

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

5th July 2006

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0738/06F- Fen Ditton

Proposed Showroom/workshop and Extension to Existing Workshop at the Marshall Car Centre, Newmarket Road, Cambridge

Recommendation: Refusal

Date for Determination: 13th July 2006 (Major Development)

Site and Proposal

1. The application site is located on the north side of Newmarket Road, which lies to the east of Cambridge. The site lies within the settlement boundary, and there are no specific Local Plan designations covering the site.
2. The Marshall Motor Group is one of the largest privately owned motor dealer groups in Great Britain. The Marshall Car Centre (application site), which was opened in 1995, occupies approximately 1.25 hectares of retail land on the entry into Cambridge. The site has eleven different vehicle manufacturers represented, and a 5,570 square metre parts warehouse.
3. The application, registered on 13th April 2006, proposes a new car showroom, and the extension to an existing workshop on the site. These new works will 'fill in' a gap in the existing run of car showrooms on the site frontage. The design, layout and style of the proposals follow the design principles of the existing adjacent car showrooms. It is stated by the applicant's agent that the additional car showroom on the site will facilitate reorganisation of the existing franchises, with the possibility of a relocation from elsewhere in Cambridge. Proposed floor space is quoted as 2,008 sq.m.

Planning History

4. **S/1785/93/F** - Car showroom, sales area, associated buildings, access and alterations to garages. This application was approved with conditions on 12th January 1994. Further permissions for car showrooms were issued in 1992, 1995, 1996 and 1997.

Planning Policy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

5. Structure Plan **Policy P1/3** states that a high standard of design and sustainability for all new development will be required which provides a compact form of development through the promotion of higher densities, and provides a sense of place which responds to the local character of the built environment and pays attention to the detail of forms, massing, textures, colours and landscaping.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004

6. Local Plan **Policy EM7** notes that development for the expansion of existing firms within village frameworks will be permitted subject to the provisions of Policies EM3 (Limitations on occupancy of new premises) and EM6 (Small scale B1-B8 development in rural and limited rural growth settlements).
7. **Policy SH7** states that proposals involving the sale, hire, modification or repair of motor vehicles or plant will not be permitted in villages where they would create environmental problems by virtue of traffic generation, noise, smell or vehicle parking.
8. **Appendix 7/1** of the Local Plan 2004 on standards for car parking explains that under Use Class A (Sui Generis) staff parking is required at 7 spaces per 10 employees. Car sales and motor repair garages require 1 space per 45 square metres of display area. These are maximum standards.

South Cambridgeshire LDF Submission Documents 2006

9. **Policy ST/3** states that the Cambridge Airport/ North works lies within the urban framework. Development and redevelopment without any limit on individual scheme size will be permitted within the urban framework, provided adequate services, facilities and infrastructure are available or can be made available as a result of the development.

Consultation

10. **Fen Ditton Parish Council** - Recommends approval of the proposals
11. **Environment Agency** - The application indicates that the proposed development would replace an existing circulation/parking area. It proposes that surface and foul water drainage would discharge to 'existing systems', thus suggesting that the site area is currently surfaced and formally drained. Whilst this would be acceptable in principle, confirmation should be sought. The application, as submitted, does not consider sufficiently the following issues: surface water drainage, pollution control, trade effluent disposal and foul water drainage. Recommends the following condition to be attached to any approval given:

"Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of pollution control of the water environment, which shall include foul and surface water drainage, shall be submitted and agreed in writing with the Local Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans"

(Reason - To ensure a satisfactory method of foul and surface water drainage and to prevent the increased risk of pollution to the water environment.)

12. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** - There would be no significant impacts caused by the proposed development in relation to noise or environmental pollution.
13. **Local Highways Authority** - No comment

Representations

14. None received

Planning Comments – Key Issues

Parking Requirements

15. Whilst there is no Policy objection in principle, there is a concern regarding parking on the site, particularly where existing spaces would be re-located and where parking for the proposed development would be sited.
16. Confirmation over existing and required car parking on the application site has been sought from the applicant's agent. In a response dated 6th June 2006 it is explained that the space along the side of the application site, adjacent to the Ford garage, is used, in part, by existing staff, and in part as a parking place for car demonstrators, which are used to introduce prospective customers to individual models. The two disabled parking spaces will be remarked in two of the existing car parking spaces along the site frontage.
17. It is explained that Marshalls is in the process of providing additional car parking to serve the North Works. Staff who currently park adjacent to Ford will be required to park in the Marshall Motor Group car park towards the back of the site. Additionally, Marshalls is in the process of implementing a larger car parking area, for which planning permission has been granted. More disciplined use of the Motor Group car park and the availability of additional car parking will allow the reallocation of spaces in the immediate vicinity of the proposed showroom, to meet requirements. In particular, staff car parking will be available on land within the control of the applicants, at the back of the Works.
18. Whilst the applicant's agents have submitted the above information to support the current proposals, a number of issues are still not addressed. The parking area to the north of the works, which has an extant permission, only has a temporary permission until June 2008 (LPA ref S/S/0232/3/F). This site falls outside the framework boundary and within the green belt, and therefore is not an appropriate area to be used on a long-term basis.
19. In relation to the existing Marshall Group car park, this parking area is already at full capacity, and would not provide an adequate number of parking spaces, for either those who currently park where the proposed car showroom/workshop would be sited, nor for additional employees for the new showroom/ workshop. The existing car park already has employees parking in non-designated spaces, and to increase the numbers of people parking here would not be acceptable.
20. In addition to the above, car parking requirements for the new floorspace created as a result of the proposals has not been addressed. It has been calculated that the proposed showroom would require 7 parking spaces in association with the display area and 16 car spaces in connection with the service area. In addition, as 6 new staff members would be employed at the premises, (increasing from 12 to 18) this means that a total of 29 new parking spaces are required (although this could be reduced to 23 if the employees parked off site), together with 2 disabled spaces.

Surface Water Drainage

21. Concerns have been raised from the Environment Agency, who state that insufficient information has been provided regarding surface water drainage, pollution control, trade effluent disposal and foul water drainage at the site.

22. Confirmation over these issues has been sought from the applicant's agents. In a response dated 6th June 2006 it is stated that the application site is surfaced and formally drained, and that the proposed condition suggested by the Environment Agency would provide an appropriate safeguard.

Conclusions

23. It is considered that the explanation provided by the applicant's agent does not address concerns over car parking at the application site. Whilst it is possible that current and future employees of the Marshall Car Centre could be required to park away from the premises, in designated car parks to the north of the site, there is insufficient space to accommodate car parking required at present as a result of the new floorspace proposed. In the absence of adequate car parking, the proposal would represent an overdevelopment of the site.
24. On the basis of the above, I recommend that these proposals be refused.

Recommendation

25. Refused, for the reason given below.

Reasons for Refusal

1. The application proposals and supporting information submitted have not demonstrated that car parking requirements can be adequately accommodated on the site in relation to the proposed new floorspace to be created and to the existing parking use displaced from the site. The proposals are therefore contrary to car parking standards set out in Appendix 7/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004. In the absence of adequate car parking, the proposal would represent an overdevelopment of the site with consequent visual harm and potential for vehicles to spill out onto the internal access road.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- South Cambridgeshire LDF Submission Documents 2006
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning Applications file S/0738/06/F and S/1785/93/F

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