

8. MAJOR APPLICATION - PROPOSED 2010SQM INDUSTRIAL UNIT EXTENSION TO EXISTING INDUSTRIAL BUILDING FOR STORAGE OF PRODUCTS PRIOR TO DISTRIBUTION AT BELLE ENGINEERING, THE BRUND, SHEEN (NP/SM/0325/0240) ALN

APPLICANT: Mr MacPhail, Altrad Belle Engineering Ltd

Summary

1. The application is brought before the Planning Committee because it represents major development within the National Park. Whilst it would be 'major development' under the terms of the Development Management Procedure Order, the development could not reasonably be considered to be major in terms of its likely impacts on the National Park.
2. The building would be within an existing enclosed yard and contained within the footprint of the established manufacturing site.
3. The site for the proposed extension is well screened by mature trees and existing buildings. All relevant material considerations have been addressed and as amended the development would be an acceptable extension to an existing industrial building in the countryside in accordance with policy DME7.

Site and Surroundings

4. Altrad Belle (Belle Engineering Sheen Ltd) is located to the south west of the village of Sheen. The extensive manufacturing site is long established and has expanded incrementally since the early 1960s. The company manufactures light equipment for the building and construction markets, including products such as high tip dumpers, compactors, wheelbarrows and concrete mixers.
5. The site as a whole occupies a roughly triangular shaped footprint bordered by Pown Street to the east (from which access is gained). The main industrial buildings are split into two distinct areas, the 'top yard', to the south of the site, and the 'bottom yard' to the north. There are a number of residential properties directly to the north of the site and to the east facing Pown Street.
6. A well-established bund of trees encloses the majority of the site's perimeter.
7. The site lies in open countryside for planning policy purposes and is outside of any designated Conservation Area.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be APPROVED subject a S106 agreement to rescind planning permission ref NP/SM/0593/057 and subject to the to the following conditions:

1. **3 year implementation period**
2. **Adopt amended plans**
3. **Before work commences, the existing redundant portable cabins to be completely removed from the site.**

4. **Before the building is first brought into use, the four existing blue van/HGV bodies on the south western boundary of the site to be completely removed from the site.**
5. **The development shall be implemented in full accordance with the stated requirements of the Arboricultural Report THL-R25-42 prepared by Tree Heritage Ltd and dated 11th April 2025.**
6. **Unless prior permission has been obtained in writing from the National Park Authority, all noisy construction activities shall be restricted to the following times of operations.**

08:00 - 18:00 hours (Monday to Friday);

08:00 - 13:00 hours (Saturday)

No working is permitted on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

In this instance a noisy construction activity is defined as any activity (for instance, but not restricted to, building construction/demolition operations, refurbishing and landscaping) which generates noise that is audible at the site boundary.

7. Construction Impacts

- **During construction/demolition phases amplified music and/or radios shall not be audible beyond the site boundary;**
 - **Any waste material associated with the demolition or construction shall not be burnt on site but shall be kept securely for removal to prevent escape into the environment. All waste transfer records should be retained for inspection by officers of the National Park Authority;**
 - **No activity hereby permitted shall cause dust to be emitted beyond the site boundary so as to adversely adjacent residential properties and/or other sensitive uses and/or the local environment. In the event dust is caused to escape the site boundary the activity shall be stopped until sufficient dust suppression has been undertaken to prevent further escape. There shall always be the appropriate means and sufficient water resources on site for dust suppression. These should be made available for inspection when required by officers of the National Park Authority.**
8. **Any artificial lighting incorporated into the site in connection with the approved development shall not increase the pre-existing illuminance or glare at the adjoining light sensitive locations when the light (s) is (are) in operation. Details of all artificial lighting to be installed under this permission shall be submitted to and approved by the National Park Authority prior to the installation of any lighting**
 9. **The building shall be constructed so as to provide sound insulation against internally generated noise of not less than 35dB(A), with windows shut and other means of ventilation provided. The building shall not be brought into use or occupied until the required sound attenuation works have been permanently carried out. Such works shall be maintained thereafter for the life of the approved development.**

- 10. No phase of the development hereby permitted shall take place, except for works of site clearance and demolition until a risk assessment has been undertaken to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, in accordance with a scheme to be agreed with the National Park Authority. Once completed, a written report of the findings and recommendations shall be submitted and approved in writing by the National Park Authority.**
 - (a) If the site risk assessment (a) indicates that potential risks exist, development shall not commence, until a detailed remediation strategy to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use has been prepared, and is subject to the approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**
 - (b) Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme (b) and prior to bringing the development into first use, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the National Park Authority.**
 - (c) If, during the course of development, any contamination is found which has not been identified in the site investigation, additional measures for the remediation of this source of contamination shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The remediation of the site shall incorporate the approved additional measures.**
- 11. Before the building is first brought into use, the surface water drainage system shall be installed in accordance with the design detailed contained within the following document: Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (Doc Ref: 17379 Drainage Strategy MD-01, P02, 15th April 2026).**
- 12. The sheeting for the sides and the roof shall be pre-coated in dark green to match the colour of the adjacent building.**
- 13. The solar pv panels shall be matt black and non-reflective. The approved solar panels shall be installed and operational before the building is first brought into use.**
- 14. Approved car parking layout and manoeuvring space to be provided and retained in its approved use for the life of the development.**

