

COMMITTEE REPORT

APPLICATION DETAILS

APPLICATION NO:	7/2013/0447/DM
FULL APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:	Re-Development of existing industrial site to include part demolition and rebuilding of existing buildings, erection of extension to existing office and associated works.
NAME OF APPLICANT:	Mr John Lanaghan, Gestamp Tallent Ltd
ADDRESS:	Geestamp Plant 1, Groat Road, Aycliffe Business Park, Newton Aycliffe, Co Durham
ELECTORAL DIVISION:	Aycliffe East
CASE OFFICER:	Steven Pilkington, Senior Planning Officer, 03000 263964, steven.pilkington@durham.gov.uk

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

1. The application site is located at the north eastern edge of Aycliffe Business Park and to the south of Newton Aycliffe. This site forms part of a much larger complex of industrial units operated by Gestamp Tallent which are located to the south of Groat Avenue and east of St .Cuthberts Way.
2. This part of the Gestamp Tallent production facility (which makes car components) is located in between Groat Road and Skerne Road. Production is spread across 5 interlinked plants, this application site relates to Plant 1 which consists of a number of steel framed buildings with a series of pitched and flat roofs linking into a larger manufacturing unit and an office building. Planning permission is sought to demolish these buildings and replace them with one larger building. The footprint of the building would be identical to those demolished, covering some 5626msq, however the height of the building would be increased to a maximum of 22.4m at the apex of the shallow pitched roof. The building is proposed to be constructed from steel profile sheeting and coloured blue.
3. In addition to the proposed extension, external alterations are proposed to the office building to the front of the site, including the formation of a glazed canopy feature, new access doors, a two storey external lift and the part rendering of the elevation. This will help facilitate the re-use of an internal unused area as office space.
4. This application is being reported to Planning Committee as it falls within the definition of a major development and exceeds 5000m² in floor space.

PLANNING HISTORY

5. There is a lengthy planning history dating back to 1978 across the wider site, however, none of these applications are considered to be of particular relevance to this particular development.

PLANNING POLICY

NATIONAL POLICY

6. The Government has consolidated all planning policy statements, guidance notes and many circulars into a single policy statement, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), although the majority of supporting Annexes to the planning policy statements are retained. The overriding message is that new development that is sustainable should go ahead without delay. It defines the role of planning in achieving sustainable development under three topic headings – economic, social and environmental, each mutually dependant.
7. The presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF requires local planning authorities to approach development management decisions positively, utilising twelve ‘core planning principles’. The following elements of the NPPF are considered relevant to this proposal.
8. *Part 1 – Building a strong, competitive economy.* The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country’s inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and a low carbon future.
9. *Part 4 – Promoting sustainable transport.* Transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development but also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. Smarter use of technologies can reduce the need to travel. The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel. However, the Government recognises that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas.
10. *Part 7 – Requiring Good Design.* The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, with good design a key aspect of sustainable development, indivisible from good planning.
11. *Part 10 – Climate Change.* Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change. Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.
12. *Part 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.* The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils; recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services; minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by

establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

LOCAL PLAN POLICY:

13. In accordance with paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the weight to be attached to relevant saved local plan policies will depend upon the degree of consistency with the NPPF. The greater the consistency, the greater the weight. The relevance of this issue is discussed, where appropriate, in the assessment section of the report, however, the following saved policies of the Sedgfield Borough Local Plan are considered relevant.
14. *Saved Policy IB1 – Locations of Industry and Business* – Sets out that the Council will maintain in appropriate locations a range of land available for industry and business uses.
15. *Saved Policy IB2(B) General Industrial Area* – Outlines that the Aycliffe Industrial Park is designated a General Industrial Area.
16. *Save Policy IB6 – Acceptable uses in General Industrial Estates* – Sets out that Business, General Industry and Warehousing uses will be considered acceptable in principle.
17. *Saved Policy IB13 -Extension to industrial and business premises* – Identifies that extensions to industrial and business premises will normally be approved provided that adjacent industrial or business premises are not adversely affected, the site is not over intensively developed and the environmental effect in terms of residential amenity or traffic movement is not significantly detrimental to the character of the area.
18. *Saved Policy D1 (General principles for the layout and design of new developments)* Sets out the general principles new development should comply with, including the achieving the objective or conserving energy, ensuring satisfactory access and parking provision, protecting the amenity of neighbouring land users.
19. *Saved Policy D3 (Design for access)* Requires that developments should make satisfactory and safe provision for pedestrians, cyclists, cars and other vehicles.
20. *Saved Policy D4 (Layout and design of new industrial and business development)* Sets out that the layout and design of new industrial and business development will normally be expected to have a high standard of building

