PLANNING SERVICES DELEGATED DECISION REPORT
Planning Ref : M/24/00216/FUL

Proposal: Change of use of transport yard for erection of workshop/light industrial/storage units, Classes E (g) and B8, Associated Parking and Landscaping

Site: Storage Land To Rear Of, Rear Of Laugherne Villa, Martley

Applicants name: [redacted]

Recommendation: Approval

Registration Date: 6 March 2024 **8 week date:** 5 June 2024 **Extension of Time:** **Site Notice expiry:**5 April 2024 **Earliest Decision date:** 7 April 2024	**Officer Site Visit:** 13/03/2024

Consultation Responses:

Martley Parish Council: Support. The Parish Council welcome this change of use and is hoping it will create some local accessible employment.

Highways: No objection subject to conditions.

Context:
The site is located immediately east of the village of Martley, near Worcester. The application is for the erection of a warehouse-type building, approximately 380m2 GFA, which would be divided into four separate workshop/light industrial/storage units. It is located within an existing commercial business site that is predominantly a transport/haulage business, although there are also two existing industrial units and storage facility on site within the existing business/industrial estate. It is considered to be a Phase 2 proposal, following on from a Phase 1 Application, ref 23/00284/FUL, for the erection of a similar warehouse-type building, approximately 870m2 GFA, which has subsequently been approved.

The application form states additional parking, with eight new car spaces, would be provided. The Highway Authority notes submitted Drawing No. 23-464-PL-001 shows just six marked parking bays but accepts there is sufficient space for additional car parking, if required. The proposed parking is consistent with WCC parking standards and electric vehicle charging points are also shown on the drawing. A covered cycle store is provided.

Highway Issues:
A Highway Assessment Report (HAR), prepared by ARF Highway Serves, has been submitted as supporting information and is effectively a Transport Statement.

Access is via an existing priority junction with the B4204. The access is wide and has a concrete surface as it is used by HGVs on a daily basis. The application does not propose any changes to the access, other than removal of a section of existing hedging to the west and replanting a new hedge slightly set back. This would improve visibility and reduce vegetation growth overhanging onto the public footway. This change was approved, as part of the consented previous application (ref 23/00284/FUL).

The HAR notes a 60mph speed limit requires a 215m Y distance, as part of the visibility splay. The speed limit on the B4204 at the access point is 60mph, although this reduces to 30mph approximately

78m to the west. To the east of the access, there is a significant bend in the horizontal alignment that will impact on vehicle speeds. The HAR states that a traffic survey was undertaken between 12th-25th November 2022. This recorded the eastbound 85th percentile speed as being 38.2mph and the westbound 85th percentile speed as 35.5mph, which are both significantly less than the 60mph speed limit.

Submitted Drawing No. 23-464-Loc-002 shows the achieved visibility splays at the access, being 78m to the west, for eastbound vehicles, and 71.5m to the east for westbound traffic. These are effectively the values provided for the existing access, which is well established and has been operating for many years. Provision of the visibility splays has already been secured by condition for the consented 23/00284/FUL application but it is reasonable to apply the same condition, as it is not clear what the Applicant's intentions are, with regard to delivery timescales for Phase 1 and Phase 2.

The HAR discusses personal injury collision (PIC) data. Considering Council accident data, no fatal or serious injury accidents appear to have been recorded within the last five years up to February 2024, within the vicinity of the site. The HAR also states CrashMap data has also been examined, which shows no Killed or Serious Injury (KSI) accidents occurred during the same period.

The HAR then notes that, during the preceding 60 months, up to 23 February 2024, one PIC, classed as slight, occurred on Martley Road, approximately 500 – 520m west of the site access in July 2021. The incident resulted in a slight injury to a pedestrian (age 11 to 15 years) who came in to contact with a slowing/stopping vehicle (car) on the carriageway. The pedestrian was crossing the carriageway from the driver's offside position. The PIC does not appear to be related to any highway design issue.