Key Issues

- Principle of major development and an extension to the building group.
- Impact on Landscape and Trees
- Highways and Parking
- Impact on Residential Amenity
- Climate Change Mitigation
- Flood Risk
- Contaminated Land

Relevant Planning History

- The site has a long planning history, but directly relevant to these proposals are:

- September 1996 – Planning permission granted for extensions to factory and offices NP/SM/0593/057). Subject to a section 106 legal agreement preventing further additional production, warehousing/storage and office space and providing for off-site highway improvements.
- November 2001 – planning application submitted for extension to existing engineering plant. (NP/1101/102). Application went to the Authority’s planning committee who resolved to approve subject to a section 106 agreement to revoke the 1996 permission and to repeat earlier provision re: restrictions to expansion. However, the agreement was never signed and the application was subsequently withdrawn.
- October 2024 – Pre-application advice sought for current proposals (Enquiry ref 50625).

Consultations

8. **Highway Authority** – *‘Application is very similar to a previous application which was approved apart from a S106 was not completed. Previous application required the construction of passing bays between B5054 and the site access. These constitute localised widening and appear to have been provided. The route between B5054 and site access is in current use by vehicles associated with the site and is adequate for this use. Photographs submitted with the application and aerial photographs show the area of the proposed extension currently in use for external storage of materials. Proposal will enclose this storage area. The area does not appear to be currently used for parking. A car parking assessment is included in the submitted Transport Statement. This states that 122 spaces are available. Application form states that 100 spaces are existing and proposed. Site layout Nov 21 (with parking highlighted) indicates that at least 122 spaces are available.’* Therefore, no objections subject to condition requiring access, parking, service and turning area being provided and maintained
9. **District Council** – no response
10. **Parish Council** – no response
11. **Environment Agency** – The site is within Flood Zone 1 – therefore no fluvial flood risk concerns.
12. **Environmental Health** – *‘The site is going to a low sensitive end use. However, it has a history of potentially contaminative past uses including the ‘Townend tip’ and quarrying, so there is potential that contaminants in the area could be mobilised during development and impact onsite and adjacent receptors including construction workers and neighbouring farmland. It is recommended, that that a contamination risk assessment is undertaken to address both the potential for human health risks and impacts to the agricultural land so that mitigation can be implemented during the development.*

There is no noise impact assessment submitted to support the application. But as the proposed use is for storage, with good design and noise control in the operational phase, potential noise concerns should be adequately mitigated. We would recommend the conditions below are imposed on the planning permission granted for this application in order to ensure that residential amenity for existing neighbours is protected.’

In conclusion, no objections subject to conditions to control hours of construction works; measures to minimise construction impacts; control over lighting and use of forklift trucks during construction; noise attention measures within the building; and submission and agreement of contamination risk assessment.

13. **Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA)** – Initially objected due to lack of surface water drainage strategy including infiltration testing. Following receipt of a ‘Flood Risk

Assessment and Drainage Strategy’ report, showing the construction of a new soakaway chamber plus a soakaway trench/crate system to replace a chamber to be removed beneath the footprint of the building, the LLFA raises no objections subject to a condition that requires the drainage system to be installed.

14. **Authority’s Archaeologist** – no archaeological comments.
15. **Authority’s Tree Officer** – no objections with regard to potential impacts on the landscape bund along the south western and western boundaries as the trees and their roots will be unaffected. However, noted that as submitted the smaller tree grouping (G2) to the south would be lost. The trees are not of high significance, but replacement planting would be required. Note: the scheme has since been amended to avoid the trees.
16. **Authority’s Landscape Officer** - no objections *‘The ‘LVIA’ submitted with the application simply shows at a few viewpoints to the south of the site along one public road, but does not explain the visual impact on views in the wider landscape or from locations such as PROWs / farmsteads etc. The increase in built form will likely be visible from higher ground to the east and south however I would not expect it to be particularly prominent given the nature of the existing site, and I would not expect it to conflict with tranquillity/ scenic beauty of views, existing trees in the landscape should mean that only filtered views are afforded. I do not object to the scheme but would agree with the tree officer’s comments that the trees lost should be compensated for.’*

Representations

17. None received

Main Policies

18. Relevant Core Strategy policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, L1, L2, E2, T1, T7, CC1, CC5.
19. Relevant Local Plan policies: DMC1, DMC3, DMC13, DMC15, DME7, DME8

National Planning Policy Framework

20. Policies in the Development Plan provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park’s statutory purposes for the determination of this application. It is considered that in this case there is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and the NPPF with regard to the issues that are raised.
21. Paragraph 88 (a) states that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings.