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://content.durham.gov.uk/PDFRepository/SedgfieldLPSavedPolicies.pdf>

CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY RESPONSES

STATUTORY RESPONSES:

21. *Highway Authority* offers no objections to the scheme given that the proposals would be confined to the private areas relating to Gestamp Tallent with no direct impact on the adjacent public highway. It is highlighted that there would be an additional 20no. employees on site as a result of the proposals, however the existing extensive car parking that already exists on site is considered sufficient to serve this increase.
22. *Northumbrian Water Limited* - Has no objections to the scheme, but for information highlight that there is a public sewer which crosses the site.
23. *Great Aycliffe Town Council* – Has no objections to the proposals

INTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:

24. *Landscape Section* - Offers no objection highlighting that there is limited opportunity for mitigation planting.
25. *Ecology Section* - Has no objections, subject to the proposed mitigation measures.
26. *Environmental Health* – Raise no objections to the scheme as the proposed development is located within an existing industrial estate.
27. *Sustainability Officer* – Sets out that improvements to the sustainability and energy consumption of the building should be secured by condition.

PUBLIC RESPONSES:

28. The application has been publicised by way of individual notification letters, press notice and site notice, no representations have been received.

APPLICANTS STATEMENT:

29. Geestamp Tallent LTD specialise in the manufacturing and supply of chassis components to the automotive industry occupying a large site with Aycliffe Business Park. The site has continued to expand from the formation of the original business in 1948 with several extensions and additions to its manufacturing facilities and employs in excess of 1000 people at the Newton Aycliffe Site.
30. The proposal refers to the part redevelopment of an existing industrial building, known as plant 1, located centrally within the existing site. The proposed works will also encompass the modernisation of the existing reception area to the south west of the development site.
31. The replacement buildings will provide for improved production, assembly and storage within the site to service the company's increasing output, building on the sustained investment into the site

*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://www2.sedgefield.gov.uk/planning_search/alldetails.php?ID=34691*

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

32. Having regard to the requirements of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the relevant Development Plan policies, relevant guidance and all other material planning considerations, including representations received, it is considered that the principal planning issues relate to the principle of development,

visual amenity of surrounding area, highway safety, amenity of adjacent land uses and ecological interests.

The Principle of Development

33. The application site is located within Aycliffe Industrial Park, a General Industrial Estate as designated by saved policy IB2 of the Sedgefield Borough Local Plan. Within General Industrial Estates, saved policies IB6 and IB13 sets out that re-developments and new extensions to industrial and business premises will be considered acceptable in principle provided that the site is not over intensively developed and the amenity of neighbouring land uses, the character of the area and highway safety is safeguarded.
34. This approach is consistent with the NPPF which sets out that a key dimension to sustainable development is the economic element, including the contribution to building a strong competitive economy and ensuring that sufficient land is available to support growth.
35. In considering the proposal against the above policy context, it is noted that the existing manufacturing operation is well established within Aycliffe Industrial Park expanding over a number of years to become a major employer within the area. The upgrade of the existing manufacturing buildings would provide improved production, assembly and storage facilities, with a view to improve the output of the plant. The site is relatively self contained within the estate and the redevelopment of the existing buildings is wholly consistent with the existing Local Plan, the development is therefore considered acceptable in principle.

Visual amenity of surrounding area

36. The layout and design of the proposed factory extension has been influenced by the functional requirements of the business. Although the building will occupy the same footprint of those to be replaced, the eaves height and ridge height would be increased particularly in relation to the single storey elements of the existing buildings (up to 11m in height).
37. Saved policies D4, IB6 and IB13 of the Sedgefield Local Plan sets out that extensions to industrial premises should have a high standard of design while seeking to protect the character of the area. In appraising the development against this policy context, as previously identified the application site forms part of a wider complex owned and operated by Gestamp Tallent. The majority of these buildings have been extended over the years to a similar scale to the proposed and are also constructed from steel profile sheets coloured blue, to give a corporate identity to the site.
38. The proposed development would result in a large building and would be prominent from the highways that immediately adjoin the site. However it would be typical of the uniform steel clad buildings found on large scale manufacturing enterprise and would be seen against the backdrop of existing developments on site and set well back into the industrial estate from main distributor roads. The topography of land surrounding the application site, and Newton Aycliffe in general is also relatively flat, meaning that wider views of the site are limited. Landscaping buffers are also present to the north and to the A167 to the east. It is therefore considered that the building would have a relatively limited visual impact overall and also one that is appropriate to this part of the Industrial Estate.

