

**Planning Committee**

24 May 2012

**Reference:**  
**APP/12/00142**

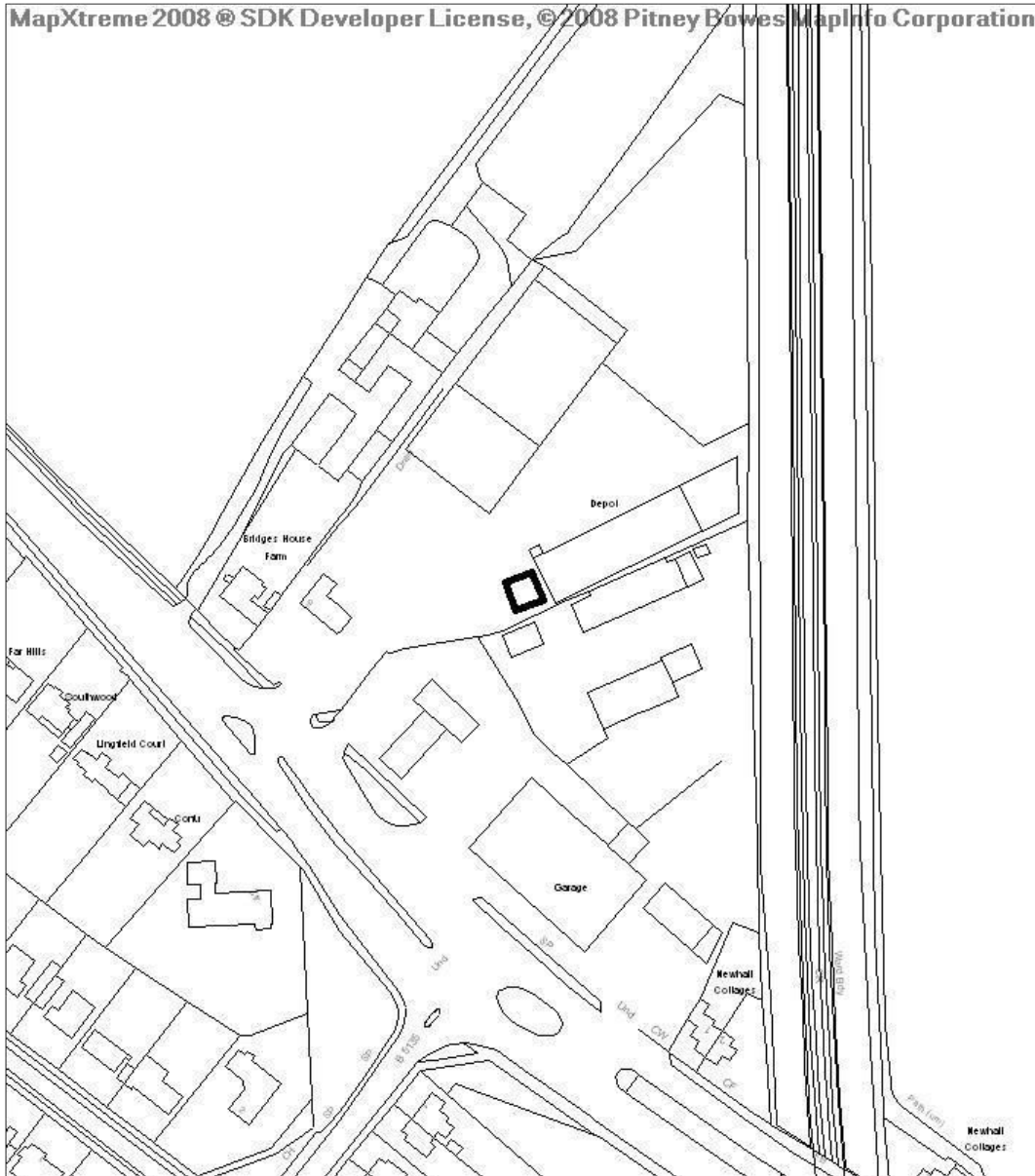
**Area Team:**  
**South Team**

**Case Officer:**  
**Mr K Spilsbury**

**Ward:**  
**Heswall**

**Location:** Chester Road Industrial Units, CHESTER ROAD, GAYTON  
**Proposal:** Erection of 2 units for B8 use  
**Applicant:** c/o Garry Usherwood Associates  
**Agent :** Garry Usherwood Associates Limited

