

New homes agreed for brickworks wasteland in Armadale

An industrial wasteland around the old brickworks and quarry in Armadale is to be transformed into new homes as part of a major regeneration of the area.

Up to 550 new homes could be built on the near 66-acre Bathville site which has become notorious for anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping.

However neighbouring businesses fear they may be hit by noise complaints and neighbours of the site expressed fears that the new housing could bring up to 1100 cars clogging surrounding residential streets.

West Lothian's Development Management committee heard that the site has long been designated for housing, and councillors welcomed the proposal to redevelop the disused factory site and infill the quarry.

An agent for the developers, Christine Dalzel said: "This represents a long overdue opportunity to develop a site which has been derelict and unsafe for years into a thriving sustainable community.

"It will not only deliver housing but will restore an area plagued by anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping and safety issues."

She added that AC Land was committed to starting work as quickly as possible at the quarry to begin the regeneration of the site.

However, an objection from Willie Connolly, managing director of ECCS on the south-western fringe of the site raised fears that the noise from his business, which reconditions and manufactures polypropylene pipework, would generate complaints from the new housing which could force his firm to relocate.

Detailed and lengthy discussion took place in the DMC meeting over the noise mitigations in place- which satisfy the planners, but which the firm asserted would not be enough.

Experts testified that an earthwork bund and fence totalling 21ft in height would adequately shield housing from the noise of pipework machinery from the ECCS yard.

Mr Connolly asserted that his firm was “a good neighbour” and does not run the noisiest machinery after 5pm. Nevertheless, he was concerned that noise tests carried about by the applicants, AC Land Generation, had not tested “a worst-case scenario” and feared that new homes close by would generate a surge in complaints.

An acoustics expert for the council assured the meeting that the size of the planned bund was a first to West Lothian and it would work effectively.

Another objector, John Russell, who lives in Watt Avenue said that whatever access roads were put in drivers would soon become accosted to the natural short cuts through his and neighbouring streets.

He told the DMC: “Most households nowadays have 2 cars, some have more. So realistically we are looking at 1,000 plus new additional cars, as things stand currently there will be a significant increase in traffic through the likes of Watt Avenue, St Paul’s Drive and the Marches for east bound

traffic.”

AC Land Generation sought full planning permission to infill the quarry and permission in principle for the housing development which includes plays areas and open space with footpath links toward Southdale primary and the town’s railway station.

Councillors agreed to the plans. The SNP’s Willie Boyle said he was keen to support the development calling for conditions on the noise potential regulation.

Chairing the meeting, Councillor Tony Boyle said; “We’ve heard from the objector, and we have heard the sound experts. To my mind they have taken every possible action to mitigate every possible noise from the business impacting on this development. I think they have done everything they can to mitigate it.”

Councillor Pauline Clark said; “This is quite an exciting development; 550 houses 25 % of which will be affordable. I hope that social housing will be in among that as well and I also hope the affordable and social housing won’t be the closest to where there may be some noise.”

Councillor Clark added: “The noise is a concern though the mitigations do appear to be excellent.”

She called for further work before a detailed planning application is made to “satisfy the concerns” of ECCS adding: “We all need to be satisfied that the business can continue, can grow and can keep itself viable.

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter