

E P Barrus Ltd, Granville Way, Bicester

12/01650/F

Ward: Bicester East

District Councillor: Lawrie Stratford and Rose Stratford

Case Officer: Rebekah Morgan

Recommendation: Approval

Applicant: E P Barrus Ltd

Application Description: Erection of two industrial Rubb storage buildings, alterations to service yard area and the creation of a new vehicular access off Launton Road.

Committee Referral: Major Application

1. Site Description and Proposed Development

- 1.1 The application site is situated on the corner of Granville Way and Launton Road. The existing building is a two-storey brick building with a height of approximately 8m. The building is set back within the site with car parking and landscaping to the front. The service yard is situated to the side of the building and is enclosed by a 2m high brick wall.
- 1.2 The application site is positioned at the entrance to a large industrial estate. The buildings in the surrounding area vary in style and design, both along Launton Road and through Granville Way.
- 1.3 The application seeks consent for two Rubb storage buildings to be situated within the existing service yard. A RUBB storage building is a building constructed of high strength PVC coated polyester membrane cladding that is tensioned over a structural steel frame system. The proposed building towards the rear of the site will measure 20m x 40m with a height of 9.45m. The proposed building positioned at the front of the site will measure 15m x 20m with a height of 9.45m.
- 1.4 The application includes alterations to the service yard, with access to the loading bays being maintained. The proposal is to create a new access off Launton Road to serve the Barrus site and the neighbouring site. Existing vehicular access onto Granville Way will be blocked off.

2. Application Publicity

- 2.1 The application has been advertised by way of neighbour letter, site notice and press notice. The final date for comment was the 28th December 2012. No correspondence has been received as a result of this consultation process.

3. Consultations

- 3.1 **Bicester Town Council:** No comments received.

Cherwell District Council Consultees

- 3.2 **Planning Policy Officer:** The main priority of the Local Plan is to secure the economic future of the District and this proposal will assist in meeting this aim.
- 3.3 **Urban Design Officer:** No comments received.
- 3.4 **Anti-social Behaviour Manager:** No objections.
- 3.5 **Environmental Protection Officer:** No objections.
- 3.6 **Economic Development Officer:** Supports the application. States that 'this proposal would contribute practically towards the objectives of the Cherwell Economic Development Strategy (2011-16).

Oxfordshire County Council Consultees

- 3.7 **Highways Liaison Officer:** An initial objection has been raised; 'the proposed access is less desirable than the existing access in terms of vehicle swept path, carriageway width, right turn facilities and pedestrian safety. The applicant is currently working with the Local Highways Officer to overcome the objections. A full written update will be provided to members at committee.
- 3.8 **Drainage Officer:** Any additional roof water run-off will need to go to a soak-away or other sustainable drainage system.

Other Consultees

- 3.9 **Police Architectural Liaison Officer:** No comments received.
- 3.10 **Environment Agency:** Application deemed to have low environmental risk, therefore do not wish to comment.
- 3.11 **Thames Water:** No objections.

4. Relevant National and Local Policy and Guidance

4.1 Development Plan Policy

Adopted Cherwell Local Plan (Saved Policies)
ENV1: Pollution Control

South East Plan 2009
CC1: Sustainable development
RE1: Contributing to the U.K's long term competitiveness
RE3: Employment and Land Provision
CO1: Core Strategy
CO2: Economy

4.2 Other Material Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

Cherwell Local Plan - Proposed Submission Draft (May 2012)

The draft Local Plan is due out for public consultation in the near future. Although this plan does not have Development Plan status, it can be considered as a material planning consideration. The plan sets out the Council's strategy for the District to 2031. The policies listed below are considered to be material to this case and are not replicated by saved Development Plan policy:

SLE1: Employment Development

Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011

In December 2004 the Council resolved that all work to proceed towards the statutory adoption of a draft Cherwell Local Plan 2011 be discontinued. However, on 13 December 2004 the Council approved the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 as interim planning policy for development control purposes. Therefore this plan does not have Development Plan status, but it can be considered as a material planning consideration.

