

ITEM 2

Application Reference	DC/080120
Location:	Land Off Duke Avenue Stanley Green Trading Estate Duke Avenue Stockport SK8 6RB
PROPOSAL:	Removal and demolition of existing structures and the erection of 7,939sqm (GEA) of industrial, storage and distribution floorspace with ancillary offices (Use Class B2, B8 and E(g)), including construction of access and estate road off Duke Avenue, car parking and associated works.
Type Of Application:	Full Application
Registration Date:	09.03.2021
Expiry Date:	20210608
Case Officer:	Jane Chase
Applicant:	SREIT (No.2) Limited
Agent:	Gerald Eve LLP

INTRODUCTION

Below are the comments of the Highway Engineer which should be read in conjunction with the Planning Officer's report on this planning application.

CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Highway Engineer - The application is for redevelopment of a site with 7,923 sqm of employment floorspace across a total of 11 units. The site was historically in use for research and laboratory purposes although following closure all buildings were demolished in 2015. Planning permission was granted in 2017 for a development of general industrial/storage/distribution units with an allowance for trade counters and comprising a floorarea of 4,482 sqm. This permission has now lapsed but this does carry weight in the consideration of this proposal.

I have been in extensive discussion with the applicant's representatives over recent weeks, various amendments to the proposed layout and packages of additional supporting information having been provided. The determinant matters from a highway perspective are traffic generation and consequent highway impact, parking provision and any consequent concerns, site accessibility, travel planning and site layout details.

Further to discussion and review I am comfortable with the traffic generation exercise and the review of its consequent impact on highway operation and safety particularly during the highway network peak periods. The review is to some extent predicated on the relative level of parking that is proposed and this informs a less intensive form

of development in terms of traffic generation with the infrastructure for site parking being restrained. It has been demonstrated that the predicted development traffic can be accommodated on the surrounding highway network links and junctions without material or unacceptable impact in terms of capacity or consequent risk to safety. Whilst I have to acknowledge that the Earl Road junction with Stanley Road does suffer from congestion and driver delay to journeys, it would be difficult to evidence that the proposed development would unacceptably worsen the situation.

I also have regard to the effect that the completed A6MARR with some traffic relief on Stanley Road evident and the Council considering as part of the A34 MRN project some improvement to the Earl Road junction with Stanley Road. This scheme if progressed would provide improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists but also an increase in operational capacity.

I therefore conclude that that I am not in a position to express concern or demonstrate that the impact of development traffic on highway operation and safety will be severe, which is typically understood to mean situations where development is likely to result in a material change in circumstances when compared to predicted Baseline / 'Do-Nothing' conditions.

The development floorspace of 7923 sqm, having regard to Council standards generates a maximum demand for 176 general parking spaces across the entire site and a minimum provision of 18 disabled bays, duly apportioned to each individual unit on the site. Furthermore, a proportion of parking spaces need providing with electric vehicle charging facilities.

The submission indicates that within the developed area provision will be made for a total of 78 general parking bays, 10 additional general spaces will be available on adjoining land, 18 disabled bays will be laid out and 16 bays will have a charge point for an electric vehicle.

The provision of 18 disabled bays satisfies the Council's standards and I raise no issue with this. The provision of electric vehicle charging to 16 bays is also acceptable although I note that the facilities are disproportionately identified across the site with most units having charging to two bays, one unit with charging to four bays and some units with no charging facilities. Ideally each unit would have free access to charging so I feel the location of charge points needs reviewing. Alternatively a parking management plan could be provided that allows unobstructed use of charge points by any person anywhere on the site when demand necessitates, although this could prove difficult for employers with staff not under their control utilising a charge point. Whichever, I am comfortable that the matter can be addressed under conditional control. I also note that the development will be future proofed with ducting installed to a further 28 bays where charging can be provided when necessary, which I obviously welcome.