The Highway Authority notes the PIC statistics. On this basis, there is no accident history associated with the site access, which might cause a concern. This suggests the existing visibility splays are adequate. The accident data also suggests that the addition of further traffic at the junction is unlikely to be significantly detrimental to highway safety and cause any concern. On this basis, the Highway Authority is content with the visibility splay provision and the principle of development and there is no justification for recommending refusal on highway safety grounds alone.

The HAR discusses existing traffic flows, with a November 2022 traffic survey recording the following:

West of site
• 7-day average two-way flows 2,218 vehicles (assume in 24 hours)
• 5-day average two-way flows 2,484 vehicles (Mon – Fri)

East of site
• 7-day average two-way flows 2,218 vehicles (assume in 24 hours)
• 5-day average two-way flows 2,479 vehicles (Mon – Fri)

The traffic survey also recorded site traffic generated by the existing development:-
• 7-day average two-way flows 45 vehicles (assume in 24 hours)
• 5-day average two-way flows 63 vehicles (Mon – Fri)

The HAR states that, based on the 7-day average trip rate (45 vehicles) generated by the site in its existing usage, the site contributed to 2.0% of overall traffic volumes. Based on the 5-day average trip rate (63 vehicles) generated by the site in its existing usage, the site contributed to 2.5% of overall traffic volumes.

The HAR states that, until each unit is occupied and the travel requirements have subsequently been established, it is unknown specifically how many journeys each unit will generate (across all modes of travel) on the B4204 Martley Road. However, the trip rates for the site in its existing usage can be considered as a guide to assess the additional trip rates generated by the proposed development.

Assuming the 7-day average trip rates generated by the site in its existing usage will also be generated by the proposed development, a 2.0% increase in traffic volumes will lead to an additional 44 daily vehicles on B4204 Martley Road in the vicinity of the site. Assuming the 5-day average trip rates generated by the site in its existing usage will also be generated by the proposed development, a 2.5%

increase in traffic volumes will lead to an additional 62 daily vehicles on the B4204 Martley Road in the vicinity of the site.

The Highway Authority notes the method that has been used to estimate additional traffic generated by the proposal. It would have been feasible to use the TRICS database to forecast trip rates for the industrial units but it is likely using existing flows is more conservative, given the number of existing staff. However, the Highway Authority notes the above figures are identical as those set out in the previous HAR, submitted to support previous application 23/00284/FUL. As that application has been grant consent, the Phase 1 trip generation should be treated as committed development. Based on the accepted 5-day average trip rate assessment, this would equate to 62 new daily vehicles as being committed.

In addition, the Highway Authority notes the Phase 1 development was for approximately 870m2 GFA, whilst the current application is for approximately 380m2 GFA, which is less than half the consent floorspace. Hence, likely trip generation for the Phase 2 development is likely to be lower than the consented Phase 1. However, even if assuming Phase 2 might generate 62 additional vehicles onto the local highway network, when this is combined with the committed Phase 1 flows, the total increase would be approximately 5.0%, based on the 5-day scenario. 5.0% is within the acceptable daily fluctuations in general traffic flows and, therefore, would have minimal impact on the local highway network. Given the relatively low flows recorded for both the main road and the access, it is envisaged the site access would operate well within its theoretical capacity. Also, as Phase 2 is likely to generate less traffic than Phase 1, due to have a smaller floorspace, the assessment is considered to be robust.

The Highway Authority notes the HAR does not discuss weekday AM and PM period traffic flows, which would normally be expected. However, it is unlikely the provision of such information would result in a different conclusion to the above.

Whilst the proposal may well generate some additional HGV movements, it is unlikely to significantly increase existing numbers. Light industrial units or small storage facilities are more likely to generate predominately private car or van trips, with some small delivery lorries and just a few HGV movements.

Whilst it is acknowledged there will be concern that the additional site traffic will have an impact on Martley, there are currently no traffic restrictions that ban certain categories of vehicles, hence all vehicle types from the site can travel through the town. As stated previously, the level of increase is considered to be minimal, in terms of overall impact. On this basis, the Highway Authority is of the opinion there appears to be no traffic impact or highway safety reasons for recommending refusal of the application, which could be justified at any subsequent appeal.

