

Item 5 **09/00836/FULMAJ and** **Refuse Full Planning Permission**
09/00837/FULMAJ

Case Officer **Caron Taylor**

Ward **Adlington & Anderton**

Proposal **Redevelopment of existing motorway service area to include demolition of existing service area buildings (including former police station, amenity building, petrol filling station, forecourt and canopy) and construction of a new amenity building, petrol filling station, forecourt and canopy. Refurbishment of existing lodge, associated landscaping and recreational facilities, vehicular and pedestrian circulation and ancillary works (09/00836/FULMAJ)**

Redevelopment of existing motorway service area to include demolition of existing service area buildings (including former police station, amenity building, petrol filling station, forecourt and canopy) and construction of a new amenity building, petrol filling station, forecourt and canopy and annex building, associated landscaping and recreational facilities, vehicular and pedestrian circulation and ancillary works (09/00837/FULMAJ)

Location **Bolton West Motorway Service Area Southbound Greenlands Lane Anderton Bolton Lancashire**

Applicant **Euro Garages**

These applications are required to be determined by the Development Control Committee as they are both major applications.

Consultation expiry: 2nd December 2009
Application expiry: 6th January 2010

Proposal **This report relates to two applications for the redevelopment of Bolton West Motorway Service Area (MSA). Separate applications have been submitted for the southbound side of the M61 (ref: 09/00836/FULMAJ) and the northbound side (ref: 09/00837/FULMAJ).**

09/00836/FULMAJ: The southbound application relates to: Redevelopment of existing motorway service area to include demolition of existing service area buildings (including former police station, amenity building, petrol filling station, forecourt and canopy) and construction of a new amenity building, petrol filling station, forecourt and canopy. Refurbishment of existing lodge, associated landscaping and recreational facilities, vehicular and pedestrian circulation and ancillary works.

09/00837/FULMAJ: The northbound application relates to: Redevelopment of existing motorway service area to include demolition of existing service area buildings (including former police station, amenity building, petrol filling station, forecourt and canopy) and construction of a new amenity building, petrol filling station, forecourt and canopy and annex building, associated

landscaping and recreational facilities, vehicular and pedestrian circulation and ancillary works.

This report covers both applications, as they are closely associated and their impact has been assessed together as well as individually.

Both applications include the demolition of the existing buildings and erection of new amenity buildings, forecourt and canopy. The main differences between the two applications is that the southbound application also includes refurbishment of the existing travel lodge which is only on the south side and the northbound application includes the erection of an annex building that incorporates conference suites and an additional restaurant, coffee shop, toilets and training area.

Background

Bolton West Services is located between Junctions 6 and 7 of the M61 within the Green Belt. The original outline planning permission was granted for the service areas in 1967 (ref: 5/5/6156) and the services opened in 1971. The applicant advises they have undergone a change in ownership four times since opening. The proposal includes new amenity buildings, filling station, forecourt and canopies on both sides of the motorway, refurbishment of the existing travel lodge on the southbound side and a new annex building on the northbound side, all following demolition of the existing buildings.

Circular 01/2008

Circular 01/2008: Policy on Service Areas and Other Roadside Facilities on Motorways and All-Purpose Trunk Roads in England, sets out policy on the provision, standards and signing of roadside facilities on the Strategic Road Network including motorway service areas. Although the circular is non-statutory it provides advice and guidance on the implementation of motorway service areas and explains policy and regulation more fully.

The Government's objective is to encourage greater choice in the provision of service facilities for all road users, thereby encouraging drivers to take breaks more frequently and so reducing the number of fatigue-related accidents.

The northbound application also includes an annex building including conference facilities. The Circular states that motorway service areas can offer a sustainable location at which to hold business meetings by reducing the overall distance that delegates need to travel. The circular states that operators may therefore be permitted to develop a modest conference facility or business centre at a motorway service area, where the proposal is supported by an acceptable Impact Assessment. This would need to demonstrate either that no new trips would be generated on the strategic road network, or, if there would be, that overall vehicle mileage would be reduced. The Highways Agency has been consulted on this aspect.

