

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

6<sup>th</sup> May 2009

**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and Sustainable Communities

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**S/1567/08/F - BASSINGBOURN-CUM-KNEESWORTH  
Change of Use of Existing Store to Office and Land to Parking and Open Storage  
(Retrospective) at 76 Old North Road for North Herts Surfacing Ltd**

**Recommendation: Delegated Approval**

**Date for Determination: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008**

**Notes:**

**This Application has been referred to the Planning Committee for determination by Councillor Cathcart.**

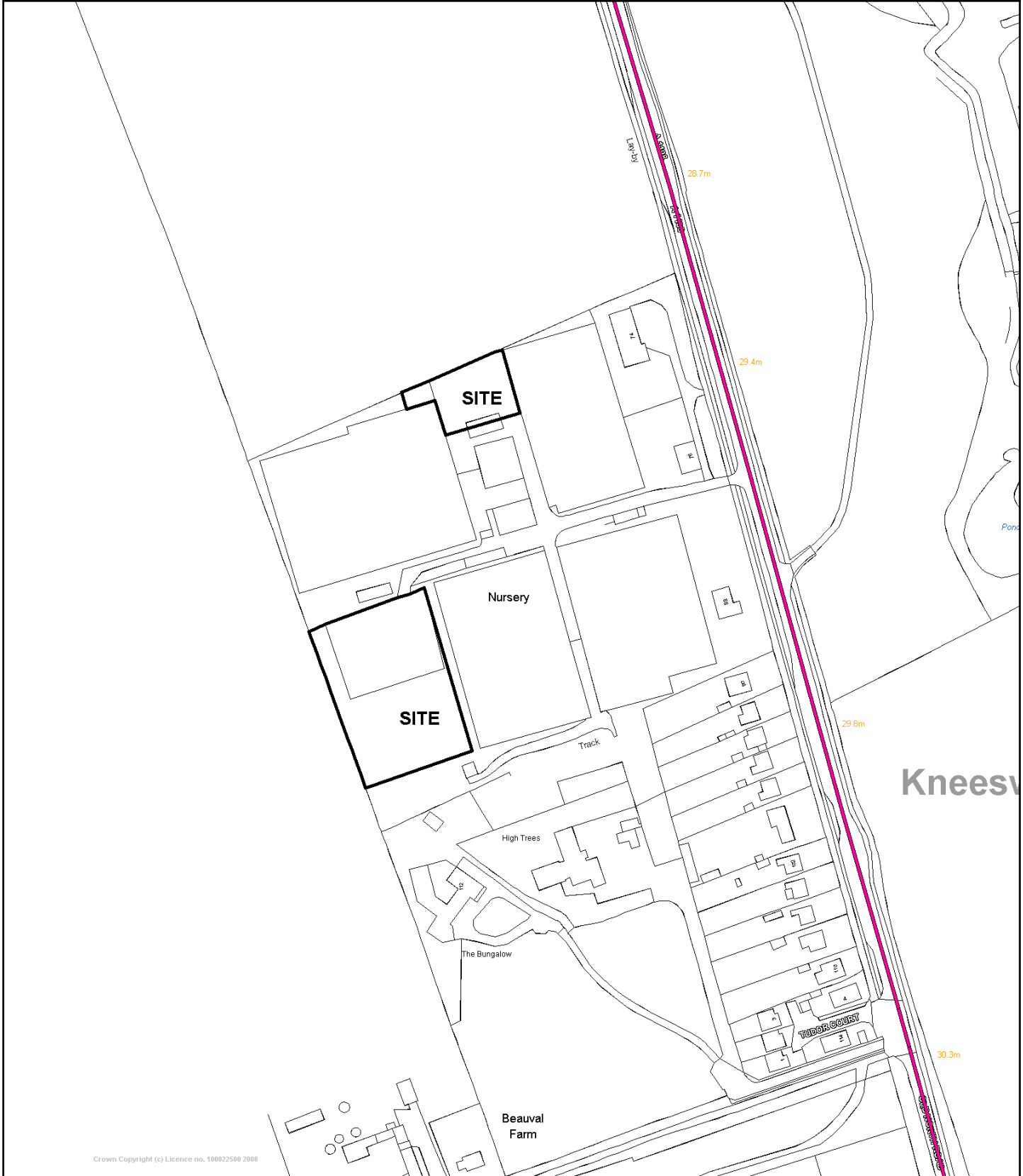
**Members will visit this site on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2009.**

