

## **Item No. 07**

<b>APPLICATION NUMBER</b>	<b>CB/16/00739/FULL</b>
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>Land to the rear of Cowlgrove Parade, Steppingley Road, Flitwick, Beds. MK45 1AJ</b>
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>Change of use from B8 storage and distribution (currently vacant) to 'sui generis' car park facility</b>
<b>PARISH</b>	<b>Flitwick</b>
<b>WARD</b>	<b>Flitwick</b>
<b>WARD COUNCILLORS</b>	<b>Cllrs Mrs Chapman, Gomm &amp; Turner</b>
<b>CASE OFFICER</b>	<b>Lisa Newlands</b>
<b>DATE REGISTERED</b>	<b>14 March 2016</b>
<b>EXPIRY DATE</b>	<b>09 May 2016</b>
<b>APPLICANT</b>	<b>Central Bedfordshire Council - Assets</b>
<b>AGENT</b>	
<b>REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE</b>	<b>A Council application with objections</b>
<b>RECOMMENDED DECISION</b>	<b>Full Application - Approval</b>

### **Summary of Representation**

The proposal would extend the current parking provision on site by 68 car parking spaces, and would be served by the existing access, with no new access onto Steppingley Road. The application site has previously been identified within the Town Centre Masterplan (2008) as a site for parking/ multi storey car park. It is therefore considered to be consistent with the adopted masterplan. The principle of development is therefore considered acceptable.

Given the surrounding uses and the limited views of the site from the surrounding area, it is not considered that there would be a detrimental impact on the character of the area, nor the residential amenities of the surrounding properties.

### **Site Location:**

The site was formerly occupied by three large disused warehouses / light industrial building, together with hardstanding and ancillary parking. The industrial units have now been demolished and permission is sought for the use of this area for car parking. The site is located within Flitwick Town Centre, adjacent to the existing station car park and located to the rear of flats, offices and retail units at Cowlgrove Parade.

An existing access road located off Steppingley Road, currently provides vehicular access to the site and the existing station car park.

The site is predominately flat and built on the same level as the adjacent railway.

The surrounding properties on Steppingley Road are on a much higher level than the application site.

Permission has previously been granted in 2015 for the use of the area around the industrial units as parking.

### **The Application:**

Permission is sought for the change of use of the area previously used as B8 Storage and Distribution (occupied by the industrial units) to 'sui generis' car parking facility.

The main objective is to provide additional parking for the Station and Town Centre and regularise informal parking arrangements.

### **RELEVANT POLICIES:**

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)**

#### **Core Strategy and Development Management Policies - North 2009**

Policy DM3 High Quality Development

Policy CS12 Town Centres and Retailing

#### **Development Strategy**

At the meeting of Full Council on 19 November 2015 it was resolved to withdraw the Development Strategy. Preparation of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan has begun. A substantial volume of evidence gathered over a number of years will help support this document. These technical papers are consistent with the spirit of the NPPF and therefore will remain on our website as material considerations which may inform further development management decisions.

#### **Supplementary Planning Guidance/Other Documents**

Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (March 2014)

Central Bedfordshire Local Transport Plan: Appendix F : Parking Strategy (Adopted in October 2012 by the Executive for Development Management Purposes)

#### **Relevant Planning History:**

<b>Application:</b>	Planning	<b>Number:</b>	CB/15/03309/PADM
<b>Validated:</b>	28/08/2015	<b>Type:</b>	Prior Approval Proposed Demolition
<b>Status:</b>	Decided	<b>Date:</b>	25/09/2015
<b>Summary:</b>		<b>Decision:</b>	Prior Approval - Approved Change Of Use

**Description:** Prior Notification of Proposed Demolition: Demolition of 3 Units and 1 Bungalow.

<b>Application:</b>	Planning	<b>Number:</b>	CB/15/00536/REG3
<b>Validated:</b>	10/02/2015	<b>Type:</b>	Regulation 3
<b>Status:</b>	Decided	<b>Date:</b>	07/04/2015
<b>Summary:</b>		<b>Decision:</b>	Regulation 3 - Granted

**Description:** Continued use as car park, including resurfacing, ancillary surface works and lighting.

**Application:** Planning  
**Validated:** 03/03/2008  
**Status:** Decided

**Number:** MB/08/00395/FULL  
**Type:** Full Application  
**Date:** 28/04/2008  
**Decision:** Full Application - Granted

**Summary:**  
**Description:** Full: Demolition of existing light industrial unit and formation of a surface car park with a 5 year temporary permission.

