

Item No. 9

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/17/05311/FULL
LOCATION	Unit 5, The Ridgeway Business Park, The Ridgeway, Moggerhanger, Bedford, MK44 3PH
PROPOSAL	Extension to existing workshop building and construction of extension to existing parking area
PARISH	Moggerhanger
WARD	Northill
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllr Mr Firth
CASE OFFICER	Martin Plummer
DATE REGISTERED	04 January 2018
EXPIRY DATE	31 March 1900
APPLICANT	Pip Bayleys Limited
AGENT	Phillips Planning Services Ltd
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Major application - contrary to policy / objection from Parish Council
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Application - Recommended for Approval

Summary of Recommendation:

The application seeks full planning permission for an extension to existing buildings within a commercial site and an extension of the existing car park. Planning permission has previously been approved for extensions and provision of new commercial buildings within the site which reflects that now proposed in this application – there can therefore be no objection in principle to this element. The provision of an extension to the existing car parking within open countryside represents a conflict with the Development Plan. However, the provision of such an extended car park will allow the expansion of the existing business enterprise with associated job creation. This element of the application will not result in significant harm to the visual amenity of the site, surroundings and is acceptable in highway terms.

Site Location:

The site is located to the east of the Ridgeway and forms a business park of industrial uses and operation. The application site forms two different areas:-

- 1) Pip Bayley's Truck Centre, which operates as a facility that repairs and MOT's commercial vehicles. Within this part of the site there is an existing workshop building and other ancillary buildings and a large area of open storage/parking of commercial vehicles;
- 2) To the west of the commercial site is a small and informal parking area and agricultural field beyond that.

The site is accessed off The Ridgeway via a long access road which is also a public right of way. The surrounding area comprises open countryside with the settlements of Moggerhanger located approximately 1 km to the south west and Blunham located approximately 1 km to the north.

The Application:

There are two elements to this application – 1) Extensions to the existing commercial buildings to provide enhanced space for the servicing and repair of HGV's (Heavy Goods Vehicles) and 2) the provision of a new HGV parking area/extension to the existing car park to the west of the site. A balancing pond is shown on the submitted plans to the north of the proposed car park. The plans submitted show a bund and planting around the enlarged parking area.

The extensions to the existing commercial buildings have previously been granted planning permission under LPA references MB/01/1323/FULL and MB/06/01018/FULL. The application proposes an extension to the north of the existing building which will enable HGV's to access fully into the building to provide a covered area for servicing and repairs of HGV's to take place. The southern extension to the existing building will provide a large storage area for parts and tools and the provision of a dedicated reception area, offices and staff restroom space.

During the application process the applicant has submitted indicative information and plans showing where landscaping / planting on land within the control of the applicant can be provided. Such landscaped areas follow the alignment of the Ridgeway on land which is outlined in blue in the application plans.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies - North 2009

CS9 Providing Jobs

CS10 Location of Employment Sites

CS14 High Quality Development

CS16 Landscape and Woodland

CS17 Green Infrastructure

DM2 Sustainable Construction of New Buildings

DM3 High Quality Development

DM4 Development Within and Beyond Settlement Envelopes

DM14 Landscape and Woodland

DM15 Biodiversity

DM16 Green Infrastructure

Central Bedfordshire Local Plan - Emerging

The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan has reached submission stage and was submitted to the Secretary of State on 30 April 2018. The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 216) stipulates that from the day of publication, decision-takers may also give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The apportionment of this weight is subject to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan;
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies;
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework.

Reference should be made to the Central Bedfordshire Submission Local Plan which should be given limited weight having regard to the above. The following policies are relevant to the consideration of this application: SP1, EMP1, HQ1, EE1, EE2, EE3, EE4, EE5, HQ1, HQ11.

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Other Documents

Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (March 2014)

Relevant Planning History:

MB/91/00249/FULL - Full: Change of use of land and associated building for the repair of agricultural and commercial plant machinery and vehicles, haulage operators depot and commercial vehicle sales. Approved 30/8/91

MB/92/00353/FULL - Full: Change of use of land and erection of two buildings for repair of agricultural and commercial plant machinery and vehicles, haulage operators depot and commercial vehicle sales. Approved 13/10/92

MB/97/00304/FULL - Full: Erection of single storey factory building and associated two storey offices and service yard. Refused 30/4/304 Appeal allowed 2/2/98

MB/98/00888/FULL - Full: Extension to workshop, repositioning and retention of key derv facilities. Retrospective repositioning of toilets, retention of B.O.C, compound and four portable buildings. Approved 4/8/98

MB/01/01323/FULL - Full: Extension to workshop and replacement of portable buildings with admin extension for offices, storage, staff and toilets. Additional parking. Approved 7/1/02

MB/00413/FULL - Full: Change of use of restored mineral workings land to HGV parking area. Approved 9/5/2005

MB/06/01018/FULL – Extension to workshop and replacement of portable buildings with an administration extension to provide offices, storage, staff and toilet facilities; provision of additional car park.

