

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** **30<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2022**

**REPORT BY:** **CHIEF OFFICER (PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT  
AND ECONOMY)**

**SUBJECT:** **FULL APPLICATION – CONVERSION AND  
EXTENSION OF INDUSTRIAL UNIT TO OFFICE  
AND WAREHOUSE**

**APPLICATION  
NUMBER:** **063312**

**APPLICANT:** **ZEBRA PRODUCTS LTD**

**SITE:** **BALING WIRE PRODUCTS  
NORTHOP COUNTRY PARK**

**APPLICATION  
VALID DATE:** **30/7/21**

**LOCAL MEMBERS:** **COUNCILLOR M BATEMAN**

**TOWN/COMMUNITY  
COUNCIL:** **NORTHOP COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**REASON FOR  
COMMITTEE:** **MEMBER REQUEST GIVEN CONCERNS ABOUT  
OVERDEVELOPMENT ,ADEQUACY OF  
HIGHWAYS AND IMPACT ON RESIDENTS.**

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

**1.00 SUMMARY**

- 1.01 This full application proposes the conversion and extension of an existing industrial building located within Northop Country Park, into an office and warehouse.
- 1.02 The building currently has the benefit of planning permission for an extension to it and its use for warehousing and offices, this being permitted under 057593 in 2018. This current application proposes a revised scheme subsequent to the earlier permission.

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

- 2.01
1. Time limit on commencement
  - 2 In accordance with approved plans
  - 3 Materials to be submitted and approved
  - 4 Site / Finished Floor Levels to be submitted and approved
  - 5 Operating times 0900-17.30 hrs Monday – Friday. No working on Saturdays / Sundays or Bank and Public Holidays
  - 6 Staff Numbers limited to 20
  - 6 Foul /surface water drainage scheme to be submitted and approved
  - 7 Details of security lighting to be submitted and approved
  - 8 Scheme for Giant Hogweed Management to be submitted and approved
  - 9 No manufacturing to be undertaken at the site
  - 10 Retention of hedgerows on site boundaries

**3.00 CONSULTATIONS**

3.01 Local Member

Councillor M Bateman

Request Planning Committee determination. Preliminary concerns relate to overdevelopment, access constraints, and impact on living conditions of residents.

Northop Community Council

Object for the following reasons:

- Intensification of heavy vehicular movements
- Impact on the historical parks and garden setting
- Impact on landscape
- Impact on occupiers of nearby residential properties

Highway Development Control Manager

Raises no objection - subject to a restriction controlling maximum staff numbers and recognising that visibility at the junction of the country park with the highway network is safeguarded by a management company

Community And Business Protection

No adverse comments

Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru

Request that any permission includes the imposition of a condition requiring the submission and approval of a foul drainage scheme.

Welsh Historic Gardens Trust

No objection

Council Ecologist

Acknowledge the need for Giant Hogweed Management on the site.  
Request this be secured by the imposition of a condition.

**4.00 PUBLICITY**

4.01 Site, Notice, Neighbour Notification

31 letters of objection received from members of Northop Country Park Residents Association, the main points of which without satisfactory controls or conditions being imposed relate to:

- a drainage condition imposed on a previous application 057593 remains outstanding
- increased vehicular movements would impact on highway safety
- impact on living conditions of existing residents through increased vehicular movements / security lighting.
- presence of Giant Hogweed within the site

**5.00 SITE HISTORY**

5.01 051664 – Sub-division of existing workshop to provide 2 No units to serve golf course and 4 No small starter business units. Approved 6/3/2014

057593 – Conversion and extension of industrial unit to offices and warehouse. Permitted 8/2/2018

**6.00 PLANNING POLICIES**

6.01 Flintshire Unitary Development Plan

STR1 – New Development

STR3 – Employment

GEN1 – General Requirements for Development

GEN3 – Development in the Open Countryside

D1 – Design Quality, Location and Layout

D2 – Design

L1 – Landscape Character

HE5 – Protection of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Importance

AC13 – Access and Traffic Impact

AC18 – Parking Provision and New Development

EM4 – Location of Other Employment Development

EM5 – Expansion of Existing Concerns

EWP13 – Nuisance

Policy IMP1 – Planning Conditions and Planning Obligations

Supplementary Planning Guidance ( SPGN )  
SPGN2 – Landscaping  
SPGN11 – Parking Standards

National Planning Policies and Guidance  
Planning Policy Wales PPW – Edition 11  
Future Wales : The National Plan 2020-2040  
Technical Advice Note 11- Noise  
Technical Advice Note 12 – Design  
Technical Advice Note 18 – Transport  
Technical Advice Note 23 – Economic Development

## **7.00 PLANNING APPRAISAL**

### **7.01 Introduction / Site Description**

The building /site the subject of this application is located within Northop Country Park, to the south of the A55 North Wales Expressway, and north west of Rhos y Chellis Cottages. The site lies adjacent to the first hole on Northop Hall Golf Course and is just within the setting of Soughton Hall Historic Park and Garden.

7.02 The existing building is of a modern design, constructed with facing brick elevations a profiled clad roof, with large door openings and 2 No open storage bays on its north western elevation. The existing building measures approximately 37.5 m x 14.7 m x 6.1m (high) and is screened by an embankment and mature conifer trees There is a large level tarmac area to the front and side of the existing building and open store bays.

### Background of Planning History

7.03 It is important to note that the site currently has an extant planning permission for conversion and extension of the building into offices and a warehouse. This was permitted under 057593 in February 2018, for a building measuring approximately 40.7m x 14.7m x 6.1m (high) with ground /first floor use comprising a total of 754m<sup>2</sup>.

