

APPLICATION REPORT – 17/00710/OUTMAJ

Validation Date: 18 July 2017

Ward: Chisnall

Type of Application: Major Outline Planning

Proposal: Outline application for the mixed use redevelopment of the former Camelot Theme Park, comprising of up to 195 dwellings, 1,000sqm of office space (Use Class B1), and 2,000sqm workshop/starter units, together with associated infrastructure, open space and landscaping, with all matters reserved except for access.

Location: Camelot Theme Park, Park Hall Road, Charnock Richard, Chorley, PR7 5LP

Case Officer: Adele Hayes

Applicant: Story Homes Lancashire

Agent: Mr Craig Barnes, Barton Willmore

Consultation expiry: 11 August 2017

Decision due by: 17 October 2017

SITE DESCRIPTION

1. The application site boundary extends to approximately 21.4ha and covers the former Camelot Theme Park site including the areas covered by the former park rides, facilities and buildings, car and coach parks, access roads, areas of hard standing and woodland areas. The land that is occupied by a hotel and industrial units and does not form part of this application.
2. The site is located within the Green Belt to the west of Charnock Richard, north-east of Heskin and south-east of Eccleston. A large proportion of the site is designated as previously developed land within the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026. The site was previously used as a theme park which is still very evident on site with rides and associated structures still in situ on site, although a number of the structures have now been demolished/ removed from the site. The M6 motorway borders the northern part of the site and the north bound Motorway Service Station is adjacent to the site boundary.
3. In November 2012 the theme park operator, Knights Leisure Ltd., closed the park as it was considered no longer viable. A number of the rides and infrastructure were removed although there are still buildings, the remains of some rides and areas of hardstanding remaining on the site.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4. The application is described as: Outline application for the mixed use redevelopment of the former Camelot Theme Park, comprising up to 195 dwellings, 1,000sqm of office space (Use Class B1), and 2,000sqm workshop/starter units, together with associated infrastructure, open space and landscaping, with all matters reserved except for access.

5. This proposal is accompanied by an illustrative concept Masterplan and Design and Access Statement showing how the development might be accommodated on the site. The indicative plans submitted in support of the application includes for the following:
 - Up to 8.8ha of public open space/landscaping;
 - 1000m² of office space (Use Class B1);
 - 2000m² workshop/starter units;
 - Up to 195 residential dwellings – two and three storey open market and affordable residential dwellings;
6. It is envisaged that the Class B1 offices would become the new office of Story Homes Lancashire region.
7. A request for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion was submitted to the Council on the 14th March 2017. The letter indicated that whilst the development falls into schedule 2, Part 10(b) of the Town and Country Planning Act (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) Regulations 2011 as Amended, it would have no more than a localised impact, such that an Environmental Statement (ES) should not be required to be submitted as part of the planning application. The Council formally adopted a Screening Opinion on 9th June 2017 to the effect that the Proposed Development is not EIA development and an ES is therefore not required.

RELEVANT HISTORY OF THE SITE

8. The site has an extensive planning history associated with its use as a theme park. It is worthy to note that an outline application (ref.14/00071/OUTMAJ) for the redevelopment of the former Camelot Theme Park comprising of the erection of up to 420 dwellings (all matters reserved) was refused in August 2014. The reason for refusal was that the proposed development was considered contrary to policy 1 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and would also have had a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within in than the existing development on that part of the site that is previously developed and would therefore be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It was not considered that the resultant harm would be overcome by very special circumstances or the benefits associated with the proposed development.
9. Story Homes decided not to appeal this decision and took the opportunity to undertake more detailed site investigation to have a greater understanding of the constraints and opportunities of the site leading to the current proposal. This current proposal is for a much reduced scale of redevelopment of the site, with a greater quantum of employment uses and less residential.

RECOMMENDATION

10. Given the level of third party interest that the proposed development has generated, and the issues that require the consideration of the Development Control Committee, it is recommended that in advance of a full and detailed consideration of the proposal, a site visit should be arranged for all members of the committee. This will have the benefit of avoiding the need to defer the application for a site visit at a future committee meeting. It is recommended that the site visit should take place during daylight hours at a time that would enable all members of the committee to attend.
11. It is anticipated that the application will be considered in detail at a special meeting of the Development Control Committee on 20 February 2018. It is also recommended that Lancashire County Council be invited to attend this meeting in order to respond to the complex highway matters that are likely to be debated.