

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** **25<sup>th</sup> JULY 2012**

**REPORT BY:** **HEAD OF PLANNING**

**SUBJECT:** **FULL APPLICATION – FOR THE DEMOLITION OF AN EXISTING STORAGE BUILDING AND STORAGE COMPOUND AND ERECTION OF A SALT STORE.**

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** **049796**

**APPLICANT:** **WELSH GOVERNMENT**

**SITE:** **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, FULBROOKE BUILDINGS, HALKYN.**

**APPLICATION VALID DATE:** **28<sup>th</sup> MAY 2012**

**LOCAL MEMBERS:** **COUNCILLOR C LEGG**

**COMMUNITY COUNCIL:** **HALKYN COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**REASON FOR COMMITTEE:** **SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT**

**SITE VISIT:** **NO**

**1.00 SUMMARY**

- 1.01 This is a full planning application for the demolition of an existing store building and storage compound and the erection of a new salt store building at Fulbrooke Buildings, Halkyn, Holywell, CH8 8BY. The new building is located at the existing highways depot which has an area of 1 hectare. The building is to be located in the north western corner of the site in the location of an existing storage building and near to the existing salt dome on the site.
- 1.02 The main issues are considered to be the principle of development in this location, the appropriateness of the scale and design of the building in this location, highways issues, pollution and noise the impact of the proposal on amenity of adjoining occupiers, impact on the conservation area and Listed Buildings in the area.

**2.00 RECOMMENDATION: TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:-**

2.01

1. Time limit on commencement
2. In accordance with submitted plans
3. Prior to any works commencing a suitable lighting scheme to be submitted and approved.
4. Landscaping scheme to be submitted
5. Landscaping scheme to be implemented
6. Traffic management plan to be submitted to and agreed prior to works commencing
7. In accordance with the Highway management plan
8. Samples of proposed colours to be submitted and agreed
9. Tree and hedge protection
10. Land level details

**3.00 CONSULTATIONS**

3.01

Local Member

Councillor C Legg

Agrees to determination of this application under delegated powers, personally am totally in support of this application but on behalf of a number of my constituents who live in the vicinity of Fulbrooke I must record strong objections to this application on their behalf.

Halkyn Community Council

Agreed to support the application. In particular, as it would benefit the road transport system in North Wales, including the Halkyn area, during adverse weather conditions in winter months.

Head of Assets and Transportation

Note from the design and access statement that the applicant proposes to implement a management plan which will limit the potential impact on the adjoining approach roads. On this basis confirm that raise no objection to the proposal from highway perspective. Notwithstanding the above, the proposal has a direct affect on the trunk road and comments have been forwarded onto the NWTRA on behalf of the Welsh Government and request that await formal direction from the Welsh Government prior to determining the application.

Head of Assets and Transportation (Rights of Way)

Public footpath 3 abuts the site but appears unaffected by the development.

Welsh Office Transport

The response being to advise that the Welsh Government as Highway Authority for the A55 trunk road does not issue a direction in respect

of this application.

#### Head of Public Protection

No objections in principle regarding the proposal. Although aware that problems arose at the time of the existing salt dome which involved lighting and some operational noise. Discussions have take place with the agent and allowances have been made in the planned development to address any concerns.

They note that the store is a strategic emergency facility and once the store is commissioned and filled it will not be in regular use until prolonged bad weather depletes the regular stores and supplies are interrupted. On this basis the proposal will not increase the operational noise associated with the site on a daily basis. In addition they would expect that any lighting being introduced should not cause a statutory nuisance and in order this is achieved they require that any lighting scheme should adhere to the guidance published by the institution of Lighting Engineers. And request a condition relating to this aspect of the application.

#### Environment Agency

Have no objection to the proposed development in principle, however, have the following comments for consideration. Following complaints in the past the applicant should ensure that the drainage be clearly separated, with only clear rainwater entering surface water drains. Any areas with the potential for contaminated water to be generated should go to sewer or treatment before discharge.

#### Airbus Operations

The proposed development has been examined from an aerodrome safeguarding aspect and does not conflict with safeguarding criteria. Accordingly, have no aerodrome safeguarding objection to the proposal.

