

Planning Statement

Proposal: Change of Use to Builders Merchant/Storage and Distribution for Thorncliffe Building Supplies Ltd.

Location: Former Sylvia Jeffery Site, Queensway Industrial Estate, Wrexham. LL13 8YR

1.0 Introduction.

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for change of use of the industrial unit formerly known as Sylvia Jeffery to a builder's merchant and includes storage. This statement should be read alongside the submitted plans and refers to the relevant adopted planning policies. The current Development Plans are the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan adopted in February 2005 and the emerging Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028 which also is relevant.
- 1.2 Thorncliffe Building Supplies Ltd is one of the largest independent builder's merchants in North Wales and the North West of England. Established in 1987, they provide an extensive range of high-quality building, timber, steel, plumbing and heating supplies, plant hire and skip hire service. Thorncliffe have existing sites in Dyserth, Ewloe and Abergele serving the both the construction industry and the general public. They are looking to expand the business within North Wales and this application seeks to utilise the vacant unit and will support the existing business and contribute to the local economy, promoting sustainable economic growth.

The Site

- 1.3 The site is located within the settlement boundary of Wrexham as shown on Map 2, Inset 1 on the proposals map of the adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan. The relevant planning policies within the adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan are GDP1 - General Development Principles Development Objectives and Policy E4 - Employment Development (of Unannotated Land) within Settlements. Policies SP2, SP9 EM1 and EM3 contained within the emerging Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028 are relevant. The policies are referred to in detail below in Section 2.
- 1.4 The application relates to a currently vacant unit, since April 2022, located on the corner of Queensway within Queensway Industrial Estate. The area is characterised by a mix of residential with houses immediately opposite the site and industrial/commercial units that vary in size and use. There is also a craft and textile shop, a café, storage unit and a performing arts academy with a school immediately located to the east boundary. The units within Queensway Industrial Estate are not limited to B1, B2 and B8 given the variety of uses in the immediate area.

- 1.5 The proposed development will provide 12 full time jobs with additional part time staff. Hours of operation will be Mon to Fri 7am to 5pm, Sat 7am to 1pm with no working on Sundays.
- 1.6 There are 38 parking spaces available plus a large yard area which will be used for deliveries. Vehicles using this delivery area will be able to enter and leave in a forward gear.
- 1.7 There are 4 bus stops close to the site. 2 at Y Wern and also 2 almost directly in front of the application site.
- 1.8 Whilst not specifically shown on the submitted plan there is ample space for cycle storage within the site.

2.0 Planning Policy

Adopted Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011

GPD1 - General Development Principles Development Objectives

- 2.1 Policy GPD1 states that all new development should: -
 - a) Ensure that built development in its scale, design and layout, and in its use of materials and landscaping, accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality.
 - b) Take account of personal and community safety and security in the design and layout of development and public / private spaces.
 - c) Make the best use of design techniques, siting and orientation in order to conserve energy and water resources.
 - d) Ensure safe and convenient pedestrian and vehicular access to and from development sites, both on site and in the nearby locality.
 - e) Ensure that built development is located where it has convenient access to public transport facilities, and is well related to pedestrian and cycle routes wherever possible.
 - f) Ensure the safety and amenity of the public and safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land or air, hazards from industry and quarrying, and associated noise, odour or vibration arising from development.
 - g) Secure public services (e.g. gas, water, electricity) to development at minimum public cost.
 - h) Safeguard sites and areas of nature conservation and wildlife interest, and to provide new habitats where there is an unavoidable loss of existing habitats and areas of wildlife interest.

- i) Ensure that development does not result in, or is subject to, flooding, soil erosion, landslides or contamination, either on or off the site.
- j) Have regard to the need to safeguard those areas that possess a strong Welsh cultural and/or linguistic identity from development that could harm this identity.
- k) Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

Policy E4 - Employment Development (of Unannotated Land) within Settlements

- 2.2 Policy E4 states that employment development on unannotated land within settlement limits will be permitted subject to Policy GDP1. The policy states that consideration will be given to employment proposals on land within settlements. Importantly it notes that such development contributes to the economic use of land, avoids pressure on the countryside, and serves to remove the detrimental effect of blight within settlements. It states that proposals must not prejudice existing amenities through noise, vibration, smell, safety, health or excessive traffic generation. Where there are planning objections, it may be possible to meet them satisfactorily by attaching conditions to the permission.

Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028

Policy SP9 - Economic Growth Employment and Enterprise

- 2.3 Policy SP9 ensures the continued role of the County Borough as a key economic driver in North Wales and the wider region and serves to diversify the local economy and widen the economic base. The policy reflects one of the objectives of the Plan to 'support a vibrant, diverse and competitive local economy that provides a range of job opportunities to enable new and existing businesses to grow in Wrexham'. It recognises that the use of employment land should accommodate projected growth while allowing choice and flexibility to meet the varying nature of future employment needs and demands. The wording of the policy makes reference to the need to secure land and buildings to attract employment opportunities **in sustainable and accessible locations**.

2.4 Policy SP2: Location of New Development

This policy directs development to the most suitable locations within the County Borough in accordance with sustainable development principles set out in national planning policy. Emphasis is given to the hierarchy of the settlements within the County Borough based on the need for development plans to secure sustainable settlement patterns which meet the needs of the economy, environment and health. The settlement hierarchy identifies a framework for the location of new development based on an understanding of each settlements existing facilities / services and their

capacity, infrastructure, employment opportunity, planning constraints, viability and opportunities for new development.

Policy EM1 Protection of Existing Employment Land

- 2.5 Policy EM1 states that the County Borough's existing employment areas as shown on the Proposals Map will be protected for B Use Class employment generating uses together with appropriate complementary uses and activities as referred to in Policy EM2. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the existing employment areas within the County Borough are protected from non-employment related land uses. The policy responds to the Spatial Strategy of the Plan to ensure a range and choice of employment land and premises are available across the County Borough to assist economic competitiveness, encourage entrepreneurship, promote the growth of indigenous businesses of all types and size and attract inward investment.

EM2 Provision of Supporting Facilities for Employees in Business, Industrial and Warehousing Developments

- 2.6 This policy applies to those employment areas defined on the proposals map and intends to enable the provision of appropriate complementary and subordinate uses in those areas to help deliver the Plan's objectives.

Policy EM3 Alternative Use of Employment Land and Premises

- 2.7 Policy EM3 considers the development of business, industrial and warehousing land and premises for other uses and applies to those existing, permitted and allocated business, industrial and warehousing land and premises in the County Borough outside of policy EM2 and provides criteria against which proposals for change of use will be assessed. The policy seeks to address:
- The need to retain a range and choice of well-located sites and premises attractive to business, industry and warehousing;
 - Making the best use of redundant land and premises for alternative employment purposes; and;
 - Where land and premises need to be retained because they are of local importance for employment opportunities

Policy DM1 - Development Management Considerations

- 2.8 Policy DM1 states that all development proposals, where relevant, must:

- a) Accord with or enhance the character, local distinctiveness and appearance of the site, existing building(s) and surrounding landscape/ townscape in terms of its siting, layout, scale, height, design, density, use of materials and landscaping;
- b) Not have an unacceptable effect on the amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties/land by virtue of noise, disturbance and overlooking; and provides a satisfactory standard of amenity for the occupiers/users of the development itself;
- c) Safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land, light or air, or land instability, arising from development;
- d) Take account of personal and community safety and security in its design and layout
- e) Be safely and conveniently accessible for all potential users/occupiers of the development on foot, bicycle, by public transport and by car;
- f) Not give rise to parking or highway safety problems on site or in the locality;
- g) Maximise sustainable travel choices first and then provides for car related needs;
- h) Contribute to low carbon communities through energy efficiency, be designed to minimise the use of non-renewable energy, water and the production of waste both during construction and when in use;
- i) Not increase the risk of flooding but makes adequate provision for sustainably dealing with foul and surface water drainage and not result in an unacceptable impact upon the water environment;
- j) Consider the needs of a diverse population including those with protected characteristics such as age or disability;
- k) On sites which have previously been developed, new development proposals should make use of existing suitable building materials wherever possible for appropriate uses in order to re-use recyclable materials and reduce the amount of imported materials; and
- l) Ensure that any risks arising from past coal mining, as indicated on the proposals map, can be adequately managed

