

UNIT 1, STRATEGIC PARK

Comines Way | Hedge End | Southampton



FELLOWS
PLANNING

UNIT 1, STRATEGIC PARK

Comines Way, Hedge End

UNIT 1, STRATEGIC PARK

Contents

Page

	Executive Summary	
1	Introduction	4
2	Site & Surroundings	5
3	Planning History	7
4	Community Engagement	10
5	Planning Policy Context	13
6	Proposals	14
7	Planning Assessment	18
8	Conclusion	23

Executive Summary

Since Strategic Park became vacant a year ago, the two premises located on the established industrial and logistic estate have been undergoing refurbishment. Improvements have been made to the energy efficiency of the building through its EPC and BREEAM sustainability ratings, improvements made to the internal layout of the associated office and meeting rooms which overlook the warehouse, alongside the enhancement of other communal facilities. This is in the final stages now, with the last of the solar panels being installed on the roof in November. This investment into improving the premises has attracted a new potential occupier. As a result, we are pleased to announce the new occupier for Unit 1 is F50 League GB Ltd. The new occupier interested in Unit 1 would need the use of the premises broadening so this includes B2 general industrial and manufacturing uses, and a planning application has been submitted proposing this, alongside some other alterations they have sought in relation to their specific requirements / operations. This application follows very similar proposal approved to Unit 2 opposite, which also sought to attract a wider group of businesses that could operate from the site.

The new occupier is a manufacturer of carbon fibre race yachts and associated components. If our plans are approved, the facility will be used to accelerate its research and development programme and to help maintain the cutting-edge F50 catamarans used in Sail GP's global racing series. The warehouse will also be used to store equipment associated with events, alongside the creation of a temporary storage compound area. This will be used during their 4-month shut down period when the racing fleet of 11 catamaran's are serviced from the site.

The proposals include minor alterations to its fenestration and external plant associated with the new occupier. This has been sensitively located mostly to the northern side of the building, to safeguard residents amenity. Other measures include establishing a Noise Management Plan for the site to ensure it operates below established background noise levels.

The application seeks to broaden the commercial uses so these are more flexible, to try attract an array of business occupiers, including B2 Industrial use classes. If the application isn't accepted, it would revert back to its current operating conditions under the B8 Storage and Distribution and Class E Commercial, Business and Service uses. We hope you agree that having Sail GP operating from the site is much more preferable to the previous occupier and builds on the innovative marine sector based in the Solent Region.



1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of F&C Property Holdings Ltd to support a planning application for the proposed change of use of Unit 1 Strategic Park from a distribution warehouse and Light Industrial premises with ancillary office space, to a more flexible set of commercial uses.

The proposed uses will include: -

- Class E (g) (i) Offices, (ii) Research and Development, (iii) Light Industrial,
- Class B2 General Industrial or
- Class B8 Storage and/or Distribution Use Classes.

The broader set-of commercial uses will help attract a wider variety of businesses seeking to locate at the established employment site both now and in the longer term.

This application follows on from a very similar proposal approved for Unit 2 opposite, which also broadened its commercial uses under planning reference F/22/93417 on the 6th February 2023. The new occupier interested in Unit 1 would need the use of the premises broadening in the same way. This planning application has been submitted proposing this, alongside some other alterations they have sought in relation to their specific requirements / operations.

The application includes the removal of the loading bay dock extensions installed by the previous occupier and the replacement of these with quiet closing sectional roller shutter doors. The air conditioning condenser units have been decommissioned from the southern boundary and relocated to the northern side of the building away from residents. Other external plant is also proposed mainly to the north, with the exception of the fridge condenser unit located on the western side of the building.

The new occupier has also sought the widening of an existing sectional roller door and an external storage compound area which would be used for part of the year. More details about the occupier are outlined in the proposals section.



Unit 1 Entrance and Car park

2. The Site

Unit 1 is one of two large format commercial buildings located within an existing industrial estate known as Strategic Park, originally built in the late 1990s. The purpose-built, fully landscaped private estate is accessed via Comines Way, near to the Kanes Hill Roundabout in Hedge End. The access road to the site has a gate lodge at its entrance providing security. The site has easy access to Junction 7 on the M27 via Charles Watts Way (A334) and the wider strategic road network.

Unit 1 comprises a high-quality detached industrial/distribution facility made from steel portal frame construction with profile sheet cladding. The unit comprises of first floor offices, with undercroft area at ground floor. The premises includes various open plan offices, meeting rooms, communal kitchen, WCs and showers which help promote sustainable travel to the premises. The upstairs is accessible via a lift or central stairs located in the entrance reception area. The warehouse measures 8.8m in eaves height but is largely screened in wider views due to the mature vegetation and woodland on most of its boundaries.

The unit has a large secure yard to the north, with a yard depth of some 31 metres. The northern side of the warehouse building has 4 level access loading doors and provision for parking of HGVs and other service vehicles in the yard area. Two of the loading doors have dock level scissor lifts in place.

To the west of the building is a car park, consisting of some 117 car parking spaces and covered cycle parking provision. As part of the recent refurbishment works, there are at least 10 EV car charging points installed in the car park which staff can access.

By the vehicular entrance into the main part of the site is a communal amenity area consisting of a pair of picnic benches on the raised decking area. This is discretely located within the treed corner and gives members of staff somewhere to eat their lunch or take a break.

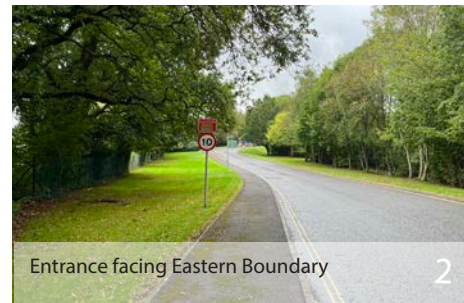
The site is bounded to the north, west and east by a group of mature trees. The trees along the boundary to the north and north-west are protected by a Group Tree Preservation Order (reference 226-E). The southern boundary includes a bund consisting of trees, with an informal access way on the other side leading to the adjacent field or the yard area. Beyond is West Road which consists of residential properties that are both single storey and two storeys in height accessed from Upper Northam Drive.

