

APPLICATION NO:	12/00516/FUL
LOCATION:	PDM Granox, Desoto Road, Widnes
PROPOSAL:	Proposed erection of portal framed building for use as raw materials reception along with new tallow farm to replace existing tallow farm and new vehicle wash facility to replace existing vehicle wash facility.
WARD:	Riverside
PARISH:	N/A
CASE OFFICER:	Glen Henry
AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S):	Granox Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALLOCATION:	Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005) Primarily Employment Area Potential extent of the Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park Coastal Zone Developed
DEPARTURE REPRESENTATIONS:	No None
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve subject to Conditions.
SITE MAP	

1. APPLICATION SITE

1.1 The Site and Surroundings

Areas within existing PDM Granox industrial complex at Desoto Road, Widnes

1.2 Planning History

Numerous earlier planning permissions granted for extensions and/ or alterations. None directly relevant to this application.

1.3 Background

Granox Limited is proposing to construct a new raw material reception building (for Category 1 Animal By-Products), a new tallow farm and a new vehicle wash station.

These plans form part of the overall site development plan which aims to update the existing processes, improve the general aesthetics of the site, and reduce the environmental impact of its operations. This proposal will also significantly improve the health and safety aspects associated with raw material delivery and reception.

2. THE APPLICATION

Proposal Description

The proposed development consists of a new raw material reception building to be constructed adjacent to the existing Plaza building. In order to do this it is first necessary to demolish the existing tallow farm which currently sits within the footprint of the proposed building. The existing tallow farm consists of 20 steel tanks with a total combined capacity of approximately 800 tonnes. These tanks are reaching the end of their useful life and it is therefore proposed to install 4 new 150 tonne tanks adjacent to the existing vehicle workshop. The new tanks will sit within an impermeable concrete bund wall capable of retaining a minimum of 110% of the capacity of the largest tank i.e. 165 tonnes. Each individual tank will be vented via ducting to a common header which will be extracted back into the existing Plaza Building thereby minimizing the risk of the release of fugitive odours. The Plaza Building is being refurbished as part of this development proposal to meet the standard of the Category 3 plant.

Once the new tallow tanks have been erected and commissioned the old tallow tanks will be removed to clear the area for the new raw material reception building. The new vehicle wash station will also be built and commissioned allowing the existing wash bays to be demolished thereby freeing up the area to allow the building works to commence.

This new raw material reception building will accommodate up to 4 raw material hoppers similar to that in the Category 3 plant.

Vehicles will enter the new raw material reception building via one of five high speed doors and tip directly into live hoppers. The hoppers will be lidded and will only be allowed to open once the vehicle is within the building and the high speed doors are closed. Once the vehicle has tipped into the hoppers the lids will close. The material within the hoppers will then be crushed and pumped to the existing No.1 and No.2 plants.

The subsequent phase of the programme will be the removal of existing equipment within the Plaza building. The Plaza will then be refurbished and new processing equipment will be installed which will allow the existing No.1 and No.2 plants to be decommissioned.

2.1 Documentation

The planning application includes the relevant forms and plans, a Design and Access Statement, Supporting Statement and Site Investigation Report

3. **POLICY CONTEXT**

3.1 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.

Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005)

The site is identified as a within a Primarily Employment Area, Potential Extent of the Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park and Developed Coastal Zone in the Halton

Unitary Development Plan. The following policies within the adopted Unitary Development Plan are considered to be of particular relevance:

- BE1 General Requirements for Development;
- BE2 Quality of Design;
- GE30 The Mersey Coastal Zone;
- PR1 Air Quality
- PR3 Odour Nuisance
- PR14 Contaminated Land;
- E5 New Industrial and Commercial Development

Halton Core Strategy (2012)

The following policies within the adopted Core Strategy are considered to be of particular relevance:

CS2: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CS8: 3MG

CS23: Managing Pollution and Risk

Relevant SPDs and Other Considerations

The Council's Design of New Industrial and Commercial Buildings Supplementary Planning Document is also of relevance.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Environment Agency– No objection in principle with reminder that variation to permit required.

4.2 Natural England – No Objection in principle

4.3 Health and Safety Executive – Does not advise on safety grounds against the granting of planning permission in this case.

4.4 Cheshire Wildlife Trust – No objection in principle

4.5 No objection in principle subject to conditions requiring scheme of noise attenuation during construction/ demolition activities. Confirmation is provided that the proposals does not warrant a detailed Habitats Regulations Assessment Report.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

No letters of representation have been received in relation to this application.

