

Planning Committee

25 October 2011

Reference:
APP/11/00932

Area Team:
North Team

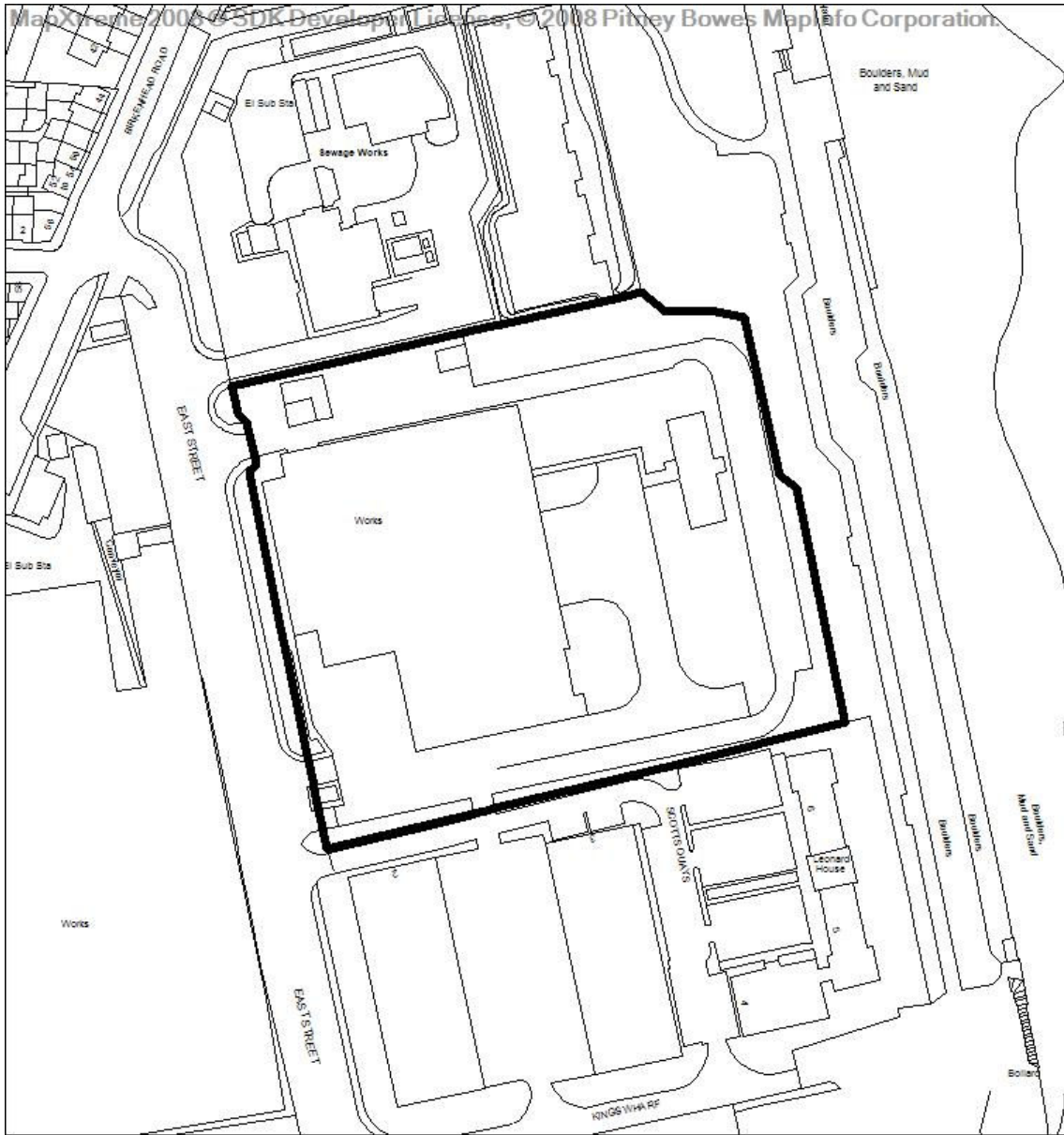
Case Officer:
Mr M Rushton

Ward:
Seacombe

Location: Vacant Factory, EAST STREET, SEACOMBE, CH41 1FG
Proposal: Change of use of former BASF factory site for use as emergency services training centre in conjunction with John Moores University.

Applicant: Hyperbaric Treatment & Training Ltd
Agent : N/A

Site Plan:



Development Plan Allocation and Policies:

Primarily Industrial Area
Urban Greenspace

Planning History:

Various, including:

APP/2002/05037 - Recladding, formation of service and parking area and use as Use Class B1, B2 or B8 (Business, general industry, storage or distribution) - Approved 18/03/2002

HSC/00/06291 - Hazardous Substances Consent to store and use in an industrial process 337 tonnes of part B10 (dangerous to the environment) in combination with risk phase R50 (very toxic to aquatic organisms) substances - Approved 29/09/2000

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

Having regard to the Council's Guidance on Publicity for Planning Applications, a total of 7 letters of notification were issued to adjoining landowners, and a Site Notice displayed at the site. At the time of writing no representations have been received.

CONSULTATIONS

Director of Technical Services (Traffic Management/Highway Maintenance) – no objection subject to the imposition of planning conditions to require cycle parking provision and a travel plan.

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

Merseyside Cycle Campaign – request cycle storage in line with the Council's standards is conditioned as part of any approval.

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

The application is for major development.

