

Development Control Committee

Meeting to be held on 10th December 2014

Electoral Division affected: Fylde West
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Fylde Borough: Application Number LCC/2014/0104
New salt dome to store rock salt, extensions to existing vehicle storage units to create four new garage units and additional landscaping. LCC Highways Depot, Grange Road, Singleton.

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

Application - New salt dome to store rock salt, extensions to existing vehicle storage units to create four new garage units and additional landscaping. LCC Highways Depot, Grange Road, Singleton.

Recommendation – Summary

That planning permission be **granted** subject to conditions controlling time limits, working programme, landscaping and floodlighting.

Applicant's Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a new salt dome to store rock salt and extensions to the existing vehicle storage unit building on the site so as to create four new garage units.

The salt storage building would have a circular base 25 metres in diameter rising to a central point with a height of 13.6 metres. A vehicle entrance measuring 5m wide by 10m high would be constructed into the northern side of the dome. The lower parts of the building would consist of a vertical concrete wall 3 metres in height. Above that, the roof would be domed and clad in green shingles.

The proposed extension to the vehicle storage unit building would involve providing four garages in addition to the four existing garage units that are located at the site. The building would increase in width from 20m to 40m. The other dimensions of the new garages would be the same as the existing units with a pitched roof to 6.4m in height. The external elevations would be constructed from profiled cladding coloured olive green to match the existing garages.

Landscaping is proposed along the eastern boundary of the site to help screen the new buildings. The landscaping strip would measure 4m wide by 54m long and consist of a 0.5m high raised area of soil to be planted with trees. The landscaping

strip would be delineated and protected from the depot yard to the west by a 3m high concrete retaining wall.

Description and Location of Site

Singleton Depot is an existing highway maintenance depot located at the junction of Grange Road and the A585 Fleetwood Road, approximately 2 km north east of Singleton. The depot is located within open countryside and is bordered to the north by Grange Road from where the depot is accessed. A line of trees is located inside the eastern boundary with the A585 beyond. To the south is a woodland known as Fisher's Slack Wood and agricultural land is to the west. The nearest residential properties are 60m to the east and 180m to the north. An access to a specialist glass-manufacturing unit in former farm buildings is located on the opposite side of Grange Road to the depot.

The area of the depot nearest Grange Road (approximately one third of the site) is served by a separate access. It comprises a tarmaced surface with a brick office building and a mobile office unit in the northern corner of the site, together with associated car parking. The remaining two thirds of the depot area is used for the storage of materials including salt and equipment associated with highway maintenance and is served by a separate access from Grange Road along the western boundary of the depot. The depot is bound by 2.4m high fencing.

The salt dome would be located on an area currently occupied by a concrete bay used for salt storage. The vehicle entrance would be on the north side of the dome. The landscaping strip would be located directly to the east of the salt dome along the site boundary fronting the A585 Fleetwood Road. The existing four door vehicle storage unit is located approximately half way down the eastern boundary of the site. One of the extra garage units would be located on the north side of the vehicle storage unit and the additional three units would be on the south side. A small open ended metal storage building would be removed and one existing lighting column would be relocated to accommodate the garage extensions.

Background

History: The proposed buildings are located at an existing LCC Highways depot.

Planning permission for the siting of a temporary demountable office building, erection of a single storey office building and link to existing offices and the retention of a revised HGV access to depot was granted in August 2006 (ref. 05/06/0510).

Planning permission for the erection of a vehicle storage facility on the site of an existing storage/parking area was granted in May 2009 (ref. 05/09/0116).

Planning permission for the variation of Condition 2 of permission 05/06/0510 to allow retention of the single storey demountable unit for a further 3 years was granted in October 2010 (ref. 05/10/0589).

Planning permission for the retention of a temporary office unit and external ramps and guard rails was granted in September 2014 (ref. LCC/2014/0099).

A planning application (ref 5/13/353) for the construction of a salt dome on the site was submitted in 2013 but was withdrawn in April 2014.

A planning application for the change of use of agricultural land to extend the depot onto surrounding agricultural land is reported elsewhere on this agenda (ref. LCC/2014/0126).