The site is located in an area which has a low risk of flooding from rivers or sea and also has a low-risk of flooding from surface water.

All habitats within the site have been deemed by previous surveys to be of negligible ecological importance given the main employment area is dominated by hard standing (sealed surfaces), ornamental planting and industrial warehousing. the woodland strip adjacent to the north-western side boundary is important at the local level, but the activities associated with the site do not impact on this habitat.

Whilst the site is located in an established employment area a short distance from the motorway, it is situated within the designated countryside and Strategic Gap between Southampton and Hedge End. Despite this, given its uses and associated infrastructure, the site has an urban fridge character. The site itself is fairly level, with the adjacent fields sloping downs towards the M27.

UNIT 1, STRATEGIC PARK



Entrance facing Eastern Boundary



Entrance into car park and view of Unit 2



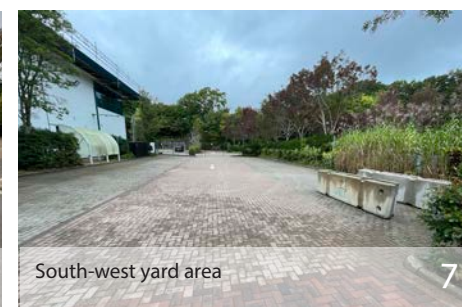
Cycle Parking for Unit 1



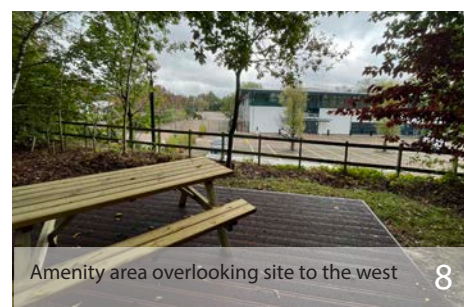
Entrance into yard



Loading door we are seeking to widen in yard



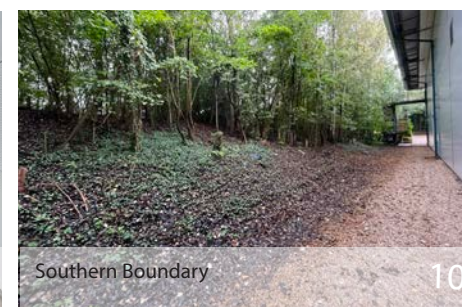
South-west yard area



Amenity area overlooking site to the west



Northern external plant

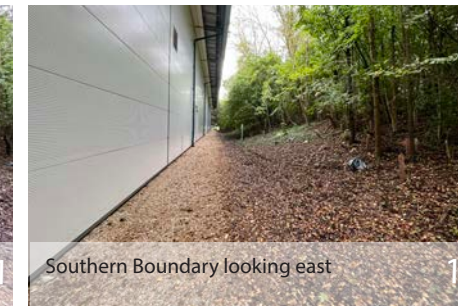


Southern Boundary

UNIT 1, STRATEGIC PARK



Southern Boundary



Southern Boundary looking east



Gap beyond treed bund next to West Road



Existing warehouse



Entrance into offices and warehouse



Unit 2

3. Planning History of Strategic Park

Unit 1 is a commercial building located within an existing industrial estate known as Strategic Park, originally built in the late 1990s. It was granted planning permission for the two premises to be used as commercial storage and distribution (use class B8) and light industrial uses (B1 use class, now falling within a broader Commercial, Business and Service Use Class E). The industrial estate was originally granted outline permission under reference Z/32223/00 in April 1995 and Reserved Matters approval followed in June 1996. Prior to this, the site was known as Commonfields, and had different industrial uses that had been established for over 10 years prior to this in an uncontrolled manner. The purpose built, fully landscaped storage, logistics and light industrial park was welcomed at the time.

Adjacent Unit 2 was originally occupied by Tandberg Television from 2006, during which time they made various changes and alterations to the building to meet the demands of the developing business, cumulating in a two storey extension to the east side in 2012. Ericsson Media took over the lease in 2013, which then passed to Mediakind. They moved out of the property in August 2022. Whilst the current use class is hard to define precisely, it was considered to fall within a Research and Development facility use class which included storage and distribution activities. Unit 2 had undergone many alterations over the years including adding various mezzanine floors and a rear extension. There were other works such as the installation of satellite dishes and chiller units in response to the occupiers needs.

Unit 1 until recently was occupied as a distribution facility with associated infrastructure. The previous occupier Amazon made some adoptions to the buildings include the installation of three additional loading bays, two of which had dock extensions (approved under planning reference F/15/76548).

The occupier also tried to create a new circulation road to the rear and side of the warehouse with other associated works to create 3 stacking areas but this was refused in June 2018. The Council felt that Amazon had outgrown the premises and that the introduction of an intensive use of vehicles within a quiet part of the site which is closest to existing residential neighbours would cause undue noise and disturbance and amenity impacts from fumes from running engine's. It would have also require the cut back and/or removal of some of the landscaping and bund screening which provide valuable noise, privacy and visual screening for residents. See planning reference F/18/82299 for further details.



3. Planning History Continued...

Late summer last year, both Media Kind and Amazon left the premises at Strategic Park and the site became vacant. The land owner used this time to bring forward proposals to improve the design of the building in order to attract a wider variety of businesses to the site. This was required as some of the alterations carried out to Unit 2 especially was not reflective of modern day business needs due to the extensive mezzanine floor areas and restrictive ceiling heights as a result.

The refurbishment works included new energy efficient sustainable construction measures to achieve a BREEAM 'Very Good' sustainability rating, including the installation of solar panels on the roof, provision of electric vehicle charging, new Grade A office accommodation, upgraded external works including new acoustic fencing and enhanced landscaping.

When both buildings became vacant, feedback has been sought from local agents to further understand local demands for commercial premises and their associated requirements. In addition to improvements made to the building itself such as the inclusion of extra loading doors and a reduction in the amount of office space available, it became clear that there is a need for manufacturing and general industrial premises in the local area. A planning application for Unit 1 was submitted and later approved to broaden its commercial uses permitted at the premises to include B2 uses under planning reference F/22/93417 on the 6th February 2023. This flexibility between a wider set of Class B and Class E(g) uses would help attract a larger variety of businesses to the site in the longer-term.

Very few conditions were added to the new permission given it was already a unencumbered 24-hour use. The only requirement was that prior to the occupation of any new occupier falling within B2 usage (now and all future occupiers) of Unit 2, a noise management strategy was required to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This strategy should include details of how the following matters shall be addressed to mitigate the impact of the use on nearby residential amenities and ensure that noise (Rating Level according to BS4142: 2014) is at least five decibels below the Background Noise Level when measured from the southern boundary of the application site:

(a) nature of activities/ operations taking place (internally and externally)

(b) operating hours

(c) nature, times and frequency of deliveries (and other related vehicle movement)

(d) any other potential noise generating sources/ activities. The agreed details shall then be implemented in full for the lifetime of that occupier.

The works approved for Unit 1 are nearly complete and have resulted in a marine business interested in occupying the site for storage and ancillary office purposes (largely falling within B8 use class primarily).

The new occupier interested in Unit 1 would also need the use of the premises broadening in the same way as Unit 2, despite the adjacent unit not using it for the time being. This planning application has been submitted proposing this, alongside some other alterations they have sought in relation to their specific requirements / operations.

Given the principle of broadening the permitted uses to include B2-use class was granted planning permission for the adjacent unit, it is hoped that the Council will look favourably at this application.

The most relevant planning history is listed on the following page.



A summary of the most relevant planning history of the site: -

- **Z/32223/000/00** Outline: Redevelopment of land to provide 9,568.9sq.m (103,000sq.ft footprint, including an allowance for first floor office accommodation of 10,260sq.ft) of industrial and warehouse floor space (B1c and B8) together with new access, parking and landscaping. Grant Outline Permission (April 1995)
- **Z/32223/001/00** Reserved matters pursuant to application 32223, including external appearance, layout and details of roads, footpaths, drainage, street lighting, enclosures, levels, sound insulation, storage of refuse and materials. Approve the Reserved Matters (June 1995)
- **Z/32223/002/00** Siting of sprinkler tank and pump house. Permitted (Approved October 1995)
- **Z/32223/004/00** Change of use of existing production space and addition of first floor mezzanines for office use. Alterations to elevations and external staircase, new car parking within service yard, re-siting of sprinkler tank, and new pump house and plant store. Permitted (November 1996)
- **Z/32223/004/00** Change of use of existing production space and addition of first floor mezzanines for office use. Alterations to elevations and external staircase, new car parking within service yard, re-siting of sprinkler tank, and new pump house and plant store. Permitted Unit 2 (November 1996)
- **Z/32223/005/00** Change of use of 1,234 square metres of production space in Unit 2 to offices. Permitted (May 1997)
- **Z/32223/006/00** Siting of 13 satellite dishes to the east of Unit 2. Permitted (June 1997)
- **Z/32223/007/00** Construction of security guard gatehouse. Permitted (August 1997) Z/32223/007/00 Construction of security guard gatehouse. Permitted (August 1997)
- **Z/32223/008/00** Siting of portable building for use as security gate house. Permitted (February 1998)
- **Z/32223/009/00** Installation of three chiller units between industrial Units 1 and 2. Permitted (December 1997)
- **Z/32223/010/00** Extension to mezzanine floor for office use class B1 and installation of windows on east and south elevations on Unit 2. Withdrawn (January 2003)
- **Z/32223/013/00** Construction of temporary car park for 100 cars and formation of embankment to north and south. Refused (November 200)
- **F/07/60963** Installation of 1 no. cycle shelter. Permitted (November 2007)
- **F/11/68675** Two-storey rear extension to existing research and development industrial facility, new internal mezzanine floor to existing building and new plant compound, parking area, landscaping and cycle enclosure Permitted (5 January 2012)
- **PN/22/93517** Installation of 870 no. photovoltaic panels on roof. Prior Approval Granted for Unit 1 (September 2022)
- **PN/22/93982** Prior notification for the installation of 1,021 roof mounted photovoltaic panels on non-domestic building. Prior Approval Granted for Unit 2 (November 2022)
- **F/22/93417** Change of use of B1(a) office space, B1(b) research and development and B8 storage space into class E(g) and B2/ B8 general industrial / storage or distribution space. Installation of new sectional shutter and pedestrian doors on the south elevation and photovoltaic panels on the roof. Associated external alterations to include relocation of external plant, erection of an acoustic fence, and landscaping. (amended description) Permitted Unit 2 (February 2023)



4. Community Engagement

During the previous planning application submitted to Eastleigh, some residents expressed concern that the changes sought will lead Unit 2 causing a nuisance locally. This is based on the previous experience of the former logistic occupier of Unit 1. They occupied the premises opposite for 6 years, but during the pandemic struggled to keep up with demand and outgrew the premises. They have since left the premises and lessons have been learnt.

Due to the misconceptions perceived during the last change of use application, an open day was held on the 20th December with local residents and stakeholders. The event explained that Unit 2 already has the benefit of storage and distribution or light industrial uses. The last application sought to broaden the commercial uses so these were more flexible, to try attract an array of business occupiers, including B2 General Industrial use classes. Residents were made aware that if the application wasn't accepted, Unit 2 would revert back to its current operating conditions under the B8 Storage and Distribution and Class E Commercial, Business and Service uses.

The event explained how we felt a flexible set of uses, is the best use of the site and the measures suggested will avoid previous loading issues or vehicles being sent away. As a result of comments received, the scheme included a Noise Management Plan which sets out a number of measures to assist the smooth running of the site. This included the erection of an acoustic fence in the corner of the site by Unit 1. All of these measures helped alleviate concerns and was later approved by the Council in February this year.

Given the previous event was successful, the land owner and the new occupier agreed to run a similar open day to answer any questions residents may have on the new proposals for Unit 1. The open day is being held on Tuesday 7th November 2023 in Unit 1 from 11 am until 3pm.

