

GROUND

To provide satisfactory off-street parking for vehicles in accordance with Policy TP06 of the Thanet Local Plan and the advice contained within the NPPF.

5 Prior to the first use of the either extensions hereby approved, the secure cycle parking facilities, as shown on approved drawing no. 0019 shall be provided and thereafter maintained.

GROUND

To promote cycling as an alternative form of transport, in accordance with Policy TP03 and SP43 of the Thanet Local Plan.

6 Prior to the first use of either extension hereby permitted, details of the electric vehicle charging points to be provided within the development, including their location and design, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The electric vehicle charging points shall be in the form of one active charging point per allocated parking space, and one active charging point per ten unallocated parking spaces. The electric vehicle charging points shall be provided prior to the first occupation of the development and thereafter maintained.

GROUND

To protect air quality, in accordance with Policy SE05 of the Thanet Local Plan and the advice as contained within the NPPF

SITE, LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Reclamet site comprises a dismantling and recycling yard fronting Woodchurch Road siting to its south east. The site is accessed off Woodchurch Road, Birchington and the site is a long established commercial concern.

The application site is surrounded on 3 sides by open fields in agricultural use. The site is adjoined on its eastern side by a residential property (Hillside) and the Nelson Park Riding Centre. The land subject of this application forms the existing Reclament site. More specifically the application relates to the two office buildings; one on the south side boundary fronting Woodchurch Road and the second building which is adjacent the northern boundary with Hillside and which is set in from the boundary with Woodchurch Road. There are Tree Preservation Orders (TH/TPO/6/1969) on trees along part of the south boundary of the site and to the east of the building marked as offices on the submitted block plan.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

The site has a long history of commercial use relating to car breaking and the storage of vehicles dating back to 1963. During the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s a number of applications were approved for various buildings; most recently F/TH/21/0080, and a weighbridge associated with this use.

Planning permission was most recently granted in November 2021 for the Variation of Condition 7 attached to Planning Permission F/TH/04/0050 for the "Change of use and creation of hardstanding for storage of accident damaged vehicles with associated landscaping" to stack vehicles to a maximum height of 5.5 metres. This was approved by Members of the Planning Committee, subject to conditions including soft landscaping on the southern boundary. The agent has confirmed that a discharge of condition application has been submitted in this regard, and once agreed the client is ready to plant, subject to 10 days notice to order and receive the trees.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Full planning consent is sought for the erection of first floor extensions to 2no office buildings within the site.

The submitted plans identify the buildings as A and B. Building A is located adjacent to the Woodchurch Road boundary and to the southern boundary of the site. The first floor extension is proposed for the office part of the building only - and a workshop is attached to it. It would be 6.5m to the ridge of the gable and be a continuation of the existing roof form from the front with gable end presenting to the side into the site car parking area and rear (yard). The proposed extension to building A would create an additional 102 sqm of floor space. The extension would be finished with metal profiled sheet cladding and interlocking tiled roof to offices with UPVC doors and windows.

Building B; adjacent Hillside would have a flat roof with a maximum height of approximately 5.8m. The additional floor would provide a further 81.3 sqm of office space. The plans indicate that composite/steel cladding to elevations, felted flat roof and UPVC doors and windows will be utilised in the build.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Thanet Local Plan 2020

SP04 - Economic Growth
SP24 - Development in the Countryside
SP26 - Landscape Character Areas
SP35 - Quality Development
SP43 - Safe and Sustainable Travel
SP44 - Accessible Locations
E01 - Retention of Existing Employment Sites
QD02 - General Design Policies
QD03 - Living Conditions
CC02 - Surface Water Management
SE03 - Land affected by Contamination
SE04 - Groundwater Protection
TP02 - Walking
TP03 - Cycling
TP06 - Car Parking

NOTIFICATIONS

Letters were sent to adjoining occupiers and a site notice posted close to the site.

