RETROSPECTIVE FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR SINGLE-STOREY OFFICE – "BLOCK L"

LAND AT WHALEY ROAD, BARUGH, BARNSLEY, S75 1HT

PLANNING STATEMENT

ON BEHALF OF AMALGAMATED CONSTRUCTION LTD (AMCO)

FEBRUARY 2015

Accelerating success.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Colliers International (CI) have been instructed by Amalgamated Construction Ltd (AMCO) to submit a full planning application for a single storey office at their head office and depot premises on Whaley Road in Barugh, Barnsley. The application is made retrospectively as the office was brought to site and has been occupied since September 2014. The formal description of the development is:

"Retrospective Full Planning application for a single-storey office (Block L)"

This report forms the required planning statement to explain and support the proposals.

1.2 The application site measures around 0.13 hectares (1282 sq m) and incorporates the access onto Whaley Road and the site of the office. The site is located within the Barugh Industrial Estate where there is a mix of offices, general industrial, storage and distribution and car showroom uses. The north-east boundary of the site is marked by the main Sheffield to Leeds railway line and neighbouring properties include Compass Engineering, Nationwide Retail Systems, AP Hollingworth and BRC Manufacturing which are all industrial and commercial businesses. The site is accessed from Whaley Road which is an estate road off the A637 Claycliffe Road.

1.3 Within the wider area there are businesses, an Aldi supermarket, the Chestnut Tree public house and residential properties although these are at some distance and unaffected by the application proposals. There are bus stops on Claycliffe Road with regular services every 10 minutes into Barnsley town centre, which is approximately 2 miles away, and to the Barnsley Bus and Rail Interchange with connections to train services to Leeds, Sheffield and Huddersfield.

1.4 This site is located within the Barnsley Urban Area according to the Unitary Development Plan and is therefore in a sustainable location with excellent access to services and facilities.

1.5 The purpose of this report is to consider the proposals generally against existing and emerging Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guidance.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION, HISTORY AND APPLICATION PROPOSALS

SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The site is irregular in shape (a reverse 'r' shape) and measures around 0.13 hectares, which includes the existing access from Whaley Road and the site of the office. Nearby occupiers include the following companies:

- Compass Engineering Ltd
- Compass Holdings Ltd
- Nationwide Retail Services
- BRC Manufacturing
- WBH Development Ltd
- Compass Fabrications
- Portobello Fabrications
- AP Hollingworth
- John Pole Storage
- Rack Group

2.2 The AMCO site as a whole also includes other modular office buildings and maintenance and storage buildings.

2.3 There are no alterations proposed to any of the other existing buildings, car parking or other areas of hardstandings.

2.4 The offices operate generally from 08.00 to 16.30 Monday to Thursday and from 08.00 to 15.30 on Fridays.

STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS

2.5 The site does not contain any listed buildings and is not located in a Conservation Area. It is located in Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Maps which means it is land which is at lowest risk of flooding. The nearest Public Right of Way is a footpath approximately 0.5 miles to the east at Dayhouse Way.

RELEVANT HISTORY

2.6 The site has been used by AMCO for very many years with the existing office buildings having been erected in the 1970s. There is currently a planning application under consideration by Barnsley Council for:

2015/0127: Erection of two storey offices, removal of existing offices and extension to existing car park at the AMCO site.

Much of the information provided for that application has been reproduced within this document.

APPLICATION PROPOSALS

2.7 The application is in full and seeks permission for a single storey office of steer-framed modular construction. As the office (known as Block L) is already constructed and in occupation the application has been made retrospectively.