If residents were unable to attend during those times, then they were encouraged to get in touch so the design team could make alternative arrangements. Hedge End Town Council and Eastleigh Borough Council officers and Members were invited, alongside 50 local residents who live in West Road and Upper Northam Drive. This included any businesses located along this road and the children's nursery. A copy of the leaflets and the exhibition boards prepared are below and on the following page.

Any feedback received during the day will be summarised and fed back to the planning officer dealing with the planning application in due course.

The planning consultant did manage to speak directly with approximately 6 households when distributing the information leaflet, located in both West Road and the top end of Upper Northam Drive. Early impressions from local residents were that they were excited by the prospect of the new occupier and thought this was very promising. They asked the usual questions about traffic, noise and odour but were very satisfied that Sail GP would be a more favourable neighbour than the former operator of the distribution facility. They also highlighted the fact that Southampton is known for its boat building tradition and that a manufacturer similar to this was located on the site before it was developed in the 1990s.



Previous Open Day, December 2022



Copy of Leaflets distributed, November 2023

Unit 1 | Strategic Park | Hedge End

Welcome

Welcome to this exhibition about the proposed changes to

Unit 1, Strategic Park, Comines Way, Hedge End.

Unit 1 is a commercial building located within an existing industrial estate known as Strategic Park, originally built in the late 1990s. It was granted planning permission for the two premises to be used as commercial storage and distribution (use class B8) and light industrial uses (B1 use class, now falling within a broader Commercial, Business and Service Use Class E). Prior to this, the site was known as Commonfields, and had different industrial uses that had been established for over 10 years prior to this in an uncontrolled manner. The purpose built, fully landscaped storage, logistics and light industrial park was welcomed at the time.

The site is within a well-established employment area, and conveniently placed near to the strategic road network, with Junction 7 on the M27 a short distance to the east, with Charles Watts Way (A334) to the northwest. The premises have been under going refurbishment, as the building was not flexible enough to respond to modern day business needs. This is in the final stages now, with the last of the solar panels being installed on the roof. This investment into improving the energy efficiency of the building alongside other measures which enhance the facilities on offer have attracted a new potential occupier. As a result, we are pleased to announce the new occupier for Unit 1 is F50 League GB Ltd.

As you may recall, we wrote to residents and stakeholders back in December last year. We set out our plans to broaden the uses of Unit 2 so this includes B2 general industrial and manufacturing uses, alongside storage, logistics, research and development or other light industrial processes previously approved. The new occupier interested in Unit 1 would need the use of the premises broadening in the same way and a planning application has been submitted proposing this, alongside some other alterations they have sought in relation to their specific requirements / operations.

SAIL GP™



Proposed Northern Elevation - Removal of the dock loaders and replacement with sectional shutter doors and widened door



Aerial view of the site



STRATEGIC PARK SOUTHAMPTON

Unit 1 | Strategic Park | Hedge End

What are the Proposals?

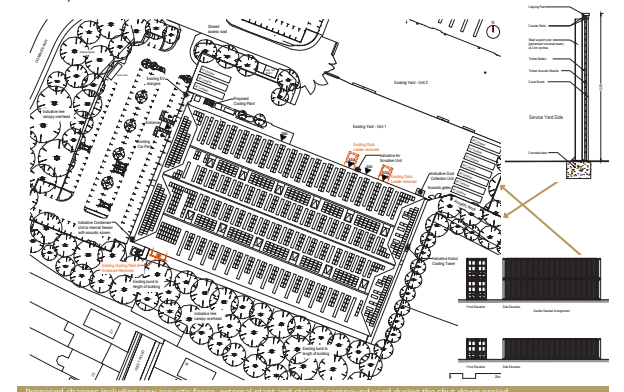
The new occupier is a manufacturer of carbon fibre race yachts and associated components. If our plans are approved, the facility will be used to accelerate its research and development programme and to help maintain the cutting-edge F50 catamarans used in Sail GP's global racing series. The warehouse will also be used to store equipment associated with events, alongside a temporary storage compound area consisting of single and double stacked storage containers used during their 4-month shut down period when the racing fleet is serviced from the site.

The new facility will bring its operations closer to its head office in London whilst still benefiting from its proximity to the Port of Southampton. Previously operations were based overseas but a decision was made to develop a new facility in the UK given the majority of racing events are now being held in the northern hemisphere. There is lots of excitement around their relocation, as this builds on the innovative marine sector based in the Solent Region.

If our plans are approved, the occupier is intending on using Unit 1 from April 2024 onwards following an internal fit-out process later this year. They hope to employ between 35-50 new members of staff approximately.

The scheme includes a Noise Management Plan which sets out a number of measures to assist the smooth running of the site. This includes the erection of an acoustic fence in the corner of the site and an overall noise restriction when B2 uses are in operation. The internal design for the building is such that processes that may generate noise will be enclosed within dedicated spaces, designed to reduce noise break-out into the main warehouse space or beyond. The scheme also seeks to include new air conditioning plant and equipment outside. This will be mainly relocated on the northern side of the premises, moving it further away from residents. Due to the nature of their operations, we should see a reduction in car trips at peak times, both in the morning and evening. All of these measures should help alleviate concerns and will continue to support employment for local people, in line with Eastleigh Borough Council's Local Plan.

The application seeks to broaden the commercial uses so these are more flexible, to try attract an array of business occupiers, including B2 Industrial use classes. If the application isn't accepted, it would revert back to its current operating conditions under the B8 Storage and Distribution and Class E Commercial, Business and Service uses. We hope you agree that having Sail GP operating from the site is much more preferable to the previous occupier and they are available today to answer any questions you may have.



Proposed changes including new acoustic fence, external plant and storage compound used during the shut-down period



STRATEGIC PARK SOUTHAMPTON

Copy of Exhibition Boards, November 2023

5. Planning Policy

The principle of broadening the uses of the site, to include general industrial or manufacturing, is considered to be acceptable in principle given it is located within a well-established industrial estate. It will also further strengthen the sites prospects of attracting a variety of businesses, which is something the local community is keen to see, rather than a reliance on distribution uses primarily. Furthermore, if the change of use is allowed, it would be bring back a current vacant premises back into an employment use.

The site is sustainably located for employment use and will contribute positively to the aspirations of the Local Plan, which seeks to support economic growth.