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraphs 11 – 14, 17, 56 – 66, 109 and 125 are relevant with regard to the requirement for sustainable development, core planning principles, the requirement for good design and conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

National Planning Practice Guidance

Fylde Borough Local Plan

Policy SP2 Development in Countryside Areas
Policy EP11 Building Design and Landscape Character
Policy EP12 Conservation of Trees and Woodland
Policy EP13 Tree Planting
Policy EP14 Landscaping
Policy EP18 Nature Conservation
Policy EP28 Light Pollution

Consultations

Fylde Borough Council – Object to the development as the proposed salt barn is in a prominent roadside location which would by reason of the lack of adequate landscaping result in an adverse impact on the rural character of the area that is not considered to be adequately mitigated by the proposed use of the building. As such it is considered to be contrary to policies SP2, EP11, EP13 and EP14 of the Fylde Borough Local Plan and paragraphs 17 and 64 of the NPPF.

In making the objection, the council notes that the revised location of the salt barn over the previously refused scheme allows for a more meaningful area of landscaping to be implemented to soften the appearance of the barn in the countryside. Were the applicant to present a high quality native species landscaping scheme the objection of the council would be resolved.

Singleton Parish Council – No observations received.

LCC Assistant Director (Highways) – No objection.

Environment Agency - No objection.

Representations – The application has been advertised by site notice and neighbouring residents have been notified by letter. No representations have been received.

Advice

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a salt dome to store rock salt together with extensions to existing vehicle storage units at the LCC Highways Depot near Singleton.

Singleton depot is used to provide highways maintenance services for the Fylde and Wyre areas including winter road gritting and as a strategic operational highway and grounds maintenance depot. At present gritting salt is stored outside in a series of open bays resulting in significant quantities of salt being lost from wind-blow and leaching, difficulties in loading salt into gritting vehicles in bad weather and in the hours of darkness, and from salt becoming overly damp, sticking together and not spreading efficiently from gritting vehicles. The proposed salt storage facility would allow rock salt to be stored under cover thereby addressing the above issues. The depot also includes four garage units for the storage of gully emptying and other vehicles which would allow vehicles to be stored under cover therefore improving security and reducing maintenance costs.

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In considering the issues that arise from the proposed development, it is necessary to take into consideration the relevant policies of the Development Plan and the planning history of the site and all other material planning considerations. Government policy is a material consideration that should be given appropriate weight in the decision making process. The policies of the Development Plan for this site are in the Fylde Borough Local Plan.

The highways depot is located on land designated as a Countryside Area for the purposes of Policy SP2 of the Fylde Borough Local Plan. This policy permits development in countryside areas providing the proposal falls within one of a number of categories including development essentially needed for the purposes of agriculture, horticulture or other uses appropriate to a rural area. Development essentially needed for the continuation of an existing enterprise, facility or operation, of a type and scale which would not harm the character of the surrounding countryside is also acceptable under this policy.

Policy EP11 relates to building design in rural areas and seeks to achieve development of a high standard of design particularly with regards to matters of scale, features and building materials that should reflect the local vernacular style.

A salt storage dome is essentially an industrial / storage use and one that would normally be more appropriately located on an industrial estate or similar site with a main urban area. The development of a salt dome and associated buildings in this location is not associated with any agricultural, horticultural or other use that would normally be considered appropriate to a rural area and the development is therefore considered to conflict with Policy SP2. The proposed buildings should therefore only

be approved if it can be demonstrated that there are other material considerations that outweigh the protection given to the countryside by policy SP2.

The depot has become established in this area as it occupies a relatively central location within Fylde and Wyre therefore allowing efficiency in the essential highway maintenance services that are provided from the site. The Wyre and Fylde area is predominately a rural area with the main urban areas located on the peripheral coastal areas and industrial sites which could be used for the location of such a building are therefore very limited within this area. The Singleton site occupies a relatively central location and is therefore ideally situated as a location from which to operate winter maintenance and other highway services.

Salt is currently stored outside in open bays at the Singleton depot but the construction of the salt dome would allow larger quantities of salt to be stored undercover. This would allow the existing salt storage facility at Green Lane, Garstang to be closed so that the winter maintenance operations in the Fylde and Wyre areas would be concentrated at the Singleton site. The existing salt storage facility in open bays is not ideal as the salt is dissolved by rainfall leading to losses of the material and contaminated run off and there is evidence that the trees beyond the southern boundary of the site have been detrimentally affected by saline water. Stockpiling the salt within a building also allows control of its moisture content which is important in terms of optimising spreading rates. Operational and environmental advantages therefore exist to enclosing the salt within a building which is located on the Singleton site.

