

Report to Planning Applications Committee
Date 14th February 2013
Report of Head of Planning Services
Subject 12/02098/NF3 Mile Cross Depot Mile Cross Road Norwich
NR3 2DY

Item

5(3)

SUMMARY

Description:	Change of use from depot (Class Sui Generis) to a mixed use of office/light industrial (Class B1), general industrial (Class B2) and storage and distribution (Class B8).
Reason for consideration at Committee:	Major Development
Recommendation:	Approve
Ward:	Mile Cross
Contact Officer:	Mrs Caroline Dodden Planner 01603 212503
Valid Date:	7th November 2012
Applicant:	Norwich City Council
Agent:	Mr Andy Scales

INTRODUCTION

The Site

Location and Context

1. The Mile Cross Depot site is approximately 4.3 hectares in size and is located on the west side of Mile Cross Road (A1024). Residential dwellings at Valpy Avenue and Vale Green bound the site to the north and further dwellings are situated on the opposite side of Mile Cross Road, to the east.
2. The site backs on to Sloughbottom Park to the west. The Dolphin Drain and pedestrian/cycle route set in substantial trees and landscaping are located to the south of the site. Further to the south is the household waste disposal site and the permanent travellers site at Swanton Road.

Constraints

3. The site is located adjacent to Mile Cross Conservation Area, which covers the Mile Cross Housing estate to the north of the site.

Topography

4. The residential dwellings to the north of the site are at a higher level than the Depot site and the Mile Cross Road is higher along the front of the site, but slopes down to the access point at the north east corner.

Planning History

Planning permission for the use of the land for a works and stores depot was approved in December 1958. Since then there have been 14 various applications granted for extensions and buildings for various uses related uses such as plant workshops, vehicle servicing and offices.

Equality and Diversity Issues

There are no significant equality or diversity issues.

The Proposal

5. To change the use from a depot (class sui generis) to a mixed use of office/ light industrial (class B1), general industrial (class B2) and storage and distribution (Class B8).

Representations Received

6. Advertised on site. No letters of representation have been received.

Consultation Responses

7. Highways Authority: Agree with the Transport and Travel Statement submitted, that although the potential occupiers of the site are not known, the nature of the uses proposed are very similar to the existing uses on the site and whilst it would change from a single operator to multiple operators, the nature of the traffic generated is unlikely to change significantly.
8. The Transport and Travel Statement confirms that the City Council, as Applicant, proposes to encourage sustainable travel to new tenants. A condition should be attached to a planning consent for the submission of a Travel Information Plan to ensure that the proposal offers a wide range of travel choices to reduce the impact of travel and transport on the environment.
9. Environmental Protection: Whilst restricting hours of operation is not feasible due to the nature of existing and potential uses on the site, it is however, appropriate to mitigate against potential noise at the northern boundary in order to provide a degree of protection for residents living in the vicinity.
10. Health and Safety Executive: the outcome of assessing the application using the automated online planning advice tool was: do not advise against the development.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework:

- Statement 1 – Building a strong, competitive economy
- Statement 2 – Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Statement 4 – Promoting sustainable transport
- Statement 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Relevant policies of the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South

Norfolk 2011

Policy 5 – The economy

Policy 6 – Access and transportation

Policy 12 – Remainder of Norwich area

Relevant saved policies of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan 2004

EP1 - Contaminated land

EP22 - High standard of amenity for residential occupiers

EMP1 - Small scale business development

EMP5 – Policy for General Employment Areas

EMP16 – Office development – sequential test and criteria

TRA6 - Parking standards - maxima

TRA7 - Cycle parking standards

TRA8 - Servicing provision

TRA12 – Travel Plans for employers and organisations in the city

Other Material Considerations

Written Ministerial Statement: Planning for Growth March 2011

Principle of Development

Policy Considerations

11. The site has operated as a works and stores depot for over 50 years being used for a mix of office, general and light industrial and storage. It is identified as a General Employment Area under Local Plan Policy EMP5, where B1 (light industrial), B2 (general industrial) and B8 (warehouse and distribution) uses are permitted.
12. Policy 5 of the Joint Core Strategy also states that a range and choice of employment sites should be allocated and retained, including sites suitable for workshop and light industrial uses. The proposal would retain a mix of employment uses for small and medium sized businesses
13. Under Statement 2 of the NPPF and local plan policy EMP16 a sequential test is required to locate main town centre uses, such as offices, starting with central locations first. The sequential test submitted explains that the established office use is mainly based in the front two storey building and that the site is well located for access by all modes of transport.
14. Bearing in mind the site falls within a General Employment Area and that the office use forms approximately 20% of the floor space of a mix of uses on the site, it is considered that the retention of a proportion of office use meets the sequential test criteria.

