SCREENING OPINION

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (AMENDMENTS) REGULATIONS 2006

Site: Acetate Products Ltd, Little Heath, Coventry.

Description of Development: Redevelopment for a mix of Employment (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8), Residential Development (Use Class C3), open space and landscaping.

The proposal is for comprehensive development of the 16.36 hectare site of Acetate Products Ltd and indicates submission of an outline planning application for a residential-led, mixed use development to include a mixture of B1, B2 and B8 employment uses. The proposal is above the threshold of 0.5 hectares for Urban Development Projects and falls within Paragraph 10 (b) Urban development projects of schedule 2 of the above Regulations. The City Council has been requested to adopt a screening opinion as to whether the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment such that an Environmental Impact Assessment should be carried out and an Environmental Statement be submitted by the developer containing the information required by Parts I and II of Schedule 4 of the Regulations.

This screening opinion takes into account the selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development as set out in Schedule 3 to the Regulations.

SENSITIVE AREA

The site is not situated within a Sensitive Area as defined by Regulation 2(1).

CHARACTERISTICS OF DEVELOPMENT.

The masterplan will seek to co-ordinate development of the site that covers 16.36 hectares with a residential-led, mixed use development. The development will potentially provide more than 10,000 square metres of employment floor space with the majority of the site proposed for residential development. The proposals indicate a density of 30 dwellings per hectare

but with a density of 50 dwellings per hectare this would not exceed the 1000 dwelling threshold.

LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

The site is located to the north of the City alongside the Foleshill Road which is a major route from the city centre to the M6 and affords easy access to the motorway.

The site is bisected by Coventry Canal which runs north to south through the site. The site is mostly surrounded by residential development, mixed with an element of employment, retail and social and community uses to the north, south and west with allotment gardens to the east.

The site was constructed in the early 20th century and was in operation for almost 100 years as a Courtalds works producing artificial fibres.

To the west of the site there are redundant manufacturing buildings. To the east of the canal there is a vacant building and redundant storage tanks. The northern section of this site includes the former acetone cracking plant and the former fuel storage and oil bulk storage. The remainder of the site forms playing fields, located further to the east of the canal.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POTENTIAL IMPACT

Chemicals such as Acetate and Acetone (a solvent) were used on site and like the main Courtalds works on Foleshill Road may have used Carbon Disulphide (which is toxic and potentially explosive). Contamination from Disulphide resulted in the demolition of three houses on Threadneedle Street close to Courtalds other site.

Examination of the available bombing maps and the fact that the site was a major industrial facility suggests that it was likely to also have been a target for air raids during WWII. This may have resulted in unexploded ordnance being present or contamination resulting from explosions or fires.

Given the history of the site and the potential contaminants, it is likely the site is contaminated to the extent that significant remediation of soils and groundwater may be necessary, along with the associated earth moving. Given the size of the site, it is likely that significant quantities of soil may therefore be required to be removed for treatment or landfill and material imported to replace it. This may require significant vehicle movements and could potentially have a regional impact.

The site has been derelict for a number of years and has been in decline since the 1980s and therefore had limited impact on the surrounding air quality. Approximately 5000 people are believed to have worked at the site during the 1950s and 1960s in comparison to a few hundred in the 1990s. Any development of the site (especially when taking into account its size) will result in a significant increase in traffic flows when compared to that

generated in the last 20 years. Given there is an intrinsic link between transport flow and volume and local air quality, it seems logical that the development will have an adverse impact on air quality. The commercial aspect of the development and the potential for residents to commute to other areas using the M6 and the likely increase in traffic volumes may have a wider, potentially regional impact on air quality.

The erection of buildings and associated highway works would inevitably involve engineering and building operations that will have some impact on the landscape, flora and fauna to the east of the site and soil and water.

Given the potential for a significant increase in traffic, it is highly probable that the proposal will give rise to significant environmental impacts, the exact nature, extent and magnitude, complexity, duration, frequency and reversibility of which, together with appropriate options for mitigation, will need to be fully assessed.

CONCLUSION

For the above reasons and under delegated powers it is determined that an Environmental Statement is required for the above development.

Decision date: 18th March 2010

Despatch date: 18th March 2010

Signed:

Handwritten signature of Tracy Daulton in black ink.

Development Manager.