

Easington District: Provision of a Material Recycling Facility to include the erection of a picking shed, Unit 'U', Thornley Industrial Estate, Shotton Colliery for First Skips Ltd

Background

- 1 The applicant is a local skip hire firm which operates throughout County Durham and has 150 skip containers, 3 skip loaders and an 8 wheel tipper. The firm purchased the freehold ownership of the site 3 years ago after leasing the premises from a landlord and has recently upgraded its on site operations. As part of the expansion of the business the firm is seeking permission to operate a Material Recycling Facility.

The Site

- 2 The site is approximately 0.2ha in area and is located on the eastern side of Thornley Industrial Estate. It was formerly used as a window manufacturing business and prior to that was part of Shotton Colliery yard. There are two existing buildings on site. One has recently been refurbished and provides offices and a staff room with some warehouse space sublet to a storage firm supplying cleaning chemicals to the motor industry (377m²). The other is a prefabricated structure of two storey height erected at the end of 2007 following the receipt of planning permission from Easington District Council. It includes an inspection pit used in the maintenance of the company's vehicles and is also used to store tools.
- 3 Neighbouring uses include the 'Mega Mix' concrete facility, a coal contractor, the Forticrete concrete manufacturing plant and a silo painting and material recycling facility that was granted planning permission by the County Council earlier this year. The site is accessed via the existing industrial estate from the B1280.

The Proposal

- 4 The proposed Material Recycling Facility would involve the erection of a picking shed (15m in width, 30m in length with a height of 9m to the apex). The building would be constructed from prefabricated steel with goosewing grey coloured external elevations. It would house a McLoskey 412 Trommel, picking station and elevator.
- 5 Waste material would be brought to the site by skip, tipped onto a reception area and loaded via a front end loader and CAT 312 excavator into the picking shed. It would then be sorted into streams using manual and automated procedures (trommel and elevator) prior to being bulked and stored outside in designated concrete bays adjacent to the existing office building. The applicant expects that around 80% of material received (rubble, soil, subsoils, ceramics, ferrous and non ferrous metals), would be recycled with the remainder going to landfill. Any green waste received by the site would be collected and removed to a nearby composting facility on a daily basis. Other waste would be stored

on site no longer than two working days. Most of the material to be recycled would arrive on the company's skips. However, the applicant does propose to accept material from third parties as appropriate.

- 6 Approximately 60 tonnes of waste would be received per day and around 60 vehicle movements per day (30 in / 30 out) are expected. The site would operate between 7.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday and 7.00am to 2.00pm Saturday. The current site employs 6 full time members of staff including 2 working directors. As part of the proposals it is expected that a further 3 full time positions would be created.

Consultations and Representations

- 7 Easington District Council has no objections to the proposal.
- 8 Shotton Colliery Parish Council has not commented (consulted 4 March 2008).
- 9 Wheatley Hill Parish Council has not commented (consulted as neighbouring parish 4 March 2008).
- 10 The Environment Agency has no objection to the proposed material recycling facility or the erection of the picking shed but notes that the applicant would be required to apply for a Waste Management Licence that must be in place before waste management activities commence.
- 11 The application has been advertised on site, in the press and neighbouring users on the industrial estate were notified. No representations have been received.

Planning Considerations

Policy Issues

- 12 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications should be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Relevant policies are contained in the County Durham Waste Local Plan (April 2005) [WLP] and the Easington District Local Plan (Adopted 2001).
- 13 Policies W38 and W39 of the WLP support proposals for the recovery and recycling of inert waste materials including construction and demolition waste provided that they can be located on land identified for general industrial use or on previous development land in sustainable locations. Policy W33 requires waste developments to minimise any harmful impacts arising from operations.
- 14 The site is included within land designated as a small industrial estate, under Policy 54 of the Easington District Local Plan, on which B1 (business), B2 (general industrial), B8 (warehousing) and bad neighbour uses will be permitted.

Residential Amenity

- 15 The proposed site is located 550m to the south of Shotton Colliery and within an established industrial estate. The nearest residential properties are located at Heywood Cottage and Throstle Nest House approximately 290m and 390m to the northwest of the site respectively.
- 16 Given the location of the site some distance from residential properties, and the presence of other industrial uses of a similar type including a coal merchants to the south, and concrete batching plant to the north, there would not be any direct impacts on residential amenity arising from the proposed development. Easington District's Environmental Health Officer has no objections to the proposal.
- 17 The main sources of noise would be from the trommel, elevator, front end loader and CAT 312 excavator but these would largely be within the proposed picking shed. The front end loader already operates on the site in association with the skip hire business and no noise complaints have been received by the either Easington District Council or Durham County Council.

Visual Impact

- 18 The site is currently bounded by a 2.4m high brick wall that together with a small number of trees and existing vegetation to the east of the site would go some way to screening the proposed building and outside storage mounds which would not exceed 3m in height. Existing industrial estate buildings to the north, south and west of the application site would screen views from Shotton Colliery and the B1280.

Recreational Amenity

- 19 The Haswell to Hart walkway runs adjacent to the eastern boundary of the application site and is defined as a Wildlife Link and cycleway/walkway in the Easington District Local Plan. The proposal would have minimal impact on the route and would not significantly affect the enjoyment of the cycleway/walkway by its users, with the 2.4m high brick boundary wall adequately segregating the site.

Traffic and Access

- 20 The site is well connected to the strategic road network and the industrial estate has direct access to the B1280 which connects to the A19 via the A181 approximately 1 mile to the south of the site. The applicant estimates that a maximum of 60 lorry movements per day (30 in / 30 out) could be generated by operations at the site including those associated with existing operations (currently up to 34 per day). The Head of Highway Management has noted that part of the existing vehicular access to the site had been blocked, and an extension of the boundary wall carried out in order to accommodate the two storey building erected

in 2007. The applicant has agreed to make the necessary alterations to re-align the kerb.

