
2023/0294

Applicant: Cranswick Convenience Foods Ltd.

Proposed new ammonia plant room and reception building

Cranswick Convenience Foods, Valley Park Industrial Estate, Meadowgate, Wombwell, Barnsley, S73 -UN

Site Description and background

The application site relates to Cranswick PLC which is a large food producer located in Valley Park Industrial Estate in Wombwell, off Wath Road Roundabout. The existing factory is a large L shaped building constructed of a mix of materials, including brick, glass and green steel cladding. There is a two-storey office area to the front and large production area behind this. The building has been extended previously and fills most of the site with a parking area to the front/South of the building. Access is from Meadowgate with deliveries directed to the side of the building. There is some limited landscaping around the site edges but the majority of screening is provided by existing tree lined areas adjacent the A6195 and the Trans Pennine Trail to the south. The site is located in the Urban Fabric in what is an established industrial estate. There is a range of building types and uses within the estate, with a variety of building shape/sizes and external materials visible.

Cranswick PLC also own and operate from other areas of Valley Park Industrial Estate and recently gained approval to develop an area of land to the West of Meadowgate. The site is addressed as land off Everill Gate Lane however the development includes a new link road from Meadowgate directly into the site. The site now contains 3 x buildings and the creation of a car parking area with 326 spaces, 18 motorbike spaces and 80 covered cycle spaces.

The site to the West of Meadowgate relates to the following application reference numbers:

2018/1353 - Development of the site for employment uses within use classes B1 (Business), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage and Distribution) and associated access, parking and circulation areas, and infrastructure (Approved with conditions)

2019/0561 - Variation of condition 8 of planning application 2018/1353 relating to highways works (Approved with conditions)

2020/0781 - Variation of condition 2 of planning application 2019/0561 relating to layout (Approved with conditions)

Additionally, the site gained recent approval for a new controlled entrance (application ref. 2023/0019) with a metal fence and gate with an electronically controlled sliding mechanism.

Relevant Site History

2006/1392 – Erection of Security Gatehouse – Approved

2008/0540 - Erection of a single storey extension to factory – Approved

2015/1103 - Extension to existing factory for dry goods storage – Approved

2019/0953 - Proposed new boiler house – Approved

2021/0730 - Two storey extension to existing building and upgrade to existing front elevation (Approved with conditions)

2023/0019 – New controlled parking entrance – Approved

In addition, there is a site also owned by Cranswick Convenience Foods linking to the site on Everill Gate Lane for Cranswick Foods:

2018/1353 - Development of the site for employment uses within use classes B1 (Business), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage and Distribution) and associated access, parking and circulation areas, and infrastructure (Approved with conditions)

2019/0561 - Variation of condition 8 of planning application 2018/1353 relating to highways works (Approved with conditions)

