

26th November 2019

FAO Jane Curley
Development Management
Moorlands House
Stockwell Street
Leek
ST13 6HQ

Via Planning Portal

Dear Jane,

Moneystone Quarry – Detailed Planning Application for redevelopment of former Sibelco Laboratory Building

On behalf of our client, Laver Leisure (Oakamoor) Ltd ('Laver Leisure'), please find enclosed a detailed application for the redevelopment of the former Sibelco laboratory building at Moneystone Quarry.

Site Background

Moneystone Quarry is located between the villages of Whiston and Oakamoor, Staffordshire. In July 2010, Laver Leisure acquired Moneystone Quarry from Sibelco UK with the exception of the laboratory facility. The building was previously used as a laboratory in connection with the quarry. Whilst the quarry closed in April 2012, the laboratory continued its use until June 2018.

A Restoration Masterplan for the wider quarry site was submitted to Staffordshire County Council ('SCC') by Laver Leisure and was approved at SCC's Planning Committee on 6 March 2014 (LPA ref. SM.96/935/122 M D4). The approved Restoration Masterplan indicates the retention of the Sibelco laboratory building.

Outline planning permission (LPA ref. SMD/2016/0378) was granted on 26th October 2016 for the erection of a high-quality leisure development across the whole Moneystone Quarry site comprising up to 250 holiday lodges and a range of associated facilities.

A Reserved Matters planning application for Phase 1 pursuant to the outline permission comprising 190 lodges, a Hub Building and other additional facilities was submitted to SMDC on 18th October 2019 (LPA ref: SMD/2019/0646).

Laver Leisure owns the laboratory building and proposes to repurpose it to provide leisure facilities as part of Phase 1 of the development of the wider Moneystone Park.

Norfolk House
7 Norfolk Street
Manchester
M2 1DW

T: +44 (0)8449 02 03 04
F: +44 (0)161 956 4009

avisonyoung.co.uk

The Proposed Development

The description of development is as follows:

“Change of use of the existing building from a laboratory to a sports hall with climbing wall, soft play area, two-lane mini bowl, cinema room; craft room and craft store, bike store and maintenance and bike hire office, café, viewing area, WCs, management office and plant rooms associated with Moneystone Park; external alterations and reconfiguration of existing car park to provide 24no. car parking spaces.”

The majority of the uses proposed are consented under the outline permission (LPA ref: SMD/2016/0378) however it is not possible for Laver Leisure to provide all of these uses within the Hub Building proposed under the Phase 1 Reserved Matters application. As such, the most logical option is to accommodate these employment generating facilities within the existing laboratory building which is located just outside of the red line boundary of the outline planning permission and in proximity to the main 'Hub Area' of the leisure park. This development will be brought forward as part of Phase 1 of the development and integrated within the wider leisure park for use by visitors.

Full details of the proposed development, including materials and elevational treatments are contained within the Design and Access Statement submitted in support of this application.

The conversion of the existing building will involve the removal of the internal walls currently subdividing the existing portal framed warehouse within the upper building to create a Sports Hall. The mini bowl and Children's Soft Play are positioned within the clear spanned lean-to to the north west of the main hall, where the ceiling height remains over 3.0m. Minimal alterations to the single storey masonry flat roofed elements around the perimeter are proposed.

The Informal Screen Room is located within the wide span space in the lower building. The original WC facilities, which serve the whole facility, have been removed and new WCs reinstated in the same location. A Bike Hire area is proposed within the southerly most section of the lower building. Minimal alterations to the single storey masonry flat roofed elements around the perimeter are envisaged and ancillary and support spaces are included within these areas.

The entrance into the building is positioned on the north west elevation facing towards the new Hub building and this is 'oversized' to create a clear visual signifier.

There are 3no. small extensions to the existing building footprint:

- A feature entrance and lobby set within the opening formed by the existing roller shutter door on the north west elevation.
- A small extension to the rear of the lean-to to create sufficient length for the mini bowl; and,
- Additional space to the side of the stair within the link corridor to enable the inclusion of a wheelchair platform lift to allow wheelchair users access between the two levels.

Extensive external alterations are proposed to the building which will greatly improve its appearance and will tie in visually with the other buildings proposed within the Phase 1 Reserved Matters application. The existing metal cladding and patent glazing will be replaced with black Marley Eternit Profile 6 cladding (regularly used on agricultural buildings), new gutter profiles will be added and the brickwork will be overclad with vertical board and batten 'Accoya' timber panelling, as proposed for the Hub and Housekeeping buildings as part of the Phase 1 Reserved Matters applications. Windows will be replaced with grey powder coated double glazed aluminium framed units.

