
MAIN CASE

Proposal: Proposed new building (B2 & B8 use) and create new access

Location: Armtrac 70 Reach Road Burwell Cambridge CB25 0AH

Applicant: Brown & Barry

Agent: Greg Saberton Design

Reference No: 14/00356/FUL

Case Officer: Scott Jackson

Parish: Burwell

Ward: Burwell

Ward Councillor/s: Councillor Hazel Williams, MBE
Councillor David Brown
Councillor Lavinia Edwards

Date Received: 14 March 2014

Expiry Date: 9 May 2014

[N274]

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The application is for the erection of a new building for B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage or distribution), this building extends to an internal floor area of 186m². The proposal is outside the settlement boundary for Burwell where development is strictly controlled. A supporting statement has been submitted with the planning application to demonstrate the operations of the applicant's company and the need for the proposed building in this location. Whilst it is acknowledged that the development will be located outside the settlement boundary, on balance it is considered that sufficient supporting information has been submitted to demonstrate that there is a need for the development in this countryside location and that it will help support an existing rural business and create additional employment. By virtue of its scale, height and appearance the proposed (B2/B8) building is considered to be in keeping with the existing building at the site and not result in an alien and discordant feature in the countryside. It is not considered to give rise to loss of residential amenity or highway safety issues.
- 1.2 The application is therefore recommended for Approval.
- 1.3 This application has been called-in to planning committee by Councillor David Brown.
- 1.4 **A site visit has been arranged for 11.50am, prior to the Committee meeting.**

2.0 THE APPLICATION

2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a new building for a mix of B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage or Distribution) uses. The proposed building is of portal frame construction, being finished in corrugated steel cladding with a roller shutter door to the front. A new vehicular exit is proposed to the front of the building, this will exit onto Reach Road, a classified C road. Parking and turning areas are proposed to the front of the new building. The proposed building measures 12m x 12m with a ridge height of 7.9m and height to eaves of 4.9m.

3.0 THE APPLICANT'S CASE

3.1 The Applicant's case is set out in the Design and Access Statement and supporting statement, both of which can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link <http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/>. Alternatively a paper copy is available to view at the East Cambridgeshire District Council offices, on the application file.

4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

4.1 The site is located outside the settlement boundary for Burwell, directly to the north west of the building operated by Armtrac (the applicant's company). The land is an agricultural field, relatively open and devoid of any boundary features. Telegraph poles and wires run a course across the site to the north and west; electricity pylons are visible to the north and west. A drainage ditch runs along the southern boundary of the site, parallel with Reach Road.

5.0 PLANNING HISTORY

5.1

12/00272/FUL	Construction of new office/training facilities	Approved	20.06.2012
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6.0 REPLIES TO CONSULTATIONS

6.1 At the time of writing this report the consultation period had not expired. The consultation period expires on 1st May 2014. Any consultation responses received before the planning committee meeting on 7th May 2014 shall be verbally reported at the meeting. The Environment Agency have been consulted on this planning application, their comments were still awaited at the time of writing this report.

6.2 Councillor David Brown - Called in the planning application on the grounds that it deserves wider consideration by the planning committee.

6.3 CCC Highways- The proposal will marginally increase traffic movements to the site, but not by a significant amount. If minded to approve the planning application recommend conditions in relation to surfacing of access, construction of access,

drainage measures to prevent surface water run-off from the site, setting out of turning space, vehicular access width, gates across the access and submission of a traffic management plan.

- 6.4 Environmental Health (noise) - There is residential development to the north east of the site. Due to the distances involved and the times of use being proposed, recommend conditions in relation to hours of operation and noise levels.
- 6.5 CCC Rights of Way - No objections. Public footpath No.32 runs through the site, however the line of the path remains unaffected. However the applicant needs to be aware that the line of the footpath shown on the site plan doesn't correspond with the line on the definitive map. The public footpath should remain clear and free from obstruction at all times. Recommend informatives in relation to the public footpath remaining clear from obstruction, no change to the surface of the public footpath, it is the responsibility of the landowner to ensure the footpath is maintained/remains free of obstruction and a reminder that the granting of planning permission does not allow for a public footpath to be blocked at any time.
- 6.6 Swaffham Internal Drainage Board - Provided that a soakaway forms an effective means of surface water disposal in this area then no objections are raised.

