

MEETING:	PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE
DATE:	12 July 2017
TITLE OF REPORT:	170638 - PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE FROM B2 (GENERAL INDUSTRIAL USE) TO BOULDER BARN AT UNIT 1A, HOLMER TRADING ESTATE, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR1 1JS For: "Taste for Adventure" Ltd per Mr John Phipps, Bank Lodge, Coldwells Road, Holmer, Hereford, Herefordshire HR1 1LH
WEBSITE LINK:	https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search/details?id=170638&search=170638
Reason Application submitted to Committee - Redirection	

Date Received: 20 February 2017

Ward: Holmer

Grid Ref: 351859,241829

Expiry Date: 17 April 2017

Local Member: Councillor AR Round.

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The site comprises internal floor space (former paint spray area) within an operational automotive repairs building on Holmer Trading Estate. The remainder of the estate has for the most part been vacated in anticipation of residential redevelopment approved under permission 150659. The application site itself, lies outside of the permitted redevelopment area under permission 150659 - although future access from College Road post development would be through a redeveloped site to modern day standards.
- 1.2 Holmer Trading Estate is bounded to the north by a railway line, the route of the Hereford to Gloucester Canal to the south and Aylestone Park to the east. The site is identified as potentially contaminated land, although is in use as a modern building with outside parking/hardstanding areas.
- 1.3 The proposal is for an indoor recreational facility described as a 'boulder barn' which is an indoor rock climbing facility (without ropes or harnesses). Externally there is an unmarked parking area which is proposed as comprising 18 car-parking spaces.
- 1.4 Access to the building would be through the derelict and dilapidated estate from College Road with no dedicated footpath and limited lighting.
- 1.5 The proposed hours of use are 12:00 midday to 22:00 hrs Monday to Friday, 10:00hrs to 18:00 hours Saturday and 10:00 am to 18:00 hrs Sunday with access to members of the public at those times.

- 1.6 The planning application has been accompanied by a supporting statement from the 'Taste for Adventure' from Sam Stokes – son of 'Brummie' Stokes MBE MEM which sets out their charitable work at the Credenhill site, which is soon to be vacated.

2. Policies

2.1 Herefordshire Local Plan: Core Strategy

- E2 (redevelopment of existing employment land and buildings)];
- MT1 (traffic management, highway safety and promoting active travel);
- SD1 (sustainable design and energy efficiency);
- SD3 (sustainable water management and water resources;
- SD4 (waste water treatment and river water quality).

2.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF has an economic, social and environmental role with a presumption in favour sustainable development, with 12 core planning principles. In addition it supports building a strong competitive economy, promoting sustainable transport, promoting healthy communities.

2.3 National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

Health and Wellbeing Paragraph 001. ID 53 001 2014 0306

- 2.4 The Core Strategy policies together with any relevant supplementary planning documentation can be viewed on the Council's website by using the following link:-

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/core-strategy/adopted-core-strategy>

3. Planning History

- 3.1 150659/F Demolition of all existing buildings and hard standings, remediation of the site, including reinstatement or landscaping of the former canal and development of up to 120 homes, landscaping, public open space, new vehicle and pedestrian access and associated works - Planning Permission endorsed by Planning Committee on 13.1.2016 subject to the completion of a Section 106 agreement (yet to be signed)].

121750 Extant planning permission to extend time limit on application DCCE2007/1655/O (passed on appeal) - Mixed use development comprising residential (115 units), employment (office, industrial and warehousing), retail and supporting infrastructure including new access off College Road, roads, footpaths, open spaces, landscaping, parking and re-opening of part of canal.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 None

Internal Council Consultations

Economic Development Officer: Objection.

- 4.2 Economic Development would like to make the following comments in relation to the above application regarding a proposed change of use from B class uses to a Boulder Barn.

The subject building – Unit 1a - is located within the current Holmer trading estate which was until recently a well-established commercial and employment location. The majority of the estate has received a permission for a redevelopment for residential purposes, Unit 1a is a subdivision of the one remaining unit that will be retained from the previous estate configuration.

- 4.3 Unit 1a appears to be a good quality, modern employment unit with a roller shutter door and will benefit from additional facilities including cloakroom/WC. There is a lack of employment units within Hereford of this quality, particularly to the north of the river. A search of the council property register returns approx. half a dozen industrial units within the northern part of the city of a similar size and use, but all of a lesser quality than Unit 1a.
- 4.4 Whilst the building has been marketed via the commercial property register for a period of over six months there is nothing to suggest that the building or location are unsuitable to accommodate a traditional B class use.
- 4.5 The Employment Land Study 2012 was conducted by commercial property consultants, Drivers Jonas Deloitte as part of the planning policy evidence base for the new Core Strategy (the study was updated in 2012). Using a Poor, Moderate, Good and Best scale, Holmer Trading Estate was rated as a 'Poor' employment location. It is recognised that this classification was likely influential in the success of the application for redevelopment of the estate for a residential purpose but was also influenced by the quality of the majority of the estate buildings and environment.
- 4.6 As mentioned above the remainder of the Holmer Trading Estate is to be redeveloped for a residential use and this has resulted in the loss of a significant amount of employment workspace. It is acknowledged that the bulk of the units consisting Holmer Trading Estate are, or were, of poor quality and the estate itself suffers from a poor environment and infrastructure. However Unit 1a is a building of good quality and fit for an industrial purpose, there is limited supply of buildings of this size and quality within Hereford north of the river.
- 4.7 The applicant has stated that they made an assessment of other potential locations for their business but has not stated what or where these were or why Unit 1a is the location of choice from within that search.
- 4.8 The applicant states that the business will employ 2 full time staff with 2 part time staff, and the potential to increase this by 1 further full time post and a further 4 part time posts. It would be useful to clarify whether the initial 2 full time staff are existing jobs within the business or new positions created as a result of this move.
- 4.9 However this level of employment is likely to be the same level as, or lesser than, the level of employment creation generated by a traditional B class use.
- 4.10 Consequently for the reasons mentioned above, I object to this application from an economic development perspective.

Transportation Manager: Objection.

- 4.11 Proposal is unacceptable but can be made acceptable by way of the following amendments to the deposited application:-
- 4.12 The application block plan indicates two building 1a and 1b, with what is labelled as parking & turning, but the red line only encompasses part of that parking & turning area/car park. No indication is shown as to the point of access to the car park area for unit 1a or indeed the access route from the site to the adopted highway. Four parking spaces are shown in tandem, and access to these spaces requires clarification to ensure they are independently accessible..
- 4.13 11 of the 14 indicated parking spaces along the north boundary of the site are not accessible without use of the aisle and turning area fronting unit 1b and which is outside the red line, as the

area to the north of the red line and abutting the line of 14 spaces forms part of the adjacent ownership and was approved for residential development under DCCE2007/1655/O. There is a valid application for extension of time for commencement of that permission under P121750/O and a further valid application for re-development under P150659/O, both undetermined.

- 4.14 The current route through the trading estate is through an estate of disused buildings and does not form a suitable or conducive route for pedestrians or cycling, meaning that the only route is by car. The accessibility of the site by sustainable modes is therefore very questionable.
- 4.15 It is noted that the supporting statement mentions a café as part of the proposals, for use by customers and others, but no details are provided in the schedule of floorspace/use in the application form. It is also noted that the table does not identify the extent of the proposed D2(?) use but it is assumed that this is the existing B2 floorspace of 378 sq m.
- 4.16 On the basis of the 378 sq m of D2 floorspace, parking provision for such use would equate to 38 spaces at full standards, and it is noted that less than 50% of full standards has been provided, but without substantiation of this provision.
- 4.17 A favourable recommendation, subject to conditions, would be likely following satisfactory resolution of all of the above points.

Environmental Health Officer:

- 4.18 I refer to the above application and would make the following comments in relation to contaminated land issues only (excluding controlled waters).

Given the former uses of the site as a paint shop, we'd recommend a condition be appended to any approval to enable a proportional assessment of risk from contamination be carried out. This is required by the NPPF in order to demonstrate the site is safe and suitable for its intended use.