Consultees:

Moggerhanger Parish Council

Objection

The Parish Council have great concerns at the expansion of the site at the above address which will lead to the increase of the number of, in the main, HGV vehicles along The Ridgeway and therefore The Ridgeway Business Park where there is also a footpath.

The proposed number of parking spaces for lorries and cars will also increase the heavy traffic on the A603, vehicles already turn to the right and left from The Ridgeway onto the A603, many of which wish to access the A421 at Cardington Cross, these vehicles pass through the village of Moggerhanger where the road carriageway is very narrow with a footpath on the north of the road, large vehicles have difficulty in passing one another, pedestrians find it dangerous. The surface of the road suffers damage and there are continual problems with drain cover movement and noise.

Cllr Frank Firth

The application is fully supported.

The visual impact of the development will be eliminated through the provision of appropriate bunds around the site – this can be controlled through a condition.

The size of the proposed new building, and the increase in both car and vehicle (trailer/cab) parking is significant. However, with respect to the car parking, agreement has been made with the neighbouring company for their employees to also use that facility. This will reduce the need to park in or around the entrances of the other businesses. There are also stringent rules and regulations regarding employee facilities and building size. Indeed with the increased size to both cabs and trailers the present building does not comply to the relevant requirements.

The site currently operates 24/7/365, and it is understood that there has been no concern raised about the noise generated by either vehicle movement and maintenance activities. There are three properties on the Ridgeway, and the most likely to be affected would be the resident at Asterby Chalkcroft Nursey.

The proposed bund would effectively reduce any noise impact.

The fact that vehicles would now be parked much nearer to the road does present a security problem, but as the site currently has 24 hour security, the use of video surveillance would overcome that concern.

The site lies adjacent to but not exactly on the flood plain however balance pools are incorporated into the scheme.

The Ridgeway currently serves as the access to three/four companies, (Andersons Transport, DS Smith, KB Pallets & Pip Bayley) all of which have HGV movement. The Ridgeway is a rural road used mainly by the residents of Blunham and Chalton. Any increase in traffic flow should therefore not cause any undue burden.

The company is already established on the site, which is a business park, and far enough away from residential properties not to cause disturbance. The expansion would allow for future growth and thus would create additional employment in the area.

Highways

No objection subject to planning conditions requiring signage to alert HGV's of the restriction on Blunham Road; the widening of the existing junction of the Ridgeway with the access road to the site and; details relating to hard surface and any gates.

The following table sets out the existing and proposed parking for HGV's, short axle HGV's, cars and loan vans:-

Vehicle Type	Existing parking provision	Proposed parking provision	Net change
HGV	48	54	+6
HGV short	7	5	-2
Car	64	97	+33
Loan van	7	9	+2

The applicant has provided the following figures for the existing HGV traffic generated from the site (Mon – Saturday);

- Servicing- 100 movements per week two way flow (twf)
- Testing- 50 movements per week twf
- Parking- 110 movements per week twf

In total then there are 260 HGV twf traffic movements per week.

Car vehicle movements

There are no figures for the car movements using the site, but it is assumed that the existing twf is about 160 per day (64 vehicles in and out associated with existing parking levels and allowance for a quarter of these to go out and in at lunch time/other times during the day).

Therefore, the increase to 97 car parking spaces is likely to generate approximately 242.5 twf car movements per day (97 vehicles in and out associated with the proposed parking and an allowance for a quarter of these to go out and in at lunch times and other times during the day). An increase in 82.5 twf car movements per day compared to that as currently exists.

HGV movements

Having regard to the applicant's submissions on HGV traffic movements (260 twf per week), it can be assumed that per day (divide 260 by 6 days as the applicant indicates HGV traffic movements is only Mon-Sat) there are, on average, about 43.33 movements per day twf.

The increase of HGV's (associated with 6 additional spaces) results in an average additional number of traffic movements of 3.2 twf per day or 19.2 twf over a six day week.

In total then, it is anticipated that the development will result in 279.2 twf HGV traffic movements per week (260 existing twf HGV movements + 19.2 twf HGV traffic movements associated with the development) – an increase in HGV movements of less than 20.

This is not considered to represent a significant increase in HGV movements from the site.