Policies

Circular 01/2008
Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development
Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts
Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport
Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West
Local Plan policies: DC1, GN5, EP21A

Planning History

There are a number of planning applications regarding the service areas the most relevant to these applications relating to an application in 2006 that was only for the northbound side:

Ref: 06/01289/FULMAJ **Decision:** Permitted – not implemented

Decision Date: 14 February 2007

Description: Proposed demolition of existing motorway amenity services building and construction of new replacement building and new fuel filling station on footprint 10m south of demolished building

Consultations

Chorley Planning Policy

Development in the Green Belt, other than for the exceptions listed in Policy DC1 of the Local Plan Review, is inappropriate. This proposal does not fall within one of these specified categories of acceptable uses, however the motorway service area is a well established development, therefore redevelopment would be acceptable provided that the impact of the new development on the openness of the Green Belt is not greater than that of the existing services. The site is not allocated as a major developed site in the Green Belt.

Chorley's Urban Designer

Welcomes the proposals to upgrade what are extremely run down services. They question whether the parking needs to be so separated and could be more flexible and what has influenced the number of bays. His comments regarding the building design are incorporated into the relevant section below. They welcome the idea of using the existing amenity areas by providing pathways as this would allow drivers and dog owners etc to stretch their legs, though they will have to be well lit and safe. The proposals to enhance the tree planting are also welcomed.

Environment Agency

Recommend conditions in relation to ground contamination and a surface water strategy to be submitted.

United Utilities

Have no objection providing the site is drained on a separate system, with only foul drainage connected into the foul sewer.

Landscape Assistant

No objection, considers the landscaping proposals to be acceptable.

Lancashire County Council Highways

As the service areas are both served primarily by the M61, the proposals will have no highway impact. They therefore have no comments to make, especially as the proposals would appear to offer some useful improvements.

Waste and Contaminated Land Officer

No comments to make on the two applications

MAPS (Police Architectural Liaison Officer)

States there is no mention of security i.e. CCTV, high security anti ram bollards or installation and siting of ATM cash dispensers.

The site is situated on the border of Lancashire and Greater Manchester Policing areas. The M61 is a main arterial route used by travelling criminals from all over the country. It is essential that the site is equipped with the highest levels of security in the interest and safety of staff and customers. They ask that the fuel forecourts be fitted with downward white light and each pump has full CCTV coverage also the shop and cash area. Both sites would benefit from the installation of Automatic Number Plate recognition. They also ask that each site have a raised parking point for two police vehicles side by side in a prominent location with full natural surveillance.

Representations

Adlington Parish Council

They are aware of the previous bad reputation gained by the motorway service area and therefore are generally supportive of the proposed redevelopment. As one of the major enterprises within the parish they also welcome the creation and maintenance of local employment opportunities. As it is located in the Green Belt they expect any development to respect the natural surrounding and remain in keeping with them. They are pleased to see the incorporation of sustainability principles within the application but note the absence of the use of wind power. As the area has previously been identified as one with a suitable wind gradient, they wonder if local electricity generation from wind should be incorporated in the scheme. The Parish Council has received numerous complaints over the past few years regarding the spread of litter emanating from the motorway service areas to the surrounding area. They suggest that any planning approval incorporate some form of requirement for a litter management plan. The applicant should also be aware that the interconnecting road-bridge forms part of a public footpath within the parish. They would expect this right of way to be maintained and possibly enhanced e.g. by appropriate signage etc. They note, although not strictly a planning consideration, that the motorway service areas will be re-branded. The parish council urges the applicant to consider restoring the original name of Anderton Services which still has historic resonance with many people and is more appropriate to the district in which the motorway service areas are located.

Horwich Town Council

No comments to make on either application.

Blackrod Town Council

No comments to make on the applications.

Applicants Case

The site appears tired and visually detracts from its surrounding. It offers poor and substandard service for the travelling public from the M61 motorway. The existing amenity building is poorly designed for the needs of a modern service area in this location. The replacement facility is smaller in the total area and designated to enable the efficient delivery of modern motorway amenities. The existing hard standing areas are grossly oversized for modern requirements. They also present a bland mass of tarmac and there are no separate facilities for serving the amenity building. The existing amenity buildings are in a very poor condition and have been neglected over the past years. They are unsightly and are part derelict, are not fit for purpose and deter customers from using the motorway service areas. The majority of the building fabric is damaged to such a degree it is uneconomical to refurbish.