39. In order to facilitate the proposed external lift shaft adjoining the reception area a number of immature trees will need to be removed. The Councils Landscape Officer highlights that there is limited scope of mitigation planting due to the developed nature of the site. Although the loss of the trees is regrettable, given the lack of landscaping on the site, it is considered acceptable on balance as these make limited contribution to the surrounding area. It is also considered unlikely that these trees would reach maturity given their proximity to existing buildings and highways infrastructure.
40. Alterations are also proposed to the appearance of the existing brick built office building to the front of the site. These include creating a feature entrance doorway, the introduction of a rendered front panel, along with an external lift to the side elevation. These changes would help to modernise the appearance the building and wider site.
41. While it is acknowledged that the development will result in the provision of a building of a significant size, it is considered that it would not be an incongruous in the context of the existing buildings on site, or in wider visual terms. The development is therefore considered to accord with policies D4, IB6 and IB13 of the Local Plan in this respect.

Highway Safety

42. Although no additional floor space would be created within the site the changes to the production, assembly and storage facilities, would improve the output of the plant. It is also estimated that an extra 20 jobs would be created. This would have some potential impact on parking demand and comings and goings from the site.
43. In considering these impacts, the Councils Highways Officer considers that the existing parking provision on site would adequately serve the development. He has also advised that the proposal would only directly affect the private highways belonging to the applicant, and that the wider industrial estate is served by roads built to industrial estate standards capable of accommodating any limited increase in traffic. Overall the proposal is, considered to accord with Policies IB13, D1, D3 and D4 of the Sedgefield Borough Local Plan and would protect the highway safety of the wider road network.

Impact on amenity of adjacent land users

44. The application site is boarded by other industrial and commercial uses. These range in nature from manufacturing facilities, officing, storage facilities and small retail units. In considering the potential impact on these neighbouring landusers, the Councils Environmental Health Unit has advised that given the location of the site within an existing industrial estate it is unlikely that the development would cause a statutory nuisance. It is also considered that a loss of amenity is unlikely to arise over and above existing operations on site.

Ecology

45. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to take into account, protect and mitigate the effects of development on Biodiversity Interests. In this instance the applicant has submitted ecology survey report and assessed the potential impacts of the development on protected species. The Ecology Section offers no objection to the scheme subject to the implementation of the mitigation set out in the report. Therefore, it is considered that the granting of planning permission

would not constitute a breach of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2010.

Other Issues

46. Paragraph 103 of the NPPF and Local Plan policy D1 require consideration be given to issues regarding flooding particularly from surface water run-off while requiring that developments adequately dispose of foul water. In this instance the new buildings would occupy the same foot print as the structure to be developed utilising existing connections into the existing drainage infrastructure. Northumbrian Water has no objections to this approach, although they have pointed out an existing sewer may need to be diverted to accommodate the development. It is however considered this is a matter of the applicant and Northumbrian Water to resolve in the first instance outside of the planning system.
47. Planning plays a key role in helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, providing resilience to the impacts of climate change and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF. In line with this and policy D1 of the Local Plan which sets out that the development would be expected to achieve improvements in relation to its energy and sustainability performance. Limited details have been supplied to show how this would be achieved and as such, a condition is recommended requiring the submission of a sustainability strategy.

CONCLUSION

48. The re-development will contribute to the economic and social element of sustainable development, providing continued investment into a key local employer in the local area.
49. The proposal is considered acceptable given the allocation of the site as a General Industrial Estate within the Sedgefield Borough Local Plan and is also considered to have an acceptable visual impact, affect on highway safety and on the amenity of adjacent landusers. The development would also not impact upon any ecological interests.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason – required to be imposed pursuant to section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with the following approved plans –

Proposed Site Layout, 1193 (S)03 P2, Received 11th October 2013
Proposed Site Plan, 1193 (S)04 P2, Received 11th October 2013
Existing Site Plan 1146 (S) 04 P2, Received 11th October 2013

Reason : To define the consent and ensure a satisfactory form of development is obtained in accordance with Policies IB13, D1 and D4 of the Sedgefield Borough Local Plan.