3.0 Assessment

- 3.1 Thorncliffe Building Supplies Ltd provide building materials, timber, steel, plumbing and heating supplies as well as offering plant and tool hire. Predominantly dealing in such bulky goods means that a large building and outside area is required for operational purposes. The way the business operates involves an element of sales floorspace within the unit for the display of stock with the majority of the floorspace used as storage, including the external area. The business model is replicated in the other Thorncliffe premises in North Wales. Part of the nature of the business includes sales floorspace within the premises, which is considered to be an ancillary feature of the way Thorncliffe operates. The sales element, which is principally trade, is interdependent with the main storage use, mutually supporting the way the business operates. The sales area will not operate as a separate function and is

ancillary to the operation of the business, which will remain subservient to the primary use of the premises as storage.

- 3.2 The sales element of the business is integral to how Thorncliffe operate and is not a separate function. The proposed use would maintain a majority of the site as storage and serves to provide a range and choice of employment in the local area. The use of the site as proposed would not prejudice its allocation as employment land and serves to promote economic competitiveness and the growth of the existing business in accordance with Policy EM1 of the emerging Wrexham Local Development Plan.
- 3.3 Policy EM3 of the emerging Wrexham Local Development Plan considers alternative uses and focuses on the need for well-located sites and premises to be attractive to business, industry and warehousing. In this regard, the site is attractive for Thorncliffe as existing employment land and the building and external areas are well suited to the operational needs of the business, as set out in paragraph 3.1. That is, the interdependence of the ancillary sales and the floorspace required for the types of goods stored on site. In addition, the proposal would make the best use of the vacant site in accordance with Policy EM3.
- 3.4 Policy EM2 of the emerging Wrexham Local Development Plan considers the provision of supporting facilities in business, industrial and warehouse development. The policy focuses on such facilities to provide complimentary and subordinate uses in such areas albeit relating to employees. The element of sales within the premises is subordinate and supports the main business use of Thorncliffe. The proposal does not negatively impact on the status and character of the employment area for B1, B2 or B8 uses in accordance with Policy EM2.
- 3.5 The proposed use of the site as a builder's merchant will bring a vacant unit into a beneficial economic use, supporting the local economy and employment opportunities providing commercial benefits and choice that will make an important contribution to local economic diversification. This is in accordance with Policy E4 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan and Policy EM3 of the emerging Wrexham Local Development Plan, as it is noted that the development would not only support the expansion of an existing business, it would also contribute to the economic and viable use of the land and provide local employment. The proposal will benefit existing staff at the existing sites in North Wales and will employ a further 12 full time employees and further part time staff at this site in Wrexham.
- 3.6 The use of the unit as proposed supports the role of Wrexham as a key economic driver in North Wales as it will serve to diversify the local economy and widen the economic base. As such, the proposal will support a vibrant, diverse and competitive local economy that provides a range of job opportunities to enable new and existing businesses to grow in Wrexham in line with Policy SP9 of the emerging Local Development Plan.
- 3.7 The site is within a mixed area comprising residential, a school, industrial, commercial and retail uses within the settlement boundary of Wrexham. The principle of the development within the settlement is acceptable. The area is characterised by a variety of uses as set out in paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 above. There would be no external alterations to the building and the whole site would be utilised for the proposal and to support the operation of the business. The proposal is considered to be appropriate to the area given the different types of surrounding development. As such, the proposal accords with the character of the site making a

positive contribution to the locality with no detrimental impact on the character or amenity of the area in line with Policy GPD1 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan and Policy DM1 of the emerging Wrexham Local Development Plan

- 3.8 The proposal promotes the efficient use of land, which is an important factor in achieving sustainable development. This is in accordance with Policy GPD1 which seeks to secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The proposal is considered to be an appropriate development in this area that will support the local economy and provide employment opportunities, which is a positive element and beneficial to Wrexham. The proposed reuse of the site reflects sustainable development and is compatible with the site location and surroundings given the existing mix of uses. The proposal promotes the efficient use of land with no detrimental impact on the character or amenity of the area. Accordingly, there is no conflict with adopted policies GPD1 and E4 or emerging policies SP2, SP9, Em1, EM2 and EM3. Therefore, taking into account the provisions of the development plan and all other material planning considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.