References: P/2006/2865 01256/A/P51

Address: Land to rear of Heston Services, MOTO, North Hyde Lane, Heston

Ward: Heston West

Proposal: Erection of two outbuildings for use as a maintenance facility and office/welfare facility and the creation of additional parking to existing site.

Drawing numbers: 01,02 & 03, received 7 September 2006

Application received: 7 September 2006

This application has been called in to Sustainable Development Committee by Councillor Sangha. In any event the application is made on behalf of a Councillor and as such needs to be determined by this committee.

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This planning application is for the redevelopment of an area of open Green Belt land to the east of Heston Motorway Services (MSA), for use as a maintenance facility. The site is located on active landfill.

1.2 Planning permission for the redevelopment of the motorway service area, demolition of existing amenity building, erection of new amenity building and two-storey 64-bedroom motel was granted in 1998 subject to a Section 106 Agreement (reference 01256/A/P27). This scheme has been implemented, however, the legal agreement stated that the easternmost 2-acre part of the picnic area should have been restored and transferred to the Council for use by the public in accordance with Green Belt policy and the objectives of the Green Chain policy ENV 5.9 of the Unitary Development Plan. To date this transfer has not been concluded.

1.3 The site and the wider MSA have been the subject of a series of planning applications that have been refused primarily due to their inappropriateness to the Green Belt.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site is an approximately 1ha area of open land which forms part of a larger motorway service area situated to the north of the M4 eastbound, between junctions 2 and 3. The land is accessed by an emergency access road from North Hyde Lane to the MSA. This road is restricted from providing public access to the motorway.

2.2 The land is mostly vegetated with some hard surfacing. The site is located on historic landfill and varies in level. This area and the golf course to the north are actively gassing.

2.3 The site is bounded by a golf course to the north, the residential area of North Hyde Lane to the east and the M4 to the south. To the west of the site is the main part of the MSA, which contains a petrol filling station, amenity building, Travelodge, car park, Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) park, and a police traffic command building. The site is on land originally designated as a picnic area to the east of the MSA.
2.4 The site and the wider MSA are within the Green Belt, and form part of Comprehensive Project Area (CPA) 6. This area of Green Belt is connected in the Unitary Development Plan by a Green Corridor (M4 corridor) to local open space to the east (Osterley Park). The Thorncliffe Nature Conservation Area is southwest of the site, on the other side of the M4.

3.0 HISTORY

3.1 The wider site was developed as a motorway service area (MSA) in 1967. Since this date there have been numerous planning applications relating to the MSA. Several applications for extensions to the Travelodge and an application for a drive-through take-away have been refused due to their impact on the Green Belt and on grounds of highway safety.

3.2 The most relevant history is detailed below:

3.3 **01256/A/P27** Proposed redevelopment of the motorway service area, demolition of existing amenity building, erection of new amenity building and two-storey 64-bedroom motel.

**APPROVED 21 May 1998**

This permission has been implemented, having been made subject to a Section 106 Agreement whereby it was agreed that the easternmost 2 acre part of the picnic area should be transferred to the Council for use as an area for nature conservation. However, to date this transfer has not been concluded, as the Agreement also provided that no transfer should take place until areas of hardsurfacing on the land had been removed and the land had been infilled with uncontaminated subsoil, reseeded and replanted. While the hardsurfacing has been removed, none of the other steps has been carried out. Accordingly, to date the required transfer has not been concluded.

(The current application site does not incorporate the easternmost part of the picnic area).

3.4 **01256/A/P46** Change of use from picnic area ancillary to motorway service area to coach depot, with erection of two-storey building.

**REFUSED 7 August 2003**


3.5 **01256/A/P47** Erection of an affordable housing scheme.

**REFUSED 7 August 2003**

REASONS: Impact on appearance and openness of the Green Belt. Harmful to Green Belt objectives. Traffic impact and highway safety not addressed. Contamination of site not addressed. Greenfield site is not a sustainable new housing location. Harmful to living conditions of existing residents. Loss of land proposed as a nature conservation area.
3.6 **01256/A/P48** Erection of lodge accommodation

REFUSED 7 August 2003


3.7 **01256/A/P49** Redevelopment of motorway service open land to create a residential scheme of up to 120 affordable units.

WITHDRAWN 4 May 2004

3.8 **01256/A/P50** Redevelopment of site to provide a waste transfer station with associated staff facilities.

WITHDRAWN 21 June 2005

4.0 DETAILS

4.1 As stated on the application forms the proposal comprises commercial vehicle parking and the erection of a maintenance facility building, a site office and ancillary staff car parking for New Bharat Coaches of Southall who run a coach and skip hire and other transport services. The proposed buildings would create an additional floorspace of 720m², 22 additional parking spaces and create five jobs.

