

# PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**PROPOSAL : DEMOLITION OF EXISTING GARAGE AND  
REPLACEMENT WORKSHOP BUILDING**

**ADDRESS : CROWN GARAGE, LEEK ROAD, LEEKBROOK, ST13  
7DR**

**APPLICANT : CROWN GARAGE (LEEK) LTD**

**DATE : SEPTEMBER 2024      JOB No. : 2021-2651**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This statement is submitted in support of a full planning application which seeks consent for the demolition of an existing garage and the erection of a replacement workshop building at Crown Garage, Leek Road, Leekbrook. The application has been submitted by Sammons Architectural Ltd on behalf of Crown Garage (Leek) Ltd and is accompanied by drawing numbers 2021-2651-01A, 2021-2651-02, 2021-2651-05C, 2021-2651-06, 2021-2651-07 and a Flood Risk Assessment all of which should be read in conjunction with this statement.

1.2 This statement analyses the site, the proposals and the policy context within which the proposals are made. Thereafter, it provides justification for approval of the proposed development on the basis that it would provide clear social, economic and environmental benefits in relation to the provision of expanded industrial development within an accessible and sustainable location. It also sets out that there would be no adverse harm upon the character and appearance of the application site or the wider surrounding area, nor would it be prejudicial to the reasonable enjoyment of the occupiers of any of the surrounding residential dwellings or neighbouring land uses or detrimental to highway safety. The proposed development therefore accords with the provision of local and national planning policy and should be approved without delay.

## **2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION**

2.1 The application site comprises of an irregular shaped plot which lies on the south eastern side of Leek Road, Leekbrook. It lies to the rear of Crown Garage a former petrol filling station which is now used for the sale of vehicles. A vehicle workshop and class 4 & 7 MOT testing station lies to the north east with vehicular access off Leek Road provided between the two. To the north on the opposite side of Leek Road lies employment development with two detached dwellings to the south west of the site and beyond those a general store and off licence with attached residential accommodation. The Basford Bridge employment site lies further north east with a designated employment site beyond.

As derived from the above Leekbrook is a mixed residential and employment area which lies to the south of the town of Leek and within the Leek development boundary. The area is effectively split into zones with the employment uses concentrated around the north east and the residential to the south west. The application site is situated in the former. Given the nature of the proposal it is considered that the proposal should be influenced by the nature of development on the site and nearby. Employment uses are generally occupied in modern industrial metal sheeted buildings and comprise, usually brick or concrete plinths with coloured sheet walls and roofs both on land opposite at Leekbrook Way and to the north east on Brooklands Way.

## **3.0 PROPOSAL**

3.1 This is a full application which seeks consent for the demolition of the existing building and the erection of a replacement workshop building. The proposed building would be set partly on the footprint of the existing building within the southern corner of the site. Due to site constraints it would have a 'L' shaped footprint with the widest part of the 'L' being at the front of the site. The proposed building would be constructed from a portal frame which would be clad to ground level

with profiled powder coated sheeting and Sapphire blue trims and a grey profiled steel sheet roof with rooflights to provide natural light. A roller shutter door would be provided within the northern elevation of the building with two pedestrian access doors on the western elevation and a further pedestrian access door on the eastern side. The south elevation would be blank and contain no openings. The proposed workshop building would have a footprint of 86 sq metres with an eaves height of 5m and an overall ridge height of 6.3m.

## **4.0 POLICY**

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application.

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in July 2023. It is the Government's clear intention that the document should be considered as a material consideration and as such carries particular weight where development is not addressed by planning policies in the existing Development Plan. National Planning Policy Framework places a strong emphasis on promoting economic growth and sets out policies for the control of development.