One representation was received. The concerns can be summarised as follows:

- The recycling and sales of parts from these vehicles is an increasing part of the business, as well as the number of cars that are stored, inspected and broken up for recycling.
- Carpark is overflowing; where will the additional staff park?
- No public transport links
- Dangerous road
- Noise issues
- Smoke from burning on the site
- The site can be seen from the road
- Opening hours are not adhered to
- Inaccuracies within planning statement Nelson Park Riding Centre is a business and domestic property
- Stacking of cars is a blot on view

CONSULTATIONS

KCC Highways: Final comments: The additional traffic movements created by 183 sqm of office space would be negligible, and would not have a severe impact on the local highway network. The applicant has submitted plans demonstrating the provision of an additional 10 parking spaces within the site, along with secure covered bicycle storage.

No details have been provided regarding the provision of EV charging spaces, but I am content to apply a suitably worded condition for this, should the LPA be minded to approve this application.

I refer to the above planning application and confirm that provided the following requirements are secured by condition or planning obligation, then I would raise no objection on behalf of the local highway authority:-

Submission of a Construction Management Plan before the commencement of any development on site to include the following:

- (a) Routing of construction and delivery vehicles to / from site
- (b) Parking and turning areas for construction and delivery vehicles and site personnel
- (c) Timing of deliveries
- (d) Provision of wheel washing facilities
- (e) Temporary traffic management / signage

Provision and permanent retention of the vehicle parking spaces shown on the submitted plans prior to the use of the site commencing.

Provision and permanent retention of the cycle parking facilities shown on the submitted

plans prior to the use of the site commencing.

Provision and permanent retention of EV charging facilities prior to the use of the site commencing in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. All Electric Vehicle chargers provided for homeowners in residential developments must be provided to Mode 3 standard (providing a 7kw output) and SMART (enabling Wifi connection). Approved models are shown on the Office for Low Emission Vehicles Homecharge Scheme approved chargepoint model list:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electric-vehicle-homecharge-scheme-approved-chargepoint-model-list>

Informatives: It is important to note that planning permission does not convey any approval to carry out works on or affecting the public highway.

Any changes to or affecting the public highway in Kent require the formal agreement of the Highway Authority, Kent County Council (KCC), and it should not be assumed that this will be a given because planning permission has been granted. For this reason, anyone considering works which may affect the public highway, including any highway-owned street furniture, is advised to engage with KCC Highways and Transportation at an early stage in the design process.

Across the county there are pieces of land next to private homes and gardens that do not look like roads or pavements but are actually part of the public highway. Some of this highway land is owned by Kent County Council whilst some is owned by third party owners. Irrespective of the ownership, this land may have highway rights over the topsoil.

Works on private land may also affect the public highway. These include works to cellars, to retaining walls which support the highway or land above the highway, and to balconies, signs or other structures which project over the highway. Such works also require the approval of the Highway Authority.

Kent County Council has now introduced a formal technical approval process for new or altered highway assets, with the aim of improving future maintainability. This process applies to all development works affecting the public highway other than applications for vehicle crossings, which are covered by a separate approval process.

Should the development be approved by the Planning Authority, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure, before the development is commenced, that all necessary highway approvals and consents have been obtained and that the limits of the highway boundary have been clearly established, since failure to do so may result in enforcement action being taken by the Highway Authority. The applicant must also ensure that the details shown on the approved plans agree in every aspect with those approved under the relevant legislation and common law. It is therefore important for the applicant to contact KCC Highways and Transportation to progress this aspect of the works prior to commencement on site.

Guidance for applicants, including information about how to clarify the highway boundary and links to application forms for vehicular crossings and other highway matters, may be found on Kent County Council's website:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/highways-permissionsand-technical-guidance>. Alternatively, KCC Highways and Transportation may be contacted by telephone: 03000 418181

Initial comments: The applicant has not submitted a site plan demonstrating the existing parking provision for the site.

