

**PLANNING APPRAISAL**

August 2019

ADDRESS	Lookers Ford, 70 Barrack Street, Colchester, CO1 2LT
LOCAL AUTHORITY	Colchester Borough Council
AERIAL VIEW	
INTRODUCTION	<p>The site extends to approximately 0.93 ha (2.3 acres) and is located within a central location approximately 1km east of Colchester Town Railway Station. The immediate surroundings of the site are predominantly employment uses, however, the wider context of the area is principally residential.</p>
PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	<p>According to the Council’s adopted ‘policies map’ (see extract below), the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is located within the settlement boundary of Colchester;</li> <li>• Falls within an ‘employment zone’ (denoted blue);</li> <li>• Is within a ‘regeneration area’ (denoted by a red dashed line); and</li> <li>• Is within the boundaries of a ‘growth zone’ (denoted by solid light blue line).</li> </ul>
SITE HISTORY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>120795</b> - 1 X Non-illuminated directional sign, 2 x internally illuminated powder coated aluminium service signs, 1 x non illuminated wall mounted ‘welcome’ sign - Approved June 2012;</li> <li>• <b>100194</b> - Installation of 2no. internally illuminated wall mounted logos, 1no. non illuminated wall sign, 1no. non illuminated white ‘foamex’ plaque with applied vinyl and logo fixed to gate, 1no. non illuminated 2 metre free standing sign, 1no. non illuminate - Approved April 2010;</li> <li>• Various older advertisement consent applications.</li> <li>• <b>F/COL/01/1777</b>- The erection of extract duct for compliant automotive spray-booth - Approve Conditional January 2002</li> <li>• <b>O/COL/01/1560</b> - Outline application for erection of class A1 foodstore, residential units and car showroom with offices and workshop with ancillary external works - Withdrawn November 2001</li> </ul>
<b>RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS</b>	
Adopted Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core Strategy (adopted 2008, amended 2014)</li> <li>• Site Allocations DPD (adopted 2010)</li> <li>• Development Policies DPD (adopted 2010, amended 2014)</li> </ul>
Emerging Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emerging Local Plan 2017-2033 (currently at an the Examination Stage but additional evidence required and therefore can only be afforded limited weight currently)</li> </ul>

POLICY MAP EXTRACT



SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY - COLCHESTER TIP/TREE, WEST MERSEA AND WIVENHOE	NORTH GROWTH AREA URBAN EXPANSION
VILLAGE SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY	STANWAY SAFEGUARD ZONE
TOWN CENTRE CORE	MINERALS AND WASTE SAFEGUARD
PREDOMINANTLY RESIDENTIAL	GROWTH AREAS
EMPLOYMENT ZONE	REGENERATION AREAS
STRATEGIC EMPLOYMENT ZONES	EAST COLCHESTER SPECIAL POLICY AREAS
MIXED USE REDEVELOPMENT	CULTURAL FACILITIES
MIXED USE	WEST MERSEA WATERSIDE AREA OF SPECIAL CHARACTER
INNER CORE	HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS
OUTER CORE	COLCHESTER LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES
NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES	SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
RURAL DISTRICT CENTRES	REGIONALLY IMPORTANT GEOLOGICAL (AND GEOMORPHOLOGICAL) SITES
URBAN DISTRICT CENTRES	RAMSAR
CAR PARKS	COASTAL PROTECTION BELT
PARK AND RIDE PLUS SERVICE STATION	SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION
OPEN SPACE	SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS
PRIVATE OPEN SPACE	AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
CEMETERIES	RIVERSIDE WALKS
ALLOTMENTS	PROTECTED LANES
UNIVERSITY PURPOSES	GREEN LINKS
COMMUNITY STADIUM	CONSERVATION AREAS
CARAVAN PARKS	LOCAL NATURE RESERVES
GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ALLOCATIONS	CBC SCHEDULED MONUMENTS
TRANSIT CORRIDOR	ENVIRONMENT AGENCY NATIONAL FLOOD ZONES
ROAD IMPROVEMENT	COLCHESTER BOROUGH BOUNDARY
JUNCTION 28 (A12)	

POTENTIAL FOR ALTERNATIVE USES

Current Established Use

The planning history review confirms the established use of the site as being for the ‘sale and display of motor cars’ which is a Sui Generis Use (‘of its own class’). On this basis, planning permission will be required for use of the site for any other purpose. Other potential uses are considered below.

Employment Development

The site is within an ‘Employment Zone’ (Policy CE3 of the Core Strategy) where B1b (Research and Development), B1c (Light industry, B2 (Industrial) and B8 (Storage / Distribution) are the primary uses supported within the designation. Secondary uses could include office development (B1c), hotels (C1), Assembly and Leisure (D1) and ‘Sui Generis’. Policy CE1 - ‘Centres and Employment Classification and Hierarchy’ seeks to protect and enhance employment provision within the Borough and development that results in a loss of (employment) capacity, will normally not be supported. The requirements needed to satisfy that the loss of employment land within an Employment Zone is acceptable, is set out in Policy DP5 of the Development Policies document. This includes demonstrating that there is already a plentiful existing supply of suitable employment land, that no suitable or viable employment use can be found (evidence of marketing for a minimum period), and that there is a substantial planning benefit from the proposal.

Residential Development

Policy H1 of the Council’s Core Strategy focuses housing delivery within the existing settlement boundary of Colchester (within which the site also falls), however the site’s specific presence with an Employment Zone means that Policies CE1, CE3 and DP5 are the predominant guide as to appropriate uses. Therefore strong justification would be required for the loss of an employment generating use from the site. The site also falls within a much larger East Colchester regeneration area and growth area (Policies SD1 and UR1 of the Core Strategy refer) which seeks to revitalise key areas, principally for residential uses. However this does not overcome the specific designation of the site within an Employment Zone, though may lend weight to arguing a ‘substantial planning benefit arising from the provision of new housing (including affordable housing) under the requirements of Policy DP5. In making the case for residential development of the site, further assessment of the Council’s employment land and residential land supply position will be required.

Retail and Town Centre Uses

Policy CE3 states that retail developments within Employment Zones will not be supported unless they are small scale sites which provide for the needs of the local workforce. In any case, the site occupies an ‘edge of centre’ location lying in close proximity to the Barrack Street neighbourhood centre. Any proposal for ‘main town centre uses’\* would therefore be subject to the retail sequential test (and also an impact assessment subject to the quantum of development proposed) to justify such uses in this location.

Roadside Development

In light of the established use of the site, other potential roadside uses such as a petrol filling station (also a Sui Generis use)

could be acceptable in principle.

**DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS**

At the current time (August 2019), the Council’s adopted development plan indicates that the following developer contributions are likely to be required as part of development proposals:

- Affordable Housing (20% provision on residential developments of 10 dwellings or more) or commuted sum if below the threshold or on-site provision is not appropriate.
- Provision of off-site open space where it cannot be accommodated on site (residential development only)
- Potential contribution to strategic transport improvements (case by case basis - subject to negotiation)

The Council does not currently have a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule in place (August 2019) and is not preparing one, until the outcome of the Government’s review of CIL is known.

We recommend pre-application discussions with Colchester Borough Council are undertaken to confirm the principle of any potential re-development of the site, as well as confirmation of any likely developer contributions sums.

*\* Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).*