5. Representations

- 5.1 Hereford City Council: Support.
- 5.2 To date some 31 letters of support have been received regarding the Brummie Stokes legacy and associated charity work the gist of which is:
- This contributes to the well-being of the community, in particular under privileged and disadvantaged children and adults;
 - Support from a local school;
 - Testimony from users of the present facility confirming the above.

- 5.2 The consultation responses can be viewed on the Council's website by using the following link:-

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search/details?id=170638&search=170638

Internet access is available at the Council's Customer Service Centres:-

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/government-citizens-and-rights/customer-services-enquiries/contact-details?q=customer&type=suggestedpage>

6. Officer's Appraisal

6.1 The proposal would involve the loss of approximately 378 square metres of employment land which is rated as "good" in the Employment Land Study 2012. Policy E2 of the Core Strategy part states that:

"Employment land and buildings rated as 'best' and 'good' using the methodology in the Employment Land Study 2012 (or successor document) will be safeguarded from redevelopment to other non-employment uses."

6.2 The Economic Development Manager advises that the loss of employment land at this location is not acceptable having regard to Policy E2. It is considered that the use for recreational purposes does not satisfy the policy aims of Policy E2 in this instance. Furthermore, there has been no evidence submitted in respect of appropriate and active marketing of the site and no indication of consideration of other potentially more suitable locations.

6.3 Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to Policy E2 of the Herefordshire Local Plan: Core Strategy in that this would involve the loss of 'good' employment space at an important employment site. Whilst there may be social benefits associated with the provision of a recreation facility, based upon the evidence before the Council, these are outweighed by the economic dis-benefits that have been identified.

6.4 In addition to the above, the Highway Engineer queries the practicality of accessing the identified parking space given the separation shown on the red line application site area which demarcate Unit 1a from Unit 1b with Unit 1b being the means of access to the identified parking.

6.5 Of greater concern however, is that the trading estate as a whole has no pedestrian path from College Road (which is the main pedestrian route from the city). Officers consider that the appearance of the run down vacated site and absence of dedicated footpath would not represent a sustainable or safe environment for visitors on foot to the site contrary to policies MT1 and SD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy and promoted by Paragraph 69 onwards of the National Planning Policy Framework) which states:

".....Planning policies and decisions, in turn, should aim to achieve places which promote:-

- *Safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas."*

6.6 This in turn would place an undue reliance upon the use of the car in favour of other more sustainable transport choices.

6.7 Furthermore there is no information provided in relation to how the site will integrate with the approved residential development on the adjacent site (150659). The proposed recreational use would be in close proximity to approved new dwellings (on indicative layouts) and access to on-site parking may be prejudiced by the need to provide structural planting along the boundary next to the proposed parking area. In this context it is not considered that this ad-hoc proposal demonstrates that it will not adversely impact upon the residential amenity of future occupants of the approved residential development.

6.8 Accordingly, and after careful consideration of land use matters, the proposal is not considered to be representative of sustainable development despite the social and limited economic benefits arising from the resulting recreational use since these are outweighed by the greater economic and environmental dis-benefits.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be refused for the following reasons:

- 1. The proposal would be contrary to Policy E2, of the Herefordshire Local Plan: Core Strategy in that this would involve the loss of ‘good’ employment space at an important employment site north of Hereford city at this location.
- 2. The proposal would be contrary to Policy MT1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan: Core Strategy in that safe access to the site cannot be achieved from College Road (by foot) and on site parking provision is inadequate and not capable of being accessed in a safe manner.
- 3. The proposal would be contrary to Policy SD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan in that the future amenity of residents (on major housing redevelopment 150659) would be comprised from comings and goings- and the future landscaping of that site may be prejudiced and impacted upon.

INFORMATIVES

- 1. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against planning policy and any other material considerations and identifying matters of concern with the proposal and discussing those with the applicant. However, the issues are so fundamental to the proposal that it has not been possible to negotiate a satisfactory way forward and due to the harm which have been clearly identified within the reasons for the refusal, approval has not been possible.