The proposed increase in office space will require an additional 10 parking spaces to be provided, as per Appendix C Parking Standards of the Thanet District Council Local Plan, adopted July 2020.

As such plans should be submitted demonstrating the existing parking layout for staff at the site and also a plan demonstrating the provision of an additional 10 parking spaces.

Parking spaces should measure 2.5m x 5m, with the provision of 6m reversing space behind each one.

We would also require the provision of Electric Vehicle Charging points, to future proof the use of the site.

Based on the requirement for 10 additional parking spaces, the applicant should provide 1 active charging space and 9 passive charging spaces.

One secure, covered bicycle storage space would also be required, again as per Appendix C Parking Standards

TDC Environmental Health: Thank you for consulting Environmental Protection on the above planning application for which we have considered the potential for environmental health impacts and consider it to have a low environmental risk and, therefore, do not offer any comments in this regard.

COMMENTS

This application is referred to the Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Pugh for Members to consider the impact of the development on views of the surrounding countryside.

The main considerations in assessing the submitted scheme are the principle of development, the impact upon the character and appearance of the area, the impact upon living conditions of neighbouring property occupiers and the impact upon highway safety.

Principle

In line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2014, planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the 'development plan' unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are a significant material consideration in this regard.

The site is located within the countryside as defined by policy SP24 of the Thanet Local Plan. Within this area development on non-allocated sites in the countryside will be permitted for either:

- * the growth and expansion of an existing rural business;
- * the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses;
- * rural tourism and leisure development;
- * the retention and/or development of accessible local services and community facilities; or
- * the redevelopment of a brownfield site for a use that is compatible with its countryside setting and its surroundings.

All development proposals to which this policy applies should be of a form, scale and size which is compatible with, and respects the character of, the local area and the surrounding countryside and its defining characteristics. Any environmental impact should be avoided or appropriately mitigated.

The application site comprises an existing vehicle recycling business with a number of buildings and open storage across the site.

Paragraph 83 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that planning policies and decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.

The increased floor spaces of 183.3sqm to the two office buildings would assist the running of an established business and would be supported in principle subject to all other material considerations.

Countryside and Landscape Character

The proposal involves development on land that is designated as countryside and within a Landscape Character Area.

Policy SP24 of the Local Plan considers development within the countryside, and provides a list of development within the countryside that is permitted through the policy, as detailed below;

Development on non-allocated sites in the countryside will be permitted for either:

- 1) the growth and expansion of an existing rural business;
- 2) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses;
- 3) rural tourism and leisure development;
- 4) the retention and/or development of accessible local services and community facilities; or
- 5) the redevelopment of a brownfield site for a use that is compatible with its countryside setting and its surroundings.

The proposed development is considered to come under 1) and, therefore, does fall within the development permitted, and as such the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy SP24 of the Local Plan.

Policy SP26 states that development proposals should demonstrate how their location, scale, design and materials will conserve and enhance Thanet's local distinctiveness. The policy further advises that development proposals should demonstrate how they respect and respond to the character, key sensitivities, qualities and guidelines of the relevant landscape character areas, as detailed in the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), and should avoid skyline intrusion and the loss and interruption of long views. Development proposals that conflict with these principles will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that they are essential for the economic or social well-being of the area.

Policy SP26 is supported by an up to date Landscape Character Assessment. The report recognises the importance of the Manston Chalk Plateau character area, to which the site forms a part, which is stated to form a skyline in many views back from lower landscapes in Thanet, including the coast and marshlands. The area is a generally flat or gently undulating landscape, with extensive, unenclosed fields under intensive arable cultivation.

The National Planning Policy Framework supports this policy, with paragraph 130 requiring planning decisions to be sympathetic to local character, including the landscape setting, and paragraph 174 requiring the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes, with the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside recognised.

