

STAIRFOOT BUSINESS PARK, BLEACHCROFT WAY, BARNSELY

Planning Statement

Stainsby Grange (Wombwell) Ltd

29th November 2013



Planning Statement

- 1.1 This Planning Statement sets out an explanation for the evolution of the proposals, and assesses the planning issues against planning policy. It should be read in conjunction with the submitted Design and Access Statement which describes the design and access details of the proposals. The Planning Application Comprises:

BW1: Application Forms, Certificates and Fee of £1540 (being £385 for each 75 square m or part thereof of new floor space proposed).

BW2: Site Location and Red Line Plan

BW3: Planning Statement

BW4: Design and Access Statement

BW5 - Existing Site Layout Dwg A945-PL-02

BW6 - Existing Elevations Dwg A945-PL-03

BW7 - Proposed Site Layout Dwg A945-PL-04

BW8 - Proposed Site Layout Dwg A945-PL-05

BW9 - Proposed Elevations of Units 2 to 5 Dwg A945-PL-06

BW10 - Proposed Elevations of Units R1-R2 Dwg A945-PL-07

BW11 - Certificate of Lawful Use

Site Description

- 1.2 The site comprises two existing commercial units located at Stairfoot Business Park in Barnsley. Both units are currently occupied by tenants:

- Blakemores Cash and Carry – 4032 sq m GIA. This unit has operated as a retail warehouse club by Blakemores since March 1984. The building was originally constructed in 1969 as a Cash and Carry occupied by another company prior to Blakemores.
- Wilsons Carpets – 584 sq m GIA. This unit was occupied in November 2011 by Wilsons Carpets, carpet retailers, and it was previously occupied by Floors to Go



- 1.3 The total site area is approximately 1.2. The site lies to the east of the B&Q DIY store. Access is taken from the Stairfoot roundabout (A633) off Bleachcroft Way. The plan referenced BW2 included with the application shows the site in context with the surrounding area.

Planning History and Background to the Proposals

- 1.4 Both existing units were constructed at the same time with the benefit of a planning permission granted in 1969. The plan referenced BW2 shows the current demise of these units being approximately 1.2ha (edged red) together with additional land in the ownership of Stainsby Grange (edged blue) to the south of these units.
- 1.5 There are no other subsequent planning permissions relating to these premises other than a planning permission granted 24/7/2004 for the refurbishment of 'Industrial Unit 4' (now Wilsons Carpets)(planning permission B/04//1141/BA). There are no conditions on this planning permission that seek to control use or range of goods sold.
- 1.6 Stainsby Grange contracted to acquire the site, including the adjacent land to the south in February 1999, completing the purchase on commencement of the B & Q build phase in April 2002 and have continuously marketed the land for commercial use over the whole of this period.
- 1.7 Due to lack of demand from commercial operators for the wider site, an application for residential development on this land was submitted to the Council and refused planning permission in October 2009, with a subsequent

appeal dismissed in March 2010. Since that time, there has still been no interest from commercial developers for this site.

- 1.8 In addition, the lease on the Blakemores unit is due to expire in March 2014. The principle driver for this proposal is therefore to obtain flexibility to maximise the chances of securing a new tenant in the event the Blakemore's lease is not renewed, and to thus ensure the unit remains viable. In addition, new development is proposed to try and improve the viability of part of the site.
- 1.9 On the 23rd October 2013 Barnsley Council issued a Lawful Development Certificate to certify that the use of the Blakemores Unit as a Retail Warehouse Club (Certificate of Lawfulness) is lawful within the meaning of Section 10 of the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 (Application Reference 2013/0902).

Description of the Proposals

- 1.10 The proposal is for:
"The development of two 'drive through' restaurant/cafe units with associated access and parking; extension of curtilage for relocated service yard and formation of a servicing route; and sub division of the existing 'Blakemores' Retail Warehouse Club unit into four separate Retail Warehouse Club units."
- 1.11 This planning application therefore comprises three elements. These are shown on the proposed layout plan included in the application and referenced as BW8:
- 1.12 Proposal 1: The development of two 'restaurant/coffee shop' drive through units on the existing service yard located to the north of the Wilsons Carpet unit, with the provision of 35 car parking spaces (including 6 disabled parking spaces). These are shown on the Proposed Layout Plan BW8 as Units R1 and R2.
- 1.13 Proposal 2: The relocation of the service yard to the south of Blakemores Unit and formation of a servicing route around the building.
- 1.14 Proposal 3: The sub-division of the Blakemores Unit into four separate units labelled on the Proposed Layout Plan as Units 2 to 5.
- 1.15 The existing parking to the front of the existing units (approximately 86 car parking spaces) would be reconfigured to provide 105 car parking spaces.

