DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2017/0541 **Valid 10/08/2017**	**PREMIER GARAGE SNEYD STREET LEEK**	**PROPOSED ALTERATIONS AND CHANGE OF USE TO FORMER SEAT GARAGE FROM A SHOW ROOM WITH A MECHANICS AREA AND VALETING BAY WITH OFFICES, TO AN ELECTRONIC ARCHIVE COMPANY WITH STORAGE, AND OFFICES. THE VALETING BAY IS RETAINED FOR SUB LET USE.** **(FULL - MINOR)**

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Design/impact on the street-scene and character & appearance of the area
- Impact on residential amenity
- Highway safety
- Sustainability

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The building to which the application relates is a single-storey, building constructed mainly of brick; the building has been extended over the years and has a mix of mainly dual-pitched roofs with a flat roof area. There is a parking area in front of the building.

The application site is located within the development boundary and a mineral safeguarding area (bedrock sand), as defined in the Core Strategy. There is a mix of commercial and residential properties surrounding the site. The most recent (and lawful) use of the site is garage and car show room/sales with associated offices and a valeting area attached.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks full planning permission for what is described as *"proposed alterations and change of use to former seat Garage from a show room with a mechanics area and valeting bay with offices, to an electronic archive company with storage and offices. The valeting bay is retained for sub let use."*

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES, GUIDANCE AND OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted 2014)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SS5a Leek Area Strategy
SD1 Sustainable Use of Resources
E1/E2 Existing and New Employment Areas/Development
DC1 Design Considerations
C1 Creating Sustainable Communities
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

- Ministerial foreword
- Introduction (Inc. Achieving sustainable development, presumption in favour of sustainable development, core planning principles, delivering sustainable development)
- 1 Building a strong, competitive economy
- 4 Promoting sustainable transport
- 7 Requiring good design
- 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 13 Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals

National Planning Practice Guidance

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

There have been numerous applications related to the site over the years, none of which are directly relevant to this application.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 10.10.2017
Neighbour consultation period ends: 27.09.2017
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None received.

Town / Parish Comments

Leek Town Council

No comments received.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No objections.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The prospective user of the premises will use part of the former workshop to form a dark room to be used for the scanning of documents such as historic mapping, books, photographs, and other files for electronic/digital storage. The remainder of the former workshop will be used for receiving and storing the original hardcopies before they can be digitally scanned and prior to being returned. The former showroom will be divided into offices, meeting room and welfare spaces.

The existing planning uses of the premises are a mix of B2 (motor vehicle maintenance and repair), sui generis (car show room) and B1 (car valeting). Given the sui generis element of the existing uses the premises can be defined as having a sui generis use overall.

The proposed storage use is quite specific – a holding area for hard-copy documents before being digitally archived (scanned) and prior to being returned. Storage use is broadly B8 and then there are the dark room, associated offices, meeting room and welfare facilities. In addition, the valeting area is to be retained for sub-letting. Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposed use is a further specific mixed uses which would be classed as sui generis.

The site is located within the development boundary. Within this context the principle of the proposed development (change of use as described and minor external physical alterations) is acceptable.

Design/impact on the street-scene and character and appearance of the area

The proposed development includes some external physical alterations to the building, primarily alterations to the window and door openings and levelling of the ground in front of the building.

It is considered that the proposed use of the building and the minor physical alterations have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposed development is considered to comply with the design tenets of Local Plan policy DC1 and section 7 of the NPPF.

Impact on amenity of neighbouring properties

The existing building immediately adjoins a number of rear gardens of properties in Sneyd Avenue. The proposed use, with the removal of the motor vehicle maintenance and repair use, is considered to have less impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties than the existing use. As such, it is considered that the proposal accords with the amenity tenets of policy DC1 of the Local Plan and bullet point 4 of para 17 of the NPPF.

Highway Safety

There are a number of car parking spaces to the front of the existing building which would be retained as part of the development proposals. The proposed change of use and physical alterations would not interfere with the existing car parking and are considered not to raise any highway safety issues and therefore the proposal complies with Local Plan policy T1 and section 4 of the NPPF.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE/SUSTAINABILITY

The use of the building for an alternative economic use would accord with the Governments commitment to build a strong economy. Bearing all the above matters in mind the proposed development is considered to be a sustainable form of development that accords with Core Strategy policies SS1, SS1a and C1 (sustainability) and all other relevant Local Plan policies. Therefore the application should be approved without delay, in accordance with para 14 of the NPPF.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Case Officer: John Williamson
Recommendation Date: 10/10/2017

X

Signed by: Jane Colley

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council