Site Layout

15. It is proposed to group uses on the site in a similar way to how the buildings and compounds were used as a works depot, with offices fronting Mile Cross Road, B1, B2 and/or B8 uses proposed for the central buildings, commercial vehicle parking, and various compounds and open storage areas west and south west of the site.
16. B1 and B8 (some open storage) uses are proposed for the smaller units bounding the northern boundary of the site, adjacent to residential dwellings.

Transport and Access

Vehicular Access and Servicing

17. There is one vehicular access from Mile Cross Road to the site. The access was designed to allow vehicles to only turn left when exiting the site. Within the site there is a system of existing internal roads that serves the various buildings and compounds. There is sufficient space to manoeuvre large vehicles on the site.

Car and Cycle Parking

18. There is ample car parking within the site, provided in three main areas. One cycle store is shown towards the front of the site. It is considered appropriate to provide a further secure cycle store in the largest car park towards the rear of the site, particularly as the site is adjacent to Marriott's Way cycle/pedestrian route and there is a desire to promote sustainable travel.
19. The separate ramped pedestrian entrance leading to the front offices should be open for use, at least during office opening hours.

Travel Information Plan

20. The Council, as Applicant is keen to encourage sustainable travel to new tenants. Therefore, a condition should be attached requiring the submission of a Travel Information Plan to ensure that the proposal offers a wide range of travel choices to reduce the impact of travel and transport on the environment

Environmental Issues

Site Contamination

21. The site has been used for many depot related uses, such as vehicle storage, servicing and MOT facilities. A positive surface water drainage system with petrol interceptors and a wash down area is in place to control surface and foul water run off.

Noise

22. The operating hours of the former depot have never been controlled and it is considered that due to the nature of existing and potential businesses on the site, restricting the hours of operation on the site would not be practical.
23. However, the proposal has the potential to cause noise disturbance, particularly as potential users and activities are unknown. Even though there is little evidence of previous noise complaints when the depot was operating at full capacity, the previous use has been linked to a sui generis local authority depot operation and the widening of the use to B1, B2 and B8 uses could have a more significant impact. It is considered that the residents close to the northern boundary should be afforded some degree of protection in the form of a condition giving a maximum northern boundary noise level at night.

Flood Risk

24. An area of the site that runs along the southern boundary falls within Flood Zone 2, but as the proposal does not include any operational development it is considered that a Flood Risk Assessment was not necessary.

Conclusions

25. It is considered that the proposed change of use from a works depot to a mixed use of offices, light industrial, general industrial, storage and distribution would provide suitable employment uses on an existing identified General Employment Area and subject to the conditions listed below would not have a significant detrimental impact on the amenities of nearby residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

