

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2024/0086
Valid 28/02/2024

DERELICT GARAGE
BROAD STREET
LEEK

RETENTION OF STORAGE
CONTAINERS AND
PERIMETER FENCING
FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF
PART EXISTING GARAGES
TAKEN PLACE UNDER
APPLICATION DET/2022/0028.

(FULL - MINOR)

MAIN ISSUES

- Impact on Amenity and Character and Appearance

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site provided rows of some 49 lock up garages on a town centre site surrounded to the west, north and east by residential dwellings. To the south the site has an access with Broad Street between commercial premises. The lock up garages have in the main been demolished to reveal their concrete pads (work done under DET/2022/0028) – 4 of the larger garages have been retained.

The lock up garages have since been replaced with rows of steel blue freight containers that essentially sit on the pads of the old garages.

PROPOSAL

The original proposal was to retain and complete the replacement of the garages with 45 steel blue storage containers.

On request the proposal has been revised to omit and remove two of the containers from the boundary with 20 Sneyd Street. The applicant requests 6months grace before removing the two containers because they are currently let.

The applicant takes the not unreasonable position, albeit not officially determined by the authority and not for consideration under this application, that there has not and would not be a material change of use on the land. Previously the lock up garages were used by tenants, perhaps mainly local residents, to store cars and other items. Moving forward a similar number of containers are provided and available for tenants to store items.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Local Plan Development Plan Document (Adopted 2020)

S01 Spatial Objectives

SS1 Development Principles

SS5 Leek Area Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

DET/2022/0028 demolition of derelict garages. Prior approval not required.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 23/04/2024

Neighbour consultation period ends: 23/04/2024

Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

One objection has been received from 20 Sneyd Street, they have two containers placed against their garden boundary. They say the containers are imposing and unsightly.

One letter of support has been submitted by the applicant, provided to him from 8 Eversley Avenue – improvement of the area, additional security measures have increased security to their homes.

Town / Parish Comments

Leek Town Council: concern that the containers are situated between residential properties. Former garages were for residents, but this change of use to commercial is inappropriate in a domestic setting.

Environmental Health

Object. Recommend refusal lack of information unable to determine noise impacts. Any lighting should be installed and directed so as not to cause increased luminance or glare at the neighbouring properties.

Staffordshire County Council Highways

No objection. No change of use or significant change to capacity.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development

In the Leek Town Centre the Local Plan area strategy (SS5) is to consolidate the role of Leek as the principal service centre and market town by meeting community need and supporting existing business. The proposed development provides both commercial business and community facility in an appropriate town centre location, within a commercial setting where it well serves residents. In principle the development is in line with the strategy.

With these provisions the strategy also requires Leek's special character and heritage to be promoted and protected.

Design and Impact on Character and Appearance

The site is enclosed by commercial properties to the south and residential properties to the north, west and east. It is not visible or prominent from public vantage. Before the containers were installed residents had partial views beyond their boundaries of old functional brick and concrete garages that dated from the 1960s. The containers are new, clean, with fresh powder coating. Overall they have a low profile within the site and the neighbours, by reason of a difference in site levels and boundary positions have a view over or above the containers so that they do not appear imposing or obtrusive (apart from the two that would be removed from the boundary at no 20 Sneyd Street).

There would be no conflict with Local Plan policies SS5 or DC1 in these regards.

Impact on Amenity

Two of the containers have been placed right up to the boundary of 20 Sneyd Street on a raised level above the neighbours garden. These containers loom above the neighbour's fence are imposing and obtrusive, they occupy a position that did not previously have a garage a built on it. The neighbour directs their objection and complaint to these two containers, which the applicant would omit and remove once his tenant has moved his storage. A six month grace period is suggested for this purpose.

Environmental Health have some concern over the potential for noise, but do not consider there to be enough information to assess these impacts. The use of the site however, is not for consideration the applicant does not apply for a material change of use and insists that the containers are used in the same manner as the garage lock ups were that previously stood on the site. It is not anticipated that the use of the containers increase noise and disturbance over and above the previous use. There has not been any objection directed toward noise and disturbance.

A condition could be used to prohibit the installation of lighting that would direct or cause glare into any of the neighbouring properties.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

Lock up garages have been replaced in a semi commercial part of the town centre with containers that are used in a similar manner -storage purposes by tenants. The site and the containers are not prominent or visible from public vantage they are enclosed by other buildings and properties. With revision the containers are not prominent or intrusive from the surrounding dwellings, by reason of boundary positions and differences in levels. The development does not conflict with the Local Plan Policies Listed above.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION : APPROVE

Case Officer: Ben Hurst

Recommendation Date: 30/04/2024

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council