## Consultees:

Parish/Town Council

Objection raised the following concerns:

- No traffic management plan provided

They also raised concerns regarding a further application which they want to refer to; these concerns are:

- Impact on the town as a whole, but in particular to residents of Kendal Drive, Badgers Close, Hilldene Close
- No provision of Traffic Management Plan/ Traffic Impact report projecting vehicular movements within the area from the Tesco Roundabout to Hilldene Close;
- Request installation of parking prohibitions in areas of the town presently being used by commuters which would encourage them to use the multi storey car park;
- Accept parking places are required in the town but present solution is not sustainable with the present access/ egress as proposed;
- Need to see coherent regeneration scheme for the whole station area to see project in context;
- Need other infrastructure for schools, doctors surgeries etc.
- Change of use would be needed for the access/egress roadway, which was not included in the outline plan.

Highways Development Management  
Public Protection  
Network Rail

No objection

No objection

No comments received

## Other Representations:

Neighbours Representations received from the following addresses:  
10 & 16 Kendal Drive;  
23 Wren Close; 33  
Badgers Close; Flat 19,

The following objections have been received in relation to this application:

- CBC have a duty of care to the local residents and the approval of these facilities does not take into account the movements made by local residents.
- Access for emergency vehicles could be compromised and increasing attendance time.

No 7 - The Willows; 1  
Steppingley Court; 2  
Ennerdale Path;

- Change of use from B8 implies recent car park use has been ultra vires/ illegal
- HCA Local Growth funding for the purchase of the former Cowlgrove site by CBC was on the basis of town centre regeneration and mixed use/ housing - not car parking
- CBC have been dilatory (in the extreme) in delivering their Station Travel Plan for Flitwick
- Section 106 planning gain monies have still to be used to enhance the railway station/ Cowlgrove sites
- A traffic impact assessment is required to evaluate the implications of the change of use - on Steppingley Road; on the railway station entrance/ exit; and on the tesco supermarket entrance/ exit.
- The lack of an up-to-date Local Plan & LTP does not assist the situation at all
- There is no masterplan for Flitwick Town Centre; no recognition of the Town Centre Regeneration; nor of the more recent Market Towns initiative.
- Excessive noise, light and emissions pollution caused by the increase in car parking spaces
- does not fit with the Governments new transport strategy in getting more people to walk and cycle.
- Before any additional parking area like the proposed to entrance to and from Steppingley Road needs a serious traffic survey to determine safety considerations as its currently traffic chaos at certain times of the day with tesco, school and station traffic converging in the same place - not to mention the taxis;
- the local road network needs assessment and joint improvement to sustain the increase of vehicles;
- emergency service access needs addressing along Steppingley Road as there is already regular congestion at peak periods
- light pollution from the site for the properties behind and overlooking will cause unlivable conditions;
- the site is in a prominent position within the town centre and will secure the future of Flitwick as a pass through centre for commuters;
- the plans are against local plans to include more town centre businesses and the site falls inside the town centre boundary;
- All of our properties windows are overlooking the site, this has a significant impact on our main living area as people are able to look directly into our property whilst parking on the proposed site (1 Steppingley Court)
- Concern regarding the use of the term sui generis and that the site is now being taken outside of the plans for the town centre regeneration.