**Site Plan:**



© Crown copyright and database rights 2011 Ordnance Survey 100019803

**Development Plan Designation:**  
Green Belt

**Planning History:**

APP/2011/01083 - Erection of 2 units for B8 use with some B1 use associated with the B8 use -  
WITHDRAWN 01/11/2011

**Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:****REPRESENTATIONS**

Having regard to the Council's Guidance on Publicity for Applications, neighbour notification letters were issued to 16 adjoining properties, and a site notice erected at the site. At the time of writing this report one representation has been received from Merseyside Cycle Campaign requesting a condition for cycle parking.

**CONSULTATIONS**

Director of Technical Services (Traffic and Transportation Division) – no objection subject to a condition for cycle parking.

Director of Law, Human Resources and Asset Management (Environmental Health Division) – no objection.

Fire and Rescue Service - Standard comments with regards to Building Regulations and water supply.

**Director's Comments:****REASON FOR REFERRAL TO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The application is a departure from Wirral's Unitary Development Plan.

**INTRODUCTION**

The proposed development is for the erection of two industrial units at Darlington's Yard, Heswall.

**PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

The application site comprises an area of hard standing within a complex of buildings used for industrial purposes in the Green Belt. UDP Policy GB2, permits development in the Green Belt only where very special circumstances can be demonstrated and there would be no harm to visual amenity by virtue of its siting, materials or design.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which replaces the former National Policy in PPG2, upon which UDP Policy GB2 was founded, still regards new buildings as inappropriate development, but, redevelopment of previously developed sites can be treated as an exception, subject to there being no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

**SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

Darlington's Yard is located within the Green Belt but is predominantly made up of small industrial units surrounded by a hardstanding surface.

There are a variety of buildings located within the vicinity, all of which vary in style, size and appearance.

The proposed Units would be located to the south west of the existing single storey brick built industrial units on the southern boundary of the site.

There is a small bungalow building located to the south of the site and a two storey industrial unit opposite. The rest of the site is made up of hardstanding and acts as an area of car parking and external storage.

Access to the site is gained via Chester road to the south of the site.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

### *The Development Plan*

The site is located within an area designated as Green Belt in the Wirral UDP. Development within this area is subject to UDP Policy GB2. UDP Policies EM6, EM7 and TR12 are also relevant.

The application site is within the Rural Area as shown on the map with Policy LCR1 of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), this along with RSS Policies DP7, RDF2 and LCR4 are relevant to this application. The Government intends to abolish RSS, subject to the outcome of consultation on Strategic Environmental Assessment. However, RSS will remain part of the statutory development plan until formally revoked.

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

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Policies in paragraphs 18 to 219 taken as a whole constitute the Government's view of what this means in practice. Sections: 3 'Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy', 7 'Requiring Good Design' and 9 'Protecting Green Belt Land' are particularly relevant.

## **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

The proposed building is not listed as appropriate development in UDP Policy GB2, which makes it clear that very special circumstances must exist if approval is to be considered. Following the submission of this application, the NPPF was introduced on xxx March 2012. This replaces former National Planning Policy Guidance including PPG2, upon which UDP Policy PPG2 was based. While the NPPF still regards the construction of a new building as inappropriate development redevelopment, previously developed sites can be treated as an exception, under the terms of NPPF paragraph 89, subject to there being no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

In addition to this, the Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study (2009) approved by the Council (Council 2 November 2009, item 42 refers) as material consideration in the determination of planning applications shows an acute shortfall in available employment land and available industrial premises in west Wirral, particularly in Heswall. The Study recommended that all existing employment land in west Wirral is retained and that additional sites should be identified (either as freestanding proposals or as part of mixed use schemes). Since completion of the Study no further employment sites have come forward in or around Heswall and there is very limited employment land currently available.