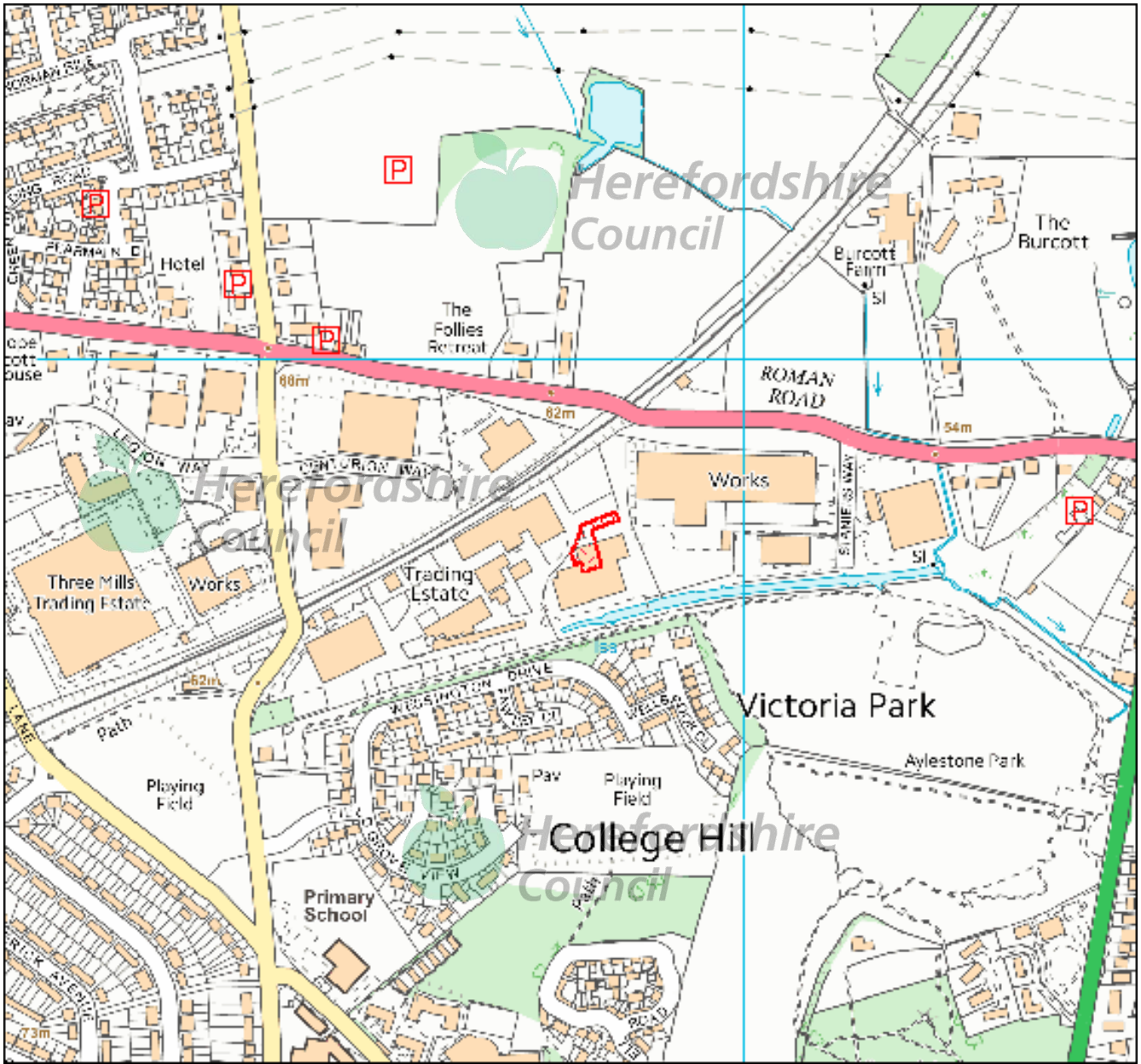
Decision:

Notes:

.....

Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.



This copy has been produced specifically for Planning purposes. No further copies may be made.

APPLICATION NO: 170638

SITE ADDRESS : UNIT 1A, HOLMER TRADING ESTATE, HEREFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR1 1JS

Based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Herefordshire Council. Licence No: 100024168/2005