- Site notice not displayed on the site - **a site notice was displayed with the car park area and on Steppingley Road.**
- lack of consultation
- Multi Storey car park and this should be considered together;
- increase in parking;
- current access is inadequate;
- pedestrian issues at the entrance to the site, both crossing the entrance and the two crossing points across Steppingley Road;
- how the application meets the governments policy to encourage people to walk and cycle to the station;
- impact on shops within Steppingley Road - even more isolated;
- Need to have a vision/ plan for Flitwick Town Centre that has gone through proper consultation, rather than piecemeal by stealth development

These issues were raised in relation to this application but appear to relate to aspects of different application which includes a new access road:

- This application does not appear to have change of use approval from residential to commercial use i.e. residential bungalow to car park. **Please note this application does not propose a second access through the former Bungalow site to Steppingley Road.**
- The access and egress to the facility is very close to Kendal Drive and could cause severe highway congestion trying to enter or leave Kendal Drive. **Please note the access for this application remains as existing and does not introduce a new access on to Steppingley Road.**
- Will isolate the row of shops on Steppingley Road and will not revitalise the town centre.
- The increase in proposed parking spaces from 257 to 751 will generate significant traffic congestion, local disruption and increase risk of accidents. The proposed new access road is virtually directly opposite a busy junction of Kendal Drive and close to the already congested junctions for the entrances to the train station and Tesco. At peak hours, traffic already backs up from the roundabouts and past the junction at Badgers Close.
- The plans do not include how the junction of the proposed access road is controlled i.e. a wing and a prayer, traffic lights, give way, roundabout
- No environmental assessment is included in the application

- Residents already have problems egressing Kendal Drive and if a new vehicular entrance is to be installed on the site of the former bungalow this will only aggravate the problems
- A traffic impact assessment needs to be undertaken before any approval is granted
- lack of information being given to local residents regarding what I presume is town centre development
- trees removed along the fence line of the Station grounds - leaves privacy vulnerable.
- rear of property overlooked;
- illumination 24 hours a day;
- additional traffic noise;
- unlimited access to multi-storey - security access;
- 24 hour access causing noise, and disturbance of additional 120+ vehicles entering and exiting the site. Open access to the site will cause antisocial behaviour requiring additional resources from the local police.
- Reluctance of CBC to enter into discussions regarding the upgrade of the Station and the Station Travel Plan;
- lack of co-operation with rail industry parties to discuss regeneration/ enter into match-funding.

### **Determining Issues:**

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Principle
2. Affect on the Character and Appearance of the Area
3. The Historic Environment
4. Neighbouring Amenity
5. Highway Considerations
6. Other Considerations

### **Considerations**

#### **1. The Principle of Development**

- 1.1 The application site was included within the town centre masterplan which was adopted as technical guidance by Mids Beds District Council in 2008. The masterplan included the creation of significant additional station car parking to be provided at Flitwick Rail Station and former units A Steppingley Road and parts of Units B and C.
- 1.2 Planning permission was previously granted in 2008 (MB/08/00395/FULL) for the demolition of existing light industrial unit and formation of a surface car park for temporary period of 5 years. A further application was submitted in 2015 for the continued use of the site for car parking. This application seeks to use some of the space created by the demolition of Unit A for additional parking. There were two options proposed within the application with option 2 including parking close to the boundary with Franklin House, Cowlgrove Parade and properties along Steppingley Close and within The Willows. This option has been refined,

the proposed parking has been brought off the side boundary, and no additional lighting or drainage is proposed.

- 1.3 The amended proposal, therefore increases the parking on the site by 68 spaces.
- 1.4 Given the history of the site, the masterplan document and the limited increase in parking provision it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable.

## **2. Impact on the character and appearance of the area**

- 2.1 The site is not particularly prominent within the town centre, only being visible from the existing station car park and from the rear of some of the surrounding properties. Notwithstanding this, given the surrounding uses, it is not considered that the extension of the car park use would detract from the character and appearance of the area.

## **3. Residential amenity of neighbouring properties**

- 3.1 The nearest residential properties are located along the western boundary of the site at Cowlgrove Parade, The Willows and Badgers Close. These properties are located in an elevated position looking down into the site. There is some planting along this boundary which helps to screen the railway and surrounding land uses from these properties. Although some of the denser screening has been removed through the demolition of the warehouse.
- 3.2 Public Protection have raised no objection to the proposed application and have recommended no conditions on the basis that there will be no further lighting on the site than the existing arrangements.
- 3.3 In summary, it is not considered that the proposal would result in a significantly detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity, in terms of noise and disturbance, having regard to the location of the site in relation to the town centre, railway and existing station car park.

