

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

20th November 2013

Planning Application 2013/261/FUL

Extensions to existing sea food production facility, together with associated car parking and service areas

Ocean House, 9B Oxleasow Road, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 0RE

**Applicant: Blue Earth Foods Limited
Expiry Date: 19th December 2013
Ward: WINYATES**

(see additional papers for Site Plan)

The author of this report is Steven Edden, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 548474 Email: steve.edden@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

The site, which is generally level throughout comprises two distinct areas. The northern half contains the existing Blue Earth Foods Ltd facility and would accommodate the proposed extensions subject to this application. This comprises a site area of approximately 1.51 hectares. The existing Blue Earth food buildings contain 7317 square metres of gross floor space.

Blue Earth Foods Ltd is a major supplier of chilled seafood products to retailers throughout the UK and Europe, employing 330 full time staff.

The company have recently purchased the former Hardings Coaches site directly to the south of their current site. This site, now re-named Atlantic House, extends to 0.83 hectares. The former coach depot provides administrative offices and raw produce preparation and packaging. The remainder of the site mostly consists of a concrete hardstanding having previously been used for coach parking up until 2011 when the former company Hardings went into administration.

The two sites are split by an existing footpath, land drainage ditch and overgrown dense hedge. A vehicle and pedestrian access linking the two sites has recently been granted permission under application 2013/148/FUL. Both sites are located at the end Oxleasow Road from which vehicular access is gained.

Beyond the eastern boundary of both sites lie various adjoining employment uses including the Ashtene Business Park which contains a number of employment units of varying sizes. The site is flanked to its north, the west and to the south by tree belts, subject to 'blanket' New Town Tree Preservation Order No.7. Beyond the western boundary lies Winyates Way. Some 150 metres due south of the 'Atlantic House' site, there lies an area designated as Primarily Open Space in the Local Plan, beyond which lies the residential development of Ibstock Close.

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Both sites are situated within a Primarily Employment Area as designated on the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3 Proposals Map.

Proposal Description

Permission is sought to extend the existing factory unit to help cope with the increased demand for the company's products by creating additional floor space allowing the company to expand whilst re-configuring the existing facility to provide a more efficient layout and method of working. Approximately 50% of the floorspace would be used for storage (B8 use) with the other 50% being used for general industrial (B2 Class) use.

The company originally intended to apply for permission for new build development on the former Hardings Coaches site to the south following the approval of application 2012/288/COU, set out later in this report. However the company have now concluded that an extension to their existing production area to the north (Ocean House) would provide a more efficient solution to their production problems. Should the proposal be permitted it would allow the company to remain in their existing facility whilst creating a further 150 full time jobs to supplement their existing workforce.

The proposals are as follows:

- o To demolish an existing Dry Goods Store: (387.5 square metres) and existing workshop/office store (126.5 square metres)
- o To dismantle an existing temporary dry store (304 square metres) and re-erect behind an existing workshop on the former Hardings Coaches site.
- o To construct a new chilled dispatch area (375 square metres) to initially be constructed as a temporary dry goods store
- o Construct a new Goods in and holding area, freezer, dry goods store and additional production and packing space totalling 3,027 square metres of floor space
- o To implement permission 2013/149/FUL whilst amending the location of the vehicular access linking the two sites by 10 metres west of its original location
- o To extend the existing service yard to facilitate acceptable HGV manoeuvring within the curtilage of the existing facility
- o To create a new formal car parking area within the 'Atlantic House' site (Former Hardings Coaches site) to supplement the existing Ocean House car park and provide additional spaces to support the proposed extensions and alterations.
- o To carry out other minor ancillary landscaping and resurfacing works to the existing sites including re-surfacing in part, the existing concrete hardstanding to the former Hardings site.

Your Officers would make members aware that the some of the more minor works proposed here would be classed as 'permitted development' and therefore do not fall under planning control, although the proposed extensions do. The whole package of proposed works is described above for completeness.

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Relevant Policies :

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3:

E(EMP).2	Design of Employment Development
E(EMP).3	Primarily Employment Areas
E(EMP).3a	Development Affecting Primarily Employment Areas
B(BE).13	Qualities of Good Design
B(BE).14	Alterations and extensions to buildings
S.1	Designing Out Crime
C(T).12	Parking Standards (Appendix H)

Others:

SPD Designing for Community Safety
SPG Encouraging Good Design

Relevant Planning History

2011/002/FUL	First floor extension to existing offices and new two storey entrance and fire escape enclosure	Approved	28.02.2011
2011/151/FUL	Partial ground floor extension with first floor extension to existing offices, together with new two storey entrance and fire escape enclosure.	Approved	26.07.2011
2012/288/COU	Change of use from coach depot (sui generis) to employment uses including B1, B2 and B8 use	Approved	10.12.2012
2013/148/FUL	Proposed vehicular and pedestrian access	Approved	25.10.2013

Consultations

Arboricultural Officer

No objections raised provided works are carried out in accordance with tree survey and report

Senior Community Safety Project Officer

No Comments Received To Date

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Area Environmental Health Officer (WRS)

No Comments Received To Date

Highway Network Control

No objection

Crime Risk Manager

No objection

Severn Trent Water Ltd

No objection. Drainage details to be subject to agreement with Severn Trent

Public Consultation Response

The application has been advertised by writing to neighbouring properties within the vicinity of the application site, by display of public notice on site, and by press notice. No representations have been received.

