Expiry Date - 06/02/2024

Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/0780/23 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **British Telecom Salvington Road Worthing West Sussex**

Proposal: **Part retrospective application for a storage compound to the rear (north) behind a 1.8m metal fence containing 6 storage containers to the north of the compound and 2 skips to the south-west of the compound. The existing storage area to the front to be removed.**

Site Visit: 01.09.2023

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: Y – Re-notified in change of description and layout of the site on 18.01.2024

Site Notice: Y - Posted 01.09.2023

Site and Surroundings

The application site relates to a large commercial building and associated car parking space located on the north side of Salvington Road. The land is owned by British Telecom PLC. The land comprises a part three-storey and part two-storey large building which elongates to span virtually the entire width of the land and is of brick form with a flat roof with telecommunications infrastructure in-situ. The building fronts Salvington Road and is set back a moderate distance behind a brick wall and row of large trees which exceed the height of the building and abut the front boundary. Access to the land is located to the east and west of the front boundary off Salvington Road. At time of site visit the west side gate was locked. The remainder of the land is hardstanding which is predominantly used for parking provision.

At time of site visit the square-shaped parking area to the east of the land and building was mostly vacant with refuse bins to the front and 2No. skips and a fenced enclosure containing 2No. forklifts amongst other equipment to the rear abutting the south boundary to No. 1 Cumbrian Close. The other square-shaped parking area located to the north-east of the land and behind the building was completely fenced off via a 1.8m tall heras fence and comprises 6No. shipping containers to the rear along with materials and other equipment associated with a storage compound for digital infrastructure purposes. It is understood the use of this land to the north-east as a storage compound to support digital infrastructure has been the case since 02/05/2021. The storage compound forms the site and is the subject of this application

The surrounding area is predominantly residential with the compound backing onto residential gardens to the east (Cumbrian Close) and north (Mendip Road) and a row of garages to the west which belong to those properties that reside on Mendip Crescent.

Proposal

Permission is sought for a temporary 5-year consent to regularise the installation of the aforementioned storage compound to the north-east of the land. The area previously served as car parking provision.

The heras fence, 6No. shipping containers to the rear, and bagged storage area to the east are to be remain in-situ whilst the area to the west would be cleared to accommodate 7No. parking spaces and the relocation of the 2No. skips from the parking area to the east of the land and building. The area to the east of the land and building would be completely restored to parking provision. The containers measure 3050mm long, 2430mm wide, and 2590mm high.

The application is supported by a planning statement which, amongst other supporting text, reads:

‘These units are vital for the secure storage of the equipment required by our engineers. Having a regional network of containers/sites is the least disruptive, most efficient and environmentally sensitive way to support the required rate of rollout - as it minimises the travel required whilst maximising the time available to build the new network.’

‘The use of storage containers allows the client to move and flex at relatively short notice and low cost to suit areas which require the teams. The containers can be moved and effectively recycled to avoid traditional construction and potential for empty buildings in the near future. The solution is both sustainable and effective in meeting the needs of the roll out.’

Relevant Planning History: None relevant.

Consultations:

Environmental and Public Health Officer:

‘We have received complaints of use of this compound during the night and early hours of the morning. We have no adverse comments, providing the storage compound is only used during the times stated on the application (Monday to Friday 07:00-16:00). Please can this be a condition to any permission granted.’

Following further discussions with the EPH Officer, it was agreed to restrict operational hours to Monday to Friday 08:00-17:00 to more closely reflect

standard daytime working hours given the compounds proximity to residential amenity.

West Sussex County Council Highways Authority:

'This application is for the creation of a storage compound containing six storage containers and a new perimeter fence. The site is located on Salvington Road, a C-classified road subject to a speed restriction of 30 mph.

This application is retrospective, with the works having started on 02/05/2021. Following an inspection of the application documents, WSCC in its role as Local Highway Authority (LHA) requests more information from the applicant, subject to the following comments:

No trip generation data has been submitted as part of the application. Could the applicant provided details of the anticipated number of trips the proposed storage compound will generate, compared with that of the pre-existing site. In addition to the above, the Application Form states that ten car parking spaces will be lost as part of the proposals, reducing the site number to 50 parking spaces. Can the applicant provide justification for the loss of existing parking provision?