Travel Welcome Pack:
The traffic generation assessment, within the HAR, has been based on the existing development. For the new development, it is desirable to encourage staff, visitors and customers to travel by sustainable modes of transport, if feasible. Some incentives can be introduced by the Applicant to reduce single person occupancy car trips, with car sharing an obvious option. The scale of development is not large enough for a Travel Plan to be prepared but a Travel Welcome Pack, for new employees, encouraging sustainable travel, can be secured by condition.

Conclusion:
Based on the analysis of the information submitted, the Highway Authority concludes that there would be no adverse highway consequences in terms of paragraph 115 of the NPPF (December 2023) and, therefore, there are no justifiable grounds on which an objection could be maintained.

Hereford and Worcester Fire Service: Fire Service Vehicle access must comply with the requirements of ADB 2019 Vol. 2 B5, section 15 & Table 15.1 with regards the proposed floor area, height of the building and type of fire appliance.
Access road to be in accordance with ADB 2019 Vol. 2 Table 15.2 with regards access widths and carrying capacity.
Water for firefighting purposes should be provided in accordance with section 16 and National guidance document on the provision of water for fire - fighting and BS 9990.

Worcestershire County Council (Footpaths): The proposal appears to be adjacent to a public right of way as recorded on the Definitive Map, the public right of way is Martley MT-723. Please see the enclosed illustrative map.
It seems vehicular access to the site is via the public right of way, it should be noted that under section 34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, any person who, without lawful authority, drives a motor vehicle on a public right of way commits an offence. The applicant should make themselves satisfied that they, and anyone else who may use public rights of way for private vehicular access in connection with the development, has a right to do so. They may wish to seek legal advice on the matter. The County Council is responsible for maintaining rights of way to a standard suitable for their usual public use.
Where possible, the definitive line of public rights of way should be kept open and available for use throughout the construction phase. However, if public safety requires a temporary closure of a public right of way during works, the appropriate application should be made to the Public Rights of Way Mapping Team at Worcestershire County Council at least 8 weeks prior to the earliest requested closure date.
We have no objection to the proposals, provided that the applicant observes the [relevant] obligations.

Ramblers Association (Worcestershire Area): No objection although PROW Martley MT-723(C) passes near the site and across the access road.

S.W. Land Drainage Partnership: In the accompanying Water Management Statement, the Applicant proposes rainwater harvesting of roof run-off and interception of vehicular paved areas prior to discharge to soakaway and permeable paving for non-vehicular areas. The use of soakaways is acceptable in principle subject to site and ground conditions being suitable. Reference to a soils map reveals that ground conditions at this location may be unsuitable for infiltration drainage methods, so options for a nil-infiltration drainage strategy should also be considered. I refer to comments made in response to previous development applications on this site where the provision of a suitable drainage strategy was problematic. There seems to be sufficient space available in the west part of the site, against the general ground surface falls, but not to the east. There is no public sewerage shown on the Severn Trent Water Limited Sewer Maps in the vicinity, so it is imperative that a satisfactory means of disposal for surface water is confirmed at an early stage, before any work commences on site.
The Applicant should follow a sustainable approach to surface water management (SuDS) and the recommended drainage hierarchy: source control-watercourse-sewer, to control additional surface water generated by roof and paved areas, so that the proposed total rate and volume of run-off from the site is no greater than present run-off rates and volume.
Refer to the former EA Surface Water Management Advice Note for Worcestershire and the latest EA advice on climate change allowances. Reference should also be made to Chapter 26; SuDS Manual (CIRIA) for measures to control the quality of the surface water discharge.
I recommend that the [percolation] condition is attached to any planning permission granted for this application.