Assessment of Proposal

The key issues for consideration in this case are as follows:-

Principle of development

The site is within an established employment area that is zoned for Primarily Employment Uses in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3. Therefore, the proposed development, as an extension to an existing employment use would be acceptable, complying with policies E(EMP).3 and E(EMP).3a of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3, in addition to core planning principles identified in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The NPPF supports existing business sectors, taking account of them expanding or contracting in order to encourage sustainable development and building a strong and competitive economy. The proposal would contribute towards economic prosperity as it involves the expansion of an existing business and as such will assist towards building a strong, responsive, sustainable and competitive economy. Therefore, the proposal would comply with the relevant aims of the NPPF.

Design and Layout

The smaller of the two steel portal framed extensions (the Chilled Dispatch area) would be square shaped in floorplan with a low pitched ridged roof and would face south towards the Atlantic House site.

The much larger extension would be located entirely to the western elevation of the existing building, facing towards Winyates Way. Much of the elevation to Winyates Way would be hidden from view by the rising embankment to the road line and the dense tree line between the site boundary and the highway. The extension running parallel to Winyates Way has been designed with a low mono pitch roof to maximise internal storage heights. To the south-west corner facing on to Winyates Way, where the tree line

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screen is less dense, a dual pitched roof has been introduced which lowers the overall height of the extension and provides a gable to the north facing elevation which would respect the gable to the existing office block to the east and would also compliment the appearance of the proposed chilled dispatch area.

External materials to be used on both extensions would be a combination of vertical and horizontal trapezoidal profile composite cladding and micro-rib panels. Colours to be used (light grey combined with a dark blue) would match those finishes used in the construction of the existing factory building.

Officers are satisfied that the design and external appearance of the proposed extensions would respect the form of the existing portal framed factory building and would therefore comply with Policies B(BE).13, B(BE).14 and E(EMP).2 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3.

Highways and Access

The vast majority of the southern (Atlantic House) site is comprised of a concrete hardstanding, much of which is to be resurfaced and demarked as a formal car parking area. At present, due to the nature of the past use, only a limited area has demarked car parking spaces with other areas marked out for coaches.

74 car parking spaces together with 8 cycle spaces currently exist at the site. 80 new car parking spaces are to be provided together with 8 motorcycle spaces and 10 new cycle spaces meeting the policy requirements.

The proposed new vehicular access linking the two sites followed pre-application discussion between your officers and the applicant culminating in the granting of permission under 2013/148/FUL as referred to earlier in the report. The minor re-location of the proposed vehicular access to that approved under the 2013/149/FUL consent together with proposed on-site parking provision is acceptable to County Highways and your officers since the works would have no impact on highway safety and would not affect the surrounding highway network.

Amenity considerations

Blue Earth Foods, trading from Ocean House as a frozen seafood company has been operating without complaint to the knowledge of your officers for many years. There are no current restrictions as far as hours of operation are concerned. Proposed hours of operation are not specified although often such sites operate on a 24 hours a day, seven days a week basis. It is often reasonable to allow businesses to operate in such a manner and in the absence of any public representations received and any objection from WRS, officers would not recommend that hours of operation be restricted in this case.

Other issues

The existing hedgerow separating the two sites is well established but overgrown. Where the new vehicle access breaks through the hedgerow, trees are to be trimmed back and pruned. An established tree line exists to the western boundary of the site which has

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been subject to a tree survey and report, carried out in accordance with BS5837 (2012). This recommends that all trees along Winyates Way be retained and that branches overhanging the site from trees on Winyates Way may be trimmed back to a line level with the existing fence. Following discussion with the RBC Arboricultural Officer, Officers are satisfied that the proposed works would have a negligible detrimental impact upon the visual amenities of the area so long as the development is carried out in accordance with the tree report.

Conclusion

The proposals would represent an acceptable use in this location given that the site is within a Primarily Employment Area. The development would comply with the relevant policies of Local Plan No.3 together with those of the National Planning Policy Framework. The design of the extension would respect that of the existing building and its surroundings and car parking and access arrangements would be satisfactory. As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and can be recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION:

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of the grant of this permission.

Reason :- In accordance with the requirements of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2) Materials and external finishes to be used in the construction of the development shall be as stated on the submitted planning application form

Reason: To ensure that the development respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area in accordance with Policy B(BE).13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3

- 3) The development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the following plans:

Drawings as submitted with the application

Reason: To accurately define the permission for the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is satisfactory in appearance in order to safeguard the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policy B(BE).13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3

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- 4) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in complete accordance with the BS 5837 (2012) Tree Report (A.Evans) dated 19.8.2013.

Reason:- To prevent damage to, and preserve the tree(s) in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy B(NE).1a of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3

Informatives

- 1) The applicant is advised that development should not begin until drainage details, incorporating sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development have been submitted to and approved by Severn Trent Water Ltd.
- 2) The local planning authority have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner to seek solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with this planning application through pre-application advice and discussion.

Procedural matters

This application is reported to Planning Committee for determination because the application is for major development (more than 1000 sq metres of new commercial / Industrial floorspace), and as such the application falls outside the scheme of delegation to Officers.