www.planred.co.uk

Plan Red Ltd
11th Floor, 3 Piccadilly Place
Manchester
M1 3BN
info@planred.co.uk

25 September 2024

Steph Nolf
Planning Enforcement Officer
Wrexham County Borough Council

Via Planning Portal

Dear Steph

Your reference ENF/2024/0368

Planning Portal reference PP-13386720
Application for Temporary use of land for vehicle storage (*sui generis*) (part retrospective)
at land at The Bridgeway Centre, Wrexham Industrial Estate

We submit this part retrospective application on behalf o FI Real Estate Management (FIREM) for change of use of 0land at the Bridgeway Centre for temporary use as vehicle storage (*sui generis*) for up to 2-years. The retrospective part to the application relates to storage of vehicles in support of Days Rental, a vehicle rental company with a base in Wrexham Industrial Estate, and the non-retrospective part to proposed storage of vehicles in support of the adjacent operator, Hydro Aluminium. To clarify on Days Rentals, it is not operating the space as rental depot and it is only used for storage of vehicles between rentals.

Temporary use application

The site area extends to 1.11 ha (red line taken to the highway). The storage area for Days Rental is circa 0.43 ha in area at the rear of the site and for Hydro Aluminium the area is circa 0.56 ha.

In both areas the application is made for temporary use for up to 2 years for vehicle storage. Days Rental will be storing a mix of vehicles types and sizes and for Hydro Aluminium this will be primarily for HGV and/or trailers. We provide explanation on the company operations below for context.

Period of use

A two-year temporary consent is sought. This is because this is a 'meanwhile use' before the area is comprehensively redeveloped. This development under application P/2022/0065 (pending approval) has a number of stages to follow, not least reserved matters approval and condition discharge before it can be implemented on this part of the wider site. The operation of the storage use provides a beneficial use of land in the interim as well as supporting the business operations of Days Rental and Hydro Aluminium, both existing employers and businesses in the Industrial Estate.

Background

The application has come about due to investigation by you on the Days Rental vehicle storage. FIREM has informed us that the previous tenant, Ningbo, (2021-23), stored HGVs on the land under

an operator licence. Prior to this Lite Access (2017-2021) used the site for storage of HGVs, plant and other building material. There appears evidence to substantiate this, (see photo below), but unfortunately there is not a full planning history we can rely on to pursue a lawful development certificate, and a change of use application is the appropriate means to regularise planning control.



In connection with the Hydro Aluminium proposal this is a recent matter and at time of writing had not started. But because the use is the same *sui generis* use, even if the vehicle mix is different, it made sense to combine the application as a part retrospective application.

Days Rental

Days Rental is a national operator providing vehicle hire of cars, vans, minibuses and other vehicles. Their rental office is located at Unit 26 Abenbury Way on the estate. This is where customers can collect and leave hire vehicles and provides office / staff facilities. The land at Bridgeway Centre is solely a storage compound for vehicles and has / will have no public access.

Hydro Aluminium

Hydro Aluminium is located adjacent to the site to the southeast off Bridge Road. Its operations produce high quality extrusion ingots (billets) from recycling a mix of end of life scrap and process scrap at is premises. Its website provides more details of its operations. Hydro has approached FIREM as its existing site has limited yard space which is operating over capacity and affecting the efficiency of its operations. It plans to rent the space at Bridgeway Centre for HGV parking (it may be a mix of cabs and trailers) to improve its operation on the main site. It also proposes to use a portable weigh machine on the site but we are informed this is not permanent fixture.

Planning considerations

The application site is situated within Wrexham Industrial Estate.

The area for Days Rental has previously been in use for storage of vehicles even when the former units were operating in the vicinity of the Hydro Aluminium area. The former units at Bridgeway Centre had been in use for a variety of commercial / industrial uses that cover Use Classes B1, B2 and B8. Potentially it might have been the case the Days Rental area was in a *sui generis* use for vehicle storage but as stated above we have insufficient evidence to confirm this.