### **Site and Proposal**

1. The full application, received on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2008, relates to two areas of land on the site, just south of Kneesworth, west of the A1198. Access is gained directly from the A1198. There are some frontage bungalows to the site, and to the rear is a nursery with a number of greenhouses and old industrial buildings. There are also large areas of hardstanding on the site. To the north and west of the site is open agricultural land, whilst to the south are a number of dwellings.
2. The application relates to two different parts of the site. Firstly, the northern part of the site contains an existing store, that would be converted into an office. The adjacent land would be used for open storage. The area of land to the southwest of the site would be used for the parking of HGV and plant vehicles and further open storage.

### **Planning History**

3. A planning application was approved for industrial development (**S/1453/91/F**) on the site, specifically related to the proposed office building. A previous application for industrial development on the site as a whole (**S/2219/88/O**) was withdrawn.
4. An application for the change of use of part of the site to a builders store/workshop (**S/0772/87/F**) was approved, as was a generator shed and oil storage tank (**S/2575/89/F**) on the same site.
5. An application for a change of use to a mini-skip business (**S/1815/93/F**) on part of the site was refused on grounds of residential amenity and highway safety. An application for a change of use of part of the existing mini-skip depot into a waste transfer station (**S/0010/94/CM**) was objected to by South Cambridgeshire District Council and refused by Cambridgeshire County Council on grounds of an unsuitable access and noise and disturbance to nearby residents. There have been several other applications on the site, not relevant to the determination of this application.



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Scale 1/2500 Date 14/4/2009

Centre = 534574 E 243814 N

May 2009 Planning Committee

## Planning Policy

6. South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (LDFDCP) adopted July 2007 – **DP/1** – Sustainable Development, **DP/2** – Design of New Development, **DP/3** – Development Criteria, **DP/7** – Development Frameworks, **ET/7** – Conversion of Rural Buildings for Employment and **NE/15** – Noise Pollution.

## Consultation

7. **Bassingbourn Parish Council** recommends approval.
8. The **Monitoring & Control Officer at Cambridgeshire County Council** states there are concerns about some materials stored on site being crushed and screened, which is unauthorised and unlikely to be supported by the County Council. Noise levels have been monitored relating to this activity and this also appears to have been unacceptable. Also, concerns are raised regarding the access to the site. If supported, a carefully worded condition could be imposed stating that no waste materials be stored on site.
9. The **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** has considered the implications of the proposal in terms of noise and environmental pollution, and concludes there are no significant impacts from the Environmental Health stand point.
10. The **Local Highways Authority** requests conditions relating to 2.4m by 120m vehicle-to-vehicle visibility splays, 2.0m by 2.0m pedestrian visibility splays, the formalisation of the two lay-by sections along the access to increase in width, a turning radius of 10.5m to be shown, and parking spaces to be 2.5m by 5m. Also, it requests information relating to total vehicle movement figures, and tracking on site for the largest vehicles. With regard to further highway and traffic information, the LHA requests a 10.5m turning radius to be shown so that vehicles do not have to cross the centre line of the A1198. A re-examination of vehicle movements and tracking is also requested.
11. The **Scientific Officer (Contaminated Land)** is satisfied there are no issues relating to contaminated land.

## Representations

12. The occupiers of **90 Old North Road** state that large lorries block both sides of the A1198 when accessing the site. They also have concerns about ground water pollution and black smoke emitted from bonfires.
13. The occupiers of **112 Old North Road** object on grounds of noise and pollution by the activities on site. The noise issue relate to crushing activities, vehicular movements and the loading and unloading of lorries. Pollution relates to dust created by the works. They also note the A1198 is busy and have concerns about the safety of the access. They also query a conflict of interest as South Cambridgeshire District Council is a client of the applicant.
14. Councillor Cathcart has referred the application to Committee with a site visit “because of traffic considerations and also the proximity of the site to residential properties.”