The average car twf movements from the site if the proposal is permitted will be about 1455 per week for a 6 day week (this is considered to be an over estimation as no figures have been provided by the applicant).

It is noted that the access has evidence of overrun at the radii of the junction of the access road with the Ridgeway and that the junction is not to DMRB standards. The overrun is within

the public highway and will lead to damage of the verge and edge of the carriageway, leading to carriageway breakdown and rutted verges, with loose material being dragged into the carriageway.

The initial site has increased in scale through the passage of time with no enhancement to the junction to bring it up to the required standards. This is now the opportunity to do so, and with the increase in vehicle movements from the site a sufficient junction for the use of access/site should be provided.

Landscape

No objection subject to an acceptable landscape scheme, which provides robust screening based on native trees and shrubs.

The site lies within the Great Ouse Clay Valley in an open agricultural landscape setting. The site has a public footpath running along the access road which links to the River Ivel corridor and other paths which are promoted as part of the Sandy Green Wheel and include the Kingfisher Way. Guidelines for development in this area include the need to safeguard the rural nature of the valley and to strengthen character through tree and hedge planting. The rights of way and links to Sandy are noted as being of importance.

An indicative landscape sketch is submitted showing the potential for planting beside the Ridgeway Road which is welcomed in principle, as is the proposal for planting to the north of the Application Site.

A 10 - 12m width of planting would allow for four rows of trees and shrubs and should be considered the minimum width for a roadside belt. The grassland verge is also important and could be sown with a simple wildflower mix.

The use of mounding is not encouraged - only a low mound would be acceptable. The planting plan will need to give full details of the scale of mound proposed, as large (greater than 1.5m) mounds can detract from the landscape character of the vale and also create harder conditions for trees to grow well.

A surface based SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Strategy) scheme forming part of the landscape provision is recommended.

The use of native species such as willow, alder, birch, cherry and oak, with a shrub layer of dogwood, hawthorn, willow and wayfaring tree is recommended. The use of evergreens such as larch would not be acceptable.

In view of the sensitivity of views from the Ridgeway access and from the east – it would be excellent if additional planting could be established along the eastern boundary of the land within the Applicant's control - the current boundary with the paddock is intrusive with unscreened fencing. There is also an opportunity to enhance the planting at the gateways.

Flood Risk Team Recommends that planning permission is granted subject to planning conditions requiring details of the management and maintenance plan of the drainage systems.

Drainage Board Comment that, to avoid flood risk any discharge must be attenuated to the 1 in 100 year flood event plus 40% allowance for climate change.

Other Representations:

Neighbours 5 representations received in support of the application, summarised as follows:-

- The development will secure and promote jobs and provide additional and much needed parking;
- The development will ensure that the premises provide high quality standards for the servicing and repair of HGV's to the benefit of the industry;
- The additional HGV parking will make it more efficient for businesses to collect their vehicles – at the present time the limitations of parking restrict the time that vehicles can be left on site.

Determining Issues:

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Principle
2. Affect on the Character and Appearance of the Area
3. Neighbouring Amenity
4. Highway Considerations
5. Other Considerations
6. Sustainable Development and the Planning Balance.

Considerations

1. Principle of Development

- 1.1 The site is located within the open countryside, outside any settlement boundaries and not designated in the Core Strategy as an employment site. The provision of extensions to the existing commercial buildings and the provision of an extension to the existing car park therefore represents a conflict with policy DM4 of the Development Plan.
- 1.2 Policy CS9 and 10 of the Development Plan set out the strategy to provide and ensure adequate provision of land for employment purposes. These policies concentrate on key employment sites within Central Bedfordshire but the general thrust of policy is to retain and enhance existing employment provision. Such a policy approach is broadly consistent with the NPPF and paragraph 28 which encourages the provision of economic development and the provision of well-designed new buildings in rural locations. Parking associated with new buildings is not expressly referred to in paragraph 28 of the NPPF but it would clearly follow that, the provision of new buildings for employment use in rural settings will require an element parking.
- 1.3 Policy EMP4 of the emerging Local Plan sets out encouragement for employment generating uses within rural areas with consideration given to the suitability and impact of the proposal in relation to the location and neighbouring land uses; evidenced viability of the proposed use; an increase in the number of jobs that can be delivered and; the impact upon traffic generation, suitable accessibility and sustainable forms of transport. Given the stage of preparation of the Local Plan limited weight only is given to this policy.
- 1.4 Whilst there is therefore a conflict with the countryside policies in the Development Plan, it is material that part of the development proposal in this application relates to an existing commercial operation where planning permission has been approved for a very similar development (in terms of extensions to the existing buildings). Development Plan policies seek to encourage economic development which is reflected in the NPPF. The determining consideration in this application is whether the development is sustainable – what is described as ‘the golden thread’ running through decision making of planning applications.