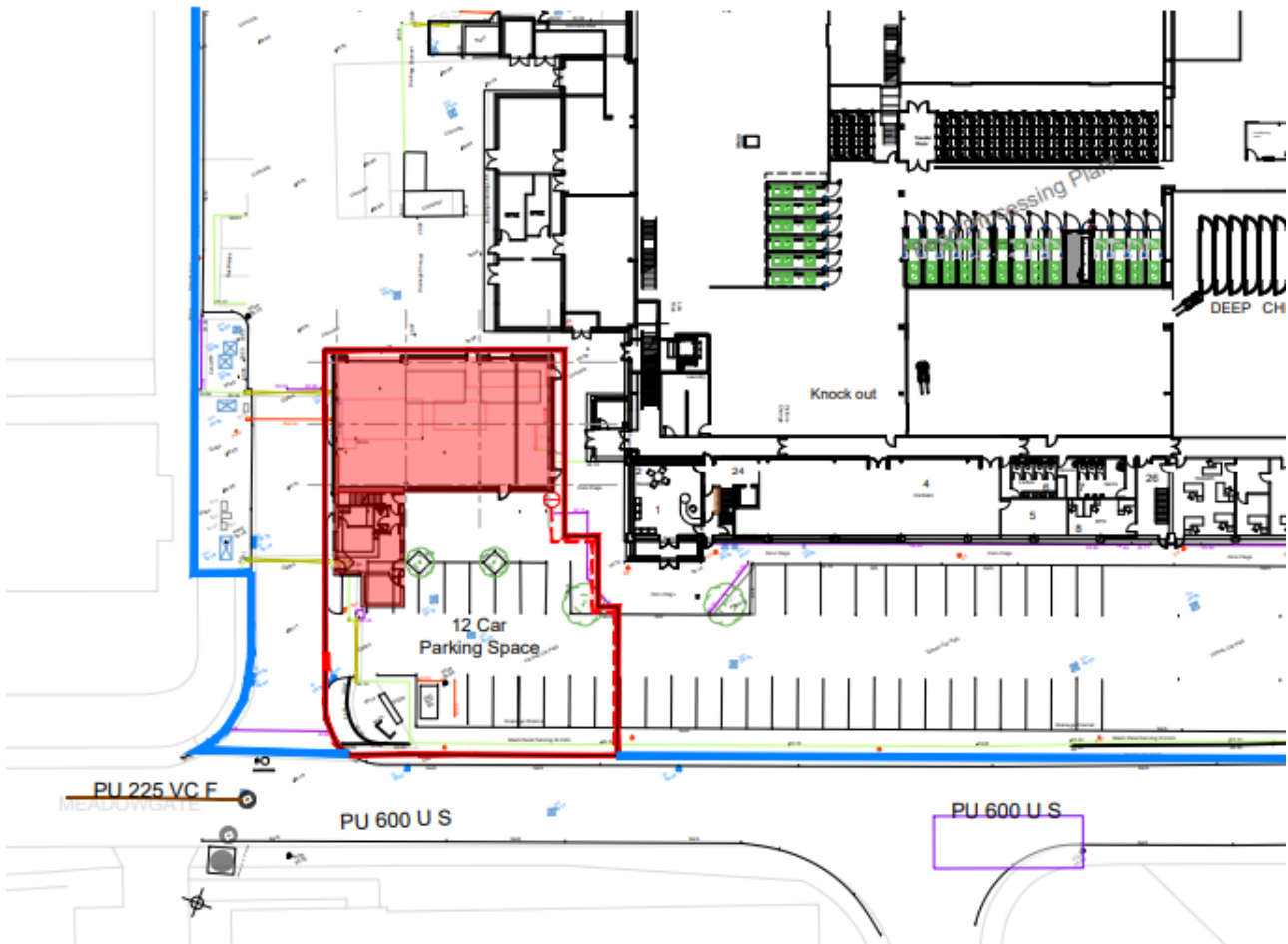
2020/0781 - Variation of condition 2 of planning application 2019/0561 relating to layout – Approved