7.0 THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009

- CS1 Spatial Strategy
- EC1 Retention of employment sites
- EC2 Extensions to existing businesses in the countryside
- S7 Parking provision
- EN1 Landscape and settlement character
- EN2 Design
- EN7 Flood risk

7.2 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan Pre submission version (February 2013)

- GROWTH 2 Locational strategy
- GROWTH 5 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- EMP 1 Retention of existing employment sites and allocations
- EMP 2 Extensions to existing businesses in the countryside
- COM 8 Parking provision
- ENV 1 Landscape and settlement character
- ENV 2 Design
- ENV 7 Biodiversity and geology
- ENV 8 Flood risk

8.0 CENTRAL GOVERNMENT POLICY

8.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

- 1 Building a strong, competitive economy

- 3 Supporting a prosperous rural economy
- 7 Requiring good design
- 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

9.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

- 9.1 The main issues in the determination of this planning application are the principle of development, impact on the character and appearance of the countryside and flood risk.

Principle

- 9.2 The principle of extending existing businesses in the countryside is considered against the guidance in policy EC2 of the Core Strategy 2009 which states that:

Proposals to expand existing businesses in the countryside will be permitted where:

- a. The proposal does not harm the character and appearance of any existing buildings or the locality; and
- b. The proposal is in scale with the location, particularly in relation to the amount and nature of traffic generated; and
- c. Any intensification of use will not detract from residential amenity; and
- d. Full justification for the proposals is submitted with a planning application.

The proposed two-storey building will be located 29.5m to the north west of the existing industrial unit belonging to the applicant's company and will be accessed via the existing entrance. This separation distance is considered close enough for the proposed development to be considered as part of the same complex of buildings, this includes the office and training facility that has been approved on land to the south east of the existing building but has yet to be built. Due to the intended use of the building proposed and its proposed hours of operation (being similar to the existing industrial unit on the adjacent site) the proposed development is not considered to be in conflict with the existing operations at the site. The proposed two-storey building will be of similar visual appearance and height to the existing portal framed and corrugated metal sheeted building, it will have the appearance of an agricultural shed. However in terms of its size and scale the proposed building will be significantly smaller than the existing factory building, being more than six times smaller in size. The existing factory unit is constructed from profile metal sheeting. The proposed building, by virtue of its materials of construction and scale, is not considered to be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing building at the site.

It is noted that this part of the site is open and devoid of any boundary treatment or hedges which would have a screening effect. Views of the proposed building would be available when approaching the site along Reach Road (from Burwell) approximately 68m to the south west. Until that point the existing planting along the eastern side of Reach Road helps to screen the proposed building. When approaching the site along Reach Road from the direction of Reach (towards Burwell) the proposed building would be readily visible from a distance of approximately 350m. Given the size of the existing facility, the proposed building will not be viewed in isolation and will be read as part of the same collection of buildings, particularly as it will resemble the appearance

of the existing building. Given that the existing facility is twice the depth of the building being proposed here, it is considered that the larger, principal building will remain highly visible on the landscape. A planning condition is recommended (condition 3) that a soft landscaping scheme be undertaken, in particular along the northern boundary of the site. Given the ability to plant a substantial landscaping scheme and the location adjacent to the existing factory unit, the visual effect of the proposal on the locality could be reasonably accommodated with appropriate mitigating measures.

A key issue to consider is whether sufficient justification has been put forward to substantiate the additional building being proposed. Armtrac is a local company based in Burwell (at this location) which manufactures mechanical equipment for the clearance of landmines and unexploded items including Improvised Explosive Devices, known as IED's. The company focuses on the exportation of these devices to countries where there has been ongoing or history of conflict. The supporting statement states that the building is required for the manufacture of the new Armtrac 20T electronic robot within a clean environment. It is designed as a more technologically sophisticated robot which requires engineering and manufacture away from the core products manufactured inside the existing facility. Field trials and testing of the robot will continue to take place in the fields to the rear of the main building, hence the requirement for a rural location. The additional building will allow for a further 6 people to be employed, this will increase the number of potential employees from 16-22.

The proposed building will intensify production, employment and traffic generation from the site. However the proposal includes the provision of 6 additional parking spaces, together with turning space. The proposals also include revisions to the vehicular access and exit arrangements. A new access is proposed to the front of the storage building, this will serve as an exit from the site. The existing access will be used for inward traffic movements only. No objections have been raised from CCC Highways in respect of increases in traffic or highway safety. The manufacturing will take place within the existing building, the hours of operation are consistent with the existing facility. The nearest residential property is located approximately 217m to the south east. Given that the increase in manufacturing/production will take place within the building (no external manufacturing processes), that the hours of operation will be during social hours and the separation distance involved the proposed building is not considered to give rise to loss of residential amenity. Conditions are recommended in relation to hours of operation (condition 12) and noise levels (condition 13) these are considered sufficient to mitigate potential for loss of residential amenity.