5. Appraisal

Background Information

- 5.1 This application is accompanied by an application to reconfigure and extend the existing car park (12/01651/F); which is being dealt with under delegated authority. The two applications are linked, so far as the highway configurations will need to work for both applications.
- 5.2 E.P. Barrus, established in 1917, moved in 1977 to the current purpose built premises in Bicester. They import and distribute tools, machinery and engines, adding value through its technical testing, product adaptation and training facilities which have expanded in recent years. Today approximately 150 staff are directly employed by the applicants.
- 5.3 The applicants have a secondary warehouse in unit C5 MoD Bicester and this is approximately 100,000 sq ft of space. MoD has given notice to them to vacate the premises by 31st December 2012.
- 5.4 The proposed development would allow a small proportion of this storage space to be relocated from the MoD site to the premises on Launton Road. It is claimed that this will improve efficiency as the goods are already dispatched from via the Launton Road site and therefore daily vehicle movements between the two sites would be reduced.
- 5.5 Barrus are currently working with the Council's Economic Development Team to find further alternatives to the MoD site.
- 5.6 The key issues for consideration in this application are:

- Principle of the Development
- Visual Amenity
- Neighbouring Amenity
- Highway Safety

Principle of the Development

- 5.7 The application site is located on an existing employment site at Granville Way, Bicester and E.P. Barrus have occupied the premises since its construction in 1977.
- 5.8 Policy RE3 of the South East Plan states that provision should be made for a range of sites and premises to meet the general needs in locations that:
- Are or will be accessible to the existing and proposed labour supply
 - Make efficient use of existing and underused sites and premises through increasing intensity of use on accessible sites
 - Focus on urban areas
 - Promote the use of public transport
- 5.9 The criteria set out in this policy relate to the identification of future sites, however, they are useful for assessing the suitability of this proposal, which meets these criteria.
- 5.10 Policies CO1 and CO2 of the South East Plan promote Bicester as an area for future economic growth. The South East Plan is therefore supportive of employment generating development within Bicester.
- 5.11 The application site is within an area shown as an existing employment area in the Proposed Submission Local Plan (2012). Policy SLE1 states that employment proposals in Banbury and Bicester on non-allocated sites will be supported if they meet the following criteria:
- Are within the built up limits of the settlement
 - Make efficient use of existing and underused sites and premises, by increasing the intensity of the use on accessible sites
 - Are, or will be, accessible to the existing and proposed labour supply
 - Have good access, or can be made to have good access by public transport
 - Are well designed
 - Do not have an adverse effect on the surrounding land uses and the historic and natural environment
- 5.12 The Council's Planning Policy Officer has advised that 'the site (which is not allocated) will importantly fulfil the first four of these criteria. The site is within the built up limits of Bicester, it will make use of existing employment land, the residents of Bicester (amongst other labour sources) will provide the labour supply and the site is on a bus route'. The two remaining criteria will be discussed later in this report.
- 5.13 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out 12 core principles that underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. The two points most relevant to this application are:

- 'proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs...'
- 'encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value'.

5.14 The proposed development is on an existing employment site, in an urban area. The business is very well established on the site and clearly needs to expand. The principle of the development is acceptable and consistent with the core principles of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Visual Amenity

5.15 A RUBB building is a storage building constructed of high strength PVC coated polyester membrane cladding that is tensioned over a structural steel frame system.

5.16 The outer membrane of the structure comes in a variety of colour options, while the roof remains white (to allow natural light penetration). The colour of the proposed buildings was discussed at the site visit and it was agreed that a dark brown colour would compliment the colour of the brickwork on the existing building and the service yard wall.

5.17 Examples of similarly designed buildings can be viewed on the adjacent site to the rear of Barrus and on another site in Granville Way.

5.18 The buildings will be visible from the public domain, however, they will not appear out of place as the styles and heights of the buildings vary in this locality. This is demonstrated in the photomontage that shows how the buildings will appear when constructed. Furthermore, the existing mature trees along the site boundary will interrupt views of the site from Launton Road.