#### CCW

CCW does not object to the proposal.

## **4.00 PUBLICITY**

### **4.01 Press Notice, Site Notice, Neighbour Notification undertaken**

4 letters of objections have been received (two from the same resident) the main points of which can be summarised as follows:-

- Ombudsman investigated previous application found Councillors had been misled no press notice, limited consultation limited consultations.
- Environmental impacts of locating on this site.
- Past experience and blatant avoidance of following correct

- protocols and procedures.
- Pollution and environmental considerations, previous requirement to put uncovered salt in building does not apply in this case.
  - Highway issues previous application justification based on death of cyclist at time due to bad weather.
  - Open salt storage previously claimed to cause health issues this is not the case and no detrimental impact on cars to justify building this time.
  - Building another structure is contrary to conservation policy.
  - Original salt dome claimed at time to improve amenity of occupants of three properties near the site. Never at that time discussed residential amenity, current scheme has no such argument.
  - Store can be located anywhere more appropriately on an industrial area.
  - Conflict of interest between conservation policy and demands no mitigation of environmental pollution, improving amenity, health and safety.
  - Conditions imposed were not complied with for at least two years.
  - No good argument to locate salt store at Halkyn Depot. Negative impact, industrial building next to conservation area, increased traffic, and noise.
  - Size/Design dominates area.
  - Impact on conservation area and Listed Buildings
  - Lighting on site wakes birds need for blinds.
  - Access to the site/traffic issues.
  - Lack of landscaping.

## **5.00 SITE HISTORY**

### **5.01 3/HA/2147/77**

Conversion of existing storage areas to provide office accommodation – Permitted 4<sup>th</sup> July 1977

### **3/HA/460/77**

Erection of additional storage building - Permitted 10<sup>th</sup> October 1977.

### **3/HA/352/82**

Sitting of 2 No portable buildings – Permitted 19<sup>th</sup> October 1983

### **05/20/39340**

Installation of a 13.85 metre high 21.0 metre diameter salt storage dome - Permitted 4<sup>th</sup> August 2005.

## **6.00 PLANNING POLICIES**

- 6.01 Flintshire Unitary Development Plan  
GEN 1 General Requirements for Development  
GEN 3 Development in the open countryside  
D1 design Quality, Location and layout.  
D2 Design  
D3 Landscaping  
D4 lighting  
L1 Landscape Character  
HE 1 Development Affecting Conservation Areas.  
HE2 Development Affecting Listed Buildings and their Settings.  
AC13 Access and Traffic Impact
- 6.02 National Planning Policy  
Planning Policy Wales  
Technical Advice Note 5- Nature Conservation and Planning  
Technical Advice Note 12 – Design  
Technical Advice Note 22 – Planning for Sustainable Buildings.  
Technical Advice Note 18 – Transport
- 7.00 PLANNING APPRAISAL**
- 7.01 Site Description  
The full planning application for the proposed 5,000 ton salt storage facility at Halkyn which is situated within the existing Halkyn Highway Depot. In area the site measures approximately 150 metres in length with the width varying from 45 to 75 metres wide giving a total area of approximately 10,000 square metres or 1 hectare in area. In shape the depot forms a rectangular wedge that gets wider from the south western boundary and slopes in a north eastern direction towards the A55 direction. The access to the site is gained from the adjoining road network in the south eastern corner of the site adjacent to number 1 Fullbrooke Villas.
- 7.02 In terms of location the site is situated on the north eastern edge of Halkyn Village and the designated Halkyn Conservation Area which abuts the site in its south western corner and is in close proximity to a number of listed buildings located within the area. Halkyn Depot is bounded to the north, east and west by existing hedgerows and trees along with security fencing. The boundary to the south eastern side is formed by the depots access and also three properties along this boundary. A road from the A55 which is located approximately 200 metres to the north east of the application site runs along this boundary past the site and connects with the B5123 to the west.
- 7.03 The site for the proposed new salt store building lies on the north western boundary of the site near to an existing salt dome and associated Highway Depot buildings. The north western boundary of the site as noted is defined by security fencing with mature trees

within the boundary of the adjoining lane that runs north east past the depot, towards a bridge which crosses the A55 trunk road. The north eastern and southern boundary is also defined by security fencing and some mature trees beyond which are fields set to grazing. To the south along the eastern boundary, three properties stand adjacent to the existing depot. The southern boundary is also defined by security fencing and the entrance to the depot off the B5123 minor road that runs south east towards the A55 trunk road.