4.3 The NPPF confirms that at the heart of the guidance is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 11) and that for decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It goes on to support economic development throughout the country and sets out requirements for Local Authorities to assist with this aim. It also sets out guidance inter alia in respect of making effective use of previously developed land, securing high quality design and assessing impacts on highway safety. The content of this document has been taken into account in the preparation of this application and the most relevant sections of the NPPF are considered to be:-

- 1 Introduction paragraphs 1-14
- 2 Achieving sustainable development
- 4 Decision making
- 6 Building a strong competitive economy
- 9 Promoting sustainable transport
- 11 Making effective use of land
- 12 Achieving well designed places

4.4 The Development Plan for the Staffordshire Moorlands comprises of Local Plan which was adopted in September 2020. The main policies of relevance to the determination of this application are as follows:-

SO1 (Spatial Objectives), SS1 (Development Principles); SS5 (Leek Area Strategy); DC1 (Design Considerations); E1 (New Development) and T1 (Development and Sustainable Transport). For the sake of brevity these policies are not quoted in full but they are referred to where appropriate in the following section.

## **5.0 ASSESSMENT**

5.1 In its general approach the Council expects the development and use of land to contribute positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands. When considering development proposals the Council will in accordance with policy SS1 take a

positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. This means that planning applications that accord with the policies in Local Plan shall be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.2 There is considerable planning policy and guidance relevant to the planning application proposal at both local and national levels. The NPPF is significant as it sets out the Government's commitment for a positive response to planning proposals that would deliver sustainable development in order to assist growth to the economy. It has been made clear that the planning system has a key role in facilitating growth and development should be supported with a presumption in favour of granting planning permission. This change of emphasis provides an important background to the application proposal.

5.3 Paragraph 85 of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that the Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity in the UK and confirms that planning policies should help create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

5.4 This guidance is carried forward in the adopted Local Plan (September 2020) with policy SS1 confirming that the council will expect development to increase economic prosperity and provide opportunities for employment and greater local capacity, with an educated skilled and flexible workforce.

5.5 The spatial strategy for Leek recognises that as the largest town in the District serving a wide area, it will be promoted as the principal service centre and market town. It is the administrative centre for the District and provides a high proportion of the District's jobs and has good transport links with the rest of the District. The Council's Development Capacity Study and Housing Land Availability Assessment both demonstrate scope for further growth.

5.6 Policy SS5 further confirms that the council will seek to create employment growth and increase the diversity of employment opportunities by supporting the retention and growth of the existing businesses within the town and providing opportunities for new enterprises and businesses by promoting further development. These provisions are further reinforced by Local Plan Policy E1 which deals directly with new employment development. It states that "New employment development will be assessed according to the extent to which it supports and improves the local economy in terms of providing for the needs and skills of the existing and future local resident workforce and meeting identified business needs, having regard to the Spatial Strategy Policies in SS2, SS3, area strategy policies, and general employment land requirements set out in Policy SS4. In general, the Council will endeavour to support the expansion of existing businesses and new businesses in the District, subject to the provisions below", including (inter alia).

5.7 It goes on to state "All proposals should help maintain or enhance an appropriate range of employment premises and sites across the District in terms of their scale, location and type. Other types of employment uses (including B use class developments (B1b, B1c, B2 and B8), commercial sui generis uses etc) should be located in existing or proposed employment areas. Such development outside of existing or proposed employment areas but within the settlement boundary may also be acceptable when it would not create undue harm to the character, appearance or amenity of the area. 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."

5.8 As set out above planning policy at both the local and national levels would support proposals for the appropriate expansion of existing employment uses in sustainable locations. The application building is located within an established employment area on the fringes of Leek. It is in a highly sustainable location and close to public transport routes. The warehouse building is not intended to increase capacity or result in any intensification of the site but to improve efficiency and ensure that services can be provided within a timely manner in order to stay competitive. It will also provide additional storage space for parts and provide a dedicated workshop thereby freeing up the adjacent MOT testing station. The proposed development would be located on an area of land which is currently occupied by a number of storage containers. The principle of the proposed development is therefore considered acceptable.

#### *The impact upon the character and appearance of the area*

5.9 The specific design policy of the LP Policy DC1 also states that all development should be designed to respect the site and its surroundings and promote a positive sense of place and identity through its scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character and appearance.

5.10 The above guidance is reflected in the NPPF which confirms that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It furthermore states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development; is indivisible from good planning; and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Developments should function well and establish a strong sense of place creating attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit. Proposals should also optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development and respond to local character and history including local materials and the use of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Developments should also create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder and the fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.

