

Turley
Mrs Karen Barnes
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The Pinnacle
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Applicant:
CP Logistics UK Reading
Propco Ltd

PART I - DETAILS OF APPLICATION

Date of Application

24th January 2024

Application No.

24/00145/FULMAJ

THE PROPOSAL AND LOCATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT:

Full planning application for the construction of 2 employment units for flexible uses within Class E (light industrial), B2 and/or B8 of the Use Classes Order (including ancillary office provision) with associated enabling works, access from Hoad Way, parking and landscaping.

Land Bounded by Hoad Way and M4 and, High Street, Theale, Reading

PART II - DECISION

In pursuance of its powers under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, West Berkshire District Council **REFUSES** planning permission for the development referred to in Part I in accordance with the submitted application form and plans, for the following reason(s):-

1. The application site comprises some 5.4 hectares of greenfield land outside of, but adjacent in part, to the settlement of Theale, a Rural Service Centre. Policy ADPP1 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026, states that within the countryside only appropriate limited development will be allowed focusing on addressing identified needs and maintaining a strong rural economy. The proposed development does not specifically support the rural economy nor is it limited in scale. The supply of employment sites across the district for the next 10 years will be successfully managed through the Local Plan Review with a commitment from the Council to revisit this to ensure adequate longer term delivery up to 2041. As such the short term needs for commercial space are adequately met and there is no immediate need for sites.

The significant scale of the use and built form is far from limited and is not considered to be compatible with the nearby residential uses. Policy CS9 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy seeks to ensure that uses are compatible. The proposal introduces a large scale commercial use immediately adjacent to an otherwise predominantly residential area with associated amenities. The existing pattern of uses in the surrounding area maintains a greater separation and

distinction between the residential settlement of Theale and the commercial area to the south, which would be eroded by the proposed development.

Accordingly the proposal fails to comply with Policy ADPP1 and CS9 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 and the economic objective of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to ensure that new development is in the right place.

2. The application site is located within Flood Zone 2. Policy CS16 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 states that the sequential approach will be strictly applied across the district with the aim of locating new development within those areas at the lowest flood risk. The policy clearly states that development will only be accepted if it is demonstrated that it is appropriate at that location and that there are no suitable and available alternatives at a lower flood risk. Due to concerns for the methodology which underpins the sequential test; the suitability and accuracy of the evidence base which underpins the search and the approach taken to exclude sites based on their size, the application fails to demonstrate that there are currently no alternative sites available at a lower risk of flooding. As such the proposals fail to comply with the requirements of Policy CS16 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 and the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.

3. The site comprises of some 5.4 hectares of relatively flat grassland with some areas of trees/shrubs. The site is semi-open along its southern, western and northern edge to the surrounding area and wider landscape. Towards the eastern end overhead electricity cables cross the site with one large pylon. The site is located on the eastern edge of the historic village settlement of Theale and is partly within the Theale High Street and Blossom Lane Conservation Area. The application site is important to the semi-rural setting of this part of the village.

The loss of this greenfield site and the proposed buildings by virtue of their scale and design will have a significant adverse effect on the landscape quality of this area and the setting of the National Landscape and views across to it. The impacts will also harm the setting of the High Street and Blossom Lane Conservation Area, and adversely effect the separate identity of Theale from Calcot and degrade the approach and gateway into Theale, an historic settlement. The scale of the proposed buildings is vastly disproportionate to the scale of the existing dwellings and commercial businesses which border the site as these are predominately 2 storey and the jarring impact of this can be seen from a range of vantage points along the High Street. Furthermore, the proposals will have an adverse effect on identified valued landscape features and qualities. For these reasons the proposals fail to comply with Policies ADPP5, CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 and the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework and the AONB Management Plan.

4. The site is set on the edge of the historic village of Theale partly adjacent and within the Theale High Street and Blossom Lane Conservation Area. The site is visible from the eastern most edge of the conservation area with the entrance into Theale from Hoad Way being among the most prominent. Here the undeveloped character of the site contributes to the original village setting of Theale. Policy

CS19 of the Core Strategy seeks to conserve and where appropriate enhance heritage assets and their settings in line with paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The proposed development will have a negative impact on the setting of the conservation area and result in a loss of legibility to the eastern part of the conservation area. The proposed built form is also distinctly out of keeping with the appearance and scale of the existing buildings on the edge of the settlement. This harm is further accentuated by the use of grey gradient panels which are strikingly graphic. The proposed development will result in a Moderate/High level of less than substantial harm to the setting of the conservation area. Despite being less than substantial, this harm is real and serious and outweighs the public benefits. As such the proposals fail to comply with Policy CS19 and CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 and the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework with regards to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

If you require further information on this decision please contact the Council via the Customer Call Centre on 01635 519111.

INFORMATIVE:

1 In attempting to determine the application in a way that can foster the delivery of sustainable development, the local planning authority has approached this decision in a positive way having regard to Development Plan policies and available guidance to try to secure high quality appropriate development. In this application there has been a need to balance conflicting considerations, and the local planning authority has also attempted to work proactively with the applicant to find a solution to the problems with the development; however, an acceptable solution to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area could not be found.

Decision Date :- 28th August 2024

Bob Dray
Development Manager

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

Notification to be sent to an applicant when a local planning authority refuse planning permission or grant it subject to conditions

Appeals to the Secretary of State

- If you are aggrieved by the decision of your local planning authority to refuse permission for the proposed development or to grant it subject to conditions, then you can appeal to the Secretary of State under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- If you want to appeal against the local planning authority's decision then you must do so within 6 months of the date of this notice.
- Appeals must be made using a form which you can get from the Planning Inspectorate at Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6PN or online via <https://www.gov.uk/appeal-planning-decision>.
- The Secretary of State can allow a longer period for giving notice of an appeal, but he will not normally be prepared to use this power unless there are special circumstances which excuse the delay in giving notice of appeal.
- The Secretary of State need not consider an appeal if it seems to him that the local planning authority could not have granted planning permission for the proposed development or could not have granted it without the conditions they imposed, having regard to the statutory requirements, to the provisions of any development order and to any directions given under a development order.
- In practice, the Secretary of State does not refuse to consider appeals solely because the local planning authority based their decision on a direction given by him.

Purchase Notices

- If either the local planning authority or the Secretary of State refuses permission to develop land or grants it subject to conditions, the owner may claim that he can neither put the land to a reasonably beneficial use in its existing state nor render the land capable of a reasonably beneficial use by the carrying out of any development which has been or would be permitted.
- In these circumstances, the owner may serve a purchase notice on the Council in whose area the land is situated. This notice will require the Council to purchase his interest in the land in accordance with the provisions of Part VI of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.