### Proposed Development

7.04 The plans submitted as part of this application propose an L-shaped extension to the southern gable and rear elevations of the building to facilitate increased office / warehouse space above that previously permitted under 057593. This would result in the building measuring approximately 44.6m x 19.2m x 6.1m (high) and an increase in the combined ground /first floor space to 13440m<sup>2</sup>. The building is intended to accommodate 20 employees as per that proposed under 057593.

### Main Planning Considerations

7.05 i) Principle of development

- ii) Scale / design and impact on character of the site and surroundings
- iii) Adequacy of access
- iv) impact on living conditions of occupiers of existing properties
- v) Giant Hogweed Management.

7.06 Principle of Development

The principle of the use of the building the subject of this application as a warehouse/ office, has been established by virtue of 057593, although development has not commenced in accordance with this permission.

- 7.07 The acceptability of the current application which primarily involves the further enlargement of the building subsequent to 057593, has to be undertaken having regard to this background history and Policies EM4 /EM5 of the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan. This involves an assessment of the appropriateness of the scale /design of the building relative to the site and its surroundings, together with the adequacy of highways, impact on the living conditions of occupiers of nearby residential properties and ecology. These issues are addressed in further detail below

7.08 Scale / Design

The proposal would result in an approximate 44% increase in both the footprint and usable floor space of the building from that previously permitted under 057593. The maximum height of the building at approximately 6.1m remains unaltered, and consistent with its initial construction and the earlier scheme referenced.

- 7.09 It is considered in visual terms the position of the proposed extensions to the side /rear of the existing building maintain the design ethos and form of the building both in its original form and as previously permitted under 057593. This in combination with improvements to its design elements including fenestration/ repositioned openings, use of materials and existing screening on the site boundaries would help to assimilate the development into the site and wider surroundings in particular the Historic Parks and Gardens

7.10 Adequacy of Access

The concerns / objections received in relation to the adequacy of the access to serve the development are duly noted. Consultation on the application has been undertaken with the Highway Development Control Manager who advises that the roads within the country park are not adopted by the Highway Authority being the subject of separate private ownership / management. The proposal has however been assessed having regard to i) the context of the background planning history (ii) concerns relating to the potential increase in the size of vehicles required to serve a larger on site warehouse building and (iii) the adequacy of the access at its junction with the adopted highway where there are concerns that an

established hedgerow is impacting on the ability to secure and safeguard adequate visibility.

- 7.11 Having regard to the above, it is considered by the Highway Development Control Manager that there is no objection to the development from both highway capacity and safety perspectives as a) the road network is capable of accommodating an increase in vehicle size and b) maintenance of the hedgerow within the visibility splay is secured by the applicant through a management company with the fall - back position being the council's street scene department in the event of urgent maintenance being required to secure highway safety.
- 7.12 Impact on Living Conditions  
Of particular importance in consideration of this application is to ensure that the living conditions of occupiers of existing residential properties located in proximity to the site are safeguarded. The nearest residential properties to the site are Rhos y Chellis Cottages located approximately 46.5m to the south west , the properties being screened from the development by a substantial high leylandi hedge around the site boundaries..
- 7.13 Consultation on the application has been undertaken with the Pollution Control Officer who has raised no objection to the development, this being consistent with the response previously received in relation to application 057593.
- 7.14 It is however considered necessary to recognise the relationship of the site to existing residential development and secure control over the retention of the afore -mentioned hedgerow which acts as a visual screen. In addition the previously permitted hours of operation of the site were conditioned to between 0800-1800hrs Monday – Friday and 0800-1200hrs on Saturdays. There was to be no site operations on Sundays or Bank and Public Holidays. This current application however proposes a reduction in site operations to between 0900-1730hrs from Monday – Friday with no weekend workings or operations during Bank or Public Holidays. This offers a significant improvement over the situation that currently exists, as the previous permission remains extant. The reduction in hours as proposed with additional controls over security lighting can be secured by condition as referenced in paragraph 2.01 of this report.
- 7.15 Giant Hogweed / Ecology  
The Council's Ecologist is aware of issues and concerns relating to the presence and increased growth of Giant Hogweed within the Country Park with measures currently in place to seek to address this matter both on the application site and wider area.
- 7.16 It is considered that there is a need for a blanket approach to seek to control its spread, but care is required when securing its removal in

the interest of health and safety this being undertaken in a managed environment. It is considered that this should be the subject of the imposition of a condition consistent with other developments within the locality where this approach has been adopted.

## **8.00 CONCLUSION**

8.01 The proposed increase in the size and associated amendment to the design of the building subsequent to planning permission 057593, is acceptable in the context of the site and wider landscape. It is a scheme that would be supported on its own merits at officer level notwithstanding the previous permission issued under 057593. It is important to note that there are no objections to the development from highway / pollution control perspectives or from the Welsh Historic Gardens Trust.

8.02 Whilst the previous permission for development of the site remains extant, the opportunity is afforded as part of this application to secure an improvement in the design of the building and impose additional conditions pursuant to 057593 in respect reduced working hours, security lighting, and the retention of the existing leylandi hedge to secure the living conditions of occupiers of nearby residential properties. There is also the opportunity to control the management of Giant Hogweed on the site.

8.03 Having regard to the above, it is considered that the application as submitted offers an improvement to that previously permitted under 057593, and it is recommended that permission be granted subject to the conditions referenced in paragraph 2.01 of this report.

### 9.01 Other Considerations

The Council has had due regard to its duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable increase in crime and disorder as a result of the recommended decision.

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.

The Council has had due regard to its public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

The Council has had due regard to its duty under Section 3 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of wellbeing objectives as a result of the recommended decision.

**LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Planning Application & Supporting Documents

National & Local Planning Policy

Responses to Consultation

Responses to Publicity

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