

Report to Planning applications committee
Date 4 September 2014
Report of Head of planning services
Subject Application no 14/00633/F Storage land west of 27 Vulcan Road North Norwich

Item
4.5

SUMMARY

Description:	Creation of self-storage site including erection of palisade fence, electric sliding security gate, installation of shipping containers, lighting and CCTV.
Reason for consideration at Committee:	Objection
Recommendation:	Approve
Ward:	Catton Grove
Contact Officer:	Mr Kian Saedi Planner 01603 212524
Valid Date:	3rd July 2014
Applicant:	Norwich Self-Storage
Agent:	Norwich Self-Storage

INTRODUCTION

The Site

Location and Context

1. The site is currently used for storing vehicles and is located on the edge of the airport industrial estate and adjacent to residential properties to the west. The site lies on the edge of Norwich City Council's jurisdiction adjacent to Broadland District Council's area.
2. The site is located within a General Employment Area of the city.

Planning History

3. 07/00251/U - Installation of acoustic screen adjacent to residential properties and retrospective application for use of land for bus parking (40 vehicles); bus driver car parking; and erection of 2 No. temporary mobile lighting units – Refused.

09/00320/F - Proposed bus parking (60) spaces for First Eastern Counties, plus site resurfacing, site lighting and the creation of a landscaped mound with acoustic fence – Approved but not implemented.

14/00164/F - Erection of a single storey valeting centre for in house vehicle valeting – Approved and implemented on the north side of the application site.

Equality and Diversity Issues

There are no significant equality or diversity issues.

The Proposal

4. The proposal is for the creation of a self-storage site, including the erection of palisade fencing, electric sliding security gate, installation of shipping containers, lighting and CCTV.

Representations Received

5. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. Two letters of representation have been received citing the issues as summarised in the table below.

Issues Raised	Response
Concern regarding type of things to be stored in containers.	Para 23
24hr access to the site is unacceptable due to associated noise disturbance.	Paras 10-11
We would expect the lighting arrangement to be acceptable so that they are not directed towards adjacent houses. Conifers currently offer screening from the site. Concern that this will not be the case if they are removed.	Paras 12-14
Impact of proposal upon access to adjacent site.	Para 21

Consultation Responses

6. **Environmental Protection:** the site borders residential premises and 24 hour access to the site may cause noise disturbance due to the type of activities that might take place on site and operating hours of 7am – 8pm are recommended (condition 5). A lighting plan is necessary to ensure that lighting will not cause a nuisance (condition 6). Lights positioned up to five metres high are likely to cause spillage and be visible from surrounding properties.
7. **Transportation:** The Council's Transportation Officer has been consulted informally and has raised no objections to the proposal. Advisory notes are recommended relating to the creation of a vehicle crossover, material to be used for hard standing and recommended management for the delivery of the shipping containers.

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework:

Section 1 – Building a strong, competitive economy

Section 7 – Requiring good design

Section 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Relevant policies of the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk 2014

Policy 2 – Promoting good design

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

HBE12 - High quality of design in new developments

NE9 - Comprehensive landscaping scheme and tree planting

EP22 - High standard of amenity for residential occupiers

EMP5 – Policy for General Employment Areas

TRA5 - Approach to design for vehicle movement and special needs

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) (March 2014)

Supplementary Planning Guidance, Supplementary Planning Documents Development Management Policies Development Plan Document – Pre-submission policies (April 2013)

Procedural Matters Relating to the Development Plan and the NPPF

The Joint Core Strategy and Replacement Local Plan (RLP) have been adopted since the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act in 2004. With regard to paragraphs 211 and 215-216 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), both sets of policies have been subjected to a test of compliance with the NPPF. The 2014 JCS policies are considered compliant, but some of the 2004 RLP policies are considered to be only partially compliant with the NPPF, and as such those particular policies are given lesser weight in the assessment of this application. The Council has also reached submission stage of the emerging new Local Plan policies, and considers most of these to be wholly consistent with the NPPF. Where discrepancies or inconsistent policies relate to this application they are identified and discussed within the report; varying degrees of weight are apportioned as appropriate.