There is also a need for greater flexibility of the existing commercial premises, to ensure it remains an attractive location for business to locate both now and in the future.

The NPPF reiterates the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 7) and in terms of building a strong, competitive economy Paragraph 80 states,

“Significant weight should be placed on the need to be support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development”.

This application is responding to the needs of an occupier wishing to locate from overseas into the Solent region and requires the uses of the site to be broadened to enable this to happen. The principle of this broadening this use has already been established when it was granted for Unit 2 opposite. At the time, the Economic Development Team concurred that there was a local need for B2 General Industrial and manufacturing premises.

The proposed widening of the uses allowed at the site has the ability to create numerous jobs, benefiting from its location along the south coast for its wider labour pool and an attractive environment, assisting in job creation and reducing out-commuting.

There is also strong support for a smooth transition of employment opportunities sought by the application given the refurbishment works are nearly complete and the premises are currently vacant. The proposal will provide compelling and tangible economic benefits, including the creation of jobs, when occupied which should be given significant weight considering current economic climate.

The application will also enable F50 League GB Ltd, a manufacturer of carbon fibre race yachts and associated components to locate here, strengthening the innovative marine sector based in the Solent Region.

The recent refurbishment included new energy efficient sustainable construction measures to achieve a BREEAM ‘Very Good’ sustainability rating as a minimum, including solar panels on the roof, provision of electric vehicle charging, new Grade A office accommodation, upgraded external works including new acoustic fencing and enhanced landscaping also follow the NPPF’s aspirations of increasing the use of and supply of renewable and low carbon energy sources. All of this significant investment carried out by the landowner demonstrates there desire to ensure the premises are fit for purpose and reflects modern business needs both now and in the future.



5. Planning Policy Continued...

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

At national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (the ‘NPPF’ or the ‘Framework’) is a material consideration of significant weight in the determination of planning applications. The NPPF states that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and sets out a general presumption in favour of sustainable development unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The previous application, which again applies to the current scheme identified the three dimensions of sustainability being sought jointly as:

- Economic: this comes in the form of supporting the economy, whereby this application would increase the commercial viability of the site. The proposals would introduce a new use class to help bring back Unit 1 into a viable usage. The Council’s Economic Growth Department previously commented that B2 usage is required within the Borough, which this application would contribute towards.
- Social: this comprises, providing housing, creating high-quality environment with accessible local services and employment opportunities. At present there are limited restrictions on Units 1 and 2, however the introduction of a B2 usage could allow the opportunity to introduce some controls to Unit 1 to mitigate any adverse impacts on the living environment for nearby neighbouring amenities. This includes a Noise Management Plan and external plant noise restriction.
- Environmental: contributing to, protecting and enhancing natural, built and historic environment. The requires minimal alterations but includes the planting of a wildflower margin on the grass verge along the access road and various bird and bat boxes within the surrounding woodland. Further to this, the refurbishment works have included the installation of solar panels on the roof and other improvements to the premises to reduce energy use. It also promoting sustainable travel through the inclusion of showers and other facilities. Unit 1 also includes a number of new EV car charging points. The development has found different opportunities to help deliver a sustainable development in the longer term.

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036

The Development Plan comprises the policies of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036. The following policies are most relevant to the proposals.

Strategic policies:

- S1 (Sustainable Development);
- S5 (New Development within the Countryside); and
- S6 (Protection of Settlement Gaps).

Supplementary Planning Documents and Other Guidance

- Quality Places (November 2011);
- Residential Parking Standards (January 2009);
- Biodiversity (December 2009).

Development Management policies:

- DM1 (General Development Criteria);
- DM8 (Pollution);
- DM11 (Nature Conservation);
- DM13 (Transport);
- DM14 (Car Parking);
- DM18 (Extension and replacement of non-residential buildings in the countryside); and
- DM19 (change of use of buildings in the countryside)

The application site falls within designated countryside and, as such Policy S5 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) is of relevance. This policy sets out that there are specific criteria which development must comply with in order for it to be acceptable within the countryside. The Local Plan sets out that extensions and replacement of existing employments uses (DM18 and DM19) can be acceptable providing that the proposals do not have an adverse impact upon the intrinsic character of the countryside. The application site also falls within a settlement gap, protected by Policy S6, which ultimately seeks to ensure that development would not undermine the physical extent and/or visual separation of settlements. Given the nature of the application involves on minor works that is visually contained within the site due to its mature boundaries, it would not impact on the wider landscape. As the site is an established employment site and the proposals relate to the alteration of an existing building for employment purposes, the development is considered to be acceptable in principle with any planning approval being subject to the particular details and impacts of the scheme, reviewed in detail in section 7.



6. What is our proposal?

The current Use Class designation of the premises is B1a Offices, B1b Research and development of products or processes and B8 storage and distribution use class. Given the recent changes to the use classes order, B1 a-c now fall within the broader Class E (g) (i, ii and iii) category which includes commercial uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity.

The application seeks to widen the permitted uses to include a B2 General Industrial use class, this is in response to a specific occupier's requirements but also gives flexibility in the future. The broader set-of commercial uses will help attract a wider variety of businesses seeking to locate at the established employment site both now and in the longer term.

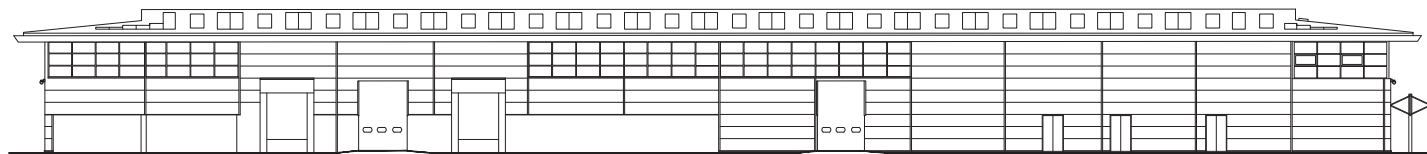
This application follows on from a very similar proposal for Unit 2 opposite, which also broadened its commercial uses under planning reference F/22/93417, approved on the 6th February 2023. The new occupier interested in Unit 1 would need the use of the premises broadening in the same way. This planning application has been submitted proposing this, alongside some other alterations they have sought in relation to their specific requirements / operations.