7.04 Access to the proposed salt store will be via the present access to the depot which is to be maintained from the minor road on the south eastern boundary of the site. Access to the proposed salt store will be from the central yard area which is used to access the other buildings within the complex. The central yard is also used to act as a parking facility for highway maintenance vehicles such as road sweepers and salt spreaders.

7.05 Need for a New Salt storage Building  
As the result of the recent harsh winters in Wales, difficulties were experienced in maintaining the supplies of road salt as a result of high demand together with restricted supplies available in the UK and Europe.

7.06 This shortage had particular social and economic consequences at both regional and UK national levels. Restricted salt supplies created difficulties in Wales in maintaining adequate levels of winter service leading to major disruption in services and supplies.

7.07 To help minimise the disruption to the highway network and reductions in the level of service in Wales that were experienced, the Welsh Government is coordinating efforts to ensure that adequate supplies are available to meet future requirements. As part of this objective, the Welsh Government has committed to provide salt storage facilities at strategic geographic locations in Wales to ensure that salt supplies can get to where they are required. In order to achieve this, additional and appropriately located facilities to be in place in readiness for any further bad weather conditions.

7.08 The new salt storage facility, proposed at Halkyn Depot, is required in order to ensure that there is a strategic reserve of salt stored at key locations along the trunk road network to support local authorities' road maintenance teams during extreme winter weather conditions.

7.09 At present there is already a salt storage facility at the Halkyn highways depot that is operated by Flintshire County Council Highways Department. This facility, which is close to the A55, and provides a source of salt for the trunk road and local highway network. The additional salt storage facility proposed at the depot, will provide much needed reserves to be on hand in North Wales should quantities fall during severe winter conditions and new supplies of salt

are not readily available.

#### 7.10 Sites Considered

Issues have been raised by objectors regarding the selection of the site in question, although the consideration is the site submitted by the Welsh Government and not the other sites considered by them. Notwithstanding this for information, a range of options were considered by the applicants and their agent.

The agents have shown that there was a presumption made in favour of:-

- Sitting facilities adjacent to trunk roads where possible.
- Making best use of current Welsh Government assets where possible.
- Utilising local authority existing facilities where shared benefits are likely to accrue.
- Purchasing sites outright rather than rent due to likely punitive dilapidation costs to buildings arising from corrosive nature of salt.
- Sites with the potential for further operational uses.
- Location in considering distribution and rotation of salt stocks.

7.11 Consideration was given to purchasing and storing salt at supplier's premises. This was discounted due to the probability of stocks being commandeered under emergency conditions.

7.12 A number of vacant industrial units in the Bodelwyddan, Kinmel Bay and Queensferry areas were also identified. These were found to be relatively remote in terms of access to the A55 and offered little advantage in terms of the criteria identified. When these alternatives were compared with the provisions available at Halkyn and its existing function as an operational highways maintenance depot and base for Flintshire winter maintenance operations, this was the preferred location

#### 7.13 Proposed Development

The proposed salt store is shown as 12.6 metre high barn style building measuring approximately 21 wide by 36 metres in length. The structure is rectangular in shape with a total floor area of 750 square metres. The door opening is approximately 10.6 metres high and is accessed off the existing area of tarmac hard standing in the centre of the depot. The opening into the store will be covered by a folding door when not in use. The roof will be dark grey profiled metal cladding similar in colour and tone to the door. The lower part of the structure is constructed from a reinforced concrete retaining wall against which the salt will be stored. Above this is vertical timber cladding with varying dark and light wood shades. The existing tarmac hard standing measures provide access to the existing salt dome and working areas.