2.8 It is proposed to retain the building as is without any external alterations.

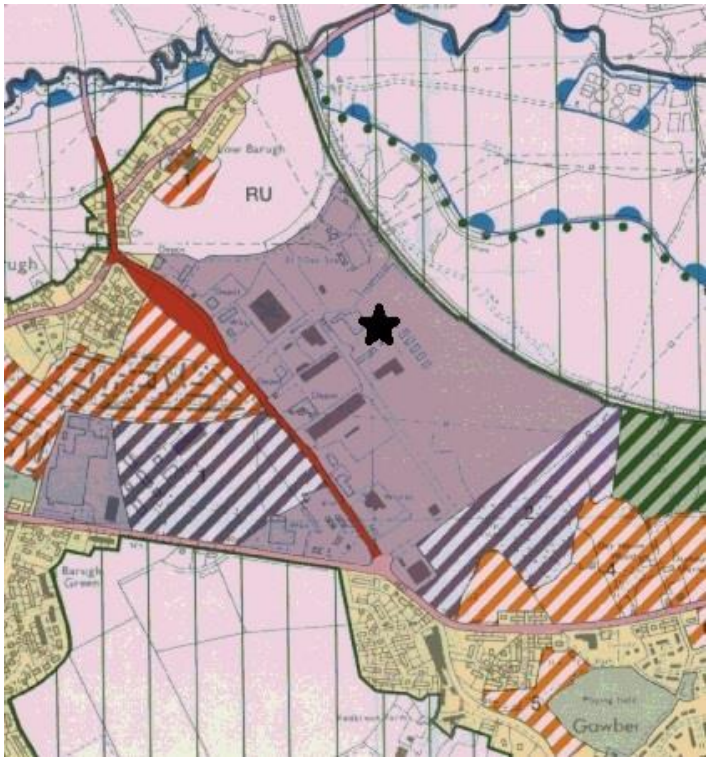
3 PLANNING POLICY

3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan comprises the saved policies in the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan and the Barnsley Core Strategy. The National Planning Policy Framework and the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Documents also provide guidance which are an important material consideration. Policies and guidance relevant to the application are discussed below.

SAVED BARNSLEY UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (UDP

3.2 The UDP was adopted in 2000 and the Proposals Map allocates the site within an Employment Policy Area as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: UDP Proposals Map Extract



3.3 The majority of policies were saved by the Secretary of State in 2007. Since then the Core Strategy has been adopted (see below) and many UDP policies have now been replaced. The remaining policies which are of relevance are as follows.

3.4 Policy ED7 relates to existing employment areas and states that they will remain in employment use for business, industry and storage and distribution.

3.5 Policy ED8 relates to older commercial and industrial areas and states that the Council will seek to stabilise employment and upgrade the environment, providing financial assistance where appropriate and carrying out environmental and infrastructure improvements as appropriate.

3.6 Policy ED10 encourages the growth of existing firms subject to satisfactory standards of design, amenity, car parking, loading and vehicle manoeuvring facilities.

BARNSLEY CORE STRATEGY

3.7 The Core Strategy was adopted in 2011 and comprises a long-term spatial vision and strategic objectives for the Barnsley Borough area for the period up to 2026. Within the Core Strategy Local Plan the location is within the Urban Barnsley Area.

3.8 Policies CSP1 and CSP2 relate to climate change and require developments to (inter-alia) minimise resource and energy consumption and be located on previously developed land.

3.9 Policy CSP8 gives priority to Urban Barnsley as the main focus for development.

3.10 Policy CSP11 and CSP12 are general policies related to the amount and distribution of employment land to be allocated in the period up to 2026.

3.11 CSP19 specifically deals with protecting existing employment land, setting stringent criteria to be met if redevelopment for non-employment uses is to be considered.

3.12 Policy CSP31 on Town Centres refers to the position that B1(a) offices are a town centre use which, in the first instance, should be directed to Barnsley town centre, district or local centres. Clearly the application site is not within a town centre, but the AMCO headquarters and depot are a long established mixed use premises which would not be appropriate for a town centre location even if suitable sites were available.

3.13 Therefore, whilst paragraph 9.226 goes on to state that:

"Proposals for main town centre uses that are not in a centre should be assessed against their impact on centres"

we do not consider that the policy test is properly required here.

3.14 Moreover, despite the out of centre location, the site is nonetheless considered to be in a sustainable, urban location, given its location close to public transport services, which supports the proposals and will be further outlined in the Section 4 of the report.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

3.15 Paragraph 4.20 of the NPPF, March 2012, presents the Government's planning policy for England. The NPPF sets the broad objectives of national Government, aiming broadly to support and achieve sustainable development and states that:

"At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking." (para 14).

3.16 It aims to bring forward sustainable development. The NPPF sets out the implications of the presumption in favour of sustainable development: It states that for decision taking this means (unless material considerations implicate otherwise):

"approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay".

3.17 One of the 12 Core Principles of the NPPF is to:

"*proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs*" (paragraph 17)

3.18 Paragraph 21 states that:

"*Investment in business should not be over-burdened by the combined requirements of planning policy expectations"*

and that local planning authorities should:

"support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting".