There has been a long established use for the storage and dismantling of vehicles on the site through previously approved permissions. The matter for consideration on this application, is purely the potential impacts that may arise from allowing the first floor extensions to the two office buildings within the site, on the character and appearance of the area adjacent part of the southern boundary of the wider site and from Woodchurch Road. As noted above the application site comprises an existing vehicle recycling business with a number of buildings and open storage; including stacking of vehicles across the site.

The characteristics of the Manston Chalk Plateau is generally flat or gently undulating landscape, with extensive, unenclosed fields under intensive arable cultivation. This open landscape is fragmented by the location of large scale developments such as the former airport, Manston Business Park and a sporadic settlement pattern to the north of the airport. Further it also forms a skyline in many views back from lower landscapes in Thanet, including the coast and marshlands.

The visual impact of the proposed first floor extensions and its associated increase in height does have the potential to be prominent, given the flat surrounding countryside, particularly to the southern boundary and from Woodchurch Road. It is considered that the extension to building A; the northern part would be somewhat shielded by the existing workshop building which this extension would be on a par with in terms of its height. In addition from Woodchurch Road the extension would be seen in the context of the existing workshop and would not in my opinion be intrusive given its context. In terms of building B and its extension this is set much further back into the site; vehicles are parked in front of it, furthermore there is a two storey dwelling to the north; Hillside which is on higher ground. Given this set back and that it would be seen in the context of other two storey development, I do not consider that it would be harmful to the wider countryside or landscape character area.

The area of land subject of this application is visually related to the existing Reclamet site, and as such, the proposed increased height of buildings will be viewed in the context of the wider existing site and, therefore, the resultant detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the countryside, over and above that created by the existing use, would be less significant.

Notwithstanding consideration of the principle as set out above, relating to the expansion of this site into the rural area, trees on the north east and south west boundaries of the office building A to the south of the site on Woodchurch Road are subject to Tree Preservation Orders. The development already exists around these protected trees. It is not considered that the additional floors proposed would likely to harm these trees any more than exists with the present situation on site.

The proposed development is considered acceptable in principle given the established use of the site already. In light of the above the proposed development is considered to be compatible with its countryside setting and surroundings and would not result in any significant harm to the character and appearance of the countryside or the landscape character area, in line with policies SP24, SP26 and QD02 of the Thanet Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Living Conditions

Paragraph 119 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

Local Plan policy QD03 is also relevant to this application. Policy QD03 (Living Conditions) states that All new development should:

- 1) Be compatible with neighbouring buildings and spaces and not lead to the unacceptable living conditions through overlooking, noise or vibration, light pollution, overshadowing, loss of natural light or sense of enclosure.
- 2) Be of appropriate size and layout with sufficient usable space to facilitate comfortable living conditions and meet the standards set out in QD04.
- 3) Residential development should include the provision of private or shared external amenity space/play space, where possible.
- 4) Provide for clothes drying facilities and waste disposal or bin storage, with a collection point for storage containers no further than 15 metres from where the collection vehicle will pass.

It falls, therefore, to consider, whether there would be impact on the residential amenities of adjoining occupiers from the proposed additional floor two two buildings within the site.

In relation to building A and the extension above part of this building, it is confirmed that this extension would not directly abut neighbouring sites that could be harmed by its erection in terms of overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light or outlook. As such I consider there to be no material harm.

Building B, and its extension, however is adjacent to the boundary with the dwelling known as Hillside. It is noted that the land which this dwelling is sited upon is at a higher level to the application site; approximately 1m. The current boundary treatment (close boarded fence), measured from inside the application site, is approximately 4.4m high and the existing building a maximum of 2.9m. The proposal will see this increase to 5.7m, that is an increase of 1.3m above the fence line and 2.8m above the existing roof line. There is also a row of conifer trees within the boundary of Hillside. The first floor extension does not propose any side first floor windows. The property known as Hillside has a carport/garage immediately adjacent to the boundary and on the side flank wall of the dwelling is an air conditioning unit; there are no first floor windows. The extension will extend beyond the rear wall of Hillside by approximately 6m, however, given that the main dwelling of Hillside is approximately at least 4m from the shared boundary and given the angles between Hillside and the office, I do not consider that this relationship would result in material harm in terms of overshadowing, loss of light or outlook, overlooking.