INTRODUCTION

The proposal is for a change of use of the former BASF site at East Street, Seacombe. The site currently consists of a large warehouse previously used for a general industrial purpose, and ancillary offices in two locations – within the warehouse itself in a central core set over three floors, and within a standalone 2-storey office building. The proposal is to change the use of the entire site to a D1 training use, to allow the relocation and expansion of a hyperbaric training centre currently located at Murrayfield Hospital, Thingwall. The training centre would provide advance trauma training, life support training, and hyperbaric training. The application indicates that the centre is to be operated in conjunction with Liverpool John Moores University, and would cater predominantly for the Emergency Services

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

UDP Policies EM6, EM7, EM8 are relevant. Whilst not a use falling within Use Class B1, B2 or B8, the proposal is considered to constitute Employment Development as broadly defined in paragraph 4 of PPS4, providing for employment opportunities. The proposal would permit the relocation and expansion of the existing business. As such, the development is considered acceptable in principle, subject to consideration of the above policies.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The surroundings are predominantly in employment use. To the south are B1 office uses within a series of 2-storey brick built blocks, whilst to the north is a water treatment site operated by United Utilities. The Volclay general industrial site (which is currently partly demolished) is to the west, whilst a strip of Urban Greenspace separates the application site from the River Mersey.

POLICY CONTEXT

The site is allocated as a Primarily Industrial Area. Policy EM8 outlines that proposals for B1, B2 and B8 uses, as well as proposals for the expansion of existing businesses, will be permitted, subject to Policy EM6 and Policy EM7. The Council's adopted Employment Land Study (2009) concluded that retention of primarily industrial areas is important because they have scope to continue providing local employment opportunities through the LDF period and beyond.

Planning Policy PPS4 is also relevant, however, Policy EC10: Determining Planning Applications for Economic Development outlines that local planning authorities should adopt a positive and constructive approach towards planning applications for economic development. Planning applications that secure sustainable economic growth should be treated favourably. The proposed development is considered to be sustainably located, and to offer employment opportunities and other long term economic benefits. The applicant has outlined that the building has been vacant for at least 12 years, and as such the benefit of providing a viable employment use is considered a strong material consideration - the proposal would in this regard be consistent with PPS4 Policy EC11.

The nature of the use proposed is relatively unique, leading to the requirement for a large warehouse space to allow reconstruction of pre-hospital trauma event scenarios and other life-support and trauma events. The proposed training would be delivered in conjunction with the emergency services, and the applicant has indicated that the location, adjacent to the River Mersey is a key requirement, permitting future training events involving river access. The applicant has indicated that a broader site search undertaken did not meet these specific locational requirements.

APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES

No built development is proposed, a change of use only has been sought at this stage. As such there are considered no appearance issues. The site is located centrally within an existing Industrial Area, and as such it is not considered that there would be harm to residential amenity resulting from the change of use.

SEPARATION DISTANCES

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

HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS

There are no significant highway implications relating to this proposal. The development would be served by areas of existing parking within the application site.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

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

HEALTH ISSUES

There are no health implications relating to this application.

CONCLUSION

The development is considered to be in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 4, and would provide a viable employment use on a longterm vacant industrial site. It is considered that the proposal would be consistent with UDP Policies EM6 and EM7.

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:-

The development is considered to be in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 4, and would provide a viable employment use on a longterm vacant industrial site. It is considered that the proposal would be broadly consistent with UDP Policies EM6, EM7 and EM8.

Recommended **Approve**
Decision:

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. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes Order) 1987 (or any subsequent re-enactment) the development shall only be used as an emergency services training centre, and for no other purpose within Use Class D1.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and because an alternative development would conflict with the provisions of UDP Policy EM8 and PPS4. This enables the local planning authority to consider the implications of other uses within use class D1as and when they may be put forward having regard to Wirral Unitary Development Plan Policies EM6, EM7, EM8 and National Planning Policy PPS4.

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 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

4. Development shall not be commenced until a Framework Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Framework Travel Plan shall include proposals and commitments to the promotion of sustainable transport including:

- Access to the site by staff
- Information on existing transport services to the site and staff travel patterns;
- Travel Plan principles including measures to promote and facilitate more sustainable transport;
- Realistic targets for modal shift or split;
- Identification of a Travel Plan co-ordinator and the establishment of a travel plan steering group;
- Measures and resource allocation to promote the Travel Plan; and
- Mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the Travel Plan, including the commitment to a submit an annual review and action plan to the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure a sustainable form of development through the encouragement of access to a choice of means of transport to the site, and to accord with UDP Policy TR9 and PPG13.

5. A Full Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority within 6 months of the occupation of the development hereby granted. The provisions of the Full Travel Plan shall be implemented and operated in accordance with a programme detail therein and shall not be varied other than through agreement with the Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, the Travel Plan shall include, but not be limited to:

- Access to the site by staff

- Information on existing transport services to the site and staff travel patterns;
- Travel Plan principles including measures to promote and facilitate more sustainable transport;
- Realistic targets for modal shift or split;
- Identification of a Travel Plan co-ordinator and the establishment of a travel plan steering group;
- Measures and resource allocation to promote the Travel Plan; and
- Mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the Travel Plan, including the submission of an annual review and action plan to the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure a sustainable form of development through the encouragement of access to a choice of means of transport to the site, and to accord with UDP Policy TR9 and PPG13.

Last Comments By: 14/09/2011 15:09:35
Expiry Date: 01/11/2011