3.19 The NPPF recognises that transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development and contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives at paragraphs 29 to 41. In particular opportunities for the use of sustainable modes of transport for the movement of people and goods are encouraged.

3.20 Paragraph 23 of the NPPF directs office developments to town centres. It is not considered that this Guidance is properly applied to the proposal given that AMCO's Head Quarters also include a depot, maintenance and storage buildings which would not be conducive to a town centre location and constitute effectively a mixed use far more appropriately located in an industrial estate environment.

4 ASSESSMENT

PRINCIPLE OF THE DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The application site is the long established existing headquarters site of AMCO, located in an existing industrial estate in the urban area of Barnsley and surrounded by other employment uses. It comprises offices, depot, warehousing and maintenance base for the AMCO operations and is effectively a mixed use site. The site is designated for employment purposes in the Development Plan.

4.2 The application proposal is for the retention of a building in a B1(a) office use. Although both the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy CSP31 seek to direct new office developments to Barnsley town centre and thereafter District or Local Centres, it is considered that this policy is not applicable here for the following reasons:

i The application is significantly for replacement of existing office space.

ii The mixed use of the site, which includes an estates compound, maintenance and storage buildings consistent with an industrial estate environment, is not appropriate for a town centre location.

iii The proposed office uses are intrinsically related not only to the other offices on site but also to the site operation as a whole and to disaggregate the new space from the headquarters and depot site would be impractical for the business and so would run contrary to development plan and national policies seeking to support employment generating activities.

4.3 The site is in a highly sustainable location. There are bus stops on Claycliffe Road with regular services (96, 96A and 97) every 10 minutes into Barnsley town centre which is approximately 2 miles away and out to either Wakefield or Denby Dale. Once at the Barnsley Bus and Rail Interchange there are connections to the wider area including train services to Leeds via Wakefield Westgate, Sheffield and Huddersfield.

4.4 Furthermore, UDP policy ED10 actively encourages the growth of existing firms. The office is required to maintain existing employment opportunities and so is consistent with the principles of development plan and national policy advice.

4.5 In addition, the NPPF is clear at paragraph 21 that investment in business should not be overburdened by the planning system and the planning system should support expanding businesses and the proposals will support the Council's economic objectives which underpin policies CPS8, CSP11 and CSP12 that focus job creation primarily in Urban Barnsley.

DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY

4.6 The AMCO site generally already contains similar offices of both single and two storey modular construction and in the wider area there are other industrial units. The site is not prominent from any public vantage points apart from Whaley Road itself.

4.7 It is considered that the design of the office is in-keeping with the rest of the site and that the location of the site in an accessible industrial estate within Urban Barnsley is in general accordance with Policies CSP1, CSP2, CSP29 and the NPPF which seek improvements to the environment and sustainable development to reduce the impacts of climate change.

AMENITY OF NEIGHBOURING OCCUPIERS

4.8 There are no residential properties in the vicinity of the site which are affected by the development and as the building is already on site there will be no disruption to neighbours.

FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

4.9 The site is located in flood zone 1 and is below one hectare in area and as such a Flood Risk Assessment is not required for this application.

4.10 The office connects into the existing surface water drains which discharge into the existing underground surface water drainage connection and existing foul drains which discharge into the existing underground sewerage system. A drawing (reference number AMCO-07) showing the drainage arrangements is provided with the planning application

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 This full application seeks retrospective planning permission for a single storey office at the AMCO Headquarters and depot site at Whaley Road, Barnsley. The premises are within an existing Employment Policy Area in Urban Barnsley wherein the UDP policies indicate that office uses are acceptable in principle. The particular nature of the proposal within a mixed use site is considered to avoid any conflict with policies for town centres.

5.2 In accordance with the NPPF, investment in business should not be overburdened by the planning system. The site is located within an older Employment Policy Area where the proposed development is entirely compatible with the current nature of the site and surrounding premises. The retention of the office building will safeguard existing jobs and will assist the future growth and expansion of the business, including the current pending planning application for a new two storey office, in accordance with policies contained within the Development Plan.

5.3 This assessment has had regards to the NPPF, the Development Plan and other relevant local policies. It has considered other material considerations including design and sustainability, flood risk and drainage.

5.4 It is concluded that the application proposals comply with both adopted policies and guidance and should be approved.