With respect to general parking provision the overall site would have 78 general bays plus an additional 10 identified on adjoining land that is under the applicant's control. The submission includes parking surveys of the parking area on the adjacent land and this does evidence that there is spare capacity within the car park. From this I reasonably conclude that the allocation of parking for 10 cars on this land is feasible

and acceptable, the detail being a matter for a legal agreement which should ensure the spaces will be available for use at all times and shall remain in association with the development site in perpetuity or at least for the planning life of the site. It is probably necessary that 10 specific spaces are identified and clearly marked within the adjacent car park to avoid any conflict, confusion, disruption or impact on the adjoining businesses. This is a matter capable of resolution under a S106 legal agreement.

I cannot shy away from having some reservations that the provision of a total of 88 general parking bays will meet the likely and realistic demands of a development of the scale proposed. This represents 50% provision relative to the maximum permitted standard or 60% when factoring in the disabled provision. It is however within the permitted maximum standards for car parking so judgement has to be assessed against the relative accessibility of the site, any interventions proposed and the risk of overspill parking.

The applicant has displayed an air of confidence that the level of parking will prove adequate having regard to the nature of the units proposed and likely tenancies and comments that similar levels of provision have been accepted in Stockport and across Greater Manchester. This I cannot dispute however other sites have better levels of accessibility or interventions have been included where accessibility is comparable to improve accessibility and infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

Simply in terms of accessibility I consider that the Stanley Green area lacks convenient and very safe access opportunities for cyclists and pedestrians with in particular the absence of controlled crossing facilities on all arms of the Earl Road junction with Stanley Road and the lack of dedicated cycle routes that connect the site to the major road network and nearby residential areas. There is the potential and need for improved cycle facilities at the signal junction, along Earl Road, along Stanley Road and connecting Earl Road with the A555 cycle track. These existing deficiencies are unlikely to encourage walking and cycling choices and this could lead to a high reliance on car travel. An element of these deficiencies needs to be addressed for a development that is in effect showing a reliance on sustainable travel.

I raised concern with the applicant, identifying the need to strike an appropriate balance between parking provision and site accessibility and expressing a willingness to considering mitigation of the reduced parking provision in a sustainable manner. This would require the development to bring forward, enable or contribute towards a significant package of measures to address the concerns and deficiencies that I have previously raised. Should there be realistic opportunities for walking and cycling with convenient and safe walking and cycling infrastructure being in place then this would enable support of a lesser level of car parking to service the development. It would also be within the spirit of the NPPF that requires development to ensure that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued and high quality, attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking are delivered.

The Council, within the A34 MRN package, is already considering a comprehensive package of improvements around the Stanley Green area and I stressed to the applicant that the development needs to commit to delivering at least part of the interventions identified, whether this be by works undertaken or an appropriately scaled financial contribution being made to assist the delivery process. In this respect the applicant has agreed to a financial contribution of £150k which would be available for improvements to the walking and cycling network within the area. This level of contribution would enable a meaningful package of work to be delivered and I am supportive that this would be an appropriate route to improving the accessibility of the site, encouraging sustainable travel choices to be made and reducing the potential reliance of the development on car travel.

I am minded the site layout that is proposed has relatively expansive hard standing areas which although necessary for delivery and servicing vehicle needs, could offer some limited space for a few additional vehicles to be parked. Whilst any inhibition to servicing space would be a matter for site management and would only become a matter for enforcement or regulation, should overspill parking give rise to servicing difficulties it would be prudent for service management and car park management plans to be submitted in advance of plot occupation. This is a matter capable of conditional control.