The proposed description of development is:

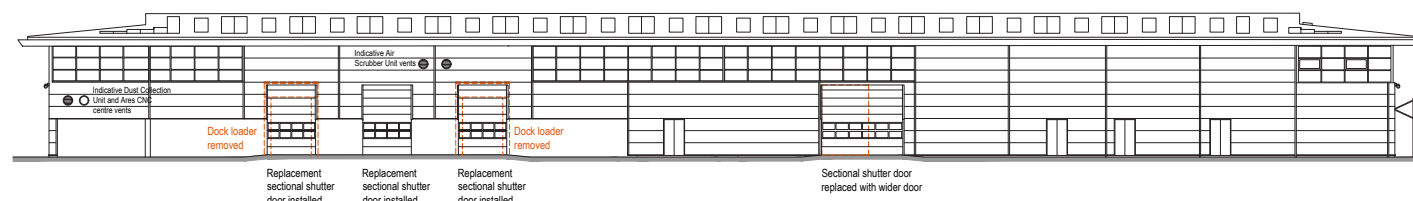
"Change of use from Class B8 and Class E (g) to flexible use including Class E(g), Class B2 and Class B8. Replacement of 2.no loading bays with sectional shutter doors and other alterations to the fenestration. External storage compound. External works and alterations including plant and landscaping."

The application includes the removal of the loading bay dock extensions installed by the previous occupier and the replacement of these with quiet closing sectional roller shutter doors. The air conditioning condenser units have been decommissioned from the southern boundary and relocated to the northern side of the building away from residents. Other external plant is also proposed mainly to the north, with the exception of the fridge condenser unit located on the western side of the building.

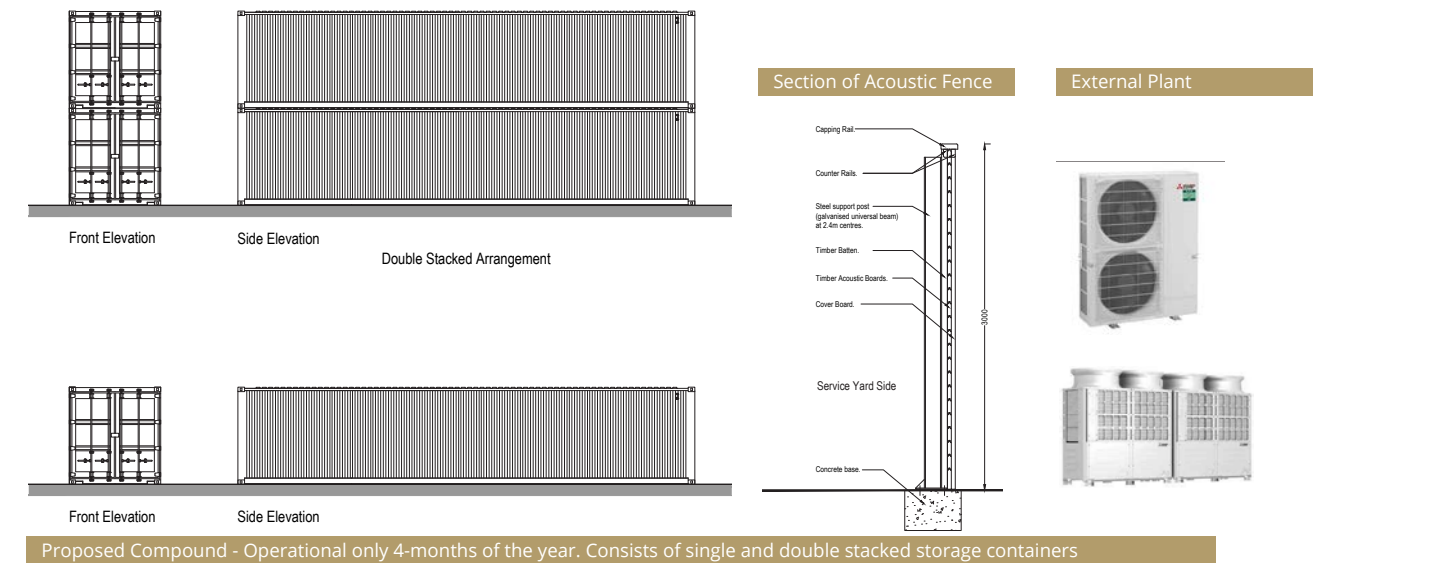
The new occupier has also sought the widening of an existing sectional roller door and an external storage compound area which would be used for part of the year.



