

<u>APPLICATION NO:</u>	22/00673/FUL	<u>CASE OFFICER:</u>	Lee Osborne
<u>WARD:</u>	Stockbridge	<u>PARISH:</u>	Knowsley Parish Council
<u>LOCATION:</u>	16 The Croft, Stockbridge Village, Knowsley		
<u>PROPOSAL:</u>	ERECTION OF STORAGE UNIT IN CAR PARK		

Site Description

The application relates to the car park to the rear of a unit within Stockbridge neighbourhood centre used as office accommodation by Forviva who manage the social housing stock within Stockbridge Village. There is a wooded area to the north and west with access way to the south. To the east is a car park to the rear of a clinic.

Proposal

The application is to locate a storage container on the northern part of the car park, retaining four car parking spaces at the southern end adjacent the north western boundary. The container would be approximately 19.8m wide with a width of 7.3m; it would have a low-level pitched roof with a height of 3m to eaves and a maximum height of 3.6m. At present there is some maintenance machinery stored within the car park together with a small storage container.

Consultations

Knowsley Parish Council - No comments received.
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority - No objections in principle.

Representations

This application has been publicised by letters sent to 47 neighbours. No representations have been received.

Relevant Planning History

19/00242/FUL - ERECTION OF A STORAGE UNIT. Granted: 04.07.2019.

Relevant Policy

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against

the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

The development plan in Knowsley comprises the Saved Policies of the Replacement Unitary Development Plan, the Core Strategy Local Plan and the Joint Waste Local Plan. The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application.

KNOWSLEY LOCAL PLAN: CORE STRATEGY

CS2 - Development Principles

CS7 - Transport Networks

CS19 - Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

CS21 - Greenspaces and Trees

SAVED POLICIES - KNOWSLEY REPLACEMENT UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ADOPTED JUNE 2006)

DQ4 - Trees and Development

Article 35 Statement

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating with the applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Assessment

The proposed container would be located in a car park to the rear of buildings, and which has a footpath running to the north and an access to the rear of each Croft units to the south. The main issues are the visual aspects of the proposal, plus highway and amenity concerns balanced against the need. The previously approved container siting is not proceeding due to ground contamination issues.

Visual Impact

The proposal would be in a car park to the rear of the car park of the clinic and north of the gated access road leading to the rear of units within Leach Croft. The container would be barely visible from any public vantage point; the only public area would be the footpath adjacent the clinic car park looking south westwards over the clinic car park to the Forviva carpark, and from the clinic car park itself. As such it is considered that the proposal would not be detrimental to the visual amenities of the local area. The container, whilst utilitarian in appearance as such are, are not uncommon within locations such as the application site, where grounds and buildings maintenance tools and machinery are required, and storage facilities therefore needed.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with Policies CS2 and CS19 of the Core Strategy.

Highways Considerations

The proposal would entail the loss of 12 parking spaces and the retention of four spaces at the southern end of the car park which is where the access is. However, since the Covid pandemic, Forviva has created a flexible working environment for staff and significantly reduced the size of their office space to provide just four workstations in one room within the unit which staff have to book in advance. The remaining office space has been redesigned to provide a Skills Centre for local children aged between 12-18 year olds, (21/00648/FUL). As such 100% car parking is provided for the staff at the workstations. Staff at the Skills Centre are not catered for as such with regard the car park but the previous application for the skills centre did note the site was in a District Centre with good public transport links and that application assessment considered that the proposal was therefore satisfactory with regard highways issues. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not be lead to highways or parking issues.

The proposal therefore complies with Policies CS2, CS7 and CS19 of the Core Strategy.

Amenity Considerations

The proposed container would be located in a car park adjacent another car park, a wooded area together with a gated access for the rear of units on the other side of the access way. As such it is considered that the proposal would not impact on residential or general amenity of local residents.

Trees/Bats

The proposal is close to trees which could have intrusive impacts as a result of works. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment was submitted which includes an Arboricultural Method Statement. The report notes that the trees should be protected by appropriate fencing and illustrates the fencing location, together with procedural controls. The report also indicates that two poor quality trees should be removed. These are a single-stemmed goat willow with an imbalanced crown and stem lean plus stem damage from the severing of ivy covering the tree (T14 on the survey) plus a tall narrow-stemmed sycamore with an imbalanced crown close to the hard standing (T15). The trees do not offer amenity value as such, particularly in the context of their backdrop to the other trees in the locality, and the loss would not impact on the character of the area. The report notes that the trees to be removed should be replaced on a 2:1 basis of appropriate species in mitigation.

The trees have been assessed for bat roost potential and the only trees offering such are a grouping (G2) with some of the more mature trees in this grouping having some cavities. All trees other than T14 and T15 are to be retained, with root areas protected by fencing. The proposal therefore would have acceptable impacts on the locality with regard to the trees and amenity of such, particularly with appropriate mitigation. There would be no apparent impact on bats or roosts although there would be a loss of potential habitat (should cavities/crevices develop in the trees T14 or T15 in the future) and therefore bat boxes could be required to mitigate the potential loss of roost.

The application therefore complies with Policies CS2, CS8, CS19 and CS21 of the Core Strategy and Saved Policy DQ4 of the UDP.