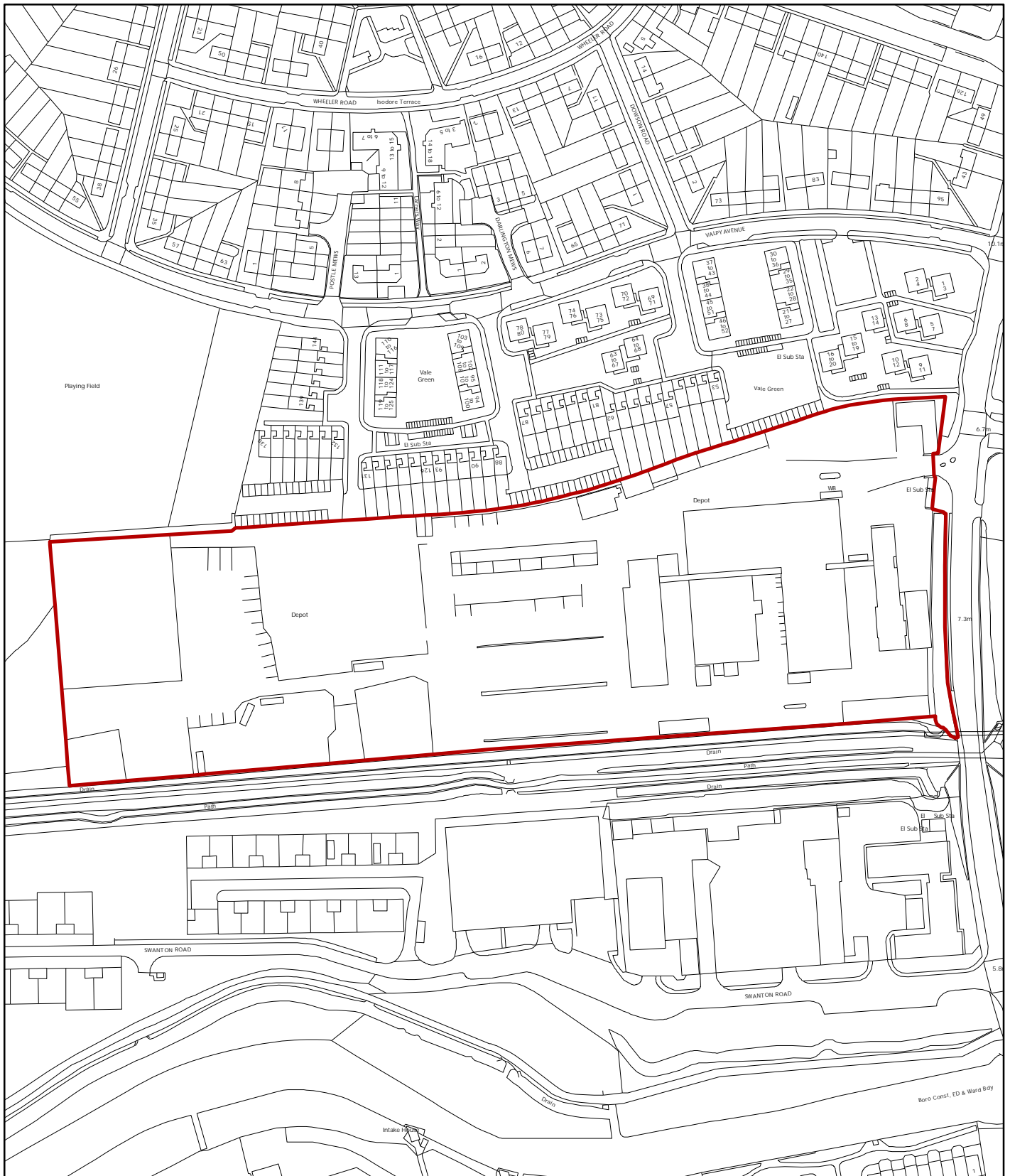
To approve Application No 12/02098/NF3 for Mile Cross Depot, Mile Cross Road and grant planning permission, subject to the following conditions:-

1. Commencement of development within three years
2. In accordance with plans, drawings and details

3. Submission of details of secure cycle storage
4. The level of noise emitted from the site shall not exceed 35dB (LAeq1hour) between 23:00 hours and 07:00 on any day as measured at the specified northern boundary on plan number P2021/26816/03 of the site.
5. Details of any new plant or machinery installed on the site.

Reasons for Approval

It is considered that the change of use from a depot (sui generis use) to a mixed use of office/light industrial, general industrial, storage and distribution would provide suitable employment uses within an identified General Employment Area, and subject to conditions, there would not be a significant detrimental impact on the amenities of nearby residential dwellings. As such the proposal is in accordance with Statements 1,2 , and 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, Policies 5, 6 and 12 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, March 2011 and Saved Local Plan Policies EP1, EP22, EMP1, EMP5, EMP16, TRA6, TRA7, TRA8 and TRA12.



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Planning Application No 12/02098/NF3

Site Address Mile Cross Depot Mile Cross Road

Scale 1:2,317



NORWICH
City Council

PLANNING SERVICES

