
APPLICATION DETAILS

APPLICATION NO: 3/2011/0517

FULL APPLICATION DESCRIPTION: **OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR SECOND FLOOR OFFICE EXTENSION TO FRONT OF EXISTING INDUSTRIAL UNIT, ADDITIONAL PORTAL FRAMED EXTENSION TO REAR OF THE EXISTING BUILDING**

NAME OF APPLICANT: STEPHENSON GOBIN

ADDRESS: UNIT 18 LONGFIELD ROAD, SOUTH CHURCH ENTERPRISE PARK, BISHOP AUCKLAND, DL14 6XB

ELECTORAL DIVISION: COUNDON ED

CASE OFFICER: **Chris Baxter**
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DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

The Site

1. The application site comprises of an existing vacant industrial unit located on Longfield Road within South Church Enterprise Park. It was previously operated by a company manufacturing coat hangers. There are existing industrial units to the south, east and west with residential properties located to the north outside the confines of the South Church Enterprise Park. The site is bounded by palisade fencing and heavy shrubbery. There is a small area of concrete hardstanding and access road to the east of the existing building. The remainder of the site is rough grass and shrubs.

The Proposal

2. This application represents phase 2 of Stephenson Gobin Ltd's relocation from its manufacturing premises in High Etherley and is for outline planning permission for a second floor office extension to the front of the existing unit, as well as the erection of an extension to the rear of the site. The application therefore seeks to establish the principle of what is proposed in order to have greater certainty that the facility could be expanded to accommodate future needs of the business when required. Only the matters of access, layout and scale are to be considered within this application, with appearance and landscaping to be reserved for future consideration.
3. The second floor front office extension would be constructed above the extension recently approved in phase 1. The rear extension would measure 55 metres by 23 metres in footprint and would be similar height to the existing industrial unit. The existing access into to site would be utilised and a new parking arrangement is proposed.
4. This application has been reported to committee in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation because the floor space exceeds 1000 square metres.

PLANNING HISTORY

5. The existing unit on site was granted planning permission in 1991.
6. A detailed application was granted permission in February 2012 for a ground floor office extension to the front of the building and parking for 40 vehicles (Phase 1).

PLANNING POLICY

NATIONAL POLICY

7. *Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1)* sets out the overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system.
8. *Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Growth (PPS4)* sets out the Government's comprehensive policy framework for planning for sustainable economic development in urban and rural areas.
9. *Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (PPS9)* sets out planning policies on protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system.

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY

10. The North East of England Plan - Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS) July 2008, sets out the broad spatial development strategy for the North East region for the period of 2004 to 2021. The RSS sets out the region's housing provision and the priorities in economic development, retail growth, transport investment, the environment, minerals and waste treatment and disposal. Some policies have an end date of 2021 but the overall vision, strategy, and general policies will guide development over a longer timescale. The overall objective for minerals policy in the Region, as set out in RSS, is to ensure the prudent use of the Region's indigenous natural resources in line with sustainable development objectives.
11. In July 2010, however, the Local Government Secretary signalled his intention to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies with immediate effect, and that this was to be treated as a material consideration in subsequent planning decisions. This was successfully challenged in the High Court in November 2010, thus for the moment reinstating the RSS. However, it remains the Government's intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies when Orders have been made under section 109 of the Localism Act 2011, and weight can be attached to this intention. The following policies are considered relevant:
12. *Policy 8 – Protecting and Enhancing the Environment* states that planning proposals should seek to maintain and enhance the quality, diversity and local distinctiveness of the environment.
13. *Policy 12 – Sustainable Economic Development* states the majority of new economic development and investment should be focussed in main settlements and on brownfield mixed use locations.

LOCAL PLAN POLICY:

14. The following policies of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007 are relevant in the determination of this application:
15. *Policy GD1 (General Development Criteria):* states that all new development and redevelopment within the District should be designed and built to a high standard and should contribute to the quality and built environment of the surrounding area.