National statistics also show Wirral is ranked the 10<sup>th</sup> worst performing local authority for the Employment Domain of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010. Wirral has the lowest job density ratio in the Liverpool City Region with 57 jobs per 100 residents and significantly lags behind other local areas in the growth of Gross Value Added.

The applicant has submitted evidence, which states that a local Heswall-based employer currently employing 18 people wishes to move into one of the new units, which would enable them to employ a further 10 people. The applicant has submitted a letter from a 'Green Thumb' franchise which indicates that the business is seeking to relocate into a larger unit and increase employment to 28 staff.

The development site is previously developed land in established industrial use and the proposed building is small in comparison to the surrounding industrial buildings. Located adjacent to the gable end of one of the larger buildings on the site, the proposed units are not intrusive in terms of scale, location and visual impact and would have no appreciable impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The proposed timber cladding also helps to create the impression of a traditional looking building of a more agricultural/ rural nature. As such the proposed development does not appear to damage the visual amenities of the Green Belt by virtue of its siting, materials or design, and would not have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development....

As the development is for new industrial uses the criteria for new employment development applied

under UDP Policies EM6 and EM7 are also deemed relevant and are addressed below.

#### **APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES**

The proposal does not lead to an unacceptable loss of amenity, have an adverse effect on the operations of neighbouring uses or compromise the future development of land in the vicinity for employment or other uses. The site is already predominantly industrial in nature and the addition of two new industrial units is not deemed to generate any additional harm.

It is considered that the siting, scale and design of the scheme is of a satisfactory nature for the Green Belt location and should members be minded to approve the scheme a condition can be imposed to secure the external materials.

#### **SEPARATION DISTANCES**

Separation distances do not apply in this instance, as no residential properties will be affected by the proposed development.

#### **HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS**

Satisfactory access is provided to the site and there is adequate off street parking provided. There will be no detriment to the amenity of the area. Following consultation with the Director of Technical Services - Traffic Management Division, it is considered that the proposal does not generate traffic in excess of that which can be accommodated by the existing highway network and would not result in harm to highway safety.

Cycle parking at the site can be secured via a planning condition to meet the terms of UDP Policy TR12.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES**

There are no negative environmental/sustainability issues relating to these proposals.

#### **HEALTH ISSUES**

There are no negative health implications relating to this application.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The proposed development could provide increased employment opportunity and would help improve the appearance of a complex of buildings that are already in use for industrial purposes on a previously developed site within the Green Belt. It is considered that there would be no harm the appearance of the Green Belt in this particular case or to the amenity of occupiers of nearby properties. Consequently, the application could be approved within the terms of the National Planning Framework, RSS Policies DP7, RDF2 and LCR4 and UDP Policies GB2, EM6, EM7 and TR12.

#### **Summary of Decision:**

Having regards to the individual merits of this application the decision to grant Planning Permission has been taken having regards to the relevant Policies and Proposals in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2000) and all relevant material considerations including national and regional policy advice. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has considered the following:-

It is considered that the proposal to develop two new industrial units in the Green Belt within the existing industrial estate at Darlington's Yard is not inappropriate development and is acceptable in terms of its siting, materials and design and Policy TR12 of the UDP. It is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions.

**Recommended Decision:**                      **Approve**

#### **Recommended Conditions and Reasons:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three

years from the date of this permission.

**Reason:** To comply with Section 91 (as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. Before any construction commences, samples of the facing/roofing/window materials to be used in the external construction of this development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved materials shall then be used in the construction of the development.

**Reason:** To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policy GB2 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

3. No part of the development shall be brought into use until space and facilities for cycle parking of a type and in a location previously submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority have been provided and these facilities shall be permanently retained thereafter.

**Reason:** In the interests of highway safety and to accord with Policy TR12 in the in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan

4. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and supporting documents received by the local planning authority on 29 February, 2012 and listed as follows: 371 01 Rev A (dated 22.08.2011); 371 02 Rev B (dated 22.08.2011) & 371 03 Rev A (dated 22.08.2011).

**Reason:** For the avoidance of doubt and to define the permission.

**Last Comments By:** 06/04/2012 17:27:08

**Expiry Date:** 25/04/2012