5.19 The proposal will not have a detrimental impact on visual amenity of this commercial area and complies with government guidance on requiring good design contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Neighbouring Amenity

5.20 The industrial use of the site is established and the application seeks to extend the storage capacity on site to support the existing business. The surrounding area is a mixture of industrial and commercial uses; but there are no residential properties within close proximity of the site.

5.21 It is unlikely that the proposed development would generate significant amounts of noise. However, due to the surrounding uses, this would not cause particular concern. The proposal complies with Policy ENV1 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan.

Highway Safety

5.22 The Local Highways Authority has raised an objection to the application. The following concerns were set out in their response:

- The proposed access is less desirable than the existing in terms of vehicle swept path, carriageway width, right turn facilities and pedestrian safety
- A full tracking plan is required to demonstrate large vehicles entering, manoeuvring onsite and egressing in forward gear
- It is undesirable to create additional accesses onto this busy road, in the interests of maintaining free-flow traffic
- Realistically, there will be no way to restrict any user of Granville Way Industrial Estate from using the new access if permitted.

5.23 The applicant has provided a plan showing how the access on to Granville Way will be permanently blocked off to vehicular traffic; therefore it has overcome the final concern regarding the use of the proposed new access by other users of Granville Way.

5.24 The applicant is currently in discussion with the Local Highways Authority regarding the other concerns.

5.25 The application will be considered acceptable if a satisfactory solution can be found that meets with the agreement of the Local Highways Authority.

Positive and Proactive Approach

5.26 During the course of the application a site meeting was held and additional information was requested; which has been submitted by the agent. The applicant and their agent are in discussions with the Local Highways Authority to attempt to overcome the concerns that have been raised.

5.27 With regard to the duty set out in paragraphs 186 and 187 of the Framework, no problems or issues have arisen during the application. It is considered that the duty to be positive and proactive has been discharged through the efficient and timely determination of the application.

6. Recommendation

Approval, subject to:

a) The satisfactory resolution of the outstanding highway concerns

b) the following conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Except where otherwise stipulated by condition, the application shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the following plans and documents: Application forms, site location plan, block plan and drawings numbered: 20750A/1, 14140-16, 14140-12, 14140-13, Specification for Building 1 and

Specification for Building 2 received 20th November 2012.

Reason - For the avoidance of doubt, to ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority and to comply with Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Notwithstanding the provisions of Class A of Part 8, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 1995 and its subsequent amendments, the approved building shall not be extended or altered without the prior express planning consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain planning control over the development of the site in order to safeguard the amenities of the area in accordance with Policy BE1 of the South East Plan 2009, Policy C28 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. The premises shall be used only for purposes falling within Class B8 specified in the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Order 2005 and for no other purpose(s) whatsoever.

Reason - In order to maintain the character of the area and safeguard the amenities of the occupants of the adjoining premises in accordance with Policy BE1 of the South East Plan 2009, Policy C28 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. The external walls of the development shall be finished in a dark brown colour in accordance with drawing number 5098 VIS1 received on 11th January 2013.

Reason - To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the completed development and to comply with Policy BE1 of the South East Plan 2009, Policy C28 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, full details of a scheme to prevent any surface water from the development discharging onto the adjoining highway shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the drainage scheme shall be implemented and retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason - In the interests of highway safety and flood prevention and to comply with Policy NRM4 of the south East Plan 2009 and Government advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

**SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION
AND RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES**

The Council, as local planning authority, has determined this application in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise. The development is considered to be acceptable on its planning merits as the proposal is of a design, size and style that is appropriate in its context and would not cause detriment to highway safety, neighbouring properties or the visual amenity of the wider locality. As such the proposal is in accordance with Policies CC1, RE1, RE3, CO1 and CO2 of the South East Plan 2009, Policy ENV1 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including third party representations, the Council considers that the application should be approved and planning permission granted subject to appropriate conditions, as set out above.

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No 2) Order 2012 and paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012), this decision has been taken by the Council having worked with the applicant/agent in a positive and proactive way as set out in the application report.