2020/1431 - Creation of new access road - Approved

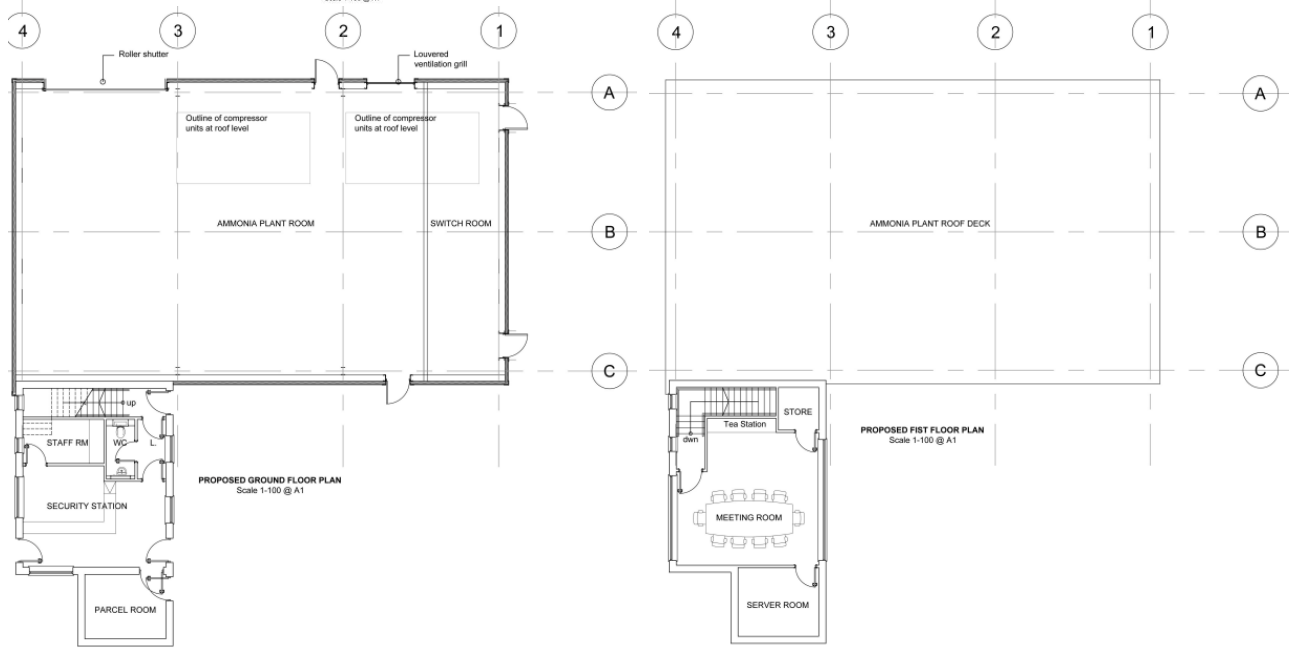
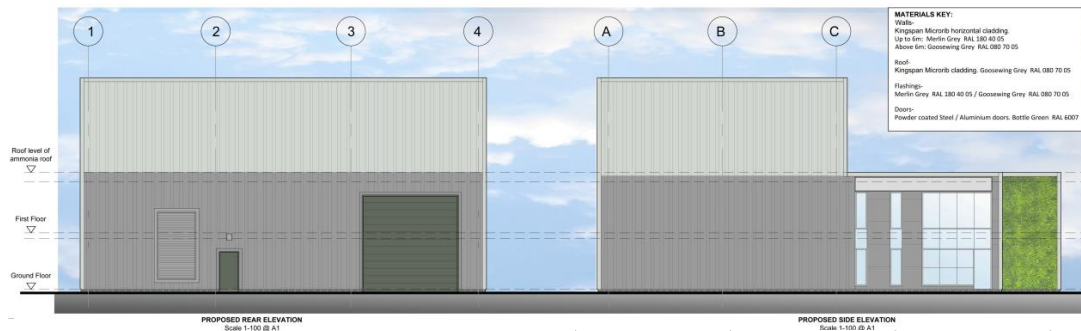
Proposed Development

The applicant is seeking approval for the erection of a detached building within the existing operational curtilage of the main Cranswick building which currently hosts a factory, warehouse and associated office buildings. The proposed building is primarily to be used for an ammonia/glycol plant room for refrigeration purposes.

The building has two distinct areas, a rectangular-shaped ammonia plant room measuring 21m x 12.85m, with a flat roof with a height of 11m. Adjoined to the ammonia plant room is a two-storey reception room with a security station, parcel room and staff room at ground floor and meeting room and server room at first floor level. The adjoining reception room is rectangular in shape measuring 11m x 6.85m with a height of 6.25m. The building features a large amount of glazing on the external elevations of the building alongside a green living wall. The proposed development will be positioned in an area on site which is used for parking and the application will effectively remove 2 x parking spaces from the site. The access into the site, however, remains unchanged.



PROPOSED SITE PLAN
Scale 1-500 @ A1



Policy Context

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The development plan consists of the Core Strategy, saved Unitary Development Plan policies. The Council has also adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes, which are other material considerations.

Local Plan

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. The Local Plan was adopted in January 2019 and is also now accompanied by seven masterplan frameworks which apply to the largest site allocations (housing, employment and mixed-use sites). In addition, the Council has adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans which provide supporting guidance and specific local policies and are a material consideration in the decision-making process.