2. Affect on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 2.1 The proposed extensions to the existing buildings will clearly result in a significant increase in the amount of built form at the application site which is countryside location. There is a public right of way to the immediate south of the application site which follows the alignment of the access road – there will be clear views from this public vantage point of the enlarged buildings. Whilst there will therefore be some harmful visual impact associated with the overall size and scale of the extensions to the commercial buildings, any such impact should be considered in the context of the commercial appearance of the site. It is also a material

consideration that planning permission has been previously approved for these extensions to the building. The design of the buildings are of a utilitarian appearance which follow the existing character of the buildings and site. In that context, the visual impact of this element of the application is considered to be acceptable.

- 2.2 The proposed extension to the car park is located to the west of the commercial buildings and will result in a demonstrable change to the character of this part of the site. The existing car park in this location is low key and informal and serves only a relatively small number of vehicles – mainly cars. The proposed extension to the car park will see a much more formal space which is likely to be dominated by large commercial vehicles. There is acknowledged to be significant harm associated with such a parking space, particularly in the short term in views from the right of way and Ridgeway to the west. However, having regard to the advice from the Landscape Officer, it is considered that any such harm will likely reduce to a more acceptable level in the medium – long term, once planting surrounding the parking area and along the Ridgeway is implemented and allowed to mature. Such matters will need to be dealt with via planning condition which will allow further and more detailed consideration by the applicant in respect of the proportions of the bund and specification of planting. Such planting may also have positive biodiversity and ecology impact which would be a benefit in the medium-long term.

3. Neighbouring Amenity

- 3.1 As noted in the representations from Cllr Firth, there are no nearby neighbouring properties – the nearest being some 260 metres to the west of the site. Any noise impact associated with the use of the site would not be significant having regard to that distance and having regard to the level of existing and proposed planting on the western boundary of the application site.
- 3.2 The development will, as noted in the Highway Officer give rise to an increase in traffic movements – such traffic movements will not be significant and there will therefore not be significant or harmful impact in terms of noise and general disturbance associated with HGV movements.

4. Highway Considerations

- 4.1 The Parish Council are in objection to the development based mainly on the increase in vehicle traffic associated with the development and the direction of travel of those vehicles through Moggerhanger along Bedford Road to join the A421.
- 4.2 No objections are raised by the Highway Officer who, during the application process, have sought additional information and clarity from the applicant in respect of existing and proposed parking levels and existing traffic movements of HGV's. The Highway Officer considers that there will be approximately 20 additional HGV traffic movements associated with the development over the

working week (Monday – Saturday) and 495 additional car movements during the same period.

- 4.3 Based upon the information provided by the applicant and, as confirmed by the Highway Officer, such a level of HGV traffic movements is not considered to be significant and would not represent a severe impact in NPPF terms.
- 4.4 Car vehicle traffic movements are potentially more significant although the Highway Officer acknowledges this to be an over-estimate. The applicant also comments that this over-estimate does not take into account that lorry drivers may well park their vehicles whilst driving away their HGV. The comments from Cllr Firth also acknowledge that there is agreement for other commercial operators at the business park to use the car park rather than park on the entrance to their sites.
- 4.5 Accordingly, there is some uncertainty regarding precise car vehicle movements into and out of the site associated with the development. Car vehicle movements would, to some extent, be expected to fluctuate depending on business operations and, it would seem, are likely to be significantly less than the over-estimate from the Highway Officer. The NPPF sets out that planning decisions should seek to reduce the reliance on private vehicles and there is some conflict with this requirement. The site is not located in a particularly sustainable location with the majority of employees required to use a vehicle to access the site. Some negative weight can be attached to this consideration but, given the presence of the existing business park in this location and the encouragement in the NPPF to provide economic development in rural locations where there will inevitably use of private vehicles, such negative weight is not significant, in this case.
- 4.6 The Highway Officer recommends planning conditions relating to improvements to the junction, signage and hard surface treatment and such conditions are considered to be necessary in the interests of highway safety and access.
- 4.7 As noted previously, there is a right of way which follows the alignment of the access road. No objections are raised by the Highway Officer in respect of the users of this right of way associated with traffic movements and it is noted that there is adequate road width and verge space where rights of way users can walk.