Background

22. In 1996 planning permission was granted for a total of 7741 sqm of new floorspace across the site, including 1937 sqm of extension on the lower building range, 3562 sqm on the upper range and a 1514 sqm office building. The permission was subject to a section 106 agreement preventing further additional production, warehousing/storage and office space and providing for off-site highway improvements. Work began in the form of an extension on the upper range and so the permission was implemented and remains extant. The remainder of the development was not built out.
23. In 2001 another planning application was submitted for an extension to the south west side of the upper building, in exchange for the unimplemented part of the 1996

permission. The application went before the Authority's planning committee and they resolved to approve the application subject to a section 106 agreement to revoke the earlier permission and to repeat the restrictions with regard to further extension. However, the agreement was never signed by the applicant and so eventually the Authority disposed of the application.

24. The current proposals are for virtually the same development as was proposed in 2001, i.e. an extension off the south west side of the upper building range.

Assessment

Principle of major development and extension to buildings

25. The proposed development would have a floor space of more than 1000 sqm and therefore would constitute 'major development' under the terms set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (DMPO).
26. Paragraph 183 of the NPPF and Core Strategy policy GSP1 seek to resist major development in National Parks in all but exceptional circumstances. However, the NPPF makes clear that for policy purposes whether a proposal is major development is a matter for the decision maker taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the National Park has been designated or defined.
27. The site is located within the established footprint of an existing industrial site, and albeit in open countryside, the principle of expanding the site is established in Development Management policies E2 and DME7, subject to a number of criteria (which will be assessed below). Subject to those criteria being met, the development could not reasonably be considered to be major in terms of its likely impacts. That is not to say that its impacts could not still be significant within the context of the site itself and its immediate surroundings – only that the restrictions placed on major development by national and local policy are not considered to apply to this proposal.
28. Core Strategy policy E2 states that proposals to accommodate the growth and intensification of existing buildings will be considered carefully in terms of impacts on the appearance and character of landscapes. Development Management policy DME7 B provides more detail, and states that outside settlements, expansion of existing industrial sites will only be permitted where:
- (i) it is of a modest scale in relation to the existing activity and/or buildings; and*
 - (ii) the scale and type of development can be accommodated without adversely affecting the residential amenity and valued characteristics of the area or traffic safety and circulation;*
 - (iii) it does not adversely affect, and wherever possible, secures the enhancement of the site as well as the future management of the valued characteristics of the site and adjoining land; and*
 - (iv) proper consideration has been given to the possibilities of conserving and enhancing landscape character by using, modifying or extending existing buildings.*

C. In all cases, the impacts on residential amenity and valued characteristics from operating hours, lighting and noise will be considered.

Subject to the development meeting these criteria the proposals are policy compliant in principle.

Justification and Scale

29. A justification statement has been submitted with the application. This explains that the extension would be used for the storage of manufactured products and essential component parts. At present finished products and other materials are stored outside in the yard, which leads them to deteriorate. The company also has an off-site storage facility in Twyford. The current proposals would allow them to relocate approximately 50% of that storage to Sheen, which will streamline internal logistics and improve operational efficiency. It would also have the benefit of removing around 125 heavy goods vehicle journeys to and from the site per year.
30. The statement also explains that the portable cabin offices have been unused since the pandemic as staff formerly based there now work remotely.
31. We are satisfied that there is sufficient justification for the proposed building.
32. With regard to criteria (i), of policy DME7, although the proposed extension would be sizeable, it would in fact be modest in scale in relation to the existing extensive range of industrial buildings on the site, and would not extend beyond the existing well-established boundary of the operational yard area.

Impacts on Landscape and Trees

33. A simple Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been submitted. This demonstrates that from Pown Street the building would be well screened by the existing belt of trees along the site boundaries and by existing buildings on the site. The building may be visible in the wider landscape from higher land to the east and south, however it would be seen within the context of the existing well-established industrial site and would not extend beyond the existing site boundaries. Consequently, any visual or landscape impacts are likely to be minor.
34. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been submitted. The Authority's Tree Conservation Officer is satisfied that the long bund of trees along the south west boundary would not be negatively impacted by the development as the extension would be within the hardstanding to the east.
35. As submitted the plans showed that the extension would result in the loss of a large proportion of a smaller tree group (G2) which help to screen the site in views from the south. Following discussions amended plans have now been received showing the building reduced in length by 12m, effectively pulling it away from the trees and allowing their retention in full.
36. As amended, subject to the conditions, the proposals would conserve the landscape character of the area and trees within the site in accordance with policies L1 and DMC13 and criteria (ii) and (iii) of DME7.