The Proposed Use

- 1.16 In relation to Units R1 and R2 the proposed use is for a restaurant/coffee shop drive through.
- 1.17 With regards to Unit 1 this Unit is currently occupied by Wilson's carpets and there are no proposals to change the use of this existing Unit. The proposal

relates to subdivision of the existing Blakemores Unit into four Units (numbers 2 to 5). The existing Blakemores Unit has an existing lawful use as a Retail Warehouse Club. The proposal is for flexibility to let these new four units for use within the Retail Warehouse Club 'sui generis' use class of the Use Classes Order.

Planning Policy

1.18 The Barnsley Core Strategy DPD was adopted in September 2011 (prior to the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework) and sets out the strategic policies for growth in the District.

1.19 Policy CSP11 sets out the Council's policy on the need for employment land for the remainder of the plan period to 2026, stating that 350 ha of land are needed in *suitable* locations. Policy CSP12 sets out a spatial distribution element to this requirement as a basis for sites to be identified within the Development Sites and Places DPD (which has yet to be published for consultation). The subtext to that policy states that:

"In considering which existing employment land allocations to carry forward into the Development Sites and Places DPD, existing allocations which are no longer fit for purpose will be de-allocated and replaced by new sites which better meet the needs of modern industry."

1.20 Policy CSP19 seeks to prevent the loss of employment land to non-employment uses:

"Existing employment land, or land last used for employment purposes will be retained in order to safeguard existing or potential jobs. The redevelopment of employment land and buildings for non-employment uses will only take place if:

- redevelopment would not result in a loss of existing jobs or employment potential; and
- there will still be an adequate supply of employment land in the locality

If the above criteria can be satisfied then redevelopment will be allowed where it can be demonstrated that:

- the buildings or land cannot satisfactorily support continued employment use."

1.21 The publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 is also a material consideration. The NPPF is the most up to date document and should be afforded significant weight in the Council's consideration of the proposals. The NPPF carries with it a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Assessment of Planning Issues

- 1.22 The existing local policy framework relating to this site is to prevent the loss of the land to non-employment uses. The adopted Core Strategy policy specifically seeks to safeguard potential job creation. The policy (as set out above) does not preclude uses that do not fall within the traditional industrial use classes of B1 Offices, B2 General Industrial or B8 Storage and Distribution uses.
- 1.23 Similarly, the NPPF now takes a more flexible approach, encouraging economic development proposals that are sustainable. 'Building a strong competitive economy' is now a central plank of national planning policy.
- 1.24 In this regard, the proposals will deliver sustainable economic development and lead to job creation and should therefore be supported in principle by the Council. Specifically:
- Proposal 1:** The development of two 'restaurant/coffee shop' drive through Units on the existing service yard located to the north of the Wilsons Carpet unit, with the provision of 35 car parking spaces (including 6 disabled parking spaces).
- 1.25 This element of the proposal will have significant environmental and visual benefits. This part of the site is currently an unattractive service yard located at the principle entrance into the whole site. The development of a 'drive thru' restaurant/coffee shop will significantly improve the character and appearance of the area at the main entrance to the site. It will also generate circa 45 FTE jobs and thus will not conflict with the adopted Core Strategy.
- Proposal 2:** The relocation of the service yard to the south of Blakemores Unit.
- 1.26 This element of the proposal will relocate the service yard to the south of the site into a less conspicuous location, well screened from public views by the building itself.
- Proposal 3:** The sub-division of the Blakemores Unit into four separate units labelled on the Proposed Layout Plan as Units 2 to 5.
- 1.27 Blakemores cash and carry operates as a retail warehouse club. This use has been recognised by the Council as a Certificate of Lawful Use was issued on the 23rd October 2013. A copy of this Certificate is included within the application as document reference BW11. The proposal is to retain the Wilsons carpets unit as existing, and to sub-divide the Blakemores unit into up to four separate units.
- 1.28 If the Blakemore's lease is not renewed the unit will become vacant and will not sustain any employment. In the event a new user cannot be found within the same use class (Retail Warehouse Club), the imposition of empty rates will mean the building may have to be demolished.

- 1.29 Flexibility to subdivide the Blakesmore unit and market the four new units for the same use as existing (Retail Warehouse Club) will significantly increase the likelihood of securing new tenants, leading to job creation.

Conclusion

- 1.30 The proposals will not conflict with adopted Core Strategy policy. Moreover, the proposals would be supported by the NPPF as a sustainable use of an existing building, in sustainable location sandwiched between existing retail units to the west and east.