
2023/0544

Applicant: Mr Lee Gauntley

Change of use from coach depot to MOT and repair garage (Amended Site Area)

The Coach House, Homecroft Road, Goldthorpe, Rotherham, S63 9DX

Site Description

The application site is in relation to a commercial property located on Homecroft Road in Goldthorpe. The site contains a brickwork building which is split into two sections with a flat roof garage-type building with a metal door on the frontage, and a two storey mixed use building with office on the ground floor and residential at first floor. To the front of the building is a hard surfaced forecourt area used for parking and to the rear and side is a grassed area. The site was originally used as a fire station before its use as a coach depot and office – with the change of use being granted through application ref. B/94/1454/DE.

The site is located in the Urban Fabric in what is a predominantly residential area. However, there are several commercial properties nearby, particularly to the East on High Street which is comprised of retail units, local convenience stores, drinking establishments, hot food takeaways and other local services.

Relevant Site History

B/93/0536/DE – Change of use former fire station to motor repairs/sale of spares (Refused)

B/94/1454/DE – Change of use of fire station to coach depot and dwelling and erection of extensions - Approved

2020/0491 – Outline application for demolition of existing buildings and erection of 4 no. houses with access and layout to be considered at this stage (Refused)

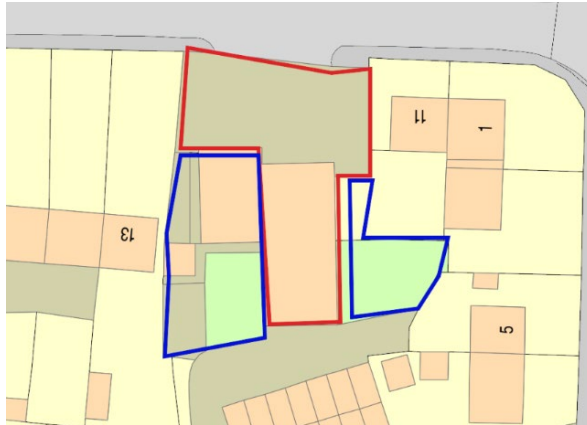
Proposed Development

The applicant is seeking approval for the change of use of the building from a coach depot to a MOT and servicing garage. The change of use is in relation to the building to the eastern side of the building (the garage side) and the entire forecourt area which will be utilised for parking for customers and staff, alongside being used as a waiting area for customers.

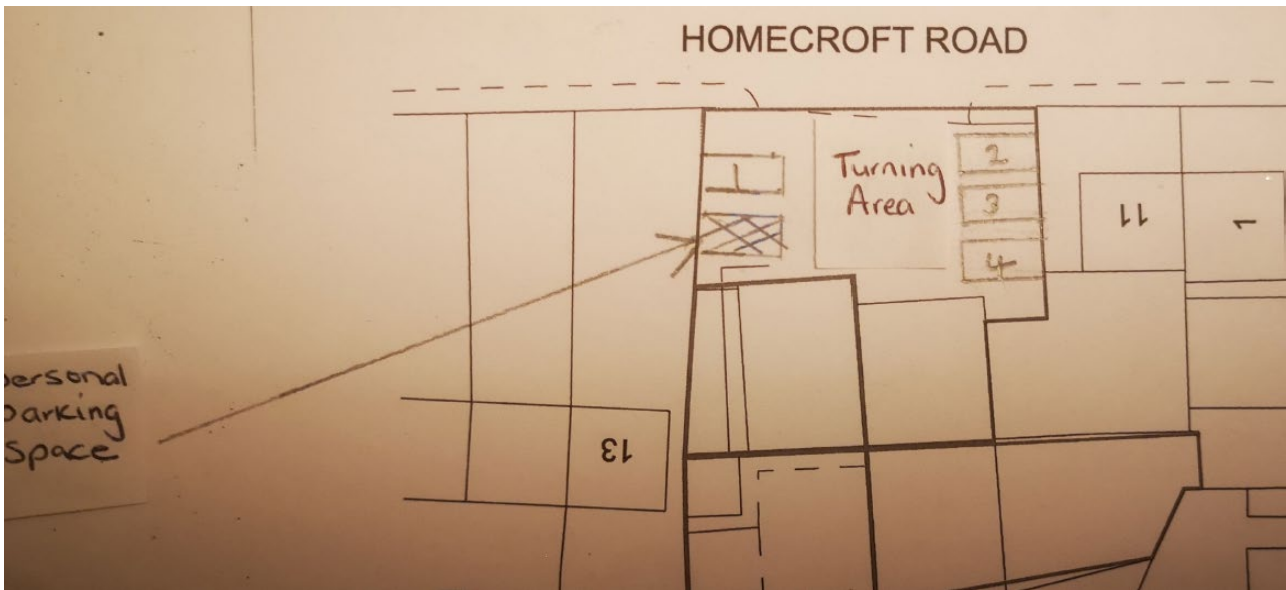
The applicant has supplied the following information in relation to the business practices of the business:

1. The applicant will initially be the sole mechanic on site, with the applicant's partner initially dealing with the admin duties of the business. There is potential in the future for the business to expand and hire further employees but there are no imminent plans to do so.
2. The opening hours of the business will be 8.30am-5.30pm Monday to Friday, 08.30am to 5:30pm on Saturday and no times on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
3. The attached building to the Western side of the garage will remain a mix of office and residential.
4. Estimation that the business will provide services for 5-7 vehicles/customers per day.

Proposed Site Plan:



Proposed Parking Layout:



Policy Context

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. As such, the following policies are relevant:-

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.

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.

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.

LG2: The Location of Growth - Priority will be given to development in the following locations:

Urban Barnsley;
Principal Towns of Cudworth, Wombwell, Hoyland, Goldthorpe (which includes Thurnscoe and Bolton on Dearne), Penistone and Royston; and
Villages.

Urban Barnsley will be expected to accommodate significantly more growth than any individual Principal Town, and the Principal Towns will be expected to accommodate significantly more growth than the villages, to accord with their place in the settlement hierarchy

T3: New Development and Sustainable Travel – New Development will be expected to:

- Be located and designed to reduce the need to travel, be accessible to public transport and meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Provide at least the minimum levels of parking for cycles, motorbikes, scooters, mopeds and disabled people set out in the relevant Supplementary Planning Document.

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.

Poll1: Pollution Control – Development will be expected to demonstrate that it is not likely to result, directly or indirectly, in an increase in air, surface water and groundwater, noise, smell, dust, vibration, light or other pollution which would unacceptably affect or cause a nuisance to the natural and built environment or to people. Developers will be expected to minimise the effects of any possible pollution and provide mitigation measures where appropriate.

RE1: Low Carbon and Renewable Energy - All developments will be expected to seek to incorporate initially appropriate design measures, and thereafter decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy sources in order to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and should at least achieve the appropriate carbon compliance targets as defined in the Building Regulations.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 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.

Consultations

Highways DC – The proposals do not include any alterations to the site from a highways perspective point of view and the sufficient level of parking provision within the site is to be retained. The proposals do not affect the current access, parking and turning arrangements of the site or adversely impact upon the highway and are therefore considered acceptable from a highways development control perspective. No specific highways related conditions are deemed necessary.

Highway Drainage – No objection.

Pollution Control – No objection raised subject to conditions.

Ward Councillors – No comments received.

Yorkshire Water – No comments received.

Representations

Neighbour consultation letters were sent to neighbouring residents on two occasions 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 a predominantly residential area, however there is commercial uses in the local area including the site itself which has most recently been used as a coach depot since the mid-90s. Indeed, the site is located just to the West of High Street which contains a wide variety of uses. As such, the commercial use of the site has long been established and the continuation of this is considered to be acceptable. That being said, the proposed development will potentially bring with it additional noise and general disturbance impacts to neighbouring properties which will be assessed in the below sections of the report.

Residential Amenity

The site is located in the Urban Fabric in what is predominantly a residential area, but the site is commercial for the use as a coach depot and office building. The Coach depot will have resulted in the comings and goings of larger vehicles on site and the proposed use as a MOT and Servicing garage will likely lead to an increase in the number of vehicular movements to and within the site. Additionally, the proposed use as an MOT, servicing and general vehicle repair can typically lead to increased noise through general business operations occurring on site. However, the majority of these activities will take place within the internal of the existing garage building on the site. This is with the exception of vehicles which are to be parked within the forecourt area of the site, however this has previously been used for the parking of much larger vehicles/coaches.