- 21 The applicant has also agreed to stop parking vehicles on the grass verge immediately outside the site, mark out designated parking bays within the site and erect no parking signs at the site entrance. The Head of Highway Management welcomes these changes and has no objections to the proposals.

Recommendation and Reasons

- 22 National strategies and planning policies encourage the aim of recycling. The proposal would make a useful contribution to the wider objective of dealing with waste generated locally in a responsible way. The proposed site is located within an area designated for general industrial use which makes provision for bad neighbour uses. The proposal would also accord with Policies W38, W39 and W33 of the County Durham Waste Local Plan.
- 23 Having considered the detailed elements of the development and its location on an established skip hire site within an existing industrial estate, I am of the view that the proposal can be satisfactorily accommodated in a manner that would not adversely affect residential or visual amenity. Subject therefore to appropriate conditions to limit any potential future impact of the use, I conclude that the development is acceptable.
- 24 I therefore **recommend** that planning permission be granted for the provision of a Material Recycling Facility including the provision of a picking shed at Thornley Industrial Estate, Shotton Colliery for the following reason:
- (i) The proposed change of use of the site would not be unduly obtrusive or adversely impact on the local community or environment. The proposal accords with Policies W38, W39 and W33 of the County Durham Waste Local Plan relating to the suitable location of Material Recycling Facilities and appropriate environmental mitigation measures, and Policy 54 of the Easington District Local Plan in relation to small existing industrial estates and bad neighbour uses.

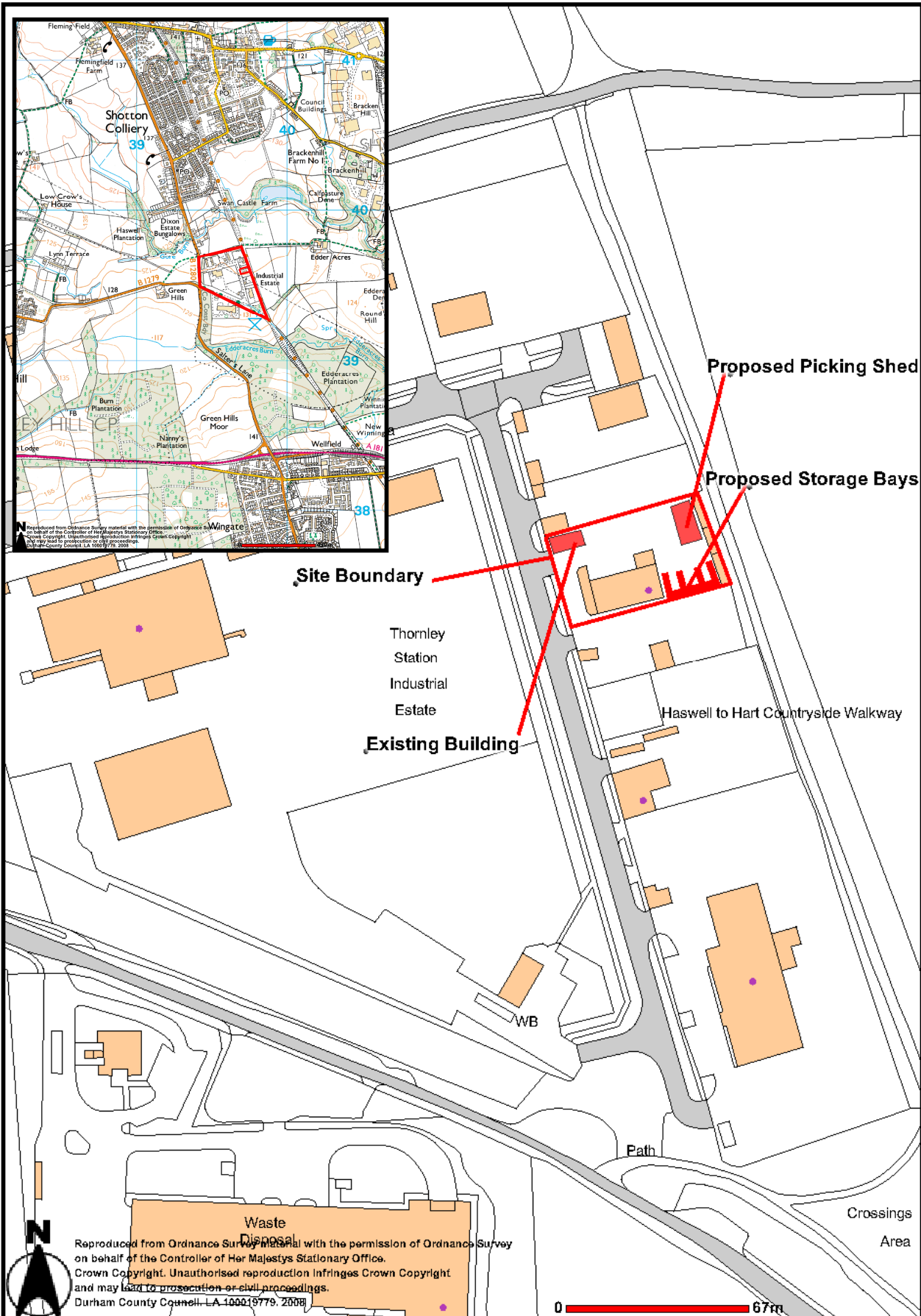
No departure

Background Papers

Planning application forms and plans dated 15 February 2008 and email sent 24 March 2008. Consultation letters and responses and other correspondence on the application file CMA/5/22

Contact: John Byers Tel: 0191 383 3408
Local Members: Councillors E Huntington and R Todd

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