16. *Policy I4 (Prestige Industrial Sites)*: reserves land for development at designated prestige industrial sites including South Church Enterprise Park, Bishop Auckland (28.7ha) It states that proposals for offices and business uses (Class B1) and general industry (Class B2) will be permitted provided they fulfil, where relevant, the General Development Criteria (Policy GD1). Proposals which involve outside storage will not be permitted.

17. *Policy T1 (General Policy – Highways)*:

All developments which generate additional traffic will be required to fulfil Policy GD1 and:

- i) provide adequate access to the developments;
- ii) not exceed the capacity of the local road network; and
- iii) be capable of access by public transport networks.

The above represents a summary of those policies considered most relevant in the Development Plan the full text, criteria, and justifications of each may be accessed at <http://www.cartoplus.co.uk/durham/text/00cont.htm>.

CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY RESPONSES

STATUTORY RESPONSES:

18. *The Coal Authority* raises no objections subject to the imposition of conditions.

19. *County Highways Authority* has no objections subject to conditions.

20. *Environment Agency* has no objections.

21. *Northumbrian Water* has no objections.

INTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:

22. *Ecology Team* raises no objections.

PUBLIC RESPONSES:

23. Neighbouring properties were notified of the application in writing and the application was also advertised in the local press. No representations have been made.

APPLICANTS STATEMENT:

24. This outline planning application is submitted in order to establish the principle of development. Such that the applicant can continue to expand their existing engineering operation and workforce within County Durham; in the knowledge that they can expand their facility to accommodate their business. Furthermore the development and design solution would realise the site's full development potential whilst also having regard to the scale and character of existing development in the vicinity of the site. I sincerely hope therefore that the council will be minded to approve this application.

The above represents a summary of the comments received on this application. The full written text is available for inspection on the application file which can be viewed at <http://82.113.161.89/WAM/showCaseFile.do?action=show&appType=planning&appNumber=10/00955/FPA>

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

25. Having regard to the requirements of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 relevant guidance, development plan policies and all material planning considerations, including representations received, it is considered that the main planning

issues in this instance relate to principle of development, impact on surrounding area and highway issues.

Principle of development

26. South Church Enterprise Park is an established industrial estate, already hosting a number of large manufacturing businesses, and plays an important role in the local economy. It is a location where expansion of existing businesses and development of new business is expected to meet the economic growth objectives of the County.
27. This unit has been vacant for around 2 years and therefore its occupation is extremely welcome. Permission has already been granted for a single storey office extension and car parking, which would create an additional 8 jobs. This proposal could potentially create an additional 35 jobs with further parking for 35 vehicles. There is no change of use involved in this proposal and therefore the only matters for consideration are the principle of extending the existing unit and any potential impact on the surrounding area.
28. As this is an allocated industrial site and the proposal could create a significant number of new jobs, the principle of extension is considered to be in accordance with policy I4 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007, as well as national guidance in PPS4.

Impact on surrounding area

29. The site is well contained within an existing industrial estate and the scale of the proposed extensions would not appear overly dominant on the existing building. The rear extension could double the size of the existing building, but it would still be contained within a large site with between 11m and 17m left to the rear boundary. The presence of a residential property to the north, a further 34m from the site boundary, is acknowledged, however, the visual impact on the property would be acceptable at this distance, particularly as there is a large belt of mature screening between the site and property. Some additional noise and disturbance can be expected but, this is an established industrial estate that makes provision for further development or expansion of existing activity.
30. In this case the wider employment benefits of the proposal need to be balanced against the impact on one property, but there would nevertheless still be a reasonable distance to that residential property, aided also by the existing buffer planting. There are also existing units to the west which are much closer to other residential properties. Further consideration would be given to the position and control of openings on the north elevation at the detailed design stage.
31. Although final design is yet to be considered, the indicative details showing an appropriate design approach successfully demonstrates that the development is unlikely to detract from the character of the existing building and Enterprise Park. Conditions in relation to materials and landscaping would ensure the development is finished to an appropriate standard for the location. The scale and layout proposed for both front and rear extensions are therefore considered to be acceptable.
32. Northumbrian Water, the Environment Agency and the County Ecologist have raised no objections to the proposed scheme. The Coal Authority has requested a condition for further investigation works to be carried out prior to commencement of development.
33. The proposals are considered to be acceptable and would not in principle have a detrimental impact on the surrounding area. The proposal accords with policies GD1 and I4 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007.