7.14 Lighting which was subject of complaints previously will be directional and mounted on lighting columns, replacing existing lighting in that part of the depot. The Head of Public Protection has looked at this aspect of the development and has requested a condition be imposed regarding the lighting provision. The existing security fence around the perimeters of the site is to be retained.

7.15 There is a significant amount of vegetation, mainly sycamore and ash trees around the perimeter of the site and these provide an element of screening to the existing depot. All these trees will be retained and protected where necessary, and additional trees planted will be undertaken as part of the proposal. Additional tree planting using large specimen trees is also proposed within the south east cartilage of the depot to mitigate views from adjacent properties.

7.16 Highway Matters

In terms of highway issues policy AC13 Access and Traffic Impact of the Unitary Development Plan states that development proposals will be permitted only if approach roads are of an adequate standard to accommodate the traffic likely to be generated by the development without compromising public safety, health and amenity and that safe vehicular access can be provided. In terms of highways issues both the Head of Assets and Transportation has been consulted on the application and raise no objections on highway grounds given the proposal to implement a management plan which will limit the potential impact on the adjoining approach roads. Welsh Office Transport section having been consulted and have not issued a direction regarding the proposal.

7.17 Lighting and Amenity

Policy D4 Outdoor lighting identifies that development will be permitted only where lighting is restricted to the minimum which is necessary to ensure public safety/security and prevent light pollution by the creation of excessive glare. While problems have occurred in the past in respect of lighting issues on the site the Head of Public Protection having been consulted has requested a condition relating to this aspect of the application. In terms of amenity in respect of those properties close to the site , as noted the proposal is for a salt store for use as a strategic emergency facility to enable authorities across north Wales to keep the A55 open during adverse winter weather conditions. AS noted once the store is initially commissioned and filled it will not be in regular use until such prolonged bad weather reduces regular stocks and supplies are interrupted as seen during last winter. Based on the above, the proposal will not increase the operational noise associated with the site on a daily basis.

7.18 Drainage

The environment Agency have been consulted on the proposal and have no objections to the application in principle. As the result of complaints in the past they have requested an informative be added to



and consent.

7.19 Principle of Development

The application site is outside any recognised settlement boundary as identified in the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan and is located within open countryside albeit within the existing Halkyn Depot. In general terms development proposals in such a location will not be permitted, however, the site is as stated above located within the existing highway depot and would fall within the definition of previously developed land within Planning Policy Wales, and given that the salt storage building is on an existing highways depot this is a consideration in favour of the proposal in policy terms. Guidance under policy GEN3 (Development in the Open Countryside) allows for the provision of new appropriate and essential development in the open countryside in very special circumstances. In the application submission the applicant has put a case in support of the application on the basis of the requirement for increased salt storage provision given the supply difficulties in recent bad weather conditions. The submission also identifies the site as the best strategic location on the eastern stretch of the A55 and in policy terms the applicant has sufficiently explained the need for such a proposal and the location in order to comply with policy GEN3.

7.20 Design and Scale of the Development/visual impact

Another key policy consideration is the design of the building and policy L1 (Landscape character) requires new development to be designed to maintain or enhance the character and appearance of the landscape. While policy D1 (Design quality, location and layout) seeks that all new proposals incorporate good standards of design whilst respecting its surroundings. Policy D2 (Design) only allows development where the building is off a good design, form, scale and materials and protects the character and amenity of the locality.

7.21 The scheme as submitted incorporates changes requested which has resulted in a grain barn type structure clad in timber using a dull style profiled metal roof. In consideration of its impact this has been assessed from both close range and from a distance. In terms of the distant views of the site the design and Access Statement submitted with the application states that the application site is not very visible from the A55. Inspection of the area shows the site is noticeable from the A55 in places resulting in those using the trunk road seeing glimpses of the proposal particularly if brightly lit during hours of darkness as is at present. The visual impact is limited by some reasonable planting with tree screening from the road, although this has gaps in some places. The site is also prominent in view from the public footpath which runs along the contour line past the parish Churchyard above the village to the south west of the site. Visualisations submitted showing the view from the south west of the field appears to show that the new building would not be visible in this location when the intervening trees are in leaf.

