

**PLANNING APPLICATION
BY
MR T FORREST
TO
RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
FOR THE
CHANGE OF USE FROM A B.8 TO A B.2 USE
AT
27, INGLEWHITE ROAD,
LONGRIDGE, LANCASHIRE**

PLANNING STATEMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application by Mr T Forrest to Ribble Valley Borough Council. It should be read in conjunction with the Noise Assessment report prepared by Miller Goodall Environmental Services.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal relates to a storage building forming part of commercial premises at 27 Inglewhite Road, Longridge. The application seeks permission to use the building for B.2 general industrial purposes. This application relates solely to the use of the building, and does not seek permission for any external physical alterations. The application is accompanied by a site plan which identifies the building to which the application relates and other adjoining land owned by the applicant.

3. THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The application relates to a single-storey mono-pitched building at 37 Inglewhite Road, Longridge. The building measures 52m long and 7m deep. The building has an internal floor space of some 364m². It is of a steel frame construction clad with dark green composite insulated profile sheet panels. To the front (east) of the building is a hard-surfaced communal yard which is be available for parking, servicing and turning. Entry to the building is via doors along its eastern side. There is an existing vehicular access from Inglewhite Road, located between nos. 27 and 29.
- 3.2 The building was erected approximately six years ago. Until the premises were vacated in August 2012 the building was used for the storage of plant, machinery and materials in connection with the Herbert T Forrest (initially) and ARC Joinery and Building Services Ltd (latterly) joinery businesses that operated from the larger site at 27 Inglewhite Road.
- 3.3 The property is situated centrally in Longridge, within an area of mixed commercial and residential use. To the rear (west) of the building are houses on Barnacre Road and Hesketh Road. To the front (east) of the building is a small estate of buildings which previously formed part of the Herbert T Forrest / ARC joinery businesses and are now in use for other industrial purposes. More generally, there is a retail store immediately

to the north at 37 Inglewhite Road, a Sainsbury's store also lies to the north of the site, a mix of commercial and residential uses are found along Inglewhite Road, with Longridge's retail core commencing just to the south of the site. A similar mix of residential and commercial property is found to the east of Inglewhite Road, eg off Crumpax Avenue.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 Planning permission 3/2006/0370 was granted on 21 July 2006 for the erection of a replacement storage building. The use of the building was limited by the application description of the development and condition 3. The condition stated:

'The building hereby permitted shall be used solely for storage purposes and no cutting, processing, finishing of goods or use of power tools shall take place within the building.'

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt, in the interests of the amenities of nearby residents, and to comply with Policy G1 of the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan'.

- 4.2 The building erected under this permission is that to which the present application applies.

5. PLANNING POLICY

- 5.1 The planning policies relevant to the site and the proposal are described below.
- 5.2 The Development Plan, as relevant to the proposal, comprises the following:
- the North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (published in September 2008); and
 - the 'saved' Policies of the Ribble Valley Local Plan (adopted in June 1998).

North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy

- 5.3 The Localism Act 2011 provides for abolition of the North West of England Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). A Strategic Environmental Assessment for its revocation has been consulted upon. The RSS remains in place for the time being, although its formal revocation can be expected soon. The RSS sets out the strategic planning and

development framework at a regional level. It is primarily directed at providing a framework for policy planning at the regional level. As such, it does not provide site specific or detailed guidance and has no direct relevance to the application.

Ribble Valley Local Plan

- 5.4 The Local Plan Proposals Map identifies the application site as being within the settlement boundary (Policy G2). There are no specific allocations relating to the site.
- 5.5 The following ‘saved’ policies of the Ribble Valley Local Plan, adopted in June 1998, are relevant to the proposal:
- Policy G1: Development Control – applies various criteria to deciding planning applications, including that development should be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature;
 - Policy G2: Settlement Strategy – defines Longridge as a main settlement, where development will be mainly directed. The policy states that development wholly within the built part of the settlement will be approved;
 - Policy EMP7: Industry / Employment – the expansion of existing firms within the main settlement will be allowed on land within or adjacent to their existing sites, providing no significant environmental problems are caused;
 - Policy T1: Transport – a list is provided of criteria to which the Council will attach considerable weight in deciding planning applications. The criteria include the availability and adequacy of public transport and the location of development in areas which maintain and improve choice to walk, cycle or catch public transport rather than drive between homes and facilities; and
 - Policy T7: Parking Provision – expects adequate provision to be made for car parking and servicing;

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.6 Central to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF sets out core planning principles and defines what the Government regards as sustainable development. A key dimension of sustainable development is ‘economic’. The planning system is expected to contribute

to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land is available to support growth.

- 5.8 In turn, the NPPF addresses various components of sustainable development. The component most relevant to the planning application is ‘building a strong, competitive economy’. The Government is committed to securing economic growth and ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth.

Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy

- 5.9 The Core Strategy is currently at the submission stage. However, the Inspector appointed to examine the soundness of the Core Strategy has highlighted the need for evidence documents to be updated. The Council subsequently requested a suspension of the examination process. By letter dated 9 January 2013, the Inspector agreed to suspend the examination until July 2013.
- 5.10 The following policies of the submitted Core Strategy are relevant to the proposal:
- Policy EC1: Business and Employment Development – states that the expansion of existing businesses will, wherever appropriate, be considered favourably. Proposals that result in the loss of existing employment sites to other forms of development will be resisted;
 - Policy DMI2: Transport Considerations - developments should be located to minimise the need for travel;
 - Policy DMG1: General Considerations – applies various criteria to deciding planning applications, including that development should be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature;
 - Policy DMG3: Transport and Mobility – in deciding planning applications considerable weight will be given to various criteria, including the availability of public transport and proposals which promote development within existing developed areas; and
 - Policy DMB1: Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy – proposals that are intended to support business growth and the local economy will be

supported in principle. The expansion of existing firms within settlements will be permitted provided that no significant environmental problems are caused.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Council's Head of Environmental Health Services was consulted on the findings of the Miller Goodall Noise Assessment report. The response received was that there were no serious objections to the proposal in principle. However, a number of detailed recommendations were made. Those recommendations are accepted for implementation alongside those contained in the Miller Goodall report.

7. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Having regard to the nature of the proposal, the site and relevant planning policies, the main planning issues to be considered are:
- the principle of the development;
 - neighbour amenity; and
 - car parking, servicing and highway safety.

Principle

- 7.2 In accord with Council policy (Core Strategy policy EC1) the applicant does not wish to promote a non-employment use at the site. Rather, he remains committed to retaining employment uses for Longridge. Since closure of the ARC Joinery business in August 2012, the applicant has marketed the premises to that end. He has been successful in attracting new industrial uses within the main buildings at the site. However, the marketing of the building to which the application relates has proved less successful. The restriction of the planning permission (3/2006/0370) to a storage use only has meant that the building remains more than 50% vacant. The part that has been let for storage is only on a short term and uncertain basis. There appears to be a lack of demand for storage space. A wider and more flexible range of business uses is deemed necessary to attract market interest, to bring the building back into productive use and to create further employment opportunities locally.
- 7.3 The application building is central to Longridge, thus accessible on foot and by bike, and with good bus connections to elsewhere. Thus, the proposal would accord with

local and national planning policies that seek to locate development in accessible locations.

- 7.4 Moreover, it is a clear feature and key priority of national planning policy that economic growth and job creation is supported. This commitment is reflected at the local level, with Local Plan and Core Strategy policies supporting the expansion of business development within settlements such as Longridge.
- 7.5 As such, the proposal would accord, in principle, with the NPPF and a range of local planning policies including Local Plan policy EM7 and Core Strategy policy EC1. The key determining issue is whether any significant environmental problems would be caused by the change of use. This issue is considered in the following sections.

Neighbour Amenity

- 7.6 No change in traffic generation, vehicle types / sizes and activity levels at the site would arise as a result of the proposed change of use of the building. As such, there would be no different outward impact from these sources than would be the case with the permitted use. Thus, there is no reason to consider that the amenities of local residents would be affected. The only change would be in the nature of the use or the activity carried on within the building and the implications thereof for neighbour amenity.
- 7.7 Local residents on Barnacre Road and Hesketh Road do not have a view into the yard area. Rather, they view onto the rear elevation of the application building, which has an eaves height of between 2.6 and 3.7 metres. A noise assessment has been carried out by Miller Goodall Environmental Services. It shows that there is no reason why the building should not be granted planning permission for a change of use from B8 to B2 use if adequate noise mitigation is used. This mitigation would include measures to upgrade the structure of the building, as recommended by Miller Goodall and the Council's Head of Environmental Health Services, along with other measures such as controls on the hours of use. With regards to the structure of the building, the Council's Head of Environmental Health specifically recommended that it be upgraded by the lining of the inside of the rear and gable walls with double thickness acoustic

plasterboard as against the single thickness advised by Miller Goodall. The recommendation is accepted and the acoustic lining would be provide to this standard if planning permission is granted.

- 7.8 The overall conclusion by Miller Goodall that the proposed development would be acceptable is entirely consistent with other recent planning decisions to approve new build industrial units on land rear of 90 Berry Lane and 10 Crumpax Avenue, Longridge. The relationship between that industrial proposal and existing residential uses is, in fact, closer than is the case with the proposed development.
- 7.9 The proposal would be in accordance with adopted Local Plan and emerging Core Strategy policy, in that it would allow business investment in a manner sympathetic to existing land uses and without any significant environmental problems being caused.

Car Parking, Servicing and Highway Safety

- 7.11 The building has been in commercial use since its erection in 2006, with no identified adverse highway implications. The premises would continue to be used for commercial purposes. The proposed industrial use would have similar traffic generation levels to the former storage use, with vehicles of like size. As such, there would be no material change in the usage of the site access and no detriment to highway safety. Similarly, the servicing and parking demands associated with the proposed use would not be materially different from the past storage use and would be readily accommodated within the site as previously.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Council planning policy is supportive of business and economic growth. The noise assessment demonstrates that the change of use of the existing storage unit to a B2 use can be carried out without harm to neighbour amenity provided adequate mitigation is used. Accordingly, the proposal would comply with local planning policy which allows for such development provided no significant environmental problems would be cause.

8.2 With regards to the NPPF, the key consideration is whether any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development. With regards to the proposed development, no adverse impacts have been identified provided adequate mitigation is used (which may be secured by condition). However, there are benefits associated with the proposed development, as follows:

- economic – the proposal would contribute to economic growth by providing suitable premises for local businesses;
- social – the proposal would provide job opportunities to local people in an accessible location, thus contributing to a strong and vibrant local community; and
- environmental – there would be no harm caused to neighbour amenity or any other environmental interests.

8.3 For the reasons set out above, the Council is respectfully invited to grant planning permission for the proposed change of use of the unit to B2 uses, subject to appropriate conditions.