The Local Plan review was approved at the full Council meeting held 24th November 2022. The review determined that the Local Plan remains fit for purpose and is adequately delivering its objectives. This means no updates to the Local Plan, in whole or in part, are to be carried out ahead of a further review. The next review is due to take place in 2027 or earlier if circumstances, require it. The National Planning Policy Framework represents up-to-date government planning policy and is a material consideration that must be taken into account where it is relevant to a planning application.

The following Local Plan policies are relevant:-

SD1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development – When considering development proposals we will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. We will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

GD1 – General Development – Development will be approved if there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents.

E4: Protecting existing employment land - Land or premises currently or last used for employment purposes will be retained in order to safeguard existing or potential jobs.

D1 – High Quality Design and Place Making – Development is expected to be of a high-quality design and will be expected to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive, local character and other features of Barnsley.

T4: New Development and Transport Safety – New development will be expected to be designed and built to provide all transport users within and surrounding the development with safe, secure and convenient access and movement.

BIO1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity – Development will be expected to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geological features of the borough. Development which may harm a biodiversity or geological feature or habitat, including ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, will not be permitted unless effective mitigation and/or compensatory measures can be ensured.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Residential Amenity and the Siting of Buildings
- Parking

NPPF

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole; or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted or unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraph 7 – the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Paragraph 8 – achieving sustainable development has three overarching objectives:

- a) An economic objective - to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure

- b) A social objective - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) An environmental objective - to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Paragraph 38 – Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way.

Paragraph 111 – Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network should be severe.

Paragraph 119 – Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

Paragraph 120 – Planning policies and decisions should

- a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;
- b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;
- c) give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;
- d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above service yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure)⁴⁸; and
- e) support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.

Paragraph 126 - The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 134 – Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes.

Consultations

Enterprising Barnsley – Support the application which help the company with their site capacity plans.

Pollution Control – No overriding concerns with the development but requested that a Noise Impact Assessment was submitted to the Council to support the development which was submitted by the applicant. Then requested variations to the NIA and further information to support the development such as where the plant equipment would be positioned on the roof top in relation to the barrier which is described in the NIA. Upon receipt of this information, alongside the amended NIA, no objection was raised.

Highways DC – No overriding concerns with the development noting that the car park approved under app ref. 2018/1353 (and the subsequent variations) is now completed on site. However, requested an updated

parking survey giving updated viewpoint of the parking supply and demand, alongside what fulfilment the capacity of the approved separate car park is. Upon receipt this information, no objection was raised to the development.

Ward Councillors – Cllr Higginbotham questioned whether the development would have any odour release implications, and if so, what mitigation measures are proposed by the developer. Additionally, referenced several nearby residents who had not been consulted and checked whether this is accurate. Cllr. Frost requested assurances about the noise generation, especially if the facility is to run at night.

Representations

Neighbour consultation letters were sent to neighbouring residents with a site notice placed nearby; no comments were received.

Assessment

Principle of development

The site is located in the urban fabric in what is an established employment/industrial area, with Cranswick Convenience Foods Ltd. being one of the primary employers and uses of the industrial estate, supporting a high number of local jobs. Local Plan Policy E4 states that land or premises currently or last used for employment purposes will be retained in order to safeguard existing or potential jobs.

The applicant is seeking permission for the erection of a building, primarily to house an ammonia/glycol refrigeration system with a series of dual temperate functions. Ammonia as a refrigerant has an Ozone depletion potential (ODP) and Global Warming Potential (GWP) of zero meaning compared to other forms of refrigeration, it is a particular climate friendly and efficient form of refrigeration. The basis of the application therefore is primarily the environmental benefits and the reduction of global warming emissions. The building will also have an attached section to be used as a new reception building and meeting room.

As such, it is considered that the proposed development is in line with Local Plan Policy E4 as it will increase the energy efficiency on site, alongside modest expansion to provide a new reception and meeting room, therefore the development does not disrupt the existing or potential business processes on the site and is acceptable in principle.