The proposed salt storage facility would be a dome type structure with a circular base (25 metres in diameter) rising to a maximum height of 13.6 metres. The lower 3 metres of the building would consist of a vertical concrete wall with the domed roof clad in green shingles (tiles) to help reduce the visual impact of the structure. The lower parts of the building would be screened by the existing vegetation alongside the A585 and the applicant proposes to undertake further planting in this location. However, due to the height of the building, it is likely that it would be visible when viewed from the A585 Fleetwood Road and also from Grange road to the west of the site. Elsewhere, the view of the dome would be limited ; to the north and south it would be screened by the highways depot and Fisher's Slack Wood, respectively, and to the west are open agricultural fields with the nearest properties being 950m away on the east side of Singleton.

Policies SP2 and EP11 require that any development in the countryside must be of a type and scale that would not harm the character of the surrounding countryside and be of a high standard of design with a scale, features and building materials that reflect the local vernacular. The salt dome is a purpose designed building with a shape and height that reflects its purpose and the need for lorries delivering salt to be able to tip inside the building. These requirements give rise to a style of building that is different to the design of farm buildings that are normally found in the locality. An agricultural barn style building has been considered but the applicant has advised that such a structure would have a larger overall height and mass in order to store the same volume of salt as the proposed dome and therefore would have a greater visual impact.

Whilst the development of a salt dome development would normally be considered contrary to the requirements of policy SP2 of the Borough Local Plan, it is considered that there are other material considerations that need to be weighed against the policy. These include the operational benefits arising from the concentration of winter maintenance services at an existing highways depot that is in a central location and the improvements that would result to the management of road salt by its storage within a purpose designed building. These are factors which would outweigh the protection that would normally be given to the countryside by policy SP2.

Fylde Borough Council suggest that their objections may be overcome by the submission of a suitable landscaping scheme. The main view of the salt dome would be from the A585 Fleetwood Road. The previous application for the salt dome on this site proposed that the new building would be located closer to the A585 with only the existing roadside hedge providing landscaping. The dome has now been moved further to the west which provides greater space for landscaping in the form of an area of raised soil with tree planting measuring 54m by 4m to be located directly to the east of the salt dome along the site boundary fronting the A585 Fleetwood Road. The combination of the existing roadside hedge and trees together with the new tree planting belt would help to screen the site from the main viewpoints of the salt dome although the screening would not be effective for some time because of the period it would take the trees to grow.

To ensure the appropriate landscaping of the building, any permission should be subject to a condition requiring the submission and approval of a landscaping scheme prior to the commencement of development so as to mitigate the appearance of the proposed salt dome. Subject to the imposition of such a landscaping condition, it is considered that the salt dome would be acceptable in terms of Policies SP2, EP11, EP13, EP14 and EP18 of the Fylde Borough Local Plan.

The proposed vehicle storage unit extension would match the existing building in form, scale, materials and colour. The height of the storage unit is significantly smaller than the proposed salt dome and would be largely screened by the existing landscaping alongside the A585. The building would be of a similar scale and design to agricultural buildings found elsewhere in the locality and therefore the form and design of the vehicle storage building is considered acceptable in terms of Policies SP2 and EP11 of the Fylde Borough Local Plan. A small open ended metal storage building would be removed to the north of the vehicle storage unit to accommodate the extension. In the event that nesting birds and bats are found during the removal of the building and at the gable ends of the vehicle storage unit, then provision would have to be made for their protection. Notes are proposed to address this.

Although there are no proposals to remove any trees around the site, a condition is recommended that requires the protection of the existing trees and replacement of any that are lost. The retention, protection and replacement of trees as a natural feature would accord with Policy EP12 of the Fylde Local Plan.

The site is floodlit every night. The application involves relocating one existing lighting column further south to provide light to the salt dome. Should the relocated

lighting column need upgrading then, to minimise light pollution beyond the boundaries of the depot, a condition is proposed to require that no additional lighting is installed until the details of such have been approved. Subject to the imposition of such a condition the development is considered to be acceptable in terms of the impact on the amenities of the local area and complies with Policy EP28 of the Fylde Borough Local Plan.

Greater concentration of winter maintenance services at this site may involve an increase in traffic through the site becoming more important as a base for winter maintenance activities. However, the site is located immediately adjacent to the primary road network and any additional traffic would not pass residential properties.

In conclusion, the proposed salt dome and extension to the existing vehicle storage units would provide improved highways and winter maintenance services to the Fylde and Wyre areas. The salt dome would not normally be an appropriate form of development within the countryside. However, it is considered that factors such as the operational benefits to the winter maintenance service and the ability to satisfactorily landscape the building are sufficient to outweigh any harm to the policies of the Development Plan. Overall, the development therefore complies with the requirements of the NPPF and the policies of the Development Plan and can be supported.

