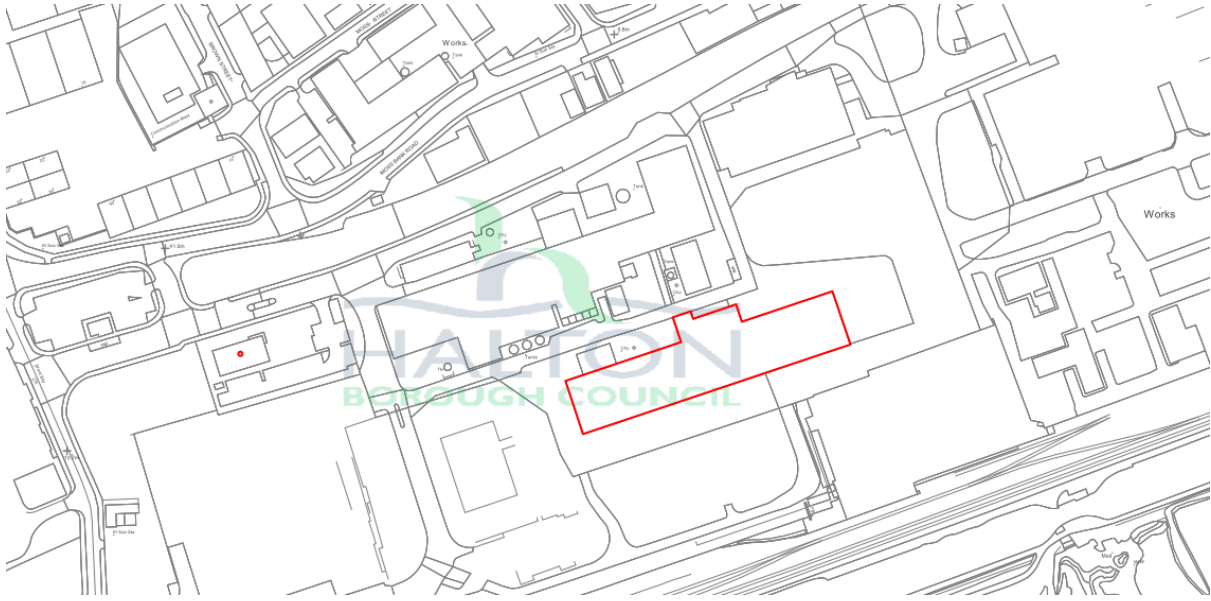


APPLICATION NO:	17/00376/FULEIA
LOCATION:	Saffil Ltd, Tanhouse Lane, Widnes, Cheshire
PROPOSAL:	Retrospective application for rebuilding of facility to house a third alumina fibre production line with associated electrical switch room and process plant
WARD:	Halton View
PARISH:	None
APPLICANT(S):	Saffil Limited
DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALLOCATION: National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005) Halton Core Strategy Local Plan (2013)	Policy RG3 – Widnes Waterfront Regeneration Area
DEPARTURE REPRESENTATIONS:	No No objections
KEY ISSUES:	Principle of development; regeneration and employment
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve Subject to Conditions
SITE MAP	
	

THE APPLICATION SITE

The Site

The site is located, approximately 1.5km south east of Widnes town centre, within the Tan House Lane Industrial Estate. The site is situated on the Widnes Waterfront

with vehicular access gained via an existing private road off Tanhouse Lane/Moss Bank Road .

The existing site covers an area of approximately 4.5 ha, which was formally part of the ICI Pilkington Sullivan Works, which has a long history of chemical processing from the mid-19th Century through to the end of the 20th Century.

Planning History

In 2011 prior notification was approved for the demolition of redundant industrial building (Ref.11/00407/DEM) and 11/00396/EIA. Permission granted in 2006 for proposed new building to house a third alumina fibre production line, electrical switchroom and process plant (Ref. 06/00936/FUL). Permission granted in 2003 for proposed extension (2940sq.m.) to existing production building and associated external structures, including a 40m stack to proposed effluent treatment works and extension to existing substation (Ref. 03/00185/EIA). In 1993 planning permission granted for the erection of a new flue vent stack (Ref. 9300383FUL).