Emerging DM Policies:

DM1 Achieving and delivering sustainable development

DM2* Ensuring satisfactory living and working conditions

DM3* Delivering high quality design

DM6* Protecting and enhancing the natural environment
DM16 Employment and business development
DM31* Car parking and servicing

* These policies are currently subject to objections or issues being raised at pre-submission stage and so only minimal weight has been applied in its context. However, the main thrust of ensuring adequate design is held in place through the relevant Local Plan policies listed above.

Principle of Development

Policy Considerations

8. The site is located within a General Employment Area of the city. The proposal seeks to change the use of the site for the siting of self-storage shipping containers. This B8 use is identified as appropriate to general employment areas under saved policy EMP5 of the adopted Local Plan. Where such uses adjoin residential areas, there is a requirement to limit uses to those which will not be significantly harmful to adjoining residents. The impact of the proposal upon the amenities of neighbouring properties is discussed later in this report but in summary and subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to satisfy the criteria of EMP5. Access arrangements are appropriate and the security of the site will be enhanced through the erection of palisade fencing and the installation of CCTV cameras.
9. The proposal would contribute to meeting the development needs of a local business in accordance with Section 1 of the NPPF.

Impact on Living Conditions

Noise and Disturbance

10. Residential properties are located adjacent to the site to the west along Waldemar Avenue. It is proposed to operate the self-storage business on a 24/7 basis. A number of management checks are proposed by the applicant aimed at reducing the potential for any disturbance from activities associated with the business. These measures include the following:
 - Customers requiring late night access will be allocated a storage container closer to the main entrance and further away from the neighbouring residents
 - Damage deposits to discourage customers from treating the storage units disrespectfully, for example by slamming doors which could lead to damage
 - The doors cannot be shut by slamming as the doors have an in-built leverage system
 - The containers are specially lined to reduce vibrating noise from heavy items making contact
 - No electricity is provided to the containers which will prevent the chance of any machinery disturbances on site
 - Only a minimal number of customers are expected at night
 - If any complaints are received from residents then the CCTV will be reviewed and the customer asked to be more conscientious when visiting. If a customer receives three complaints then their contract will be terminated

11. Whilst these measures are encouraging they depend largely upon the good will of customers and do not represent adequate controls against noise disturbance. The need to eliminate the opportunity for noise disturbance is made more critical by the relatively low background noise of the area, which would make any late night noise produced on the site more noticeable. It is therefore considered appropriate to restrict use of the site to not be open to the public or trade, or for trade deliveries or collections, between the hours of 8pm and 7am on any day.

Lighting

12. Lighting is proposed across the site both in the form of short poles to be installed on top of several of the containers and taller poles positioned between the containers. Plans indicate that the lights will be directed in towards the site but the Council's Environmental Protection Officer has expressed concern with the type of lights proposed and the short pole lights which are to be installed five metres above the ground on top of the containers. The lighting specifications submitted with the application indicate suitability for a range of uses including car parks, building facades and car parks and they can therefore be positioned to achieve a variety of lighting effects. It's not possible to confirm whether the lights will only illuminate the site directly and there is potential for light spillage onto neighbouring properties.

13. Following concerns raised by the Council's Environmental Protection Officer the applicant has provided further detail relating to the illumination specifications and angles for the external lights. Despite the additional information concerns remain over the lights to be installed on top of the containers and the potential for light spillage onto neighbouring residents. The submitted layout plan of the shipping containers is only indicative so the exact position of the lighting cannot therefore be determined at this stage.

14. Low level lighting is encouraged as an alternative to lighting on top of the containers. A lighting plan will be conditioned and the approval of the local authority will be required prior to the installation of any external lighting at the site.

Design

15. The proposal involves no built development, the containers being mobile structures. The indicative layout shows the containers to be arranged in such a way to allow cars to circulate the site in a forward gear. It will be necessary to ensure that vehicles can navigate the site in a forward gear in the interests of protecting highway safety and the safety of those persons present on site. Enabling vehicles to easily circulate the site will also minimise the potential for noise disturbance to neighbouring properties resulting from vehicle manoeuvres and reversing beepers. Planning permission will therefore be conditioned to require a detailed site layout plan demonstrating that vehicles will be able to safely navigate the site. The condition will also restrict any stacking of containers to prevent harm to the visual amenities of the surrounding area.