Flood Risk

- 9.3 The site is located with flood zones 2 and 3 (a). The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) submitted with the planning application recommends that finished floor levels at ground floor are set in line with the existing building, that electricity points are a maximum of 1.1m above the finished floor level and the building is constructed from flood resilient materials. The Environment Agency has been formally consulted on this planning application and their comments are still awaited. Through applying the Environment Agency's standing advice it is evident that the appropriate means of evacuation, floor levels and means of disposing of surface water can be met. The proposal is for industrial and office uses, these are classified as less vulnerable uses in Table 2 of the Flooding and Coastal Change section in the Planning Practice

Guidance (paragraph 66). Less vulnerable uses in flood zones 2 and 3 (a) of Table 3 of the Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph 67) are considered appropriate for development.

Summary

- 9.4 The proposal is outside the settlement boundary for Burwell where development is strictly controlled. A supporting statement has been submitted with the planning application to demonstrate the operations of the applicant's company and the need for the proposed building in this location. Whilst it is acknowledged that the development will be located outside the settlement boundary, on balance it is considered that sufficient supporting information has been submitted to demonstrate that there is a need for the development in this countryside location and that it will help support an existing rural business and create additional employment. By virtue of its scale, height and appearance the proposed (B2/B8) building is considered to be in keeping with the existing building at the site and not result in an alien and discordant feature in the countryside. It is not considered to give rise to loss of residential amenity, highway safety issues or flood risk. The proposal is therefore recommended for approval.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within 3 years of the date of this permission.
- 1 Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.
- 2 The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be those specified on drawing number 02/1168/14 received on 14th March 2014. No additional or alternative materials shall be used unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 2 Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the countryside, in accordance with policies CS1, EN1 and EN2 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.
- 3 No development shall take place until full details of soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include planting plans; a written specification; schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes, proposed numbers/densities; and an implementation programme. The details shall also indicate all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of any to be retained. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

- 3 Reason: To assimilate the development into its surroundings, in accordance with policy EN1 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.
- 4 No development shall take place until a scheme for the maintenance of the soft landscaping for a minimum period of 5 years has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of the methods for the proposed maintenance regime, a detailed schedule, and details of who will be responsible for its continuing implementation. The soft landscaping shall be maintained in accordance with the agreed scheme.
- 4 Reason: To ensure the longevity of the landscaping scheme, in accordance with policy EN1 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.
- 5 No unbound material shall be used in the surface finish of the access within 6m of the highway boundary of the site.
- 5 Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policies S6 and S7 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.
- 6 No gates shall be erected across the vehicular exit hereby approved unless details have first been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 6 Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policies S6 and S7 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.
- 7 Prior to the building being brought into first use the vehicular exit where it crosses the public highway shall be laid and constructed in accordance with the Cambridgeshire County Council construction specification.
- 7 Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policies S6 and S7 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.
- 8 The vehicular exit shall be constructed with adequate drainage measures to prevent surface water from running off onto the adjacent public highway.
- 8 Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policies S6 and S7 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.
- 9 The manoeuvring area shown on drawing 03/1168/14 shall be provided and retained free from obstruction at all times.
- 9 Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policies S6 and S7 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.
- 10 The access shall be a minimum width of 5m for a minimum distance of 10m measured from the highway boundary and thereafter retained free from obstruction.

- 10 Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policies S6 and S7 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.
- 11 No development shall take place until a traffic management plan has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Highway Authority. The traffic management plan shall address the following matters:
- i) Movements and control of construction traffic (including deliveries and removal of waste material from the site);
 - ii) Provision of contractor parking facilities during construction works;
 - iii) Control of dust, mud and debris.
- All of the above shall take place within the site, clear of the public highway at all times.
- 11 Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policies S6 and S7 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.
- 12 The use of the new building hereby permitted shall take place only between the hours of 0700-1800hrs Monday to Friday, 0700-1300hrs on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays and Public Holidays.
- 12 Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, in accordance with policy EN2 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.
- 13 The specific noise level emitted from the site shall not exceed the existing background noise level or 35dB, whichever is the higher. The noise levels shall be measured/calculated at the boundary of the nearest residential property. The measurements and assessment shall be undertaken in accordance with BS4142:1997.
- 13 Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, in accordance with policy EN2 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.
- 14 The development permitted by this planning permission shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) dated 31st March 2014, produced by Greg Saberton Design and the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA:
- Ground Levels to be set at the same level as the existing industrial building to the south east.
- 14 Reason: To reduce the impact of flooding on the proposed development and future occupants, in accordance with policies EN3 and EN7 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location(s)</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
The application file- 13/01129/FUL	Scott Jackson Room No. 011 The Grange Ely	Scott Jackson Planning Officer 01353 665555 scott.jackson@eastcambs.gov.uk