Third Party Comments:

[redacted]
I write with concerns regarding the above application. We are the nearest neighbour and our boundary forms the walls of the warehouses within this yard, proximity is extremely close.
The Operator has conditions placed on them by DVSA in order to hold their operators license, these conditions are as follows:
Conditions:
(1) There will be no operation, movement, loading or unloading of authorised vehicles or trailers at the operating centre before 0600 and after 1900 Mondays to Fridays; before 0600 and after 1600 on Saturdays; and there shall be no operation, movement, loading or unloading of authorised vehicles or trailers at the operating centre on Sundays and Public Holidays
(2) Minor maintenance work for example changing of bulbs and mirrors can only take place 07.00 to 18.00 Mondays to Fridays. Major maintenance work including work on tyres and the use of pneumatic equipment can only take place 08.00 to 18.00 Mondays to Fridays. Maintenance work is permitted 08.00 to 13.00 on Saturdays, with no such maintenance at all on Sundays or Bank/Public Holidays
(3) There will be no washing of the vehicles and trailers authorised under this licence with the use of a pressure wash within the operating centre outside of the hours 0800 to 1800 Mondays to Fridays, 0800 to 1300 on Saturdays, with no such maintenance at all on Sundays or Bank/Public Holidays

Undertakings:
(1) Reverse beepers of vehicles authorised under this licence shall be of a broadband not tonal type
(2) The operator will sweep the concrete yard and access driveway adjoining the B4204 every day to ensure that mud, dirt and debris is not dragged on to the public highway
(3) Engines on vehicles authorised under this licence will be run for no more than 10 minutes before leaving or after returning to the operating centre
(4) The operator will ensure that any loaded skips carried by vehicles authorised under this licence are securely sheeted
Please ensure that these conditions are mirrored within the conditions set by planning.

We have the following serious concerns:
Dust:
The yard's maintenance is inadequate, leading to dust accumulation. As lorries pass through, the dust enters our house through open windows, posing health risks.

Noise:
The movement of lorries within the yard causes excessive noise, especially empty bulkers, aggravated by rough surfaces. Tarmacking a smooth roadway through the yard would reduce this disturbance, it is worse since the lorries now travel the full length of the concrete yard area, especially as some are leaving before 6am. This is a rural location, not an industrial one, the wildlife must be considered too regarding lighting.

Footpath:
The poorly defined footpath presents hazards when vehicles and machinery are in motion. Visitors return unable to find their way through. Clear marking and maintenance of the footpath are essential for safety.

Water Drainage:
The expanded hardstanding within the yard has led to a notable increase in rainfall runoff towards our property. The current yard layout directs excessive water flow towards our garden, resulting in ongoing land contamination. To address this issue, additional drainage must be installed to redirect runoff away from our property. All drainage should be directed towards the mains located just across the field from the back of Laugherne Villa. The current drainage system in our garden is inadequate to handle this runoff and should be reconfigured and sealed off. It is concerning that the Water Management Plan submitted with this application fails to acknowledge this system. As it stands, this system directs water to the ditch and eventually to Laugherne Brook, posing a potential pollution hazard.

Debris and Mud:
The continuous movement of lorries is causing mud and debris to be tracked onto the road, leading to blocked drains in the vicinity. The build-up of debris, extending approximately 30cm into the road, poses a hazard especially when two lorries need to pass each other, requiring them to stop due to limited road width.

Vermin Control:
There has been a noticeable rise in vermin activity on the premises. While we have a pest control contract in place, it has come to my attention that Pencroft Ltd, the operator at this site, does not. Vermin, are burrowing under the warehouses and entering/exiting through the corrugated sides, which presents a concern. It is recommended that a vermin control contract be included as a condition.

Operating Hours:
Considering the close proximity of neighbouring properties and a campsite, the operating hours of the facility should be carefully reviewed to minimize disruptions.

Additional Workshops:
Given that Pencroft Ltd holds a license for 12 lorries and 3 trailers at this location, the need for an expanded workshop raises questions about the source of work to keep both facilities busy. Without restrictions, this expansion may lead to increased traffic, dust, and noise. The traditional use of this yard as a transport yard involved limited daily movement, unlike the current continuous activity throughout the day.

