

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2022/0621
Valid 24/11/2022

CRODA CHEMICALS
EUROPE LTD BARNFIELD
ROAD
LEEK

THIS APPLICATION SEEKS
FULL PLANNING PERMISSION
TO BUILD A NEW TWO-STORY
BUILDING ON THE EXISTING
CRODA INDUSTRIAL SITE.
THE PROPOSED BUILDING
WILL BE UTILISED FOR
PROCESSING/MANUFACTURING

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- Impact on neighbouring amenity.
- Impact on highway safety.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site comprises the southern part of the wider Croda Chemicals Europe Ltd site; located within the Barnfields Industrial Estate. The application site is located in the Development Boundary of Leek. The cattle market is to the east to the other side of a belt of mature trees.

The development location within the site would be at the south west corner on an existing area of car park which serves temporary offices (planning permission already granted to demolish the offices).

PROPOSAL

Planning application for a new two storey light industrial building. The new facility would deliver new supercritical CO₂ (SCCO₂) purification technology, which would sit alongside the existing Super Refining Technology and increase the portfolio of products. The process would be subject to an Environment Agency permit variation with the necessary abatement requirements, including noise and odour.

The facility used for specialist processing/manufacturing would include plant rooms, control room, and ancillary areas such as WCs and kitchen. The building would be constructed in the southwest corner of the existing Croda site, located on the existing car park that serves the temporary offices. The office building is to be demolished to make space under permission SMD/2021/0495.

The facility would be operated by 5 new full time employees working on a 1 person, 5 shift pattern to cover the 24hour operations. This would extend to a total of 10 full time

employees, working on a 2 person, 5 shift pattern. Additional parking would be accommodated either adjacent to the existing site entrance to the north or in the future, expansion to the south. Site operations to remain as existing, with goods in and out between 08:00 and 16:00 hrs Monday to Friday and processing being 24/7.

The building would provide a solar array on its south facing roof slope.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

S01 Spatial Objectives
SS1 Development Principles
SS5 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
DC1 Design Considerations
E1 New Employment Development
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

The Croda Chemicals site has a long planning history with numerous planning applications for various types of development, such as new buildings, storage tanks, railings etc.

SMD/2021/0495 Demolition of office building. APPROVED.

SMD/2021/0749 New four storey building Phse 3 works. APPROVED.

SMD/2022/0545 Utility bldg. Phse 3 works. APPROVED.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 3.01.2023

Neighbour consultation period ends: 3.01.2023

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

None

Town / Parish Comments

Leek Town Council: No objection

Environmental Health

Awaited

Severn Trent Water

No objection subject to condition requiring control over drainage scheme

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No objection subject to condition relating to future use of the existing condition.

AES Waste Services

No issues regarding waste collections.

OFFICER COMMENTS**Principle of Development**

The application site is located within the Development Boundary of Leek; a 'town' as identified by Local Plan policy SS5. Policy SS5 seeks to create employment growth and increase the diversity of employment opportunities to meet existing and future needs through the retention and growth of existing businesses within the town.

The development would obviously support the flexibility and growth of the business in line with these strategic principles.

Design

Policy DC1 refers to design and seeks to secure development of a high quality which is designed to add value to the area and to respect the site and its surroundings. New development should promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF (2021) requires the design of a development to add to the overall quality of an area, by being sympathetic to local character and by being visually attractive as a result of good architecture. The Council's Design SPD outlines the Council's expectations in respect of the design of new buildings.

The development would take place to the edge of the factory site with an end elevation facing Barnfield Road. The development would continue a run of roadside buildings and replicate the scale, design and use of materials within the street scene. The site and its external appearance at the peripheries is already industrial in character and appearance enclosed by palisade fencing. The proposed materials include metal cladding in juniper green which will reflect the adjacent building.

As the proposed materials and design will reflect the appearance and use of the existing buildings on and near the site, it is considered that the proposals will integrate into the local context without detrimental effect to the surroundings. There would be no adverse impact on the character appearance of the area.

It is for these reasons that the proposed development is not considered to have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the surrounding area and it will comply with policy DC1 of the Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF (2021).

Amenity

Policy DC1 and paragraph 130(f) of the NPPF (2021) seek to secure development that protects amenity, including residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, sunlight, outlook, privacy and soft landscaping.

The application site is an established industrial site located within an existing industrial estate where there are rights under the GPDO to replace or improve plant for industrial process without planning permission. No residential properties are located within close proximity. The proposed development will therefore not have a detrimental effect on neighbouring amenity.

Environmental Health Officers have been consulted but are yet to respond with their comments awaited. However, in consultation comments responding to recent applications they have recommended a condition that prohibits an increase to background noise levels at noise sensitive properties. Such a condition appears serviceable and appropriate for the development proposed in this application. There is no reason why circumstances would be different in respect of this proposed development.

Highway Safety

No objection from the highway authority subject to a condition requiring the closure of the access and reinstatement of the footway. Development would result in a small increase to employee numbers and parking requirements. The development would consume an existing parking area that is no longer required, provided for the temporary offices which are to be demolished to make way for the development. Additional parking can be absorbed and accommodated in the existing car park to the north or, in the future, the large site expansion into owned land to the south.

Drainage

The proposal includes a drainage scheme that directs flow to existing on site effluent treatment plans. It does not detail any discharge to highway or public sewer.

Contaminated Land

A Ground Investigation and Interpretative Report and a Remediation Strategy have been submitted with the application. Report and strategy produced by AECOM for the development site dated Jan 2023. AECOM have previously submitted a remediation strategy for other parts of the site to address conditions relative to other development to the north. Such a strategy has been accepted by Environmental Health Officers with those conditions discharged. A condition to secure the implementation of the strategy would appear appropriate in this case.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development is considered to accord with the relevant policies contained in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (2020) and the NPPF. As such, the application is recommended for approval.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 19/01/2023

X *J. Colley*

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council