It is appreciated that an MOT and Servicing garage is associated with greater noise than the existing coach depot, but these uses are not inherently noisy or disruptive and are often found in residential areas. The use is comparable to other light industrial uses which are regularly found and acceptable in residential areas and given the business activities will largely occur within the building, the impact on neighbouring properties in terms of noise and general disturbance will be limited.

The applicant has provided details regarding the initial intensity of the business which they are the sole mechanic on site with no employees, with an estimation that the applicant/business will serve 5-7 cars per day given that and MOT check/service takes between 35-60 minutes to complete. This level of business activity on site is not considered to be to an unreasonable level. However, they have indicated that the business will potentially grow in the future with 1 or 2 additional mechanics working on site alongside an apprentice. The applicant has indicated that the apprentice would not have their own independent workload, they would shadow the mechanics on site and carry out very simple jobs. The apprentice would not increase the number of cars which would be worked on per day.

The change of use falls with the land rather than the applicant therefore there is the requirement for the LPA to ensure that the level of business operations does not expand to an unreasonable level in the future that would detrimentally impact the residential amenity of existing or future neighbouring residents. Under the approval granted in 1994 it allows a user to have 5 coaches on site and be able to service and repair them with no hours restrictions so potentially could be 24 hours a day. However, the coach depot is not going to have as many coming and goings and visits from the public as an mot/repair garage would do so there is likely to be more activity which could impact on neighbouring properties. As such it has been discussed with the applicant to limit the number of vehicles worked on to 10 cars a day and to limit hours of working to 08:30am-17:30pm Monday-Friday, 08:30-1pm Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays. In comparison to the fallback position of what works could be carried out under the previous permission then

it is not considered that this would result in any significant detriment to neighbouring amenities over and above what the site could be used for.

Subject to the above conditions, the proposed development is considered to be in compliance with Local Plan Policy GD1: General Development and is acceptable in terms of residential amenity.

Highways Safety

The site has long been established as a commercial property, has an existing access from Homecroft road leading to a fairly large hard surfaced car park in a forecourt area. Given the previous use of the site, the frontage of the site has previously been used for the parking of larger vehicles used as coaches. The proposed use as a MOT and servicing garage will likely intensify the use of the access in terms of regular vehicular movements, as customers will be reaching the site themselves. However, the parking area to the front is of a size which can accommodate this slight uptick in vehicular movements. Additionally, the applicant has provided a parking layout plan clearly identifying the amount of available parking spaces for customers to be 4 on site, with a space of the applicant's personal vehicle and sufficient turning area. This will allow for vehicles to enter and leave the site in forward gear.

Highways DC have been consulted on the proposal and have not raised any objection to the application, subject to conditions. The proposed development is in compliance with Local Plan Policy T4 and the Council's SPD for Parking and is considered to be acceptable.

Visual Amenity

There are no proposed alterations to the building itself, and the only physical/visual change will be that the forecourt area will be used to park smaller vehicles than larger buildings such as coaches. Parking to the front of properties is therefore established through the previous use and is similar in character to the surrounding area.

The proposed development is in compliance with Local Plan Policy D1 and is acceptable in terms of visual amenity.

Drainage

Colleagues in Drainage have been consulted who have raised no objection to the proposed drainage details for the development and the proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable from a drainage perspective.

Conclusion

The applicant is seeking approval for the change of use of the former Stevensons Coach Depot on Homecroft Road, Goldthorpe, into a MOT, repair and servicing garage. The site is located in the Urban Fabric in what is predominantly a residential area however there are commercial uses nearby, with High Street to the East which contains a variety of commercial uses and local services. The proposed use of the site as a commercial property has long been established and will not be out of character with the surrounding area. Likewise, the use of a MOT, repair and servicing garage is often found within residential areas in the borough and subject to control over the proposed use and future expansion, is considered to be acceptable. The applicant has indicated that there is expansion potential in the future with additional mechanics possibly working on site, alongside an apprentice who would take on a job shadow/minor jobs role 3-4 days per week. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable subject to conditions which would strictly control the future expansion potential of the business.

There are no external alterations proposed to the building, including the external forecourt area which is hard surfaced and will not be altered through the development. The site has a parking area to the front which will be retained with the access into the site remaining as existing, with the agent submitting a parking plan showing that the forecourt area can cater for 4 x customer vehicles alongside 1 space for his personal vehicle. Highways DC have assessed the information and raised no objections to the proposal.

The application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

Recommendation

Approve with Conditions