5. Other Considerations

- 5.1 Having regard to the EA flood risk mapping neither the extended buildings or car park are located in an area of high fluvial flood risk but there is some high risk of surface water in the location of the extended car park. The applicant has submitted a flood risk assessment and the plans submitted show the provision of a balancing pond to the north of the parking area – the flood risk team raise no objection. It is considered then that the impact associated with flood risk will be adequately mitigated.

6. Whether the scheme is Sustainable Development

6.1 Environmental

The provision of built development within the countryside location does result in some negative impact, particularly in the short term. However the impact is not considered to be of such significance that it would warrant a reason to refuse planning permission having regard to the planning history previously mentioned; the context of the site as a business park and; the way in which the visual impact will be mitigated through landscape treatment. There will be some benefits to ecology and biodiversity associated with the landscaping. Flood risk is neutral given the mitigation proposed although there is added ecology and biodiversity associated with the balancing pond proposed.

6.2 Social

There is likely to be reliance on private vehicles to access the site and this does weigh against the application. However, for the reasons previously mentioned the weight attached to this consideration is not significant and the impact associated with traffic movements (particularly HGV's) is acceptable in NPPF terms.

6.3 Economic

There are economic benefits of construction employment associated with the development but the main consideration relates to the way in which the development will support an existing local business and allow it to expand. The applicant has set out that expansion of the building is required to meet current standards and the enlarged parking area will enable are more streamlined and efficient business which will encourage business growth and employment generation. Such considerations are identified by third party representations in support of the application and Cllr Firth. Economic development is a core planning objective in the NPPF and this is a matter which must be given significant weight, in this case.

7. Planning balance.

7.1 Whilst there is conflict with countryside policies the harm associated with the development in visual amenity terms and neighbour amenity terms is considered to be acceptable. There will be an increase in traffic movements but this will not be significant, particularly in respect of HGV's. There is potential enhancement in ecology and biodiversity terms and flood risk matters are neutral. Any negative weight attached to the conflict with countryside policies and the short term visual impact identified would be outweighed by the economic benefit and job creation.

Recommendation:

That Planning Permission be granted subject to the following planning conditions:

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- 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 development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers 17-03 A, 17-04 A, 17-05 D, 17-06 B, 17-07C, 17-08 and 042985_3.

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

- 3 Prior to the commencement of any above ground building work details of the materials to be used for the external walls and roofs of the development hereby approved have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To control the appearance of the building in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality.
(Section 7, NPPF)

- 4 Prior to the commencement of any above ground building works a landscaping scheme to include all hard and soft landscaping and a scheme for landscape maintenance for a period of five years following the implementation of the landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscape scheme shall be based upon plan reference 17-05 D and indicative plan reference 17-07 submitted in email dated 14 April 2018 and will include landscape and tree planting along the western boundary of the application site with the Ridgeway and have regard to the specifications set out in the Landscape Officer consultation response to this application, dated 05 March 2018. The approved scheme shall be implemented by the end of the full planting season immediately following the completion and/or first use of any separate part of the development (a full planting season means the period from October to March). The trees, shrubs and grass shall subsequently be maintained in accordance with the approved landscape maintenance scheme and any which die or are destroyed during this period shall be replaced during the next planting season.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable standard of landscaping and adequate mitigation of the development in visual amenity terms.
(Sections 7 & 11, NPPF)

- 5 Prior to the laying of any hard surface associated with the extended car park a 'Maintenance and Management Plan' in line with the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (20/12/2017 Rev 2.0) for the entire surface water drainage system, inclusive of any adoption arrangements and/or private ownership or responsibilities shall be submitted to and approved in writing by

the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out and managed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the long term operation and maintenance of the approved sustainable drainage system to prevent the increased risk of flooding both on and off site, in accordance with para 103 of the NPPF.

- 6 The development shall be carried out in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (20/12/2017 Rev 2.0).

Reason: To ensure that the implementation of a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and that the approved system will function to a satisfactory minimum standard of operation and prevent the increased risk of flooding both on and off site, in accordance with para 103 of the NPPF.

- 7 Details of the signage to alert HGV's of the restriction on Blunham Road, and the signage location shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and the development shall not be brought into use until the signage has been constructed and located in accordance with the approved details. The signage shall remain thereafter for the perpetuity of the development.

Reason: To alert HGV's not to use Blunham Road and to turn left (to the A603) when existing the site.

- 8 Details of a widened junction between the access road and The Ridgeway to DMRB TD 41/95 standards with 15.0m kerb radii, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and the development shall not be brought into use until the junction has been widened/constructed with kerb radii, in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway and the premises and to provide a junction suitable for the use of the site.

Statement required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 - Part 6, 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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