The Nelson Park Riding school and associated dwelling is located some distance from the extensions (approximately 60m) given this significant distance of separation I do not consider there to be any harm resulting from the extensions themselves.

The use within the extensions is proposed to be office use. This would not be noisy as such and, therefore, I concur with the views of the Council's Environmental Health team that have raised no objection to the proposal.

The proposal is, therefore, considered to be acceptable with regards to residential amenity in regard to existing residents, and in terms of the extensions themselves and noise and disturbance through the use within in accordance with Policy QD03 of the Thanet Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Transportation

Paragraph 110 of the NPPF states that In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that amongst other aims: a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be - or have been - taken up, given the type of development and its location and b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual impacts on the road network would be severe. Paragraph 112 goes on to highlight that "within this context, applications for development should: a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second - so far as possible - to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use; b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport; c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive - which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards; d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and e) be

designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.”

Policy SP43 of the Local Plan states that the Council will work with developers, transport service providers, and the local community to manage travel demand, by promoting and facilitating walking, cycling and use of public transport as safe and convenient means of transport. Development applications will be expected to take account of the need to promote safe and sustainable travel. New developments must provide safe and attractive cycling and walking opportunities to reduce the need to travel by car. Whilst policy SP44 states development generating a significant number of trips will be expected to be located where a range of services are or will be conveniently accessible on foot, by cycle or public Transport.

Following receipt of the application KCC Highways initially asked for more information and clarification in relation to the number of parking spaces existing and proposed provision of Electric Vehicle Charging points and covered bicycle storage space.

The agent duly submitted a revised plan. This plan shows an additional 10 parking spaces and covered bicycle store, located within the existing parking area. This is suitably designed and would not create visual harm in its own right.

KCC Highways have confirmed the additional traffic movements created by 183 sqm of office space would be negligible, and would not have a severe impact on the local highway network. The applicant has submitted plans demonstrating the provision of an additional 10 parking spaces within the site, along with secure covered bicycle storage. Whilst details of electric charging points have not been detailed, KCC Highways are happy that this can be dealt with by a condition.

KCC also recommends conditions relating to a Construction Management Plan, I consider that this would be necessary given the limited width of Woodchurch Road that construction vehicles would have to negotiate. Securing the provision and permanent retention of the vehicle parking spaces, again this is necessary to ensure that the site can accommodate the numbers of vehicles likely to be generated from the extensions proposed.

Officers consider that the extensions proposed are relatively modest and that the number of traffic movements, once built, would not result in harm to the highway network and it has been demonstrated that the additional parking spaces required for this level of increased floor space could be accommodated within the site.

Given the above, with the appropriate safeguarding conditions, the impact upon highway safety and parking is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Other matters

In terms of comments raised by third party representations it is considered that whilst there are no public transport links to this site it is unlikely that members of the public will be going to site unless they are scrapping a car or buying, in which case they are likely to be using a private car.

The smoke from burning on the site is separate to this application and would be looked at under Environmental Health legislation.

Operation of the site outside of the permitted operating hours is separate to this application and any alleged breaches would need to be identified to planning enforcement- the objection has been forwarded to Planning Enforcement.

Conclusion

In summary, the additional floor to the two buildings is considered to be acceptable in terms of impact on visual amenity of the area. It is considered that the application is acceptable in regard to residential amenity, highways aspects and all other matters. As such the proposal is accordingly recommended for approval subject to the attached conditions.

It is, therefore, recommended that Members approve the application subject to safeguarding conditions.

Case Officer

Gillian Daws

TITLE: F/TH/23/0233

Project Reclamet Recycling Centre Woodchurch Road BIRCHINGTON Kent CT7
OHL