JUSTIFICATION

Legislative Background Information

Granox Limited is authorised to process Animal By-Products (ABPs) as defined by Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009. This regulation lays down health rules regarding animal by-products which are not intended for human consumption. It states that ABPs shall be categorized into specific categories which reflect the level of risk they pose to public and animal health.

The process of rendering (regardless of ABP category) produces two distinct finished products; meat and bone meal (MBM) and tallow. These are produced following a crushing, evaporation and separation process where the protein (MBM) and fat (tallow) are produced according to a quality specification. The outlets for these products are dependent on which category Animal By Products has been processed to produce them. In summary these categories are as follows:

Category 1 material is comprised mainly of entire bodies and parts of animals derived from animals which are suspected of being infected with a TSE (transmissible spongiform encephalopathy) or animals which are killed in the context of TSE eradication measures. It also comprises those parts of animals which are most likely to contain the TSE agent (e.g. brain, spinal cord). Category 1 material is defined as posing the highest risk and all meal and tallow produced from rendering this material must be disposed of by incineration.

Category 2 material is comprised mainly of animals and parts of animals which have been declared unfit for human consumption and animals that have died but have not been killed for human consumption or for disease control purposes. Category 2 material is defined as posing a medium risk and is normally downgraded to Category 1 status and thus the products of rendering must also be disposed of by incineration. It cannot be upgraded to Category 3 status.

Category 3 material is comprised mainly of carcasses and parts of animals which are slaughtered and passed fit for human consumption but are not intended for human consumption for commercial reasons. The majority of Category 3 material comes from slaughterhouses, meat cutting plants and butchers shops. Category 3 material is defined as posing the lowest risk and the meal and tallow produced from rendering is primarily used for the manufacturing of petfood, biodiesel and organic fertilizers.

The Existing Processes

The Granox site currently processes Category 1 and Category 3 ABPs in separate plants. The Category 3 plant was a completely new installation in 2009

and this replaced a plant which was previously used for the processing of Category 1 ABPs. As well as new processing equipment the plant included a fully enclosed raw material receiving hopper. This was a significant improvement on the previous situation whereby raw materials were tipped onto the floor and then loaded by mechanical shovel into the raw material crushing system. New processing and evaporation equipment also improved odour capture and containment and significantly reduced fugitive odour emissions within the building. This, in turn, reduced the odour loading to the No.3 chemical scrubber which extracts building air and treats it prior to discharge to atmosphere.

The Category 1 process is currently comprised of two plants (No.1 plant and No.2 plant) served by a common raw material reception building (The Plaza). Currently, Category 1 ABPs are delivered to site and off-loaded in the Plaza Building. Vehicles discharge their contents directly onto the floor and these are loaded by a mechanical shovel into the raw material crushing system and pumped to No.1 and No.2 plants. The air extracted from these two plants is treated by the No.1 and No.2 chemical scrubbing towers before discharge to atmosphere.

The proposals therefore seek to upgrade the Category 1 process to meet the high standards achieved with the Category 3 plant. In order to do this a phased programme of works is proposed which allows the process to remain operational during construction.

Reported Benefits and Impacts Associated with the Proposed Development

The following provides a summary of the suggested benefits of the scheme as reported by the applicant:

Odour

The construction of a new raw material reception building with fully enclosed hoppers will significantly improve odour containment and capture compared to the existing situation whereby raw material is tipped onto the floor. Odours from within the hoppers will be extracted and ducted to the No.2 scrubbing tower. Odour levels within the reception building will therefore be minimized and this will reduce the potential for fugitive odours to escape from the building. A new building also has the benefit of better overall containment. The new tallow tanks will be individually extracted and ducted to the No.2 scrubbing tower. This represents an improvement on the current situation.

Ultimately, the new processing equipment which will be installed in the refurbished Plaza building once the new raw material building is commissioned will provide significant benefits in terms of reduced odour generation. This will have a direct positive impact on the odour loading to the chemical scrubbers and odour levels released beyond the boundary.

The combination of all these proposed works will optimize process efficiency and reduce odour levels beyond the boundary of the site.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of employees working in the new raw material reception building will be greatly improved compared to the current situation. The new raw material building will no longer require personnel to drive mechanical shovels to load raw material and the potential for accidents (slips, trips and falls) will be greatly reduced by not tipping raw material onto the floor.