Highways and Parking

37. With regard to traffic safety, as part of the S106 agreement appended to the 1996 permission, passing places were required to be constructed on local roads and these works have taken place. The applicant has estimated that by bringing storage facilities back onto site, rather than off site, this will reduce vehicle movements on local roads by around 125 goods vehicles per year. While this is a valid consideration, it is also a fact that without a condition controlling the long-term use of the proposed building, the nature of the use could change over time and it could be used for manufacturing rather than storage.

38. However, the floorspace now proposed is similar to the unimplemented part of the 1996 permission and therefore the impacts of any increase in traffic levels on local roads is unlikely to be significantly different from what is already permitted. In considering whether a condition to limit the use of the building is reasonable, we must bear in mind that the 1996 permission (which did not place any limit on use) is extant and could be built out at any time, and that this is a valid fallback position. On that basis a condition is not considered to be reasonable in this case.
39. With regard to parking, a submitted Transport Statement explains that the 1996 extant approval provided for 118 off street car parking spaces. The total number of existing car parking spaces is 122 and these spaces would be unaffected by the proposals. The Highway Authority is therefore satisfied that the parking provision is sufficient to meet the needs of the development.
40. Consequently, the proposals meet the requirements of criteria (ii) of DME7 B.

Impact on Residential Amenity

41. The nearest neighbouring properties in third party ownership are located approximately 180m to the north of the site. There are also a number of dwellings close to the access with Pown Street that are shown within the applicant's control. Given the proposed siting of the extension on the opposite side of the building group, it is unlikely that the development would cause any significant harm to amenity at this property (through noise for example), over and above the existing situation, subject to the condition as recommended by the Environmental Health Officer, that sound insulation against internally generated noise of not less than 35dB(A) with windows shut is provided.
42. The Environmental Health Officer has also recommended conditions to protect the amenity of residents during the construction phase, including limiting hours of working and also control over lighting all of which are considered to be necessary in the interests of amenity and in furtherance to criteria C of policy DME7.

Climate Change Mitigation

43. A supporting statement submitted by the applicants explains that at present the company uses 100% renewable electricity across its operations. It employs energy-efficient LED lighting in the factory and operates machinery powered by energy-saving electric motors. They are developing a heat recovery system to harness exhaust heat from compressors and ovens for winter heating and they plan to install solar panels that will generate up to 30% of daily energy requirements. The company has installed a nitrogen generator for their laser cutting machines, eliminating up to 100 annual bulk delivery trips of liquid nitrogen.
44. With regard to the current proposals, black, non-reflective solar pv panels would be installed along the full length of the south west facing roof slope. The associated reduction in vehicle movements as a result of less off-site storage will also reduce carbon emissions. We are satisfied that the requirements of policy CC1 are met.

Flood Risk

45. The site is within the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of fluvial flooding. However, as the proposals are for major development a drainage strategy is required to demonstrate the conveyance of surface water from the new extension to a confirmed point of outfall and confirmation of a proposed flow rate.
46. This information, together with the results of infiltration testing has been submitted during the course of the application. The Local Lead Flood Authority has now lifted its initial

objections, subject to a condition that requires that drainage measures to be provided before the building is first occupied. Subject to that condition, the proposals accord with policy CC5.

Contaminated Land

47. The Environmental Health Officer's response states that the proposals are for a low sensitive end use. However, the site has a history of potentially contaminative past uses including the 'Townend tip' and quarrying, so there is potential that contaminants in the area could be mobilised during development and impact onsite and adjacent receptors including construction workers and neighbouring farmland.
48. It is recommended that a contamination risk assessment is undertaken to address both the potential for human health risks and impacts to agricultural land so that mitigation can be implemented during the development. This can be secured by condition and would ensure compliance with Development Management Policy DMC15.

Biodiversity Net Gain

49. As the site is a completely sealed concrete surface, the development is exempt from the statutory requirement to demonstrate 10% biodiversity net gain.

Other Considerations

50. The 1996 planning permission was part implemented and therefore remains extant. If that were to happen alongside the current proposals, then it would result in an excessive level of development on the site that would result in very little car parking and manoeuvring space and could result in an increase in traffic levels beyond the capacity of local roads. As a result a section 106 agreement will be required to rescind the 1996 permission.

Conclusion

51. In conclusion the criteria in Development Management policy DME7 with regard to the expansion of existing industrial premises in the countryside are met and therefore the proposed extension is acceptable. Impacts on trees, amenity, surface water flooding, land contamination and highways are all acceptable or can be adequately mitigated. Consequently, the application is recommended for conditional approval.

Human Rights

Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

Nil