

37/11/0025

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHANGE OF USE OF LAND FOR USE AS STORAGE FOR GROUNDS MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS AT TAUNTON DEANE NURSERY, STOKE ROAD, STOKE ST MARY (RESUBMISSION OF 37/11/0011) (RETENTION OF WORKS ALREADY UNDERTAKEN)

Grid Reference: 324958.122767

Retention of Building/Works etc.

RECOMMENDATION AND REASON(S)

Recommended Decision: Conditional Approval for the following reason

The proposal is for a limited storage use on an existing commercial site with no new building and limited traffic movements and the proposal is considered not to have a detrimental impact upon visual or residential amenity and is therefore considered acceptable and, accordingly, does not conflict with Taunton Deane Local Plan Policies S1 (General Requirements) and S2 (Design).

RECOMMENDED CONDITION(S) (if applicable)

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

(A4) Location Plan

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

2. There shall be no storage of equipment or materials over 3m in height unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the visual amenity of the area in accordance with policy S2 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

Notes for compliance

1. The visibility splays should be maintained at all times, and it is recommended that any vegetation obscuring the splay is removed.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is for change of use of part of the land at Taunton Deane Nursery site

for the storage of grounds maintenance equipment and materials. Such materials would include fencing materials, concrete slabs, wood chip, play bark and iron planters and turf culture equipment such as rollers, chain harrows, fertiliser spreader and trailers as well as play equipment and surfacing used in the day to day operation of the parks department. The land area is approximately 30m x 70m and located on the southern part of the site and an average additional vehicle movement would be 20 per week.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

The site consists of former agricultural land which had use as a commercial plant nursery for the Authority in October 2006 (ref.37/06/0006). Subsequent applications were submitted for the alteration of the access position (37/06/0010) and erection of greenhouses, polytunnels and an office building in July 2007 (37/07/0002).

A recent application for retention of polytunnels and clarification of vehicle movements (37/11/010) was granted by Members on 9th September 2011.

An application for use as storage and depot for grounds maintenance equipment and materials was submitted (37/11/0011) and subsequently withdrawn on 11th August 2011.

CONSULTATION AND REPRESENTATION RESPONSES

Consultees

SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP - Given that the proposal would not appear likely to result in an increase in vehicle movements to the site, nor would it have a detrimental effect on the existing highway network there is no objection to this proposal from the Highway Authority.

STOKE ST MARY PARISH COUNCIL - Previous comments still apply - Objections raised and supported by photographic evidence from Mr Groves had been raised to PC by neighbouring residents. These objections include frequent use of site at unsocial hours, increased vehicular activity, traffic noise, dust, general environmental impact and nuisance and loss of amenity.

Currently there appears to be much increased traffic movements, unsuited to either the narrow lanes through Stoke St Mary or through Chestnut Drive - a densely populated residential estate. The further proposed expansion of the site would substantially increase traffic to and from the site.

The application would appear to be retrospective as the site is currently being used as a depot for non horticultural storage and tipping for forward transit. This is above and beyond the scope of the original application. We believe the site to be currently operating without the appropriate permissions being in place and therefore open to enforcement proceedings.

No environmental survey regarding the impact on flora and fauna has been offered, nor does the site appear to have been registered as an approved recycling depot (deposit of tarmacadam hard core). Taking into account the above it was unanimously agreed to oppose both applications.

LANDSCAPE LEAD - Subject to retention of the existing maturing landscape the proposals will have limited landscape impact.

Representations

2 letters of objection on the basis of:

- the use for storage of ground maintenance equipment and materials not horticulture,
- it being retrospective,
- permitting it would set a precedent and would allow the land to be sold for industrial use.

1 neighbour objection on grounds of:

- Intensification of the use,
- Council acting in biased manner,
- The site is a transfer station for materials and machinery around the Borough and generates intense use,
- Large vehicles and disturbance,
- Other items stored outside red line area,
- B8 use will affect amenity of neighbour contrary to policy S1 of the Local Plan,
- Traffic disturbance,
- Dust nuisance,
- Noise and disturbance and impact of lighting.
- Vehicle movement information inaccurate, there are more than 20 vehicles per week, the impact is likely to increase with no control over operating times.
- The hours of use specified are anti-social and unacceptable close to a residential property.
- The site is in open countryside and is contrary to policy S7 of the Local Plan without justification.
- External lighting will be required in winter months, inappropriate in a rural location.
- If approved appropriate conditions should be attached.

PLANNING POLICIES

PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development,
PPS4 - Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth,
PPS7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas,
STR6 - Development Outside Towns, Rural Centres and Villages,
S&ENPP19 - S&ENP - Employment and Community Provision in Rural Areas,
S&ENPP48 - S&ENP - Access and Parking,
S&ENPP49 - S&ENP - Transport Requirements of New Development,
S1 - TDBCLP - General Requirements,
S2 - TDBCLP - Design,
S7 - TDBCLP - Outside Settlement,
EN12 - TDBCLP - Landscape Character Areas,

DETERMINING ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

The main issues are the traffic and the landscape and amenity impact of the proposal.

The storage of equipment and materials is intended for the southern end of the site and it is indicated that this will be no more than 20 additional journeys per week. The access to the site was approved with the original permission and it is not considered that the proposal would worsen any safety aspect of the use of the access. The use is not considered to result in significant transport movements over and above the existing commercial use of the site. The Highway Authority have commented and raise no specific objection to the proposal. A note reminding of the need to maintain visibility was added to the recent permission and it is considered to add that if permission were granted in this instance. There is not considered to be highway safety or traffic issue with the site and the application is considered acceptable.

The area of storage lies to the south of the site and the area is largely screened from views from the road to the south by hedging. The Landscape Officer considers that subject to retention of the existing maturing landscaping the proposals will have limited landscape impact. This view is agreed with and the landscape impact of the proposal is considered an acceptable one.

The open storage areas for sand and compost are to the west of the site and are considered to relate to the approved horticultural use of the site and not the storage use of items such as fencing and play equipment that occurs to the south. There is a dust issue with this existing use and attempts are being made to lessen this, including dampening the area in dry conditions.

The concern over noise, nuisance and unsocial hours seem to relate to the existing commercial horticultural use of the site. It is not considered that this would be significantly altered by the change of use to a small part of the southern part of the site. The applicant has indicated the extent of use operating the storage area during the normal working day, (normally 7am to 5pm) however it is not considered that a condition can be imposed limiting this as it would not possible to enforce, given other traffic movements to the site. A condition to limit the height of any materials stored on site is considered appropriate.

A wildlife survey was submitted with the original application and no protected species found. Given the relatively small area of land that is proposed and the nature of the storage use of the application it is not considered that there would be any adverse wildlife impact from the proposal.

The proposed use modifies part of the use of the site allowing an alteration to the existing commercial use of the site. It is not considered that this alteration would have a significant adverse impact on the landscape or private amenity of local residents to warrant an objection to the proposal. The application is considered to comply with Development Plan policies for use of existing commercial sites and the proposal is supported.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

CONTACT OFFICER: Mr G Clifford Tel: 01823 356398