ASSESSMENT

Design and Visual Impact

The proposed raw materials building and replacement tallow farm will be located within the core area of the existing industrial complex. The proposed replacement vehicle wash facility will be located on an area of vacant grass land to the western boundary of the site of the existing PDM complex between the existing waste water treatment plant and adjoining Hutchinson Hill.

The proposed buildings and plant are considered of a scale, character and materials consistent with earlier modernisation and redevelopment phases at the site. The majority of the scheme will be substantially screened by existing buildings and plant when viewed from the adjoining Mersey Estuary and by a proposed new meal store previously approved by planning permission (12/00026/FUL) when viewed from the adjoining Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park development. All will be viewed in the context of the wider industrial complex. The proposed more modern buildings and plant will also act to screen and soften some of the older and more utilitarian plant which will remain within the site and which is currently visible from the road and rail bridge approaches. As such it is considered that the proposed modernisation could only be viewed as a significant improvement. Exact details of the materials can be controlled and secured through appropriate conditions and the proposals are not considered to impact unduly on the future development of the Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park and surrounding areas.

Odour

The construction of a new raw material reception building includes fully enclosed hoppers with interlocked lids which will only open once high speed vehicle doors are closed. This will significantly improve odour containment and capture effectively acting as an airlock compared to the existing situation whereby raw material is tipped onto the floor. The new raw material bins and building will be vented to an odour treatment scrubber. At present there is no extraction system linked directly to the Plaza building where raw material is tipped directly onto the floor. Containment of raw material within sealed bins effectively allows lower volumes of more odorous air with higher volumes of cleaner room air to be treated which will increase efficiency of the odour abatement systems. More modern plant and buildings will also reduce the potential for fugitive odour release thereby improving odour treatment beyond the site boundaries. In

addition the new tallow tanks will also be extracted to an odour control tower therefore improving containment and treatment from these tanks.

Ultimately, the new processing equipment which will be installed in the refurbished Plaza building once the new raw material building is commissioned will provide significant benefits in terms of reduced odour generation. This will have a direct positive impact on the odour loading to the chemical scrubbers and odour levels released beyond the boundary.

On that basis the Environment Agency and the Council's Environmental Health Officers have confirmed that they raise no objection.

Highways, Parking and Servicing

The scheme proposes significant modernisation of existing plant and facilities at an existing industrial complex. The applicant has confirmed that the proposals make no provision for increased capacity over and above what is currently authorised. The proposals are for modernisation of existing facilities and are not considered likely to result in additional vehicle movements. It is considered that adequate provision is made for parking and servicing with regards to the development site itself and on that basis no objections are raised on Highway grounds.

Contamination

The site is known to be contaminated and a Site Investigation Report has been submitted to support the application. Whilst the Council's Environmental Health Officers have confirmed that additional investigation and analysis is required, no objection is raised in principle and it is considered that this can be adequately secured by condition. The Environment Agency raises no objections.

CONCLUSIONS

This application proposes a new raw materials handling facility with replacement tallow farm and vehicle washing facilities at an existing industrial complex. The proposed buildings and plant will be set within the context of the existing substantial industrial complex and are considered to represent a significant overall improvement and modernisation of the existing facility both in terms of visual improvement and reducing odour release. The overall objectives of Supplementary Planning Guidance, the Halton Unitary Development Plan, the Core Strategy and other policy guidance are considered to be met within the proposed submission. The proposals are considered to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework offering a good quality of development suited to the character of the wider area and as such are recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Approve subject to conditions

CONDITIONS

1. Specifying amended plans
2. Materials condition, requiring the submission and approval of the materials to be used (BE2)
3. Construction Management Plan including wheel cleansing facilities to be submitted and approved in writing. (BE1)
4. Construction and delivery hours to be adhered to throughout the course of the development. (BE1)
5. Vehicle access, parking, servicing etc to be constructed prior to commencement of use. (BE1)
6. Requiring finished floor and site levels be carried out as approved. (BE1)
7. Site investigation, including mitigation to be submitted and approved in writing. (PR14)
8. Restriction of external lighting (PR4)
9. Securing provision of high speed access doors and interlocked raw materials hopper lids (PR3)
10. Requiring submission and agreement of noise mitigation during construction/ demolition activities (GE18)

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

As required by:

- Paragraph 186 – 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework;
- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No.2) Order 2012; and
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2012.

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.