## **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

15. The key issues regarding the application relate to the principle of development, the impact upon the amenity of the occupiers of adjacent dwellings and highway safety.

### ***The principle of development***

16. The site does lie outside the Kneesworth village framework. However, the history of the site, the buildings on site and the large areas of hardstanding all show that the site has been used in the past for some industrial activities. A mini-skip business has been run from the site, and this Council has approved industrial development in some buildings. Given the nature of the site, I do not consider outdoor storage on this site would be harmful to the countryside. The proposed office is to be used for administration as well as for tea-breaks and would effectively be ancillary to the use. As the building already exists and appears structurally sound, I do not consider that any harm would be caused by an office in this location. The principle of re-use of buildings for employment is supported by Policy ET/7 of the Local Development Framework adopted 2007.

### ***The impact upon the amenity of the occupiers of adjacent dwellings***

17. There are residential dwellings to the east and south of the proposed areas. Number 76 Old North Road is located by the access. No. 112 is a backland plot set to the south of the site. There is a bund with minimal planting, and a water tower between it and the proposed storage area, with a distance of approximately 10m to the rear garden. The majority of the noise concerns relate to crushing of materials on site. This crushing does not form part of this application, and an informative can ensure the applicant is aware of this. It is this crushing that the Monitoring and Control Officer at the County Council has concerns about. Such crushing would need a new application, likely to be determined by the County Council. Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) has investigated the site a number of times, and has no concerns about the proposed storage use. When considering this application, it is important to note that such crushing is an unlawful activity on site, and this application would not change this stance.
18. I note the further comments from the occupiers of no. 112 Old North Road relating to noise emitted from loading and unloading of lorries and general vehicle movements. The area directly to the north of this property is to be a store, and there are already storage bins on site, which appear to have been on site for a number of years. I consider it necessary to condition that storage use should only be for North Herts Surfacing Ltd, as any future storage may have a more harmful impact in terms of noise pollution and also visual impact.
19. By the nature of the existing hardstanding and the storage of concrete bases, wooden railway sleepers, equipment and road materials, dust is likely to be an issue on site. There is a bund to prevent the spread of such dust. Again the Environmental Health Officer registers no concern about environmental pollution. I also note the comments from the Scientific Officer regarding land contamination on the site.

### ***Highway safety***

20. The access to the site is existing. The Local Highways Authority has requested a number of conditions and further information regarding the site and its use. Further clarification of figures is requested as the applicant appears to have provided two different sets of figures. The figure of 10 vehicles relates to their licence, whilst 5

vehicles is the current working position on site. A turning area has been demonstrated on site, but not at the exit onto the A1198. This information should be provided, as there are concerns that vehicles would cross the centre line of the A1198 when exiting the site.

21. Conditions can be added regarding vehicle-to-vehicle visibility splays as demonstrated on the amended plan, pedestrian visibility splays, and the formalisation of the access width as agreed by the applicant in a letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

#### ***Other Matters***

22. I do not consider there to have been a conflict of interests in the consideration of this application. It has been judged solely on its own merits.

#### **Recommendation**

23. Subject to the applicant demonstrating that the largest vehicles using the site can leave the site safely and not causing any potential traffic impacts on the A1198, delegated approval. Conditions will be required regarding vehicle and pedestrian visibility splays, the formalisation of the lay-bys to provide a continuous access, and a condition restricting the use to North Herts Surfacing Ltd only.

If approved, the application shall also have an informative stating that the approval does not give permission for any crushing of materials on site, and does not allow for the storage of waste materials, which would require a separate County Matter consent.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (adopted July 2007)
- Planning Files Ref: S/1567/08/F, S/1453/91/F, S/2219/88/O, S/0772/87/F, S/2575/89/F, S/1815/93/F and S/0010/94/CM
- Documents referred to in the report including appendices on the website only and reports to previous meetings

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