## **4. Highway Implications**

- 4.1 The Highways Officer has raised no objection to this application. Using the TRICs data base the existing warehouse unit which has now been demolished would have generated in the region of 61 trips, the proposed development of an additional 68 spaces with an occupancy of 90% would generate in the region of 109 movements. It is considered that the majority of the incoming trips would be outside of the normal peak period for the highway network while PM trips would be an even distribution further into the early evening.
- 4.2 It should also be noted that the introduction of additional car parking is likely to reduce the amount of drop off trips, which at this point could not be quantified. In addition, this change of use will also eliminate heavy goods vehicle movements from the site and as a result reduce the number of HGVs through the Town

Centre.

- 4.3 The Highways Officer is of the opinion that the additional trips generated by the proposal spread over and beyond the working day would not cause a detrimental impact on the highway network.
- 4.4 It has been an aspiration of the Council to provide a link from the Station through the Council owned land, through the neighbouring potential residential development site to connect up with an existing footpath within Beaumont Road. This footpath continues on through Beaumont Court to The Thinnings and then there are connection options to go under the railway line across to the other side and the highway network on the opposite side of the railway line. This is seen as encouraging sustainable transport and promoting a safer route to the Station.
- 4.5 The plans are to be amended to show how this route through the car park would be provided and safeguarded. The amended plan will be presented at committee and an update on the late sheet will report any further consultation responses on this amendment and an additional condition which will require that the route be safeguarded and implemented on the first occupancy of any residential development on the adjacent site.

## **5. Representations**

- 5.1 A number of representations have been raised in relation to this application that appear to be more pertinent to the outline application for the multi-storey car park. The surrounding area around the units was granted planning permission in 2015 for use as car parking. This application seeks to expand that to include part of the former Unit A which has now been demolished. The proposal would increase the parking provision on the site by 68 spaces. It is not considered that this would amount to a intensification of use on the site, as the potential traffic generation of the former industrial unit also needs to be taken into account.
- 5.2 A number of representations make reference to an additional access point from Steppingley Road. This application does not propose a second access onto Steppingley Road. The proposal would be served by the existing access off Steppingley Road; the Highways Officer is content that this junction can accommodate the additional traffic generated by the proposed increase in parking.
- 5.3 Representations have also been raised in terms of the town centre masterplan. The area in question was identified in the town centre masterplan (adopted in 2008, as technical guidance) as the site for a multi storey car park. Therefore, the extension of the existing car park use on this site would be entirely in accordance with this masterplan for parking on the site.
- 5.4 Further concerns have been raised regarding potential light, noise and emissions pollution. The amended scheme does not increase the amount of lighting on the site, and the parking has been moved off the boundary with Cowlgrove Parade and Steppingley Road. It is therefore considered that given the limited increase in parking on the site and the amendments that it would not have any greater impact than the existing car park use on the surrounding areas. In addition to this, the Public Protection Officer has raised no objection on these grounds.

5.5 Comments have been received regarding the need for a transport assessment. The Highways Officer has been consulted on the application, whilst they note the limited information submitted with this application, given the proposal increases the parking provision by 68 spaces, it is not considered that a transport assessment would be necessary in this instance. The Highways Officer is satisfied that the increase in parking on the site would not have a detrimental impact on the highway network and highway safety.

## **6. Other Considerations**

6.1 **Human Rights issues:** The development has been assessed in the context of human rights and would have no relevant implications.

6.2 **Equality Act 2010:** The development has been assessed in the context of the Equalities Act 2010 and would have no relevant implications.

### **Recommendation:**

That Planning Permission be approved subject to the following:

### **RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS / REASONS**

1 The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 The car park shall be constructed and surfaced in a stable and durable manner in accordance with the existing surfacing arrangements.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure the acceptable parking of vehicles outside highway limits .  
(Section 4, NPPF)

3 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers 4008 Rev A

Reason: To identify the approved plan/s and to avoid doubt.

### **INFORMATIVE NOTES TO APPLICANT**

#### **Statement required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 - Part 5, Article 35**

The Council acted pro-actively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore

acted pro-actively to secure a sustainable form of development in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

**DECISION**

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