THE APPLICATION

The applicant seeks planning permission for a new production building to house a third alumina fibre production line, associated electrical switchroom, process plant. Saffil produces alumina fibre which is used in a number of automotive applications, including catalytic converters and diesel particulate filters. A fibre production line (Saffil Line 3) is required to replace a facility recently destroyed by fire, and to satisfy European automotive demand created in part by implementation of new emission regulations for commercial vehicles.

Once constructed it is envisaged that the site would operate 24 hours a day as per the existing site operations, and the production line would provide for the retention of 25 full time jobs.

Documentation

The applicant has submitted a planning application form, drawings and the following reports:

Design and Access Statement
Environmental Statement

POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 to set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

Paragraph 196 states that the planning system is plan led. Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per the requirements of legislation, but

that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 197 states that in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 14 states that this presumption in favour of sustainable development means that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF; or specific policies within the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

The government has published its finalised Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) to compliment the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005)

The following Unitary Development Plan policies and policy documents are relevant to this application: -

Policy RG3 – Widnes Waterfront Regeneration Area

Policy BE1 – General Requirements for Development

Policy BE2 – Quality of Design

Policy GE17 – Protection of Sites of International Importance for Nature Conservation

Policy GE18 – Protection of Sites of National Importance for Nature Conservation

Policy GE19 – Protection of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

Policy E5 – New Industrial and Commercial Development

Policy TP7 – Pedestrian Provision as part of new development

Policy TP12 – Car Parking

Policy PR1 – Air Quality

Policy PR14 – Contaminated Land

Policy PR15 – Groundwater

Policy PR16 – Development and Flood Risk

Halton Core Strategy Local Plan (2013)

The following policies, contained within the Core Strategy are of relevance:

- CS1 Halton's Spatial Strategy
- CS2 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CS4 Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities
- CS15 Sustainable Transport
- CS18 High Quality Design
- CS19 Sustainable Development and Climate Change
- CS23 Managing Pollution and Risk

Joint Waste Local Plan 2013

- WM8 Waste Prevention and Resource Management
- WM9 Sustainable Waste Management Design and Layout for New Development

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

- Design of New Industrial and Commercial Development SPD
- Widnes Waterfront Supplementary Planning Document

CONSULTATIONS

The application has been advertised via the following methods: site notices posted near to the site, press notice, and Council website. Surrounding residents and landowners have been notified by letter.

The following organisations have been consulted and any comments received have been summarised below in the assessment section of the report:

Environment Agency – No objection

St Helens Council – No comments

Coal Authority – No objection and recommend an informative

Historic England – No comments

Cheshire fire and rescue – Contacted the applicant recommending sprinklers

Council Services:

HBC Emergency Planning – highlighted the presence of COMAH sites in the area.

HBC Open Spaces – No Objection

HBC Contaminated Land – No objection

HBC Highways – No Objection

Conservation Consultant – no objection

Merseyside Environmental Advisory service – comments are contained in the report below. They state that overall the Environmental Statement provides an adequate basis on which to proceed and recommend conditions.

ASSESSMENT

Planning Policy

The application site is designated as an Action Area and, Policy RG3 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan is of relevance. This policy lists the variety of use classes that are considered to be acceptable within the area, this includes B2 uses. The proposal is considered to be a B2 use and is acceptable in principle. The site is within the area of the South Widnes Key Area of Change (CS9). The proposal is for additional production facilities associated with an established employment use and this is in conformity with policy CS9.

Design, Appearance and Visual Impact

The proposal is to construct a new building and associated plant to accommodate a third manufacturing line. The new production building would have a footprint of approximately 132m x 26m, the height of the eaves would be 7.3m high, and the maximum height at the apex approximately 11.6m high. In terms of scale and appearance this is considered to be consistent with the existing main production building on site, and considered to be in character with the wider waterfront area. The switch room would be sited between the proposed new production building and the existing onsite boiler house, adjacent to the internal service road.

The scale of the building would only really be of significance when viewed in relative close proximity, for example, from the Trans-Pennine Trail on the opposite side of the canal.

The proposed building would provide a gross floor space of 3,432 Sq.m, and would have a steel frame construction, with main elevations finished predominantly in cladding, the west end of the building would be constructed in a brick face, as the staff amenities are housed in the western end of the building.