Highway issues

34. The existing access into to the site is to be retained. As part of the scheme, rearranged parking provision is proposed that would add a further 35 spaces to the 40 already

approved. The County Highways Officer has raised no objections to the parking arrangement however a condition has been recommended to ensure the parking within the site is retained as parking. The Highways Officer has also requested the imposition of conditions for the submission of a travel plan for the site because of the significant potential increase in the numbers of people travelling to the site.

35. It is considered that the proposals would not compromise highway safety and would be in accordance with policies GD1 and T1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007.

CONCLUSION

36. This outline proposal for extensions to the existing unit would provide an element of comfort to the business so that the existing unit could be extended should the company expand and grow further. The extensions could facilitate a significant number of new jobs. The proposed extensions are considered acceptable in principle.
37. The scale and layout of the proposed extensions are considered appropriate and would not be a dominant feature within the site or within the surrounding area. The proposals would not detract from the appearance of South Church Enterprise Park.
38. When balanced against the economic benefits of the proposal, the amenities of neighbours would not be unacceptably compromised.
39. Sufficient parking provision is provided within the site and highway safety would not be compromised.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the following **conditions and reasons**.

Conditions:

1. Application for approval of reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority before the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission and the development must be begun not later than the expiration of two years from the final approval of the reserved matters, or in the case of approval on different dates, the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.
2. Approval of the details of appearance and landscaping (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained in writing from the local planning authority before any development is commenced.
3. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with the following approved plans:

Plan Ref No.	Description	Date Received
00 Rev A	Site Location Plan	31/01/2012
14 Rev B	Proposed Site Layout	31/01/2012
12 Rev B	Proposed Elevations	19/01/2012
13 Rev A	Proposed Floor Plans	19/01/2012

4. Prior to the buildings hereby approved being brought into use, the parking areas shown on the approved plans shall be constructed and made available for use and thereafter be used for no purpose other than the parking of employee and visitor vehicles.
5. Before the development hereby approved commences, site investigations shall be undertaken to confirm coal mining conditions and any remedial works shall be undertaken. Details of the investigation works and remedial works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.
6. Prior to the building hereby approved being brought into use a Travel Plan Coordinator shall be appointed and contact details for this person shall be provided in writing to the local planning authority.
7. Within 6 months of the building hereby approved being brought into use, a final Travel Plan, conforming to the National Specification for Workplace Travel Plans, PAS 500:2008, bronze level, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved details shall thereafter be implemented for the lifetime of the development.
8. Before the development hereby approved is commenced, details of the materials to be used for the external surfaces of the development and hardstanding shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and the external surfaces shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.
9. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first available planting season following the practical completion of the development (or occupation of buildings or commencement of use) and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the substantial completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reasons:

1. Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
3. To define the consent and ensure that a satisfactory form of development is obtained.
4. In the interests of highway safety and to comply with policy T1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007.
5. In the interests of the stability of the land and to comply with policy GD1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007.
6. In the interests of sustainable means of transport and to comply with policy T1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007.
7. In the interests of sustainable means of transport and to comply with policy T1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007.
8. To ensure that the external appearance of the development will not be detrimental to the visual amenities of the area. In accordance with policies GD1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007.

9. In the interests of the visual amenity of the area and to comply with policies GD1 of the WearValley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007.

REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

1. The proposal is considered acceptable having regard to policies GD1, I4 and T1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007.
2. The visual appearance of the Enterprise Park would not be adversely affected and the proposed extensions would not appear overly dominant. The amenities of neighbouring properties would not be adversely compromised. Adequate parking provision and access is provided and highway safety would not be compromised.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Submitted Application Forms and Plans
- North East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS)
- Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007
- Planning Policy Statements/Guidance
- Consultation Responses



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Planning Services

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Comments

Date 22nd March 2012

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