Highways Safety

The proposed building is positioned in an area on site which is currently used for parking, and the building would effectively remove 3 parking spaces from the existing parking area in the site. This isn't ideal as the industrial estate in general is characterised by substantial on-street parking and is often congested at large periods of the day. However, applicant is arguing in the Design & Access Statement that the reduction of the number of parking spaces will not have a negative affect given that Cranswick has fairly recently purchased a piece of land to the West of Meadowgate for the development of the site for employment uses which includes the formation of a 316-bay car park, which is in a short walking distance (c.5 minutes or less) of the site. This application was approved under application reference 2018/1353.

Highways DC have been consulted on the proposed development and have referenced that the parking including in the car park on the separate Cranswick site (2018/1353). As part of the decision making process for app ref 2018/1353, a parking survey was submitted which Highways DC asked for an updated version to be submitted to support the development. The updated parking survey as submitted to support the development which showed that the car park on site is to capacity at all times of the survey (58 cars), however the new car park was well under capacity. The maximum number of cars recorded in the new car park was 88 at 1pm, with the lowest number of vehicles being 67 recorded at 5am. This indicate that the newly completed car park has capacity to accommodate additional vehicles and will clearly provide an area for the modest loss of 3 parking spaces through the proposed development.

The above data was assessed by Highways DC who did not object to the proposal, given the number of removed parking spaces is minor and the fact that there is a large car park for the business in close walking proximity. The proposed development is therefore in compliance with Local Plan Policy T4 and the Council's SPD for Parking and is acceptable.

Visual Amenity

The proposed building is located to the front of the main building on site, projecting forward of the existing building by 4.5m, which will hence increase the visibility of the proposed building on the site. The proposed building, however, has a footprint size of 335sqm and therefore will be dwarfed by the existing building on site which is much larger with a footprint size of 1.425 hectares or 14250sqm. The proposed building is of a similar height to the host dwelling, and it is not considered that the building will contrast or appear excessive at the side of the existing building.

The proposed design of the building is slightly different architecturally compared to the existing building, featuring a flat roof, finished in cladding with a large amount of glazing and a green living wall. The agent has acknowledged that the proposed design differs from the existing and would change the character of the area, but the agent has explained that the design has taken influence from the approved redevelopment of the existing building on site. The changes (approved under ref. 2021/0730) seek to significantly renovate and modernise the frontage of the building, facing South, with a large amount of glazing and a change to the external materials to cladding which is very similar to the materials on the proposed development. Whilst the two applications are independent of one another, the agent has confirmed that the works approved under application ref. 2021 are due to be soon, with the development currently out to tender. When assessing the proposed design against the approved design, the LPA agrees that the two designs would sit alongside each other successfully, and the design is in keeping, respecting good levels of design.

In any case, the site is located firmly within an established industrial estate with features a wide range of building types, sizes, structures and external materials, including cladding and grey coloured render. The application site itself is located to the North-East of the industrial estate, with the site screened by existing surrounding buildings – notably, the hotel and scattered trees in the curtilage of the business premises, to the South of the proposed building which obscures views into the site. On a wider scale, the site is positioned to the Eastern end of Valley Park Industrial Estate with the existing Premier Inn Hotel in between the development and the nearby bypass/roundabout. It is considered that the general design principles of the building and the external materials are acceptable within the context of the diverse palette of Industrial Estate and the lack of visibility into the site.

The Green Living wall is positioned on two elevations of the proposed building, which is not a typical feature within the industrial estate and will introduce a new feature into the existing palette of external materials/features. However, the addition of a living wall will successfully add to the diversity of external materials with an attractive feature. This is subject to the green living wall being suitably managed to ensure this, and the agent has agreed to add a condition onto any forthcoming planning approval for the submission and agreement of details to ensure that the living green wall will be successfully integrated with the correct type of species in the correct timescales, as well as a management and replacement plan.