- 7.22 The structure would be visible from the parish church which is listed and from the B5123. In this locality there is a group of locally prominent cattle sheds/agricultural buildings which help in screening the site from the church and would enable this similar style development to be incorporated into the landscape without any significant further loss of landscape quality when viewed from the north west. The significance of the impact of the development on the character of Halkyn village itself would be fairly limited. The existing site and Depot is screened from the existing traditional buildings located within the village centre by the Britannia Inn. In addition the proposed store would not be seen in tandem view with any of the buildings and would not therefore dominate any frontages or principal elevations.
- 7.23 The location where the building can be seen, for example the road leading off the A55 there is already considerable disruption from the existing buildings on site and the bright yellow highway vehicles. The proposed building itself would be seen across the existing site rather than to one side thus would not add to the lateral extent of the intrusion and given the falling nature of the land it would not add significantly to the height. It is felt that the visual impact of the building has been reduced as far is practicable in this location and the summer views would not be greatly affected. In wintertime the building would be visible from the rising land in the south and would be visible in locations from the A55 although it would always be partially screened and consider that the building given its barn like appearance would blend into the countryside even in winter. In respect of the distant locations from where it would be most visible are the B5123 and the over bridge with these views being seen in context with the existing agricultural buildings which presently interrupt the rural character. The impact of the proposal on the conservation area and on the surrounding countryside will be acceptably low providing that lighting scheme on the site improves on the glare from the site as presently experienced.
- 7.24 Impact on the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings  
In respect of the more detailed issues, the site in question as noted abuts the village of Halkyn and its immediate environment is a Conservation Area and is near several Listed Buildings. In order to satisfy the requirements of policy HE1 (Development Affecting Conservation Areas) and HE2 (Development Affecting Listed Buildings and their Settings) the proposal in policy terms must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area; ensure there no adverse effects on the architectural or historic character and appearance of listed buildings or there setting. As noted above the impact of the proposal on the conservation area will be acceptably low and this would be improved by an improvement in the lighting presently experienced on site by reducing glare from the site.

7.25 Regarding the impact of the structure as noted this would be very prominent from two listed buildings and the neighbouring house, the Britannia Inn and the adjacent camp site. The impact on the historic character of the buildings in question would not be significant given the salt store would be in the background and the character of the buildings have already been affected by the depot and in particular the coloured plant and machinery in the open storage. It is considered that the proposed building would not add materially to the impact on this open country setting.

7.26 The information provided with the application shows that given the location of the salt barn would not impinge to a material extent on the front or side views. Any impact would be very slight in view of the distance between the barn and the houses and the downward slope of the land to the rear. In effect the view from the rear has been reduced by the depot itself. In terms of view while there is no right to a view, while the building would block an area of sky view from the rear of the houses backing onto the site, it would not block the significant open aspect towards the river. The use of materials and a variation in colour of the timber cladding will give the building a more agricultural appearance. The bulk of the building can be further broken up from the perspective of the dwellings by introducing some tree planting within the yard area to break up the apparent bulk without obstructing the view of the river from the houses.

## **8.00 CONCLUSION**

8.01 The proposed salt store is for the provision of a 5,000 ton capacity salt storage building which is to be located at the existing Halkyn Depot where road salt is presently stored and has been for many years. The nature of the proposal is both compatible and consistent with the existing use of the site. The site is not within a sensitive area such as an SSSI, National Park, AONB Scheduled Monument or a World Heritage and European site. The proposal does not raise highway objections subject to conditions nor is it seen to have adverse impacts such as noise issues, nor lighting impacts subject to appropriate safeguards and conditions. In terms of conservation the proposal does not adversely impact on the Conservation Area or listed Buildings in the area and subject to appropriate planting and use of materials and colours the proposal is considered acceptable.

In considering this planning application the Council has acted in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998 including Article 8 of the Convention and in a manner which is necessary in a democratic society in furtherance of the legitimate aims of the Act and the Convention.

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