16. The site already benefits from mature landscaping on the western boundary which

provides visual screening from the neighbouring properties. The applicant has expressed no intention to remove these trees, but the long term retention of the trees cannot be guaranteed since the trees are located outside of the site boundary. A condition is therefore recommended to require landscaping works to the western boundary of the site to provide satisfactory screening of the application site in the event that the trees should be removed in the future.

17. Palisade fencing is proposed to be erected around the boundary of the site in order to enhance security. The fencing will reach 2.1 metres in height and the design of the fencing is reflective of that erected on surrounding sites in the employment area.
18. CCTV cameras will be installed at the site, which will further enhance the security of the site in accordance with saved policy EMP5 of the adopted Local Plan.

Transport and Access

Vehicular Access

19. There are no objections to the proposal on transportation grounds. Temporary car/cycle/motorbike parking will be possible on site whilst vehicles are unloading or loading from the containers. No other parking will be necessary.
20. It will be necessary to install a vehicle crossover at the new access point to the site. The applicant is advised to contact the Council's highways team in order to ensure that the crossover is built to an acceptable standard.
21. It's also recommended that the shipping containers be transported to the site outside of main operational hours of the surrounding businesses to avoid any disruption to the highway during the set up process of the business. Any such disruption will however only be temporary until all shipping containers have been delivered to the site.
22. Should the ground of the site be levelled and re-surfaced, any hard standing must be constructed with a porous material to allow sustainable drainage at the site. This will be secured by condition.

Other issues

23. A letter of representation raises concern regarding the nature of what is to be stored in the containers. The self-storage units are relatively small and will not be suitable for larger commercial purposes. The applicant has stated that customers will not be allowed to store anything of an illegal nature, fireworks, explosives, dangerous chemicals, food/perishable goods, birds, fish, animals or any form of living creature. The storage of certain hazardous substances would also be controlled by separate legislation.

Local Finance Considerations

24. The application involves a change of use of the land for the siting of the self-storage units. Whilst the application is for a permanent consent the containers are not buildings and the proposal will not therefore be liable for CIL.

Conclusions

25. The proposed use is appropriate for the general employment area and would assist in meeting the development needs of a new business. Subject to conditions controlling the activities on site and ensuring adequate layout, landscaping and lighting, the proposal will satisfy the objectives of Sections 1, 7 and 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), Policies 2, 5, 6 and 12 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (2014), saved policies NE9, HBE12, EP22, EMP5 and TRA5 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (2004), relevant policies of the Development Management Policies Development Plan Document – Pre submission (April 2013) and all other material considerations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve application reference 14/00633/F subject to the imposition of the following conditions:

- 1) Standard time limit -3 years
- 2) Shipping containers shall be installed and laid out in accordance with a site layout plan to be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The layout of the site shall not provide for the stacking of the storage containers and shall provide for landscaping along the western boundary of the site.
- 3) Landscaping scheme to include details of screening to the western boundary of the site.
- 4) Opening hours restricted so that the site is not open to the public or trade, or for trade deliveries or collections, between the hours of 8pm and 7am on any day.
- 5) No external lighting shall be installed unless in accordance with a lighting plan to first be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The lighting plan will show how lighting will be minimised during the hours of closure from 8pm to 7am daily.
- 6) Any hard surfacing to be constructed of a porous material.

Informatives:

- 1) The applicant is advised to contact Ken Willis for further advice on the installation of the vehicle crossover.
- 2) It is advised that the applicant installs the storage containers outside of the main operating hours of surrounding businesses in order to minimise any impact on the highway.

Article 31(1)(cc) Statement

The local planning authority in making its decision has had due regard to paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework as well as the development plan, national planning policy and other material considerations and has approved the application subject to appropriate conditions and for the reasons outlined in the officer report.