To conclude, the proposed design has taken inspiration from the redevelopment of the existing building (approved under ref. 2021/0730) and is located on an industrial estate which is diverse in terms of the external appearance of neighbouring buildings, including type, structure and external materials. The green living wall would introduce a new feature into the street scene but this is not necessarily considered to be a poor design and would add to the character and diversity of the area. Subject to a management scheme to ensure that the green living wall remains to a high quality the proposal is acceptable in terms of visual amenity, in compliance with Local Plan Policy D1.

Residential Amenity

The site is part of an established industrial estate. The distance to the nearest housing would be c130m to those on Kingfisher Drive to the South and c300m to 79 Wath Road. The separation distances to the neighbouring properties are well in excess of the requirements in the SPD: Residential Amenity and the Siting of Buildings and it is not considered that the building would have any direct detrimental impact on any neighbouring property in terms of overshadowing, loss of outlook or loss of privacy.

The applicant has submitted a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) to support the development which has been assessed by colleagues in Regulatory Services. Further information was requested, including amendments to the NIA, and confirmation of where the plant equipment would be situated. An amended NIA was submitted which clarified these points, with the agent submitting an elevation plan (Rev. D) showing the position of the condensers and flues on the roof deck. The elevations effectively showed that the plant would be entirely screened by the walls/cladding on the sides of the roof deck, which would significantly decrease noise output. This factor is included within the amended NIA and Regulatory Services raised no objection subject to conditions which restrict the construction hours of the proposed development.

Additionally, the applicant's consultant has submitted information to support the scheme in terms of odour release, with further evidence and explanation to the processes of the development. It was confirmed that ammonia refrigeration effectively has no odour release unless there is a serious malfunction which would go beyond the control of this particular planning application.

Cllrs. Frost and Higginbottom requested further information in regard to noise and odour implications to nearby residents. A response was made to both stating that the LPA will assess both of these factors, following advice from regulatory services. As stated above, the noise generation or odour release is not a cause for concern.

The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with Local Plan Policy GD1 and SPD: Residential Amenity and Siting of Buildings and is acceptable in terms of residential amenity.

Impact on Trees

The proposed site plan and site visit showed that there are a small number of trees on site, in close proximity to the proposed development. No direct objection has been received from the Forestry Officer, but the development is in close enough proximity that it would require protective fencing and details to ensure that the trees aren't damaged or removed through the development/construction works. This will require the developer to submit these details through a planning condition, with agreement from the LPA.

Conclusion

The proposed development is for the erection of a detached building located to the front of existing Cranswick Convenience foods building on Meadowgate on the Valley Park Industrial Estate. The proposed building is to house an ammonia/glycol refrigeration system with an adjoined reception-type building housing a security station, parcel room, staff room and meeting room. The site is part of an allocated employment land, as allocated in the Local Plan. The proposed development is to support the existing employment use on the land, slightly expanding it with increased floor space and a more efficient refrigeration system, without removing or decreasing the employment use, thereby is in compliance with Local Plan Policy E4 and is acceptable in principle.

The proposed design is in keeping with the wider redevelopment of the site, albeit introduces a green living wall on two of the elevations. This will be a new feature in the street scene/industrial estate but is not necessarily considered to be a poor design or detrimental to the visual amenity or character of the building or area. This is subject to good management of the green living wall with the support of an implementation and management scheme, which will be submitted to the LPA and covered through a planning condition. The proposed development is situated on an area of land on site which is currently utilised for parking purposes and the development would remove 12 parking spaces from the site. This isn't ideal as the site visits to the site and the submitted parking survey showed that the car park is often at capacity, and the area is characterised by street parking. However, the business (Cranswick) have recently purchased and developed a piece of land to the Western side of Meadowgate which includes 315 parking spaces. Colleagues in Highways DC have been consulted on the proposal and considered that the parking survey showed that there is sufficient provision on the wider car park which is a short walk to the application site, to alleviate the loss of 3 parking spaces for the proposed development. The proposed development is unlikely to generate a significant level of vehicular movements to the site nor will it place a substantial burden on parking provision within the site or area to raise highways concerns.

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable and is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

Recommendation

Approve with conditions