The economic viability of the amenity building is further compromised by the remote location of the petrol service forecourt. The proposal is to provide a modern replacement amenity building of a size appropriate to the volume of traffic using (and likely to use) the facility and with facilities appropriate to motorists needs. The brief also requires the provision of a petrol filling station linked to the amenity building to optimise operational efficiency and ensure the best possible service for users.

The amenity buildings, one on each side of the motorway will provide a shop, restaurant, games area, contemplation/prayer room, tourist information service, communal seating and rest area and toilets. A new picnic area will also be provided, creating an attractive environment for travellers to have refreshments outdoors.

Department for Transport Circular 01/2008 is prescriptive of the number of parking spaces (across the various types) that need to be provided based on the number of vehicles passing the site on the M61 each day. It also directs that provision is made available for the various types of vehicles that would potentially visit the site – as the provision in terms of size/orientation is specific to the type of vehicle to be accommodated it makes more sense operationally to group the various sizes. The applicant states the layout has been discussed at length with the Highways Agency.

The annex building will contain a conference facility that will be available to travellers using the service station facilities, however it is unlikely that it will attract business from the local area and therefore unlikely it will become a destination in its own right. Separate fuel filling areas are to be provided for both cars and HGVs and will provide alternative fuels such as LPG. Air and water facilities will be provided free of charge.

The following facilities will also be incorporated into the development as a minimum, in accordance with the Circular, and will be available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year:

- Free parking for up to 2 hours for all types of vehicle;
- Free toilets and hand washing facilities for all road users, with no obligations to make a purchase;
- Parent/carer and child facilities containing baby changing facilities;
- Access to a signed, free, private breastfeeding area;
- A free picnic area;
- Access to a cash operated telephone;
- Fuel;
- Snacks and hot drinks (hot substantial food and hot drinks available between the hours of 6 am and 10 pm);
- Free play area for children;
- Access must be permitted for up to two hours for those carrying out emergency repairs to broken-down vehicles.
- Free overnight parking for lodge customers;

Assessment

Principle of the development

The proposal is in the Green Belt where development is inappropriate unless it falls within one of the categories listed in PPG2, which this proposal does not. As the proposal is therefore inappropriate development and by definition, harmful to the Green Belt, it is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate

development will not exist unless the harm by reason of its inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The site is not allocated as major developed site in the Green Belt and therefore the normal considerations of Green Belt policy above apply. However, the site is obviously already developed so therefore providing the proposal has no more impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing buildings the development would be permissible as this would constitute very special circumstances. In addition, the need to provide the facilities as detailed in the Circular would also constitute very special circumstances.

On the southbound side of the motorway the volume of the existing buildings added together is 13,370 cubic metres, with the proposed replacement buildings being 11,465 cubic metres. This results in a 1,905 fewer cubic metres overall than exists at present. Therefore it is considered that although the development is inappropriate in the Green Belt there are very special circumstances that would outweigh the presumption against it as there is a reduction in built volume and therefore a benefit to the Green Belt.

In terms of the northbound side of the motorway the proposed volume of the buildings is 17,240 cubic metres, compared to the existing 9,920 cubic metres, an increase of 7,320 cubic metres across the two sites.

Although there is an increase on the northbound side there is a reduction of 1,905 cubic metres on the southbound side. However, there is still an overall increase of 5,415 cubic metres.

The applicant has submitted amended plans lowering the finished floor level of the annex building by 0.66m and its height by 2.29m on the northbound side to reduce its impact. In addition, further justification and clarification has been sought from the applicant on how much the above amendments have reduced the volume. However without this justification the development on the northbound side of the motorway does represent inappropriate development and it is not considered sufficient very special circumstances has not been provided at this time to outweigh the presumption against it. Any further information provided by the applicant will be reported to Committee via the Addendum.

The development is being considered as a whole, rather than each side of the carriageway independently due to the argument of offsetting the volume of buildings to be demolished on one side of the motorway against the other. As established above the southbound side would be acceptable in policy terms as it results in a reduction in volume of existing to proposed. However, the increase in the development on the northbound side has not been sufficiently justified. It would however be inappropriate to approve the southbound application in isolation from the consideration of all the elements within the combined scheme.