In view of the scale, location and nature of the proposed development it is considered no Convention Rights as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998 would be affected.

Recommendation

That planning permission be **Granted** subject to the following conditions:

Time Limits

1. The development shall commence not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Imposed pursuant to Section 91 (1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Working Programme

2. The development shall be carried out, except where modified by the conditions to this permission, in accordance with the following documents:

a) The Planning Application received by the Director of Transport and Environment on 11th June 2014.

b) Submitted Plans and documents received by the Director of Transport and Environment on 11th June 2014:

Drawing No. A02 - Existing Site Plan and Site Photos
Drawing No. A04 - Proposed Salt Store Building Elevations
Drawing No. A05-1 - Existing Vehicle Storage/Garage Elevations
Drawing No. A05-2 - Proposed Vehicle Storage/Garage Elevations
Drawing No. A06 - Site Sections and Roof Plans
Drawing No. A07 - Existing and Proposed Floor Plans
Drawing No. L01 - Tree Survey - As Existing

Submitted Plans and documents received by the Director of Transport and Environment on 26th August 2014:

Drawing No. A01 Rev. B - Site Location Plan
Drawing No. A03 Rev. B - Proposed Site Plan

c) All schemes and programmes approved in accordance with this permission.

Reason: To minimise the impact of the development on the amenities of the area and to conform with Policies SP2, EP11, EP12, EP13, EP14, EP18 and EP28 of the Fylde Borough Local Plan.

Landscaping

3. No development shall take place until a scheme and programme for the landscaping of the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Transport and Environment. The scheme and programme shall include details of:
 - a) the location and dimensions of screening mounds and planting belts.
 - b) details for the construction and heights of screening mounds including materials to be used, grading, soiling and seeding or other methods for securing vegetation cover.
 - c) details for the planting of tree and shrub screening belts including numbers, types and sizes of species to be planted, location and layout of planting areas, protection measures for individual plants and planting techniques..
 - d) details for the seeding of any landscaping areas including mixes to be used and rates of application.

The approved landscaping works shall be undertaken in the first planning season following commencement of the development and shall thereafter be maintained for a period of five years including weed control, replacement of dead and dying trees and maintenance of protection measures.

Reason: In the interests of visual and local amenity and the local environment and to conform with Policies EP13, EP14 and EP18 of the Fylde Borough Local Plan.

4. No development of the salt dome shall take place until details of the colours of the shingle materials to be used for the external elevations of the salt dome have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Transport and Environment.

Thereafter, the approved materials shall be used in the construction of the salt dome building.

Reason; In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and to conform with Policy SP2 of the Fylde Borough Local Plan.

5. The colours of the external elevations of the proposed garage units shall match the colours of the external elevations of the existing garage units.

Reason; In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and to conform with Policy SP2 of the Fylde Borough Local Plan.

6. All hedges and trees forming part of the site boundaries or to be retained within the site shall be protected from any damage and maintained throughout the development.

Reason: In the interests of visual and local amenity and the local environment and to conform with Policy EP12 of the Fylde Local Plan.

Floodlighting

7. No additional lighting shall be erected to illuminate the salt dome unless the details of such lighting including the position, direction and design of such lighting has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Director of Transport and Environment.

Any additional lighting shall thereafter be erected and operated in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To minimise light spill beyond the site boundary to the surrounding rural area and to safeguard the amenity of the area and to conform with Policy EP28 of the Fylde Borough Local Plan.

Definitions

Planting Season: The period between 1 October in any one year and 31 March in the following year.

Director of Transport and Environment: means the Director of Transport and Environment of the County Planning Authority or any successor position to that post

Notes

If bats are found or suspected at anytime during construction activities, work in that area should cease immediately until further advice has been sought from Natural

England and/or the scheme ecologist. The scheme ecologist, Natural England or their agents in the Lancashire area will be able to locate a licensed bat worker to remove any bats present which might be harmed during the works. If bats are exposed during the works and are vulnerable to harm, gloves or a container should be used to move them to a dark and quiet area, until a bat worker has been contacted.

The open ended metal storage building to the north of the vehicle storage unit should not be removed unless the building has been previously checked and found clear of nesting birds in accordance with Natural England's guidance. Similarly, the gable ends of the vehicle storage unit should be checked. Nesting birds, their nests and eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and impacts on nesting birds therefore need to be avoided.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Ext
LCC/2014/0104	11 June 2014	Rob Jones/Environment/ 34128

Reason for Inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A