Regeneration and Action Area

The site is located within the Widnes Waterfront Action Area. The proposal therefore needs to be considered in the context of Widnes Waterfront and against Policies S1, RG3 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan, the adopted Widnes Waterfront Supplementary Planning Document, and the most recent revised Waterfront Masterplan.

The existing site is manufacturing and therefore falls within the use class B2 'General Industrial', this new proposal is to provide a new building and continue this

existing employment use and provide additional employment which is one of the acceptable uses listed in Policy RG3.

Air Quality

The Environmental Statement submitted with the application includes an air quality assessment. This includes a study of the existing sources of pollution and background concentrations within the vicinity of the site, potential effects on air quality during site construction and during the site's operational stage.

During construction it is envisaged that no significant emissions to air would occur. The main production activities would take place within the building, though the manufacturing process requires the several new chimney stacks to extract various emissions resulting from the manufacturing process (please see those referred to in the design section above).

The new production line includes significant abatement equipment to mitigate the process emissions to air. These include water scrubbing systems to abate Hydrogen Chloride (HCl) emissions, regenerative thermal oxidisers to reduce emissions of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and dioxins, bag filters to minimise particulate emissions, steam raising boilers are to be changed from oil to gas fired reducing emissions of carbon and sulphur oxides.

The report concludes that the changes in concentrations of background emissions will be insignificant when compared to existing background levels and will be minimised by use of suitable abatement technologies and stack heights.

It should also be noted that any emissions from the industrial process are controlled through the Environmental Permitting Regulations.

Noise and Vibration

The nearest existing residential property is approximately 800metres away from the site. All the mechanical processing and sorting would be carried out within the proposed buildings, the applicant proposes to maintain all equipment with sound attenuation and abatement measures. Taking into account the distance to sensitive properties there would be no impact.

Ground Conditions and Contamination

The site is a former chemical works and has a long industrial history. Site investigations have identified significant levels of contamination. The Council's Contaminated Land Officer and the Environment Agency have been consulted. Both the Contaminated Land Officer and the Environment Agency have no objections.

Transport and Highways

The proposed development would result in an additional 35 vehicle movements to and from the site a week (20 for deliveries of materials to the site and 15 for the transportation of finished goods from the site). The proposal is to utilise the existing

access and car parking facilities. The Highways Officers are satisfied that cumulatively the number additional vehicle movements would not have a detrimental impact on the highway network.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

The Environmental Statement has been accompanied with a phase 1 habitat survey. The site is currently underused, with old brick built industrial buildings due to be demolished, this was the subject of a separate prior approval application (11/00407/DEM). The Council's retained advisor on nature conservation has confirmed that the buildings were unsuitable for bats.

The Mersey Estuary RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI are approximately 2.5km away to the south west of the site. The local nature reserves of Wigg Island and Widnes Wharf are also within 1km of the site.

The Council's nature conservation advisor is of the opinion that the site as a whole is also considered to be of minimal habitat value to nature, and the proposals would have no significant impact on the ecology of the site or surrounding area.

Residential Amenity

The site is located within the Widnes Waterfront Regeneration Area, existing surrounding sites are either derelict or within existing industrial and employment uses. There are no existing residential properties within the vicinity of the site; therefore the proposal would not impact on residential amenity. The consented scheme for the nearby Routledge site took into account this sites operation prior to the fire on site.

Summary and Conclusions

The proposal is considered to comply with national planning policy NPPF, and Development Plan policies contained in the UDP (RG3, BE1, BE2, E5, GE17, GE18, GE19, TP12 and TP16) and Core Strategy (CS1, CS2, CS4, CS9, CS15, CS18, CS19, CS23).The Environmental Statement and supplementary information demonstrates that the development would be acceptable in terms of potential flood risk, ecology, ground contamination, noise, air quality and landscape and visual impact. The proposed development would facilitate the retention and expansion of an existing business in the Borough. It is therefore recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

APPROVE

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1 List of approved plans, amended plans and documents (BE1, BE2)
- 2 Requiring submission and agreement of a Construction Environmental Management Plan
- 3 Submission of a lighting scheme.

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

As required by:

Paragraph 186 – 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework;

- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015; and

This statement confirms that the local planning authority has worked proactively with the applicant to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of Halton.