5.11 The proposed development replaces an existing workshop building. Whilst the replacement building would be larger than that which it replaces it is of a relatively modest size and scale and its overall form and height has been designed to be in keeping with the adjacent buildings. The form and design whilst functional and utilitarian respects and reflects that of other buildings within the wider site and locality. In this regard it is considered that the proposed development would be in accordance with the provisions of Policy DC1 of the Core Strategy in this regard and guidance contained in the NPPF more generally.

#### *The impact on residential amenity*

5.12 Local Plan Policy DC1 states that all development should protect the amenity of the area, including the creation of healthy active environments and residential amenity, in terms of satisfactory daylight, visual impact, sunlight, outlook, privacy, soft landscaping as well as noise, odour and light pollution.

5.13 The proposed unit is not in a proximity close enough to residential properties to result in any adverse impact upon residential amenity or adversely impact upon any neighbouring land uses. Having regard to the lawful use of the application site and the existing building, its location on an established and busy brownfield site within an area which is characterised by employment and commercial uses it is not considered that the proposal would be prejudicial to the reasonable enjoyment of amenity afforded to any surrounding residential dwellings or neighbouring land uses. In this respect it is considered that the proposal complies with Local Plan Policy DC1 and guidance contained within the NPPF

## *Highways*

5.14 Paragraph 114 of the NPPF states that development should provide a safe and suitable access for all users with paragraph 115 stating that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe. This guidance is reflected in policy DC1 which requires, amongst other matters, for development to provide for a safe and satisfactory access and make a contribution to meeting the parking requirement arising from necessary car use.

5.15 The site is located to the east of the A520 Cheadle Road and approximately 2.5km to the south of Leek. The entrance to the application site is via Basford Lane which connects directly to the A520, which is part of the moorlands primary road network. Local bus routes are served by bus stops on Cheadle Road and are sufficiently frequent to provide the opportunity for staff to travel by this mode to and from Leek, Leekbrook, Cheddleton and Stoke on Trent. No alterations are proposed to the site access. The application site has adequate car parking available for the current uses and this proposed use will not create any additional traffic to give rise to any issues in terms of highway or pedestrian safety. In conclusion therefore it is not considered that the proposed use would adversely affect highway safety and would therefore be compliant with LP Policy DC1 and guidance contained in the NPPF.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

6.1 The Government has a strong commitment to growth and provides a strong presumption in favour of development and is committed to increasing levels of growth. The NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. The proposal is considered to constitute a sustainable form of development which will support and enable the continued growth and expansion of a well-established local business. The scale of development is appropriate for the size of the site and local infrastructure capacity and its location on an existing brownfield site within an area characterised by employment and commercial uses is in line with Local Plan Policy E1 would be inkeeping with local and national planning policies. It is not considered that the proposal would be detrimental to the residential amenity of any of the surrounding residential properties nor adversely affect adjacent land uses. The proposed development therefore accords with the provisions of policies SS1, SS5, DC1, E1, and T1 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and guidance contained within the NPPF. The Local Authority is therefore respectfully requested to endorse this application and grant planning permission accordingly

## **7.0 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**

### **USE**

7.1 The application proposes the demolition of an existing workshop and the erection of a larger workshop building on an established brownfield site on the outskirts of Leek which would provide additional space for the established business.

### **AMOUNT**

7.2 The existing workshop building has a footprint of 30 sq metres. The proposed replacement workshop building would have a footprint of 86 sq metres.

### **LAYOUT**

7.3 The layout of the development will be as shown on the submitted site layout plan.

## **SCALE**

7.4 The proposed workshop building will have an eaves height of 5.0m and an overall ridge height of some 6.3 and as such would be lower than that of the workshop and MOT building approved under application SMD/2012/0679 which had an eaves height of 6.1m and an overall ridge height of 7m.

## **LANDSCAPING**

7.5 No additional landscaping is proposed as part of this application due to site constraints and its location on an established brownfield site.

## **APPEARANCE**

7.6 The appearance of the proposed development reflects the character and appearance of the adjacent industrial buildings and wider site.

## **ACCESS**

7.7 The application site lies within a sustainable location which is accessible by a range of transport modes. The proposal will use the existing access point directly onto the main A520. No alterations to the proposed access are proposed and the proposed development would not result in the loss of any existing car parking provision on the site.