

Application Number: FUL/2019/1658

Earl Place Business Park Fletchamstead Highway

Change of use of areas of car park to car parking and outside storage with associated fencing and landscaping.

WITHIN GREEN BELT?	No
VISIBLE FROM GREEN BELT?	No
WITHIN CONSERVATION AREA?	No
LISTED BUILDING?	No

POLICY GUIDANCE

The Coventry Local Plan 2016 to 2031 has been adopted on 05/12/2017. Policies that are relevant include: DS3, JE1, JE5, DE1, AC3.

ADDRESS AND DATE OF NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION

Notification letters were sent out in accordance with the communications report. A site notice was placed on the entrance to the Business Park 6th August 2019.

RELEVANT HISTORY

R/2000/1126 - Change of use of existing building and erection of new building for storage and distribution of goods, pick and pack, sorting and assembly of goods, shredding of documents, together with associated headquarters offices and ancillary service road, parking and servicing areas; minor changes to the elevations of the existing building. Approved 24th November 2000.

Condition No.5 of the above permission states '*no storage shall take place in the open on any part of the site*'

R/2000/0349 - Continued use of premises for Use Class B2 (general industrial) and proposed use of premises for Use Class B1(b) (light Industrial) and Use Class B8 (storage and distribution) (Variation of condition 9 imposed on planning permission number 23396/U granted on 24 November 2000 - to remove restriction of B2 use only).

Condition No.4 of the above permission states '*no storage shall take place in the open on any part of the site*'

FUL/2016/0369 - Change of use of car park to car park/outdoor storage area (temporary consent for period of two years), approved 6th April 2016.

Condition No.2 of the above permission, *the use of the outside storage area shall cease by no later than 31st December 2017 and any materials or finished goods shall be removed from this area by this date*.

FUL/2017/0542 - Change of use of car park to car park/outside storage area and construction of 3.5m barrier fence and landscaping, approved 28th April 2017.

FUL/2018/0820 – Proposed construction of 49 additional car parking spaces, approved 14th June 2018.

FUL/2019/0799 – Proposed installation of 3no. 4000 litre LPG tanks, with fencing and safety barriers, approved 23rd May 2019.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways – No Objection.

Environmental Protection – No objection subject to conditions.
Drainage – No objection.

ISSUES

The site and its location

The application site relates to Earl Place Business Park, located off Fletchamstead Highway. To the west are houses located within Eastcotes and to the east are other commercial units, including a car dealership and office buildings.

Details of Development

The application proposes to change the use of parts of the car parking area associated with the Earl Place Business Park to areas of car parking with designated areas for the storage of goods. In addition, a barrier fence is proposed in order to enclose the sections of the site that will be the subject of storage alongside additional landscaping.

FUL/2017/0542 granted permission for an area of outside storage together with a 3.5 metre barrier fence. This permission was not implemented for Unit B.

The applicant asserts that if a reasonable amount of storage is not provided for the existing units, the units will remain uncompetitive in the modern market and there is a risk they will remain vacant. This is backed up by the lack of interest shown in the vacant unit B and by subsequent planning approvals which have approved non-employment uses at the Business Park (Tampoline centre and a gym).

Assessment

The main issues in determining this application are: -

- the principle of development;
- the impact upon the character of the area;
- the impact upon neighbouring amenity and,
- the impact on parking and highway considerations.

Principle

Section 2, paragraph 10 & 11 of the NPPF 2019 states that applications must be approved that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. Coventry City Council have an up-to-date Local Plan which was adopted on 5th December 2017. Policy DS3 of the CLP which states the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development consistent with paragraphs 10 & 11 of the NPPF 2019.

Policy JE1 states the council will work positively and proactively with the business community in the city to support sustainable economic growth and job creation. This will be achieved by supporting expansion of companies. The application site relates to an existing employment use, more precisely an area of car parking associated with Unit A to the north and Unit B to the south side of the site. The application is to support the existing commercial use and therefore is in accordance with Policy JE1 of the CLP and the aforementioned paragraphs of the NPPF.