Existing Northern Elevation



Proposed Northern Elevation

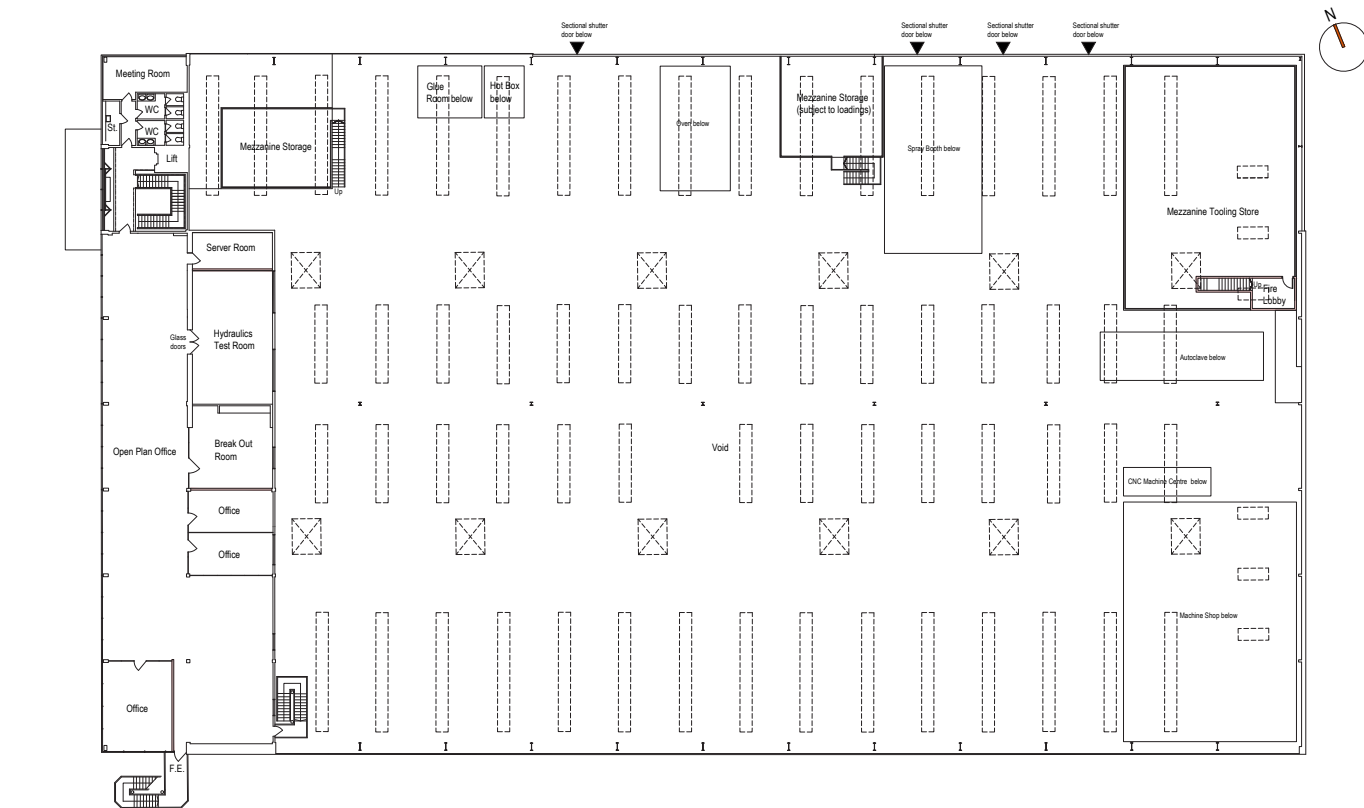


Proposed Compound - Operational only 4-months of the year. Consists of single and double stacked storage containers