The Local Development Plan (LDP), 2023, allocates the land as part the industrial estate with no constraints applied to the site. Policy SP9 provides general support and primary focus for employment uses in the estate across the range of Class B1, B2 and B8 uses, but this does not preclude other uses appropriate to the location. The storage of vehicles is clearly an activity and land use that is appropriate in the locale and is often an ancillary use within larger-scale plots.

As a temporary use it will not preclude the long-term use of the wider Bridgeway Centre site for employment generating use, and therefore no harm arises to the objectives of Policy SP9. This also means no harm arises to Policy EM1 that seeks to protect existing employment land for Class B uses, a policy objective that covers the whole estate.

Policy EM3 considers alternative use of employment land. We do not consider that a temporary use as sought here engages this policy. As the policy is written it considers proposals for a permanent changes of use out of an employment use. This is not the case here and per the *Dundee decision* we should not infer it is relevant to the case.

Other general planning considerations are raised in connection with transport, noise and amenity.

Once more the past history of the use of the site suggests this temporary use on the Days Rental area replicate the recent use of the land and activity. Moreover, as a vehicle storage site, and not a site for direct rental or public access, the impact of movement of vehicles will be limited. The site is adjacent to existing industrial premises to north and south and of itself will not generate noise or other emissions as a storage facility. The site is set back off the main road and presently obscured from view by site hoardings erected for the demolition of buildings at Bridgeway Centre. There are no residential properties nearby; and the site already has security lighting and CCTV which will be retained.

A similar consideration applies to the Hydro site, in this case the land was a mix of buildings (single-storey units), yards, parking areas and access roads in an irregular grid arrangement. The introduction of HGV parking will be a change in visual amenity of the land, albeit temporarily. The site has retained security lighting and CCTV from the past use which will be retained. This site too is behind the site hoardings at Bridgeway Centre, with a degree of internal set back to avoid the existing grass / tree area to frontage. Whilst it may prove possible at some angles to see tops of trailers from passing by on the road the impact in the context of an industrial estate will not harm amenity. And it is an effective extension of the Hydro premises adjacent.

The Block Plan illustrates the separation of the two areas and the access points of the existing internal access road. A mix of existing boundary and temporary internal fencing and gates is used, with photograph of the gate entrance to Days Rental shown for information. We consider this work as de-minimis in connection with the temporary change of use and will be removed on cessation of the use.

We therefore do not consider the temporary use raises any material harm to engage relevant policies and no harm can recorded against the general development management considerations of Policy DM1, in particular parts (i), (ii) and (iii).

Consent sought

We seek a permission for temporary use for up to 2 years from date of approval for the two vehicle storage compounds.

The application is simply accompanied by the Site Location Plan and Block Plan for approval for the temporary storage of vehicles.

As the site is already partly enclosed by boundary security fencing with only temporary fencing and gates provided, and reusing security lighting and CCTV, we consider what works are undertaken to be de-minimis and do not need an explicit consent for the temporary features.

No hours restrictions are sought. For Days Rental most movements of vehicles will align with opening hours of Days Rental's office at Abenbury Way[1], as a business Days Rental requires flexibility to receive and dispatch vehicles outside these hours as vehicles may be relocated from other depots in the UK to meet customer needs. For Hydro the operation is required to meet its existing work patterns on the adjacent site which we understand is unrestricted. Given the industrial estate location and absence of noise sensitive uses to the site, (Pentre Maelor is at least 300m away to nearest buildings south of Hydro and Clywedog Road East) we see no reason to impose hours restrictions on the temporary use.

Next steps

We trust the submitted information is sufficient and proportionate for the purpose of considering this application for part retrospective change of use of the site. If additional information is required, please contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Purser, Director
Plan Red Ltd

M: 07938 063301
E: richard@planred.co.uk

[1] Days Rental opening hours are 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri; 8am-12.30pm Sat and closed Sun