Impact on visual amenity

Policy DE1 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure high quality design and development proposals must respect and enhance their surroundings and positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area. The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 127 states that "Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities); d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and

transport networks; and f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

The NPPF further states (at paragraph 130) "Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development. Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes being made to the permitted scheme (for example through changes to approved details such as the materials used)."

Planning permission is sought to change three areas of car-parking to storage. The three proposed storage areas are identified in drawing No.A1785-JSA-L02.

Area A (I) is located adjacent to the western edge of Unit A; Area A (II) is located adjacent to the eastern edge of Unit A. Area B is located immediately to the north of Unit B.

The areas of storage will be enclosed by fencing which will be 3.5m high around storage areas A(I) & B, and 2m high around storage area A(II).

The location of the storage areas together with the maximum height of the storage will mean the items to be stored will be a significantly lower height than the surrounding buildings and other structures within the site and will not be highly visible within the Business Park vicinity.

The western part of the site forms an embankment that separates the site from the residential area to the west. Previous applications have restricted development to this area due to the impact on the adjoining residential properties.

This application proposes additional planting in this area as part of the development. The proposed landscaping area will help restrict views into the yard area from the rear gardens of the properties to the west. Whilst there is already some planting in this area, additional screening will help to improve the situation by further restricting views.

In this instance it is not considered necessary to insist that the fencing to be stained a brown or neutral colour. Due to their location within the business park, they will not introduce an incongruous feature within the street scene and will be in accordance with Policy DE1 and the aforementioned paragraphs of the NPPF.

Impact on adjoining properties

Paragraph 17 of the NPPF seeks to protect the amenities of all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. The proposed storage area B (the closest one to residential properties), is located 16 metres from the site's western boundary with the residential rear vehicle access to the properties located within Eastcotes, which means the rear elevation of the properties located on the eastern side of Eastcotes is over 30 metres away. Due to the location of the proposed storage areas in relation to the residential properties and the no objection from Environmental Protection, subject to a further noise assessment once the end user is known and the submission of a noise management plan noise levels. Taking all of the above into account, the proposed storage areas will not cause harm to the residential properties through increased noise, dust, fumes etc and therefore a satisfactory residential environment is maintained in accordance with the aforementioned paragraphs of the NPPF.

Parking and Highways Considerations

Policy AC3 states proposals for the provision of car parking associated with new development will be assessed based on the parking standards set out in amended Appendix 5 located within the Coventry Connected SPD.

Background

FUL/2017/0542 gave permission for Open Storage for a temporary period which expired in 31st December 2017. This means the northwest car park is available again.

Application FUL/2019/0799 granted permission for the installation of storage tanks which removed 8no car parking spaces.

The northern section of the existing car parking provides 99no parking spaces. If you ignore the concrete surface loading areas and unusable corner vehicular spaces, Multimac (based on Unit A) have 149no spaces overall against a requirement of 80no car parking spaces, therefore an over supply of 69no spaces.

Of the proposed Open Storage areas:

- Area A (II) is not currently parked and therefore represents no loss of parking;
- Area A (I) has seen some parking, but as this is a concrete-surface loading bay and discounted within the parking count and the highway comments in response to FUL/2019/0799 (permission for storage tanks), there will not be loss of car parking;
- Area B – Although this reduces the potential parking capacity for Unit B, a B8 user would require 31 parking spaces.

Therefore, the total number of off-road parking spaces required for the units, is 80no for Unit A plus 31no for Area B gives a total requirement of 111no off road parking spaces.

Overall the proposal does not represent any detriment to the local transport network in terms of sufficient absorption within the existing over-provision of available parking.

Therefore, the proposal does not represent any detriment to the local transport network in terms of sufficient absorption within the existing over-provision of available parking and is therefore in accordance with Policy AC3 of the CLP. Equality No equality issues are raised by this proposal.

Equality

No equality issues are raised by this proposal.

CONCLUSION

In view of the design, siting and massing of the extension it accords with development plan policies and supplementary planning guidelines and therefore the application is recommended for approval.