

FENITON
(Feniton and Buckerell)

07/1581/FUL

Target Date: 15.08.2007

Applicant: Allwood Buildings Ltd.

Location: Talewater Works, Talewater, Talaton

Proposal: Erection of two light industrial units on existing site

CONSULTATIONS

County Highway Authority

The proposal indicates (in the application form) that staff would increase from 30 to 38 and that the parking spaces would increase from 30 to 40. Whilst additional information relating to the purpose of the proposal has been submitted it does not provide any clarification on this point.

The highways authority has commented:

“...if this application seeks the erection of two buildings –one to store timber undercover and the other to accord with Health and Safety requirements, and that there would be no additional staff employed on site and no additional traffic generation, then it would be unreasonable to raise a highway objection, although the need to improve visibility at the access point would still be applicable. If this is the case, I would recommend conditions are imposed to ensure that the units are used for the specific purposes that are being sought, rather than general B1/B2/B8 industrial units.

If, however, the units are going to lead to additional staff being employed as indicated in the application, then the Highway Authority would maintain an objection for the reasons given below, unless the Local Planning Authority considers other Development Plan policies (such as the need for employment opportunities in the rural area outweighs the sustainable transport objectives.”

Environment Agency

While there are no objections, in principle, to this proposal the applicant should note that the lowest western part of the site may flood in extreme conditions from the River Tale or from ponded waters in the road that cannot drain satisfactorily.

The applicant is therefore advised to site the office floor level well above ground levels on this part of the site and to keep all sensitive electrical equipment and the electrical installation 1m above the lower western part of the site.

Economic Development Officer

“I had a meeting at Talaton with Mr Kingdon on Tuesday 16th June.

Allwood Buildings Ltd has been trading from Talaton for more than 25 years. They manufacture a wide range of timber frame construction components, or complete building solutions. These are prefabricated at Talaton for assembly on site.

Allwood Buildings Ltd employ some 30 people at their Talaton premises and are an important source of employment in this part of the district. A much larger sub-contracting team (circa 100 FTE) is linked to the success of the business, in the assembly of Allwood products on site.

The business has now outgrown the available covered workspace at Talaton and is hoping to construct a new 4,000 square foot building on vacant land, in its ownership, along the north western boundary of the site. This boundary is impressively screened by a line of mature oak trees.

Their proposal appears to me to be an entirely rational move towards more effective use of land already consented for B Class use. The demands of the business for additional manufacturing space is already putting their covered storage areas under considerable pressure. Hopefully the construction of the new building will alleviate this problem and result in more efficient processing of raw materials to finished product within the capacity of the site. I hope the Council will look to co-operate with the applicants as they seek to under write the future of this important local enterprise and would ask you to draw these comments to the attention of Members.”

Environmental Health

I have the following comments to make:

“Before the development begins a report on potential contamination of the site shall be prepared by an appropriately qualified person and submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The report shall include:

a survey of the scale and nature of any contamination on the site
an assessment of potential risks to the public, buildings (existing or proposed) or the environment, including adjoining land
details of any remedial measures necessary to make the site suitable for the proposed use or development

The remedial measures shall be carried out as approved before development begins.

If during development works any contamination should be encountered in areas previously expected to be free from contamination, remedial measures shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: Site has been used historically as a quarry, clay mine, brick manufacture. Unknown fill. This is required to protect site workers and future site users & occupiers.”

PLANNING HISTORY

App. No:	Proposal	Decision	Date
01/P0103	Change of use from Office to dwelling	Approved	02.03.2001
92/P0606	Replacement Timber Treatment Plant Building & New Timber Storage Facility.	Approved	09.06.1992
90/P1134	Retaining, security & Boundary Wall	Approved	17.07.1990
89/P0512	Timber Storage Building	Approved	23.05.1989
83/P1828	Use Of Land & Buildings For General Industrial Purposes	Approved	11.01.1994

PARISH COUNCIL

“The Council is concerned at the height of the proposed industrial unit to the north of the site whose base will be almost at the height of the roof of the proposed westerly unit and consider this will create too dominant an appearance, particularly during the winter and spring when the trees are without leaf. The council is also concerned at the erection of fencing which has already taken place adjoining the road to Colestocks at the westerly edge of the site and on the northern boundary. Some of this fencing is actually sitting on the highway and has been there for several months and is over 2 metres in height and is not in keeping with the rural aspect of the site. Some Members were also concerned that at the north-western apex of the site, razor fencing is at ground level and is considered to be a danger to the public. The Council is also concerned at the effect of any additional traffic to the site, heavy lorries (sometimes as many as three), servicing the wood treatment plant already have to park on the highway whilst awaiting their turn to enter the site, this is at a particularly blind junction for traffic travelling in both directions and is an accident waiting to happen, particularly in the morning when traffic (school buses and parents on the school run) is at it's heaviest. Further traffic requiring entry to the site will only worsen the situation.

