





The site is located within Wessex Park, in the Bancombe Road Trading Estate, Somerton.

The site is comprised of three conjoined units - 1A, 2A, and 3A - and an industrial yard area. The units and the yard are at the most southerly end of the run of industrial units that make up Wessex Park.

This application seeks permission for the erection of a fence and gates to form a secure yard; and siting of new shipping containers for additional business storage (B1 - ancillary) and for storage to be let (B8).

Through the course of the application, amended plans were received to move the fencing behind the visibility splay and lower the wall posts.

## HISTORY

None relevant

## POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), and Paragraphs 2, 11, 12, and 14 of the NPPF states that applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For the purposes of determining current applications the local planning authority considers that the adopted development plan comprises the policies of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006 2028 (adopted March 2015).

## **Policies of the Emerging South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028)**

Policy SD1: Sustainable Development

Policy SS1: Settlement Strategy

Policy EQ2: General Development

Policy TA5: Transport Impact of New Development

Policy TA6: Parking Standards

## **National Planning Policy Framework**

Chapter 1: Building a strong, competitive economy

Chapter 7: Requiring Good Design

## **CONSULTATIONS**

**Somerton Town Council** - Unanimously not supported due to poor visibility and lack of parking spaces for visitors.

**County Highway Authority** - Standing Advice applies.

**Highways Consultant** - Consider/assess the impact of the proposed fencing on the extent of visibility splays at the access point - would visibility for and of vehicles emerging from the site be compromised? Also consider impact of the location of the storage containers on the provision of on-site parking. Can existing parking provision be re-provided?

**Environmental Protection Unit** - No comments or request for consultation deadline extension received.

**Tree Officer** - The officer advised how the fence could be erected without harming the trees on site, through careful planning of the positioning of the fence posts.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

None received

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Principle of Development**

Industrial estates are allocated to provide space primarily for industry, or, in planning terms, the B uses. The proposed uses are B1 storage ancillary to the existing B1 use of the unit, and B8 storage. Chapter 1 of the NPPF states that the planning system should place significant weight on the need to support economic growth. The principle of siting shipping containers to provide further storage to support the existing business, and the diversification provided to that business through the potential to let storage as a B8 use is considered to support the business economically.

Furthermore, the erection of 2.1 metre high fencing and a gate to provide a secure holding for the premises, affords the business with additional security, again, considered to support the business.

Overall, the proposal is considered to provide economic benefits, and as such it is encouraged

in-line with Chapter 1 of the NPPF. However, the economic benefits, afforded significant weight in accordance with the NPPF, must also be weighed against any identified harm.

## **Amenity**

Notwithstanding the views of the Town Council, the visual impact of the fence, gates, and containers are not considered to result in demonstrable visual harm to the amenity of the area. The location of the site, in the middle of an industrial estate, lends itself to distinctly industrial development, which is commonly utilitarian and of a large scale. The fencing, gates, or storage containers are considered to be commonplace in this sort of environment. The principle of judging the visual impacts of development on the character of an industrial estate may be considered to be an impediment of economic development, contrary to Chapter 1 of the NPPF.

The trees on site are considered worthy of retention, and with proper consideration, it is considered that they can be retained. It is therefore considered reasonable to impose a condition that the positions of the fence posts be agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to the erection of the fencing.

## **Highways**

The Highways Authority states that its Standing Advice applies to the application; as such, the Somerset Parking Strategy must also be considered.

### Visibility

At 30mph the Standing Advice requires 43 metres of visibility from 2.4 metres back from the highway. Currently, the gate posts are situated directly within the visibility splay, impeding visibility. With the pillar in place, vehicles would either edge onto the highway unsighted, or they would reverse to achieve visibility around the pillars. A thin line of visibility to the right can be achieved through the trees, telecommunications cabinet, and mast on site, but only at 24.4 metres. Views to the left can be achieved up to 30 metres from a position behind the pillars and the 2.4 metres from the highway as sought by the Advice. Overall, the site does not comply with the Advice at present.

The application brings benefits to highways safety by removing the pillars either side of the access. It could be conditioned that they are removed prior to the erection of the fence or gate, or prior to the containers are brought onto site. Additionally, the gate has been positioned 2.8 metres back from the highway and the run of the means of enclosure has been positioned so that it does not interfere with the existing visibility splay behind the pillars. Therefore, taking into account that the fence does impinge on the existing visibility splay (behind the pillar), and the pillar will be reduced to 0.9 metres in accordance with the Standing Advice, the application both increased the existing visibility splays and allows vehicles to assess visibility at 2.4 meters back from the highway, in accordance with the Advice.

### Parking

The parking strategy states that parking spaces should be 4.8m by 2.4m unless parallel to a curb. The spaces proposed are compliant with those specifications, so can be considered as acceptable spaces. 7 spaces are proposed. The Strategy seeks 1 space for every 40m<sup>2</sup> and 1 space for every 300m<sup>2</sup> of floor area, in Somerton. The units comprise 187m<sup>2</sup> of B1 use, requiring 4.7 spaces, leaving 2 full spaces of provision. 7 new containers, with dimensions of 3m by 2.4m, would create 50.4m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace. If the containers were all used as ancillary storage then 1.3 spaces would be required. If the containers were to be used as B8 storage then less than 0.2 spaces would be required. Overall, there is ample parking on site to comply with the requirements of the Parking Strategy. Furthermore, there is space to turn vehicles on site to meet the requirements of the Standing Advice.

When the gates require opening or closing, there is considered to be sufficient space to allow for a vehicle to use the entrance as a momentary lay-by, thereby not blocking or impeding access on the highway, and not resulting in severe demonstrable harm to highways safety.

Overall, the application may be considered to result in an increase in vehicle movements, but results in an improvement to the existing access and visibility, and has ample space for the parking and turning of associated vehicles. The application is therefore considered to be generally in compliance with the Standing Advice and Parking Strategy, and would not prejudice highways safety, in accordance with policies TA5 and TA6.

## **Conclusion**

The proposal is considered to support economic growth and will not result in harm to local amenities or highways safety. The application is therefore considered to comply with policies SD1, SS1, EQ2, TA5 and TA6 of the South Somerset Local Plan, and the provisions of the NPPF.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve.

01. The proposal for the change of use and erection of a fence and gate, and the provision of 7 storage containers, is considered to be in an acceptable location and causes no demonstrable harm to local amenities or highways safety. As such the proposal complies with policies SD1, SS1, EQ2, TA5 and TA6 of the South Somerset Local Plan, and the provisions of the NPPF.

### **SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:**

01. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To accord with the provisions of section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans (except where directed otherwise by the conditions below):

Drawing Number: DD002, received 27 November 2015

Drawing Number: DD001 Rev B, received 08 January 2016

Photographs of Palisade Gates, and container, received 27 November 2015.

Reason: In the interests of proper planning and for the avoidance of doubt.

03. The permission hereby granted is for 7 storage containers to be positioned in the area shown on the approved plan: DD0001 Rev B only. The containers shall not be positioned elsewhere on site without prior express grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interests of highways safety, in accordance with policies TA5 and TA6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028).

04. Prior to the erection of the means of enclosure hereby permitted, a detailed plan showing the positions of the fence posts and the trees on site shall be submitted to and agreed in writing.

Reason: In the interests of local amenity, in accordance with Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028)

05. Prior to the erection of the means of enclosure hereby permitted, the pillars at the access of the site shall be reduced to a height no greater than 0.9 metres and shall not be increased in height without prior express grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interests of highways safety, in accordance with Policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006-2028).

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