Design

The Council's Urban Designer advises the proposed design of the amenity building has a contemporary appearance with an extensive amount of glazing and a striking roof treatment. The

entrance is successfully articulated with a canopy which mirrors the roof treatment and makes the building easy to read. The elevation to the M61 will be largely screened by trees and landscaping at ground floor level, so the roof and glazing at first floor would be acceptable. The crisp white render, glazing and roofing materials complement the design further. The proposed annex building is also contemporary with an entrance porch/feature.

The design of the travel lodge building has been amended so that it better reflects the rest of the buildings of the site and to tie the scheme together. In addition the timber cladding originally proposed has been amended to grey infill panels to reflect the aluminium window frames, as it was considered timber cladding would not weather well in the long term in such an exposed location.

The design of the proposals is now acceptable and it is considered it will greatly enhance the site.

Visual Amenity

The application is accompanied by a Visual Impact Assessment having regard to long views of the site from nearby residential areas and roads and footpaths. The landscaping of the site has been designed to provide screening of the site from key viewpoints. The lighting of the site will be an improvement on the present situation with the existing 30m tall floodlighting columns replaced with 8m ones, with more targeted lighting. In terms of the visual amenities of the Green Belt it is considered that the proposals will be an improvement on the site as existing in terms of design, siting and materials and is therefore acceptable in this respect.

Traffic and Highway Safety

The slip roads will remain the same as at present. The comments of the Highways Agency will be added to the addendum, but they have advised verbally that they have been involved with the scheme from an early stage.

The relationship with the surrounding roads will remain as at present. Lancashire County Council Highways (who are not responsible for the motorway but have jurisdiction over the surrounding roads) make no comments as they state they will have no impact on the highway network, though they do state that the proposals would appear to offer some useful improvements.

In terms of parking the Circular is prescriptive of the numbers of parking spaces and also requires different types of parking spaces to be made available for the various types of vehicles using the site. It is considered reasonable that the different types are grouped together to ensure ease of use.

Other Matters

In terms of the comments of the Architectural Liaison Officer, if the applications are approved conditions will be added to any permission relating to CCTV and a parking point for two police vehicles.

As shown in the planning history the northbound side of the services had planning granted in 2007 (ref: 06/01289/FULMAJ)

also for demolition of the existing motorway amenity services building and construction of new replacement building and new fuel filling station. This permission although not implemented is still extant and the permitted building was not on the site of the one now proposed. The permission could therefore be implemented until its expiry date. If this permission was implemented as well as the one now for consideration on the northbound site, it would result in inappropriate development in the Green Belt. A legal agreement would prevent the earlier permission being built if the current application is permitted.

Public Footpath number 11 crosses the road bridge over the M61. This part of the site is unaffected by the proposals and the existing situation will remain. It is not therefore considered the proposals will have an unacceptable impact on this footpath.

Conditions

If the applications were approved the development would be implemented in phases, with the parking arrangements being designed to allow for extension overtime, in place with increasing demands. It is also intended that the development will be brought into use in stages as construction proceeds. Phase 1 will be the demolition and construction of the Southbound Amenity Building and works to the existing lodge. Phase 2 will be the demolition of the existing northbound Amenity Building and construction of the new Amenity Building. Phase 3 will be the construction of the new Annex Building. A condition relating to phasing of the development to ensure buildings are demolished when new ones are erected would be applied to any permission.

Conditions are also proposed to any permission relating to a waste, to ensure sufficient recycling and waste provision is provided to prevent litter to the site and surroundings in line with Anderton Parish Council's comments, full details of external ventilation and extraction systems to ensure equipment such as air-conditioning units are appropriately sited, sample materials to the buildings and ground surfaces, landscaping implementation, no other access to the motorway than via the slip roads, surface water, ground contamination, site boundary treatments, CCTV, police vehicle parking and levels.

Recommendations Although the development on the southbound side will result in a reduction of built development in the Green Belt, this reduction is not as much as the increase proposed on the northbound side.

As the development is being considered as a whole, rather than each side of the carriageway being dealt with independently, it is not considered that sufficient justification has been given for the increase in size of the proposals in the Green Belt overall that would warrant very special circumstances sufficient to outweigh the presumption against it.

Recommendation: 09/00836/FULMAJ Southbound - Refuse Full Planning Permission
09/00837/FULMAJ Northbound - Refuse Full Planning Permission

Reasons

To follow