4.2 The submitted plans show that the parking area would be to the south of the site, with the two proposed building to the north. The maintenance facility building would be 30m wide and 20m deep with a roof height of 10m at the ridge. The building is only single storey, but tall enough to allow for articulated vehicles. The proposed staff building is to be located adjacent to the maintenance building and would be 15m wide and 8m deep with a roof height of 4m to the ridge. The building provides a changing room, canteen area, office and control room. The applicant proposes a landscaped screen outside the application site, in the area that should be remediated and transferred to the Council.

4.3 Access to the site would be via North Hyde Lane.

4.4 The proposal is not a major application.

5.0 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Five immediately adjoining occupiers were notified on 18 September 2006. Press and site notices for a major application and a departure were also posted.

5.2 Four letters (Four from local residents, three from residents of another Borough) have been received that support the proposal on the basis that it makes the best use of land and is good for the local economy. The applicant has also submitted a petition of 40 signatures in support of the scheme. No reasons for support are included.
5.3 Four letters of objection, including an objection from The Heston and Cranford Residents’ Association, have been received. The objections can be summarised as follows:

- Detrimental to highway safety on North Hyde Lane.
- Increase in heavy traffic.
- Measures have been put in place to specifically ensure that heavy vehicle traffic should not be allowed onto North Hyde Lane from the MSA. This proposal would introduce such vehicles onto an already congested road.
- Not a suitable site as it is close to a residential area and would be harmful to residents’ living conditions.

The Heston Residents Association have raised the following concerns:

- Contrary to Green Belt objectives.
- Future public open space is proposed adjacent to the site.
- The degradation of the site should not be a reason for approval.
- There is no need for the proposal.
- The development would be harmful to the local residential area.
- Would result in the loss of the picnic area for motorists.
- No indication has been given as to the number of vehicle movements.
- Negative impact on road safety.
- Inappropriate for development as it is a landfill site.
- No indication that the proposed drainage of surface water satisfies the Environment Agency.

**Environment Agency**

No objection subject to conditions and several informatives relating to the potential contamination of the site, surface water run off and pollution prevention.

6.0 POLICY

6.1 Unitary Development Plan

**IMP.5.2** Comprehensive project areas

**ENV-N.1.1** Purposes of including land in and objectives for the use of land in the Green Belt

**ENV-N.1.2** Acceptable development in the Green Belt

**ENV-N.2.3** Promotion of nature conservation management

**ENV-N.2.9** Green corridors

**ENV-B.1.1** All new development

**ENV-P.1.1** Environmental sustainability; environmental impact statements and sustainability checklist

**ENV-P.1.3** Surface water management

**ENV-P.1.5** Noise pollution

**ENV-P.1.6** Air pollution

**ENV-P.1.8** Development proposals on or near contaminated land

**ENV-P.1.9** Remediation of contaminated and potentially unstable land

**E.1.1** Location of new employment development

**T.1.1** The location of development

**T.1.2** The movement implications of development

**T.1.4** Car and cycle parking and servicing facilities for developments

**T.4.3** Traffic implications of new development

**T.4.4** Road safety

3D.8 Green Belt

6.3 Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering sustainable development
6.4 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts
6.5 Planning Policy Guidance Note 10: Planning and waste management
6.6 Planning Policy Statement 23: Planning and pollution control
6.7 Planning Policy Guidance Note 25: Development and flood risk

7.0 PLANNING ISSUES
7.1 The main planning issues to consider are:

- The location and the principle of the development in the Green Belt
- Environmental impact, landfill and existing contamination
- Traffic impact
- Impact on adjoining land uses and local residents

The location and principle of the development in the Green Belt
7.2 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 - Green Belts sets out Central Government policy on Green Belt and promotes its permanence and open character. The most important attribute of Green Belt is its openness. There are five purposes of Green Belts:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

7.3 Once Green Belts have been defined, the use of land within them has a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives.

- providing access to the open countryside;
- providing opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation near urban areas;
- retaining attractive landscapes and enhancing landscapes near to where people live;
- improving damaged and derelict land around towns;
- securing nature conservation interests; and
- retaining land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.