Site Constraints:
Neighbourhood Plan: NPA Boundaries
Water Supply
SWDP 5: Protect and Enhance
Surface Water: 1 in 1000 extent
Outside SWDP Development Boundary
Public Right of Way: Type- Footpath. Path No- MT-723 C
Surface Water: 1 in 100 extent. - Distance: 4.49
Surface Water: 1 in 30 extent. - Distance: 7.1

Planning Site History:
80/02669/FUL - Steel portal framed industrial storage building – Approval Jan 20 1981

83/02187/FUL. Replacement of temorary office with permanent brick structure . Laugherne Villa , Martley, Worcester, WR6 6QB. APL. Nov 29 1983

84/01482/FUL. LAUGHERNE VILLA MARTLEY Worcestershire - dismantling of absolete and erectin of new vehicle repair workshop . Laugherne Villa , Martley, Worcester, WR6 6QB. APL. Sep 4 1984

87/01622/FUL. Extension to provide ground floor bathroom hall and garage for use by disabled person . Laugherne Villa , Martley, Worcester, WR6 6QB. APL. Aug 6 1987

03/00296/OUT. Residential development (including low cost and tied housing) of redundant haulage yard/brown field site, together with construction of off-site sewage disposal facilities. Site At Laugherne Villa , Martley, Worcester, WR6 6QB. REF. Aug 7 2003

12/00452/FUL. Workshop and office . Land Rear Of Laugherne Villa,Martley,Worcestershire,WR6 6QB. APL. Aug 22 2012

12/01308/CCO. Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 4 & 5 of planning permission 12/00451/FUL. Front Office At,Rear Of Laugherne Villa,Martley,Worcestershire,WR6 6QB. APL. Oct 29 2012

12/01438/FUL. Change of use of land to enable expansion of transport yard. Land Rear Of Laugherne Villa,Martley,Worcestershire,WR6 6QB. APL. Dec 12 2012

14/00849/CCO. Application for approval of details reserved by condition - Condition 4 of Planning Permission 12/01438/FUL.. Front Office At, Rear Of Laugherne Villa, Martley, Worcestershire, WR6 6QB. APL. Oct 16 2014

15/00975/FUL. Change of use of land from agriculture to a transport and storage yard (B8). Land to rear of Laugherne Villa, Martley, Worcestershire, WR6 6QB. WDN. Oct 19 2015

M/23/00284/FUL. Change of use of part of transport yard for erection of workshop/light industrial/storage units, classes E(g) and B8, associated parking and landscaping.. Rear Of Laugherne Villa, Martley. APL. Jan 26 2024

Policies relevant to Decision:

South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP)

SWDP 1: Overarching Sustainable Development Principles
SWDP 2: Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy
SWDP 4: Moving Around South Worcestershire
SWDP 8: Providing the Right Land and Buildings for Jobs
SWDP 12: Employment in Rural Areas
SWDP 21: Design
SWDP 22: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

SWDP 25: Landscape Character
SWDP 26: Telecommunications and Broadband
SWDP 27: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
SWDP 29: Sustainable Drainage Systems
SWDP 31: Pollution and Land Instability

Worcestershire County Waste Core Strategy

WCS1 and WCS17

Neighbourhood Plans and Supplementary Planning Guidance

South Worcestershire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (March 2018)
South Worcestershire Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (July 2018)

Martley, Doddenham and Knightwick Neighbourhood Plan (adopted January 2018):

- Policy MKD1 - Landscape Design Principles
- Policy MKD3 - Building Design Principles outside Martley Conservation Area
- Policy MKD14 - Supporting Local Employment

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Officer Report:

Site Description and summary of proposal/application

The proposal relates to an existing commercial site located off the B4204 outside the village of Martley within the open countryside. The application proposes the change of use of the transport yard for the erection of workshop/light industrial/storage units (Classes E (g) and B8) with associated parking and landscaping.

The land at and to the rear of the dwelling known as Laugherne Villa has been in use as a transport/haulage yard for around 75 years. 12 years ago the Villa and the yard were acquired by Pencroft Ltd. The yard acts as a base and operating centre for that Company.

Substantial existing portal framed, and steel-clad buildings are positioned along the Eastern boundary and continue to be used as workshops (B2) for Pencroft, and another by CVS, a commercial vehicle restoration and repair business. The buildings towards the front of the site are also in B2 use and are let to another vehicle maintenance and fitting out enterprise.