In conclusion, whilst the overall level of general parking provision remains relatively low I consider a reasonable balance between parking and the potential for access by alternative modes of travel has been reached. The site will deliver ample cycle parking, a robust travel plan for the site will be a matter for conditional control, the adjoining highway network is subjected to parking regulation and prohibition and the applicant will under the terms of a legal agreement make a contribution towards delivering pedestrian and cycle infrastructure works in the area. I consider these measures and improvement will allow and encourage walking and cycling as a realistic travel mode which will assist mitigating the impact of the development and parking provision that has been identified and proposed. Furthermore the fact that the development would essentially be in compliance with the Council's parking standards and that accessibility improvement as is required to satisfy National and Local Planning Policies has been delivered, leads me to the conclusion that it would be difficult to justify opposition to the proposed development on the grounds of overspill parking impact and site accessibility.

The internal site layout has also been a matter of extensive discussion. The layout includes amendments to the adopted highway at the end of Duke Avenue. The existing turning head would be removed with the carriageway realigned to afford access to the site whilst retaining access to the sites opposite and a new/replacement turning head would be constructed. The general arrangement as proposed is acceptable and matters of detail can be covered by conditional control. In the event that planning permission is granted the applicant will need to apply to the Government Office for a Stopping-Up Order for the affected parts of the highway and authorisation will need confirming before any development on the site can take place. The revised turning head will be a matter for a dedication/S38 agreement to create new adopted highway.

The amendment to the turning head and site access arrangement necessitates a revision to parking for the Armco unit to the north of the site. The latest drawing shows these spaces can and will be suitably relocated and I am satisfied with the revision.

Within the site the vehicular, cycle and pedestrian areas are to an acceptable design and fit for purpose. Again, the detail is a matter for conditional control. Provision is made for general car and disabled parking, electric vehicle and motorcycle parking, which is considered acceptable as commented earlier.

Concern was also raised about the proximity of buildings 3-6 to the retaining wall to the northern side of the A6MARR adjoining the site. There is a covenant on the land which protects access for the Council to undertake maintenance of the wall and although this is not specifically a planning matter it is essential that any development does not cause future issues or fetter such a covenant. I have been advised by the Council's Structures Team that the absolute acceptable minimum at the south easterly corner should be 3m (with 5m elsewhere) and that the corridor width cannot be compromised by any external items such as rainwater goods, hard verges, planted areas, fixtures and fittings etc. I note the layout now ensures a minimum 3m clearance and is free from any items external to the building so I am satisfied with the layout in this respect.

Plot forecourts have been designed to accommodate the realistic size of service and delivery vehicles that will visit the buildings, this being relative to the size of the buildings. Larger units have the ability to be serviced by large articulated vehicles without unacceptable impact on the operation and safety of the site layout and smaller units can accommodate a rigid pantechicon sized vehicle. I do consider it necessary that a restriction on service vehicle sizes is imposed on the smaller plots to prevent articulated vehicle visits, this is a matter capable of conditional control. A site service management plan will also be necessary to optimise site servicing, avoid conflicting arrivals and generally manage servicing to avoid causing site operational and safety issues.

Each building will be provided with internal cycle parking and staff shower and locker facilities. A communal covered cycle store is also proposed to serve the overall site and meet any additional demand for parking. I am satisfied in this respect, the details are a matter capable of conditional control.

Finally a draft framework travel plan accompanies the submission. The final travel plan and all updates need to be produced using the online TfGM Travel Plan Toolkit and in accordance with current national and local best practice guidance. I envisage a framework travel Plan would be produced for the whole site with subsidiary plans to be produced for each unit. This requirement can be covered under conditional control. Noting that it will be important for the Travel Plan(s) to be properly reviewed and revision sought if targets and objectives are not being met, there will be a need for the Travel Plans to be continually monitored by the Local Planning Authority. As such I would recommend that any approval granted is subject to a provision within the legal agreement/Section 106 Agreement relating to the payment of a fee of £5k to cover the Council's costs of monitoring the Travel Plan.

In the event that planning permission is to be granted and a suitable legal agreement covering the off-site parking provision, the accessibility improvement financial contribution and the travel plan monitoring fee is to be completed, I will provide a list of necessary planning conditions.