Need

Forviva manage and maintain the social housing within Stockbridge Village, responsible for approximately 16 dwellings. The grounds maintenance tools and machinery have been kept previously at the high-rise tower blocks within Stockbridge Village. However, with the demand for social housing the areas within the blocks where the equipment has been stored is to be converted to provide residential accommodation (20/00610/FUL and 20/00611/FUL). As such there is a significant need to provide an alternative storage facility within the Stockbridge Village environs.

Conclusion

The need for a storage facility due to the conversion of the existing storage areas to provide social housing is established. The proposed siting of a container which would provide such a facility would have little impact on general amenity and parking requirements (as currently required by the applicant) and would not be readily visible from the wider area except from the footpath, users of the adjacent car park and glimpses from first floors of housing on Round Hey or the civic building on The Withens. The loss of the trees is acceptable and would not impact on the general character of the wooded area or bat roost potential, whilst suitable mitigation can be provided by replacement planting and the siting of bat boxes. As such the need for the storage facility on balance outweighs the slight negatives of the application as submitted. In such case it is considered that the application complies with planning policies and is recommended for approval.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission be granted subject to the following condition(s):-

- 1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: In order to comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed in Schedule 1.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

- 3) Prior to the commencement of development hereby permitted the protective fencing referred to in the approved Arboricultural Method Statement submitted as Appendix C of the Arboricultural Impact Study shall be in place and retained as such at all times during the site development/installation period.

Reason: To ensure that the trees on the land adjoining the site to be retained are protected during development works and to comply with Policies CS2, CS19 and CS21 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy

adopted January 2016 and saved Policy DQ4 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Plan adopted June 2006.

- 4) Five working days written notice shall be given to the Local Planning Authority before commencement of the works hereby granted.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the protective fencing referred to in Condition 3 is in place to comply with Policy CS21 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016 and Saved Policy DQ4 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan adopted June 2006.

- 5) Notwithstanding details shown in the approved documents and on the approved drawings, prior to first use of the storage unit full details of tree replacement planting of four trees based on a 2:1 replacement of the two trees to be lost shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planting being implemented within the first available planting season following agreement (or within the planting season if agreed during said period). The details shall include location, species, size, initial establishment and longer term maintenance.

Any tree planted in accordance with this condition which is removed, uprooted, destroyed, die or becomes severely damaged or become seriously diseased within 5 years of planting shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.

Reason: To ensure that suitable mitigation tree planting occurs in the interests of amenity and to comply with Policies CS19 and CS21 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016.

- 6) Prior to the storage unit being installed on site it shall be powder-coated a colour which has first been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policies CS2 and CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016.

- 7) In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported immediately to the Local Planning Authority. Development on the part of the site affected must be halted and a risk assessment carried out and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Where unacceptable risks are found remediation and verification schemes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These shall be implemented prior to the development being brought into use.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination are dealt with if arising in the interests of safety and the environment and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with Policies CS2 and CS19 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016 and saved Policy ENV5 of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan adopted June 2006.

- 8) Prior to the first use of the container storage hereby permitted a scheme for the provision of 4 bat boxes shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include scale drawings of the bat boxes or manufactures brochure and specifications, the locations the boxes are to be sited and the height from ground level together with a timetable of implementation. The bat boxes shall be implemented in accordance with the timetable and maintained at all times thereafter.

Reason: To provide bat roosts in the interests of biodiversity and to comply with Policies CS2 and CS8 of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy adopted January 2016.

SCHEDULE 1

Date Received	Ref. No	Version	Drawing/Document Title
02/11/2022	L01B	-	LOCATION PLAN
02/11/2022	L03C	-	PROPOSED SITE PLAN
02/11/2022	L04B	-	PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN
02/11/2022	L05B	-	PROPOSED ELEVATIONS
14/11/2022	-	-	ARBORICULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT INCLUDING ARBORICULTURAL METHOD STATEMENT (APPENDIX C)
14/11/2022	STO-AJP-00-00-DR-S-100	P5	MODULAR GARAGE SLAB
16/01/2023	EMAIL		EMAIL FROM AGENT REGARDING PREVIOUS APPROVAL FOR STORAGE CONTAINER
18/01/2023	EMAIL		EMAIL FROM AGENT REGARDING CURRENT STORAGE ARRANGEMENT

Signed Case Officer: Lee Osborne

Signed Authorising Officer: Alan Kilroe

Date: 20 January 2023

Informatives

- 1 NOTE FOR APPLICANT: The applicant's attention is drawn to the following comments:-
- 2 Breeding birds are protected under the general provision of Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended. Whilst the nest is being built or is in use, the eggs,

young and nest are protected against intentional and reckless taking, damage and destruction. No tree, scrub or hedgerow felling, management and/or cutting operations should take place during the period 1 March to 31 August inclusive to protect breeding birds. If such works occur outside the stated period then a qualified ecologist should be present for advice if breeding birds are found to be present.

- 3 The applicant, their advisers and contractors should be aware that if any European Protected Species are found, then as a legal requirement, work must cease and advice must be sought from an ecologist .
- 4 Merseyside Fire Service

Appendix 1 – Site Photographs