In August 2012 permission was given for a new workshop building (12/00452/FUL) and later in 2012 a further consent was granted to change the use of 0.23ha. of land at the rear of the site to extend and expand the transport yard (12/01438/FUL)

Consent was granted more recently (M/23/00284/FUL) for a workshop building to be erected at this site, partially on the extended transport yard area and the remainder on the original yard (Classes E(g) and B8) is to be located towards the Eastern boundary.

The current proposal is referred to within the submission documents as “Phase 2 of the scheme”. The proposal is for a new building with an L-shaped footprint with its longer leg (32.5m) alongside the Western boundary of the existing Transport Yard. The building would be a steel framed structure with similar cladding, brickwork and roofing materials to those of the building recently approved.

The four units would have a total area of 382sq.m. (including a secure cycle store) and are proposed for light industrial and storage use.

A Public footpath runs north south through the site.

There would be an increase from 34 car parking spaces to 40, and lorry spaces would be as per the previous permission at 20. There are already motorcycle, cycle and disabled parking spaces.

Foul sewage would be to a new package treatment plant.

The application is supported by the following plans and documents:

- 23-464-Loc-001 – Location Plan
- 23-464-Loc-002 – Visibility Splay – Survey of Existing Access
- 23-464-Loc-003 – Site/Block Plan
- 23-464-PL-001 – Proposed Floor Plan
- 23-464-PL-002 – Proposed Elevations (1 of 2)
- 23-464-PL-003 – Proposed Elevations (2 of 2)
- Planning Statement
- Water Management Statement
- Enhancement of Shelter for Native Wildlife as part of Extension Scheme
- Highway Assessment

Officer Assessment of the proposal

Policy and Principle of Development:

Policy SWDP1 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the Framework & explains that planning applications that accord with policies in the SWDP will be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policies SWDP1 & SWDP2 seek to direct development to locations most appropriate to the form & scale of development proposed. In this case, the site lies outside any defined development boundary & as such is located in the open countryside as defined within the adopted SWDP.

The site lies within the open countryside where Policy SWDP2 states that development will be strictly controlled and will be limited to specific exceptions of appropriate development within the countryside. Employment development in rural areas is one of the exceptions listed but is subject to compliance with Policy SWDP12.

SWDP12 (Employment in Rural Areas) Part C refers to: The expansion of existing employment sites in rural areas will be supported where it has been demonstrated that intensification of the existing site is not viable or practical. Reasoned Justification (RJ) 1 refers to: The provision of new rural employment sites should be considered favourably during the plan period, provided it is not harmful to the integrity of the settlement or landscape character.

In considering rural employment opportunities RJ 5 says: This policy should also be read in conjunction with policy SWDP8 E.

SWDP8 E states: In addition to the sites allocated specifically for employment uses, the provision of employment land and the conversion of existing buildings to support job creation throughout south Worcestershire will be supported providing the development supports an existing business or new enterprise of a scale appropriate to the location. Notwithstanding, SWDP12 should be considered the more appropriate development plan policy in considering most designated open countryside locations.

Paragraph 83 of the Framework states that planning polices, and decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural area including through well designed new buildings and support the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

Since the adoption of the SWDP, the NPPF places great emphasis on supporting the rural economy at

para 83 and para 84 (and para 103) and acknowledges the fact that application sites in rural areas may not be well served by public transport.

SWDP 4 does require proposals to minimise the need for travel.

The existing site's status is considered to be commercial and is a transport and storge yard as part of a wider, well-established, industrial site, though the site surroundings are open countryside/agricultural fields. However the site is not a major employment scheme and the authorised use as a commercial yard is recognised to generate vehicle trips already.

Furthermore, the site is considered to be within walking distance of Martley, which, as a Category 1 settlement in the Settlement Hierarchy (Annex D of SWDP), is considered to be a more sustainable location. As such, the proposal would provide opportunity for employment in a location reasonably well related to the local population.