7.4 In this area of Hounslow the Green Belt forms a buffer against any westward sprawl. Specifically, this site marks the change from the residential areas of Heston to the openness of the Green belt extending west and provides important visual relief along North Hyde Lane and the M4. This section of the Green Belt also links with that to the south of the M4, including the Nature Conservation Area to the west of the Thorncliffe Hotel. The Green Belt also forms an important part of Comprehensive Project Area 6 (CPA 6), which requires any development near the Green Belt boundary not to detract from the open aspect of the Green Belt.
7.5 PPG2 specifies that the construction of new buildings inside a Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for the following purposes:

- agriculture and forestry (unless permitted development rights have been withdrawn);
- essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it;
- limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings;
- limited infilling in existing villages and limited affordable housing for local community needs under development plan policies according with PPG3; or
- limited infilling or redevelopment of major existing developed sites identified in adopted local plans, which meets the criteria in paragraph C3 or C4 of Annex C.

7.6 The proposed development, including significant hard surfacing, new buildings and the introduction of a maintenance facility, would not fall within any of the above categories and so would represent inappropriate development, which is by definition harmful to the Green Belt. Such development should not receive favourable planning permission unless there are very special circumstances which justify the development, and which clearly outweigh the harm to the green belt, which by definition, arises from inappropriate development.

7.7 With the exception of two small 5-6m landscape strips to the north and south of the site the entire site area would be covered in tarmac to provide parking and manoeuvring areas. Two additional buildings, one 10m in height to allow for the servicing of Heavy Goods Vehicles, would also be constructed. It is considered that there are no special circumstances that can be established that would require the Council to entertain this proposal, which is contrary to national policy and a departure from the Council’s Unitary Development Plan. There is therefore, an in principle policy objection to the proposal.

**Environmental impact, landfill and existing contamination**

7.8 The site is on historic landfill and has recently been the subject of investigations by the Environment Agency for the illegal deposit of controlled and special waste. UDP policy ENV-P.1.8 states that any development proposals near to a source of potential pollution, in particular on sites within 250m of landfill, will be required to demonstrate that they can be developed and used safely before planning permission is granted or development commenced, as appropriate. Other than a report from the Environment Agency relating to the drainage for a previous proposal the applicant has provided no details as to how the existing contamination of the site is to be addressed and the implications of this proposed development.

**Traffic impact**

7.9 The applicant has provided no details as to the traffic that would be generated by the development. Whilst the parking layout is adequate in relation to manoeuvring, insufficient information has been provided to show that the coaches/lorries would be able to enter and leave the site in forward gear. Of particular concern is the impact of the increased number of vehicle movements, many by articulated vehicles, on the residents of North Hyde Lane, which is the only access to the site.
Impact on adjoining land uses and local residents

7.10 The site is bounded to the east by North Hyde Lane, which has a large area of residential development on its eastern side. The site is also bounded by a golf course to the north and the motorway service area and associated facilities to the west.

7.11 There is concern over the increase in the number of heavy vehicles that would use North Hyde Lane as a result of the proposal, and the intrusion this would cause to residents’ living conditions. Policy T.4.3 states that development will not be permitted if the associated traffic movement would increase danger, cause unacceptable noise, congestion or environmental intrusion. North Hyde Lane is a residential road and insufficient information has been provide to ensure that road safety would not be compromised by the increase in Heavy Goods Vehicles in the local road network. The site is not serviced by appropriate roads for the scale of vehicles involved.

8.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS
None identified.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 It is not considered that the applicant has demonstrated that the proposal falls under the ‘special circumstances’ stated in UDP policy ENV-N.1.2 for acceptable development in the Green Belt. Furthermore, insufficient information has been submitted with the planning application for the Local Planning Authority to assess properly the traffic and environmental impacts of the proposal and the developer has failed to address the implications of existing contamination of the site.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSAL

Reason:

1. The proposed development would be contrary to Green Belt policy as it is inappropriate development that would harm the appearance and openness of the green belt by reason of its nature and intensity and would be harmful to Green Belt objectives for the area. The application has failed to demonstrate that there are any exceptional circumstances to consider departing from the Unitary Development Plan policies ENV-B 1.1 (All New Development) and ENV-N.1.1 (Purposes of including land in and objectives for the use of land in the Green Belt).

2. The associated increase in the number of heavy goods vehicles along North Hyde Lane would be incompatible with neighbouring development and would be harmful to the living conditions of nearby residents. The proposal is contrary to Unitary Development Plan policies ENV-B 1.1 (All New Development) and T.4.3 (Traffic implications of new development)

3. The proposal has failed to demonstrate that the proposed use is suitable for the site with regards to the extent of existing contamination, fails to provide sufficient details of drainage and fails to address any potential increase in flooding, contrary to Unitary Development Plan policies ENV-B 1.1 (All New Development), ENV-P.1.8 (Development proposals on or near contaminated land) and ENV-P1.9 (Remediation of contaminated and potentially unstable land).