

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2023/0076
Valid 02/03/2023

ESTERCHEM LTD
BROOKLANDS WAY
LEEKBROOK
LEEK

PROPOSED ADDITION OF
SECOND STOREY TO EXISTING
OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Design and visual impact
- Neighbour amenity
- Highways
- Environmental Health

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

An industrial unit forming part of a well-established industrial estate. The premises is accessed by a shared road and benefits from on-site parking. Surrounding area consists of differently sized and shaped buildings.

PROPOSAL

A second floor extension to an existing industrial building to provide additional office space. Composite cladding is proposed for the walls and roof. The new pitched roof would match the gradient of the existing. Five windows in the northern elevation and two in the eastern side would allow natural light into the office space.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

SS1 Development Principles
SS9 Smaller Villages Area Strategy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
E1 New Employment Development
DC1 Design Considerations
DC3 Landscape and Settlement Setting
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

Supplementary Planning Guidance

1. Design Principles for Development in the Staffordshire Moorlands

Supplementary Planning Document

1. Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide

National Planning Policy Framework

Including sections:-

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 6. Building a strong, competitive economy
- 9. Promoting sustainable transport
- 12. Achieving well-designed places

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/2021/0437	Proposed storage building. Allowed at appeal.
13/00622/REM_1	Variation of Condition 1 - Extension of Temporary Time Limit of Planning Permission ref. 09/00460/FUL. Approved.
11/00290/REM_1	Variation of Condition 1 - Extension of Temporary Time Limit of Planning Permission ref. 09/00460/FUL. Approved.
09/00460/FUL	Temporary Offices. Approved.
05/00799/FUL	A.E.Z. acetates plant enclosure building. Approved.
02/00576/FUL	Industrial buildings weigh bridge and alterations to vehicular access. Approved.
01/00992/FUL	Removal of lean-to store and extension to house pastillator. Approved.
88/00983/OLD	Site for industrial development. Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice. Expired.
Neighbour consultation period. Expired.

Public Comments

No representations received within the consultation period.

Leek Town Council

No objections to the application.

Environmental Health

No objections subject to conditions.

Severn Trent Water

No representations within the consultation period.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

The application site is not located within any Development Boundary and it is not within the Green Belt. According to the Local Plan designations the site is within the open countryside for the purposes of applying/considering planning policy. The application premises forms part of a well and long-established industrial estate within Leek Brook. Leek Brook does not have a settlement Boundary but is identified within the Local Plan as being a 'Smaller Village.' The majority of the Leek Brook development is alongside Cheadle Road, to the west and southwest of the application site. Leek Brook industrial estate is linked to the main road at its most western point, to the east the estate stretches towards Twinney Wood and generally follows the route of part of the Churnet Valley railway line. In terms of planning policy it could be argued that both Local Plan policies SS9 and SS10 are relevant and could be applied. The industrial estate at this point is not really in an isolated location as it forms an obvious part of the wider industrial estate area which easily connects to Cheadle Road (the main vehicular link between Cheddleton and Leek), however it is not readily noticeable as being part of the Leek Brook settlement as much of the area is screened from view. Both policy SS9 and SS10 do lend 'in principle' support for the scheme. Policy SS9 encourages appropriate development which meets an economic need and allows small-scale new employment development. Policy SS10 seeks to support the rural economy by 'Enabling the limited expansion or development of business for employment uses where a rural location can be justified. In this instance it is clear the scheme is to support an existing and established business and is a limited form of development. It is not considered essential to justify the rural location as the business is already here and the principles of economic use of the land have already been secured by the original approval of the estate.

Local Plan policy E1 is also relevant in that it focuses on Employment Development with the aims of expanding existing businesses and the creation of new ones. The policy goes on to state that 'the sustainable redevelopment, intensification or improvement of existing employment sites for new business and industrial developments will be supported provided it would not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities, character or appearance of the area.'

It is clear that the principle of extending the existing business premises is acceptable however success of the application (or otherwise) is dependent on other material planning considerations being satisfied.

Design and visual impact

The addition would sit on top of part of an existing building. Plans show the application building as having first floor accommodation at its northern end, it is upon this section of the building that the extension would be built. The extension would provide 5 new office areas. Existing first floor accommodation would be remodelled, mainly to allow the formation of a new internal staircase to access the new second floor offices.

The extension is unusual in terms of its relationship with its host building because it sits on top of the existing roof. However, the proposed pitched roof gradient matches that of the existing roof and new materials could be conditioned to match. Other parts of the application building have 'tower-like' sections and surrounding development does not have a uniform height. The development will be seen in the context of existing industrial buildings which are different in shape, size and heights so support of this scheme will not introduce any visually harmful development.

Neighbour amenity

No nearby residential properties as this is a well-established industrial estate. Extension will be near to other buildings but there are no relationship issues.

Highways

There is an existing car park at the Esterchem site. No part of the development would result in any of the available spaces being lost. There appears to be plenty of unrestricted off and on-street parking. The scheme raises no concerns in terms of highways impact.

Environmental Health

Environmental Health officers have no objections to the scheme, commenting that 'The proposed development appears relatively low level with no predicted adverse impacts. We would advise the following conditions are imposed to mitigate development and lighting impacts which may be caused to the nearest commercial/residential neighbours.'

Recommended conditions include construction and demolition (Pollution control) and control of lighting. A condition to secure the times in which noisy construction works could be carried out has been suggested, however the reason given was to protect neighbouring dwellings. A site visit has confirmed there are no immediately surrounding residential properties, therefore the condition is not necessary.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

For the reasons outlined above, it is recommended that the application is approved subject to conditions.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : Conditional approval.

Case Officer: Lisa Jackson

Recommendation Date: 8th June 2023.

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council