The Neighbourhood Plan is also relevant. Policy MKD14 supports the following forms of local employment development:

1. Intensification (or expansion where intensification is not viable or practical) of existing business (B1), general industrial (B2) and warehousing development (B8) and uses at Maylite Trading Estate and Edgar Estate
2. Extensions to existing rural B1, B2 and B8 premises and new tourism and leisure related development

The broad principle is accepted subject to the essential policy tests in considering new employment sites in rural locations which are that the proposals represent a scale appropriate to the location, and that the proposals would not be harmful to the integrity of the settlement or landscape character.

Design and Landscape & Visual Impact:

Policy SWDP 21 is relevant in that they seek to permit development where the layout, scale, massing, density, materials and design of the proposal respects the character and quality of the area. Policy SWDP 25 relates to consideration of landscape character. In looking to national planning policy, chapter 12 of the Framework promotes good design and a high-quality built environment. In particular, paragraph 130 states that permission should be refused for poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Policy SWDP 25 states that development proposals and their associated landscaping schemes must take account the latest landscape Character Assessment, should be appropriate to and integrate with the character of the landscape setting and conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the primary characteristics defined in character assessments and important features of the Land Cover Parcel.

There is a public right of way (PRoW) that runs through the wider site and continues beyond the site boundaries (reference 723(C)). Although views from the PRoW within the bounds of the site are already heavily influenced by the existing site use, the views from the PRoW beyond the bounds of the site are not. Beyond the site boundaries, the views are of undeveloped agricultural land.

The proposed development would likely be visible above the existing boundary vegetation from the perspective of the PRoW when heading towards the site in a northerly direction.

The proposed buildings are typical in scale and design for rural industrial units and have the appearance of a modern agricultural shed so, subject to the proposed dark grey cladding, could appear agricultural in nature. Furthermore, they would be viewed in the context of the existing industrial units and uses and would not be viewed in isolation in the countryside.

They are to be sited on an existing storage yard and of a scale and mass commensurate with the other light industrial buildings on the wider site.

The proposed landscaping scheme includes additional tree planting to the east between the proposed building and the existing boundary vegetation.

The proposed cladding materials and landscaping scheme would ensure that the visual impact of the development is kept to a minimum and officers are satisfied that the proposal would be in keeping and would not have a detrimental impact on the landscape character and visual amenities of the area, compliant with the above mentioned planning policies.

Ecology & Wildlife:

Policy SWDP22 states that development that would compromise the favourable conservation status of European or other international protected species or habitat will not be permitted.

No preliminary ecological appraisal has been submitted with this application but due to the nature of the site, being in commercial use, there are no significant features of ecological importance within the site and it was not considered necessary in this instance. In addition to the landscaping, enhancements by way of bat and bird boxes are proposed as part of the submission.

Policy SWDP22 requires all new development to contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity within the site and wider area and as such it is considered that a condition should be imposed to secure the proposed enhancements.

Highways & Traffic Generation:

The site is located within an existing commercial business site that is predominantly a transport/haulage business, although there are also two existing industrial units and storage facility on site within an existing business/industrial estate.

Following on from the phase 1 permission which provided 15 additional car spaces and 5 additional lorry bays, the current application includes a further increase in parking, with 6 new car spaces. The proposed parking is consistent with WCC parking standards.

Access is via an existing priority junction with the B4204. The access is wide and has a concrete surface as it is used by HGVs on a daily basis. The application does not propose any changes to the access, other than removal of a section of existing hedging to the west and replanting a new hedge slightly set back. This would improve visibility and reduce vegetation growth overhanging onto the public footway. A condition to secure the visibility splays is recommended.

A Highway Assessment Report (HAR), prepared by ARF Highway Serves, has been submitted as supporting information and visibility splays have been illustrated on the submitted plans.

Whilst the third party objection is noted, in view of the comments received from the Highways Authority (HA), it is considered that subject to securing the visibility splays by condition as well as other conditions recommended by the HA, officers are satisfied that the development would not have a severe detrimental impact on highway safety.