3. Prior to the commencement of the development a scheme to embed sustainability and minimise carbon emissions shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved scheme and retained while the building is in existence

Reason- In order to minimise energy consumption and to comply with the aims of policy D1 of the Sedgefield Local Plan and Paragraphs 93 and 97 of the NPPF.

4. No development shall commence unless in accordance with the mitigation detailed within the Bat Risk Assessment Report Survey Report compiled by Argus Ecology received 11th October 2013 including but not restricted to adherence to spatial restrictions; adherence to precautionary working methods as stated in the reports.

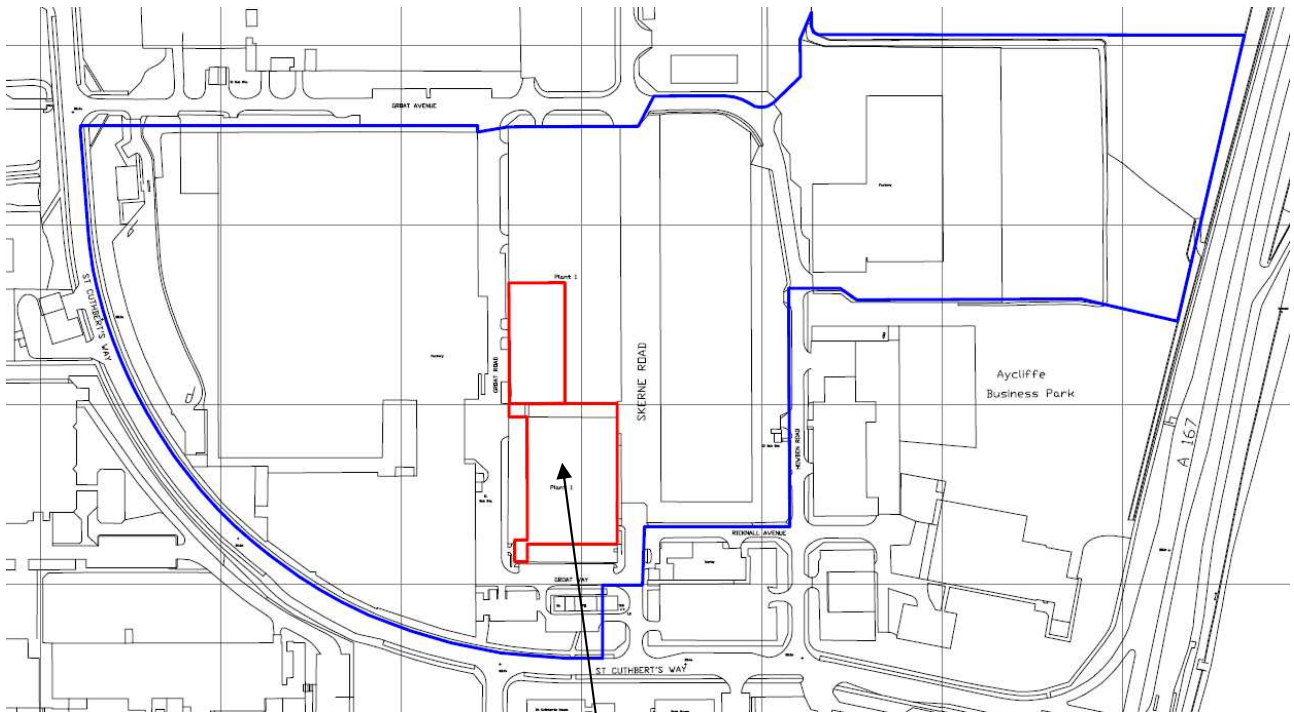
Reason: To ensure the preservation and enhancement of species protected by law in accordance part 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

STATEMENT OF PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

In dealing with the application, the local planning authority has adopted a positive and proactive manner, the decision has been made within the 13 week target provided to the applicant on submission and in compliance with the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework to promote the delivery of sustainable development.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Submitted Application Forms, Plans and supporting documents
National Planning Policy Framework
Sedgefield Borough Local Plan
County Durham Plan (pre submission version) and
Statutory responses from, Highway Authority and Northumbrian Water
Internal responses from Landscape Section, Ecology Section and Sustainability Section



Application Site



Planning Services

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Comments

Date 28th November 2013

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