Please raise the above points with the applicant and reconsult. Upon receiving this information, the LHA can assess the application further.'

Following receipt of the applicant's answers to this information request, a second consultation response was received:

'The applicant has provided the requested information and as such, the LHA has been reconsulted and can provide the following updated comments:

The existing vehicular access point will be utilised for this development, with no alterations to this arrangement proposed. From inspection of WSCC mapping, there are no apparent visibility concerns with the existing access point on Salvington Road.

The applicant has confirmed that the site will accommodate 6 gangs with 12 vans, each of which will visit the site in the morning for pick up and in the afternoon for drop off of vehicles. The compound will be used for the parking of these vans, as well as storage. Considering this, the LHA does not anticipate that the proposed development would give rise to a significant material intensification of movements to or from the site.

The remaining parking provision of 50 parking spaces is considered suitable to serve the wider site. On-site turning ability remains achievable, allowing vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear.

In summary, the LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to

the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 111), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.'

Representations:

One representation has been received from an occupier of No. 1 Cumbrian Close objecting to the application on the following grounds:

- No time restraints on the use of the compound.
- Unacceptable noise impact all through the night.
- Fears relating to the proliferation of storage equipment.
- Unsightly development.
- Damage to boundary fence which abuts the car park to the east of the building.

Relevant Planning Policies
National Planning Policy Framework (Revised December 2023)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Worthing Local Plan (2023) 2020-2036
SP1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
DM5 (Quality of the Built Environment)
DM10 (Economic Growth and Skills)
DM14 (Digital Infrastructure)

Planning Assessment

As previously mentioned, the use of the area to the north-east of the land prior to the installation of the storage compound and subsequent submission of this application was onsite parking provision for staff. The compound, by virtue of the storing of relatively large scale and industry related equipment is utilitarian in appearance and significantly clutters the space. Notwithstanding, the compound is located to the rear of the British Telecom building and bounded by tall trees and shrubberies which provide screening. Thus, the compound is removed from visual point to public areas. Given this context, the compound is not anticipated to result in a significant harmful impact on visual amenity.

The operations of the compound, which would involve the depositing, manoeuvring, and transporting of industry related equipment is not considered conducive to what is a predominantly residential area with both the north and east boundaries of the compound abutting the rear garden spaces of adjacent residential properties. Following discussions with the agent, it was agreed that the 2No. skips that are currently sited adjacent the south boundary to No. 1 Cumbrian Close to the east side of the land and building be relocated to the south-west corner of the compound which is considered to be the most appropriate siting of the skips in view of the context of surrounding amenity

given the noise generated by their usage; the agent indicated that the skips would be used daily for tarmac, spoil and general waste and be emptied fortnightly or when they reach capacity. It is considered that the relocation of these skips into the secure compound to the south-west corner coupled with the restrictive control on operational hours sufficiently addresses the objectors concerns and will overcome issues in relation to noise and disturbance to residential amenity. Moreover, the site is considered suitable for the operations required given its former use as an underutilised hardstanding to the rear of the building within the existing premises which denotes an efficient use of land whilst optimising operational efficiency. The storage compound would be ancillary to the commercial use of the land.

Although the compound results in the loss of parking space, this is not anticipated to give rise to concern in relation to highways safety as confirmed by the highways authority. Further parking spaces are still available to other areas of the land and the parking to the east of the building is to be cleared of equipment and restored as such.

In arriving at this decision, weight is attached to the Council's and central government's support for the expansion and improvement of digital infrastructure to boost connectivity, as outlined in policy DM14 of the Worthing Local Plan.

In light of the explanation for the requirements of the site to support the expansion of the local area infrastructure network within the supporting statement together with correspondence received from the agent, it was agreed that a temporary permission of 5 years be most appropriate as it would not be the Council's desire to introduce such industrial operations on a permanent basis given the surrounding predominant residential context.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Temporary 5 Year Permission
3. Hours Of Operation
4. Incidental Storage Facility

Informative:

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating, with the Applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Expiry Date - 06/02/2024

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? Y

Case Officer: Jason Albon Date: 05.02.2023

Authorised by: Louise Prew Date: 06/02/2024