Drainage & Flooding:

Policy SWDP29 states that “all development proposals will be required to demonstrate through a water management statement that the site drainage and runoff will be managed in a sustainable and co-ordinated way that mimics the natural drainage network”.

For the drainage strategy the Applicant has submitted a Water Impact Statement which states “By use of some rainwater storage for yard cleaning, located to the main elevation to capture excess water from fast run-off surfaces (roofs of proposed buildings), the current site conditions can be improved by this simple management and the captured water used for selective yard and vehicle cleaning and for other tasks outside.
Capturing rainwater further reduces the chance of flooding from this site. Overflows from the water tanks can be directed to new soakaways within part of the site network owned by the client, set a minimum of

5m from any building or boundary, to attenuate the runoff using seepage to the network of adjacent fields surrounding the site.
There will be no buildings close to the site boundaries within the area of soakaway location and the existing ground does no exhibit water retention or surface flooding.
The existing access driveway and general parking spaces use porous surfaces, to drain through the materials and mitigate any run-off to the surrounding ground area. However, the new buildings will require turning and yard areas mage up from robust surfaces for heavy vehicle movements and so these areas are to be included in the final planned sizes of soakaways required. The surrounding ground on the west side of the site is a well-drained soil with young hedgerows and arable land beyond, and it is proposed that this land, used for storage and 'green belts' of planting will be used as soakaway locations.
Any water from the works or impervious parking areas that could collect oils and other common factory contaminants from vehicles or machinery to be collected and filtered through oil interceptors within the drainage pipework before discharging to the normal surface water soakaway system.
Foul water management:
The new units will be serviced by staff wc's and staff washing facilities for between 2 and 6 staff in each unit. The units will be designed to be autonomous, with individual toilet and washing facilities, Foul drainage from these facilities will be directed to a new sewage treatment plant located to the south of the new building with an outfall to drain to the open land and planted areas as part of the lower levels of the site. The treated discharge will be drained via a new herringbone drainage irrigation field, calculated by the treatment plant specialists after full percolation tests and trial holes are established.
Therefore, all foul water from the proposed toilets and washing facilities will be discharged through the new treatment plant within the site area."

The site is within Floodzone 1 and as such there are no significant risks relating to potential flooding of the site. However, the Land Drainage Partnership has recommended a pre-commencement condition including percolation tests as per the submitted Water Management Statement.

Officers are satisfied that there would be no adverse impact on surface water flooding as a result of the development, subject to compliance with the Water Management Statement and the condition suggested by the Land Drainage Partnership.

Odour & Noise Nuisance:

Whilst the concerns of third parties are noted, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) have been consulted and no comments have been received. The proposal is for light industrial and storage uses as part of a wider, established commercial/industrial area with planning permission for Class B2 (Industrial) activities and the application site itself is currently in use as a transport and storage yard.

Although the proposed development would be likely to lead to an intensification of the use of the site in terms of vehicle movements, noise from Class E(g) activities should not, by definition, adversely impact the nearest residential receptors.

Furthermore, the proposed units would be well screened from Oak House by the intervening buildings on the site.

Subject to the restrictions suggested by WRS on the previous planning permission for phase 1 being additionally secured by condition on this site, officers are satisfied that nearby residential properties should not be unacceptably impacted by the development proposed.

Other Issues:

Matters of air quality, contamination and water management can be adequately addressed through conditions.

Conclusion:

The proposed commercial building is acceptable in principle having regard to Policies SWDP2, SWDP4, SWDP8 and SWDP12 of the Development Plan. No significant harm to the visual amenities and

landscape character of the area, residential amenity (of neighbouring properties), highway safety, biodiversity or flood risk have been identified and officers consider that the proposal accords with the relevant policies of the Development Plan.

Recommendation: Approval subject to conditions

Please see attached Draft Decision Notice

Member Involvement/Consultation: YES – the local ward member was notified of this application

CIL Liable?: NO

Case Officer: AP-C

[redacted]

[redacted]

Date: 03/06/2024

Authorising Officer:

[redacted]

[redacted]

Date: 4 June 2024