The Council is also concerned about the poor drainage in the area (already recognised by the Environment Agency and DCC) and the adverse effect on this of additional quick run off from buildings compared to absorption by the ground.

For these reasons Feniton Parish Council resolved to recommend refusal of the application.”

Members are advised that the Enforcement section have been requested to look into the issue of the fencing raised by the parish council.

WARD MEMBER

The initial comments of Councillor Brown are as follows::

“Support the application. I wish to support this thriving business I consider the 2 proposed buildings, one for storage the other for manufacture of wooden buildings to be wholly appropriate and compatible on this site.

I consider that any highway considerations can be overcome.

This application will consolidate this business which currently employs 50 people on site and around 100 on erection of buildings.

In the event this application comes to Committee I would reserve my position until I am in full possession of all the relevant facts and arguments for and against.

REPRESENTATIONS

Objections

1 letter of objection received raising the following points:

- Unsuitable location
- poorly aligned and narrow approach road to the site including tight turning over railway bridge

- Highway safety of other road users (pedestrians and cyclists) due to size, regularity and lack of consideration shown by lorry drivers

PLANNING POLICIES

Government Guidance

PPS 1 - Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS 7 – Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
PPG 13 – Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport

Devon County Structure Plan (2001-2016)

Policy CO6 – Quality of New Development
Policy TR2 – Co-ordinating Land Use/Travel Planning
Policy TR5 – Hierarchy of Modes

East Devon Local Plan (1995-2011)

Policy D1 – Design and Local Distinctiveness
Policy S5 – Countryside Protection
Policy E6 – Small Scale Employment Development in Rural Areas
Policy TA7 – Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The application site relates to a small industrial site set in a rural location approximately ½ way between the villages of Feniton and Talaton. The site is relatively isolated and is surrounded by open gently undulating countryside. The site occupies a corner position between the Feniton and Talaton road that runs east-west along the south of the site and the local road leading to Colestocks running southwest to northeast to the west of the site. The site has a narrow road frontage with access onto the main road and a house and office complex on the corner junction. To the rear and east of these are a complex of modern steel framed buildings and open storage areas. The main part of the site is relatively level but at the northern end there is a sloped access road up to an area of outside storage terraced above the existing site level and approximately 5.5 metres higher than the lower site level.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application proposes the erection of two further modern industrial/warehouse style buildings on the site. The supporting information accompanying the application states that these are required to allow the expansion of the production and storage facilities to meet the increased demand for sustainable timber frame construction systems.

CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

The main issues in the determination of the application are considered to be the principle of the expansion of the business on this site, the design of the buildings and their landscape and visual impact, the potential impact on trees of amenity value and the highway safety implications resulting.

Principle

Policy E6 of the Local Plan supports in principle the expansion of existing businesses within their sites in rural areas and where there are no alternative available sites within any adjoining built-up area boundaries and where the proposed buildings are of a form, bulk and design in keeping with

their surroundings and local building styles. Secondly where there would be no adverse impacts on wildlife, landscape or neighbouring residential amenity and where the site has adequate vehicular access and is accessible by public transport, cycling and walking.

The proposal would be within the confines of the existing site and the buildings would be designed to match and relate to existing buildings on the site. Whilst , no information has been submitted relating to what other sites may have been explored it is considered that given the size of the existing site and the length of time that the business has been established on the site that this is unlikely to be a viable option. The supporting information also suggests that part of the reason for the proposal is to reduce the requirement for storage of materials off site and thereby cut down on traffic between the site and other storage facilities elsewhere.

Design and landscape impact

The buildings would both be of a simple single span pitched roof construction clad in a dark green profiled sheeting to match existing buildings on the site. The smaller of these buildings would run parallel to the road to the west and, at least in summer, would be relatively well screened provided it can be erected without adversely affecting roadside trees. This building is likely to be more prominent though when the trees are bare. This is also the case with the larger of the buildings whose massing and height would be considerably greater (7 metres to ridge) and which is likely to be prominent above the level of existing buildings on the approach from the northeast.

The parish council have raised particular concern about the visual impact of the larger of the buildings from the approach road to the north west of the site and certainly this is likely to be the direction from which the proposal would be most prominent, particularly during the winter months. Views from other directions are likely to be restricted by or seen in context with existing industrial buildings on the site. Inside the northern boundary of the site the existing hardstanding area on which the proposed building would be located is cut into and lower than the land to the immediate north and along which there is an emerging belt of planting which in time will help to screen the development. The positioning of the building close to the rear boundary of the site is likely to preclude any additional planting which in any case is considered unnecessary.