Relevant Policy Considerations

Loss of Employment

'Policy E2 – Existing Employment Areas' of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (March 2014) seeks to protect against the loss of established employment sites and premises to other uses and seeks to establish stronger, but flexible measures to safeguard those areas which are most likely to be capable of supporting the local economy. The policy states that:

“Employment areas and premises (falling within Use Classes B1, B2 or B8) that:

- *are well located to the main road and public transport network; and*
- *provide, or are physically and viably capable of providing through redevelopment, good quality modern accommodation attractive to the market without harm to the amenity of nearby residents; and*
- *are capable of meeting a range of employment uses to support the local economy;*

will be safeguarded for such purposes.

Redevelopment of such areas for housing, retail or other non-employment uses will not be permitted unless:

- *the site is identified in the Site Allocations DPD for redevelopment; or,*
- *it can be demonstrated that the site would not be suitable or viable for continued employment use having regard to the above criteria and evidence can be provided that no suitable and viable alternative employment use can be found, or is likely to be found in the foreseeable future; or*
- *substantial planning benefits would be achieved through redevelopment which would outweigh the loss of the site for employment use.*

Where redevelopment is proposed, preference will be given to a mixed-use redevelopment scheme which retains an element of employment provision on the site. Where this would not be viable the Council will negotiate for funding to support off-site employment provision.”

The redevelopment of the former Sibelco laboratory building for leisure facilities associated with the wider Moneystone Park accords with Policy E2 because:

- The site is set back from the main road without any active frontage.
- The laboratory building has been vacant since June 2018 and has fallen into a state of disrepair. The building was purpose built to support the operation of the quarry and has a typical layout which relates to its previous use as a laboratory. As such, the size, layout and specification of the building would not be attractive or suitable to meet the operational requirements of modern business occupiers.
- The land directly surrounding the site will soon be coming forward as a leisure park. Unrelated business uses would be incompatible with this.
- The site's rural location within the Churnet Valley is ideal for tourism-related development in accordance with the Core Strategy and the Churnet Valley Masterplan.
- The building is ideally positioned directly adjacent to the main Hub Area of the leisure park to provide the necessary facilities for a high-quality, diverse and attractive tourism development.

- Substantial economic, social and environmental benefits will result from the sensitive development of the wider Moneystone Park which would outweigh the loss of this site for employment use.
- Although the proposed uses within the laboratory do not fall within Use Class B (business), they represent employment generating uses as part of the mixed-use leisure development. Once fully developed, Moneystone Park will create around 250 full time permanent jobs, plus around 230 further jobs during construction.

As a result of the above, the vacant laboratory building is not required to be safeguarded for employment purposes and the redevelopment of the site for alternative, employment-generating uses is supported in accordance with Policy E2 of the Core Strategy.

Transport

'Policy T1 - Development and Sustainable Transport' of the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (March 2014) seeks to ensure that all new development is located where the highway network can satisfactorily accommodate traffic generated by the development or can be improved as part of the development.

A Transport Note has been prepared by Peter Brett Associates LLP (PBA), now part of Stantec in support of this application. It identifies how the existing laboratory building will be converted to accommodate land uses that have been approved under the outline planning permission for the wider Moneystone Park and assesses the likely transport impact of the proposed development.

The Transport Note concludes that the proposed development will provide a net benefit with regards to reduction of potential vehicle trips to the site and promotion of sustainable transport as the laboratory building will now accommodate part of the uses permitted as part of the outline planning permission for Moneystone Park. The Transport Note also demonstrates that the proposed parking provision is in line with Condition 6 e) of the outline planning permission.

On the basis of the above, the proposed development is therefore considered acceptable on transport grounds and accords with Policy T1 of the Core Strategy.

Submission Documents

This planning application is supported by the following plans and documents, the scope and extent of which has been prior agreed with SMDC Officers:

- Application forms and certificates;
- Site Location Plan (Ref: 1733/MS-002);
- Existing Site Plan (Ref: 1733-LB-009);
- Proposed Site Plan (Ref: 1733-LB-019);
- Existing Floorplan (Ref:1733-LB-004);
- Proposed Floorplan (Ref:1733-LB-010);
- Existing Elevations (Ref: 1733-LB-005);
- Proposed Elevations (Ref: 1733-LB-014);
- Transport Note (November 2019);
- Design and Access Statement (October 2019).

The planning application fee of £487 (£462 plus £25 planning portal service fee) has been paid via bank transfer.

I trust the above is in order and that you have sufficient information to validate the planning application. Should you require further information or wish to discuss then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alice Henderson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alice Henderson
Graduate Planner
0161 956 4018
Alice.henderson@avisonyoung.com
For and on behalf of
GVA Grimley Limited t/a Avison Young