Impact on trees

The smaller of the buildings set on the lower level of the site would be in close proximity to the line of trees on the western boundary that run parallel to the road. The proposed building would though be constructed on an area of existing hardstanding and therefore due to its nature and method of construction is considered unlikely to have any additional impact on these trees.

Highway safety

The supporting statement with the application refers to the present need for occasional storage of materials off site and suggests that the proposals would alleviate this need and may therefore reduce site traffic. However, the application also states that there would be a need for additional production staff which would more than likely lead to travel by private vehicles, thereby increasing site traffic. The approach roads to the site are narrow country lanes which would be unsuitable for significant increases in traffic and the highways authority has recommended refusal of the application on the basis that it would be unsustainable by giving rise to additional traffic where there is a lack of alternatives to private transport use. The site is undoubtedly located such that private transport is the most viable means of accessing the site, however, the applicant's agent has suggested that a car sharing scheme is in operation and that it is possible to access the site by public transport/walking from Feniton train station to the east.

Other issues

This business is well established and is a significant local employer that also supports the wider economy through associated workers employed in the erection of the company's products off-site. The proposed buildings would allow the consolidation and expansion of the company's business within the existing site in order to meet the increased demands for its products.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposal would allow the consolidation of the company's business operations within their existing site through the erection of two modern single span buildings to provide undercover storage for materials and increased production space. The buildings would be located within the confines of the existing site but would be close to the west and north boundaries. The smaller of the buildings on the west boundary would be relatively well screened by existing trees on the roadside. The larger building would occupy an elevated position above the existing buildings on the site and would appear more prominent. Nevertheless, this building would be slightly dug into the natural slope of the site and there is emerging planting to the rear which would help to break up its appearance in due course. Concerns expressed relating to highways issues and the location of the site are acknowledged but given the existing nature of the business and that vehicle journeys to storage facilities elsewhere may reduce, it is not considered that refusal on highways grounds is warranted. In consideration of the issues discussed the proposal is considered to be acceptable and is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE 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 and shall be carried out as approved.
(Reason – To comply with section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.)
2. No development shall take place until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
(Reason - To ensure that the materials are sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area.)
3. The use of the buildings shall be restricted to ancillary uses solely in conjunction with the use of the existing business on the site and for no other purposes other than with the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason – To allow the local planning authority to retain control over future uses of the building in the interests of highway safety.)
4. Prior to commencement of any works on site, tree protection details, to include the protection of trees, hedges and shrubs along the sites boundaries adjacent to the proposed buildings, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. These shall adhere to the principles embodied in BS 5837 and shall indicate exactly how and when the trees will be protected during the site works. Provision shall also be made for supervision of tree protection by a suitably qualified and experienced arboricultural consultant and details shall be included within the tree protection statement. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the agreed details.

In any event, the following restrictions shall be strictly observed:

(a) No burning shall take place in a position where flames could extend to within 5m of any part of any tree to be retained.

(b) No trenches for services or foul/surface water drainage shall be dug within the crown spreads of any retained trees (or within half the height of the trees, whichever is the greater) unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All such installations shall be in accordance with the advice given in National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) Publication Number 10 1995.

(c) No changes in ground levels or excavations shall take place within the crown spreads of retained trees (or within half the height of the trees, whichever is the greater) unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

(Reason - To ensure retention and protection of trees on and adjoining the site in the interests of amenity and to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area.

5. Before the development begins a report on potential contamination of the site shall be prepared by an appropriately qualified person and submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The report shall include:

- a survey of the scale and nature of any contamination on the site
- an assessment of potential risks to the public, buildings (existing or proposed) or the environment, including adjoining land
- details of any remedial measures necessary to make the site suitable for the proposed use or development

The remedial measures shall be carried out as approved before development begins.

If during development works any contamination should be encountered in areas previously expected to be free from contamination, remedial measures shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

(Reason - Site has been used historically as a quarry, clay mine, brick manufacture. Unknown fill. This is required to protect site workers and future site users & occupiers.)

6. Prior to the commencement of development visibility splays shall be provided at the site access in an easterly direction based on co-ordinates of 2.4 metres by 45 metres. All land/ vegetation within the required visibility splay shall be lowered or cut back to a height not to exceed 0.9 metres above road level and be permanently maintained as such.

(Reason – To ensure adequate visibility is provided in the interests of highway safety.)

Reasons for Approval

1. The proposal complies with the East Devon Local Plan 1995-2011 policies: D1, S5, E6 and TA7.
2. The proposal does not adversely affect the privacy and/or amenity of neighbouring occupiers.
3. The design and external appearance of the proposal does not harm the visual amenity of the site and surrounding area.

4. The proposal is for the extension of an established business within the confines of the existing site.

Note to applicant

CN04 – ALL/BHB/1, ALL/BHB/2, ALL/BHB/3

List of Background Papers

The file containing all letters, consultations, and documents referred to in the report.