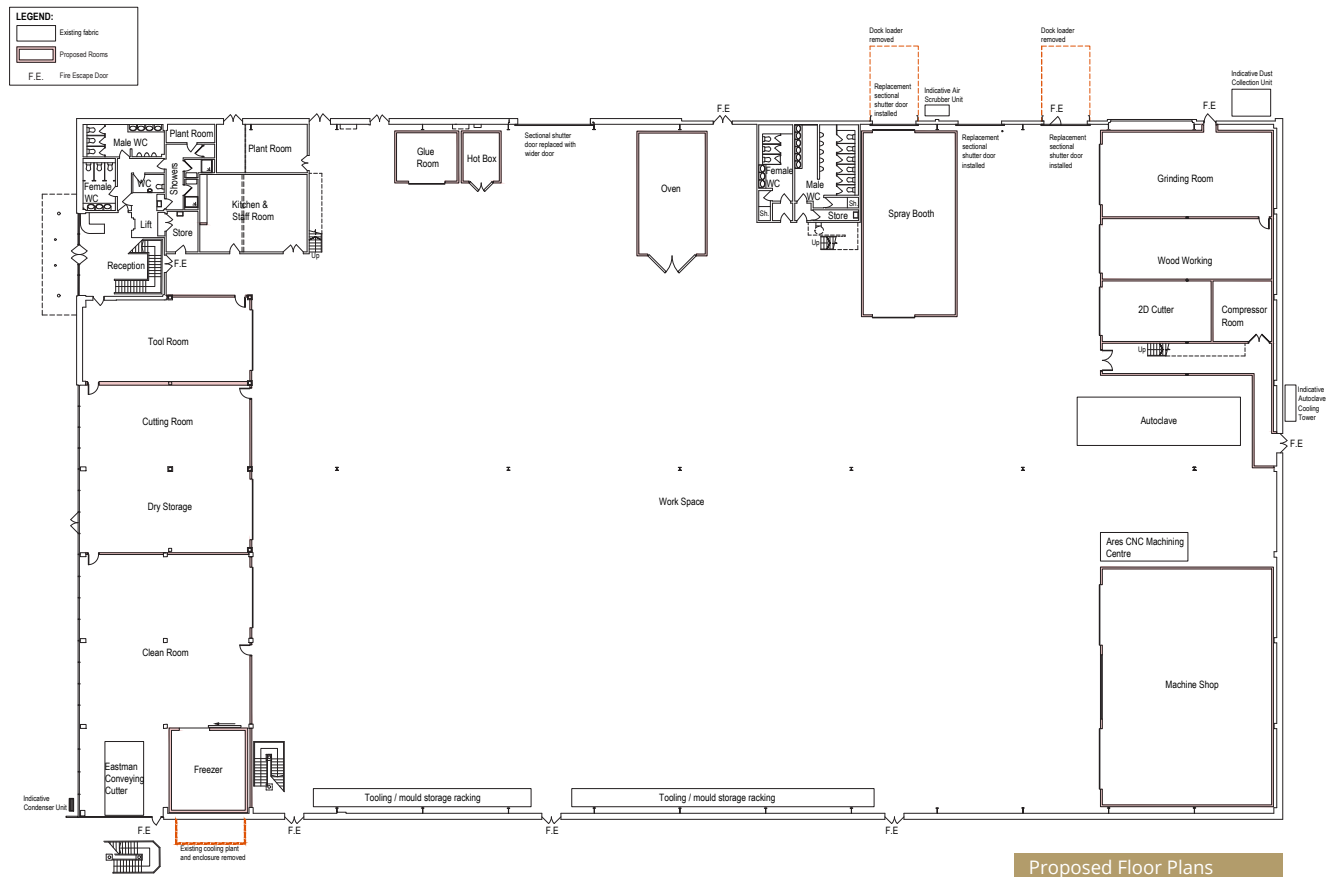


Proposed Site Plan

UNIT 1, STRATEGIC PARK



First Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan

UNIT 1, STRATEGIC PARK

The Proposed Occupier - F50 League GB Ltd

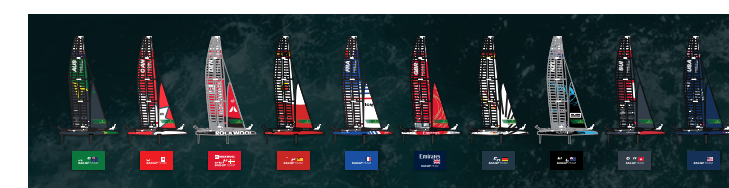
The new occupier is a manufacturer of carbon fibre race yachts and associated components. If our plans are approved, the facility will be used to accelerate its research and development programme and to help maintain the cutting-edge F50 catamarans used in Sail GP's global racing series. The warehouse will also be used to store equipment associated with events, alongside a temporary storage compound area consisting of single and double stacked storage containers used during their 4-month shut down period when the racing fleet is serviced from the site. There are currently 11 catamarans in the fleet.

The new facility will bring its operations closer to its head office in London whilst still benefiting from its proximity to the Port of Southampton. Previously operations were based overseas but a decision was made to develop a new facility in the UK given the majority of racing events are now being held in the northern hemisphere. There is lots of excitement around their relocation, as this builds on the innovative marine sector based in the Solent Region.

If our plans are approved, the occupier is intending on using Unit 1 from April 2024 onwards following an internal fit-out process later this year. They hope to employ between 35-50 new members of staff approximately.

The scheme includes a Noise Management Plan which sets out a number of measures to assist the smooth running of the site. This includes the erection of an acoustic fence in the corner of the site and an overall noise restriction when B2 uses are in operation. The internal design for the building is such that processes that may generate noise will be enclosed within dedicated spaces, designed to reduce noise break-out into the main warehouse space or beyond. The scheme also seeks to include new air conditioning plant and equipment outside. This will be mainly relocated on the northern side of the premises, moving it further away from residents. Due to the nature of their operations, we should see a reduction in car trips at peak times, both in the morning and evening. All of these measures should help alleviate concerns and will continue to support employment for local people, in line with Eastleigh Borough Council's Local Plan.

The application seeks to broaden the commercial uses so these are more flexible, to try attract an array of business occupiers, including B2 Industrial use classes. If the application isn't accepted, it would revert back to its current operating conditions under the B8 Storage and Distribution and Class E Commercial, Business and Service uses. We hope you agree that having Sail GP operating from the site is much more preferable to the previous occupier



SAIL GP™



STRATEGIC PARK SOUTHAMPTON



STRATEGIC PARK SOUTHAMPTON

7. Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

The principle of broadening the uses of the site, to include general industrial or manufacturing, is considered to be acceptable in principle given it is located within a well-established industrial estate. It will also further strengthen the sites prospects of attracting a variety of businesses, which is something the local community is keen to see, rather than a reliance on distribution uses primarily. Furthermore, if the change of use is allowed, it would be bring back a current vacant premises back into an employment use.

The site is sustainably located for employment use and will contribute positively to the aspirations of the Local Plan, which seeks to support economic growth. The principle of broadening this use has already been established when it was granted for Unit 2 opposite. At the time, the Economic Development Team concurred that there was a local need for B2 General Industrial and manufacturing premises.

There is also a need for greater flexibility of the existing commercial premises, to ensure it remains an attractive location for business to locate both now and in the future.

We do not have any data in terms of how many employees were previously based at the site. However, it is clear that this has varied between different occupiers over the years. Based on the size of the premises circa 6,333sqm, typically a B8 last-mile distribution use would generate approximately 66-90 jobs (using Employment Density Guide, 2015). If the premises are occupied by a Light Industrial Use (Class E (g) iii) this would typically have 106-135 jobs or 158 jobs if a research and development facility. If a B2 use was allowed, it is estimated that 177 jobs could be created based on the floor area. Whilst the employment figures are all estimations, it does appear that approximately 90 jobs would be created-on average. This ultimately will depend on the occupier, which is to be made more flexible so the premises can respond to a changing business climate.

The intended occupier has indicated that they hope to employ between 35-50 new members of staff approximately. This application is responding to the needs of an occupier wishing to locate from overseas into the Solent region and requires the uses of the site to be broadened to enable this to happen. The new occupier will also strengthen the innovative marine sector that is found in the Solent region and build on its boat building tradition.

In summary, the proposed widening of the uses allowed at the site has the ability to create numerous jobs, benefiting from its location along the south coast for its wider labour pool and an attractive environment, assisting in job creation and reducing out-commuting. There is also strong support for a smooth transition of employment opportunities sought by the application given the refurbishment works are nearly complete and the premises are currently vacant. The proposal will provide compelling and tangible economic benefits, including the creation of jobs, when occupied which should be given significant weight considering current economic climate.

In light of the above, the principle of the development is acceptable. The main consideration of this application is whether the increased flexibility of commercial uses, including B2 (general industrial) into Unit 1 would be acceptable from an environmental perspective in relation to residential amenity and highway safety. Use Class B2 covers a range of activities and operations (those falling outside of E(g)), but this time, unlike the previous adjacent application, has the added benefit of knowing who the intended occupier is and the activities they are intending within the premises. The nature of the use includes the manufacturing of catamaran components and maintaining their current racing fleet. That said, they have indicated that only occasionally will the manufacturer of new catamarans take place as the fleet will only increase by two or three in the coming years. Focus will be on the existing fleet and innovation, alongside the provision of storage space. The proposed internal floor plans also further illustrate this (as discussed in more detail in the residential amenity section).



Design, Appearance and Impact on the Character of the Area

The layout and design of the proposed alterations have been designed to respond to the identified opportunities and constraints, namely its location in the settlement gap, the proximity of residents in West Road and the mature trees on its boundaries.

The design also seeks to meet the business needs of the identified occupier by providing a storage compound consisting of shipping containers for 4-months of the year within either end of the yard areas. Whilst at times the compound will include double stacked 40ft containers, they would be located on established hardstanding areas and public views of them would not be possible due to this part of the site being enclosed by mature trees and vegetation. They are also only there during part of the year. It is therefore not considered to give rise to landscape harm.

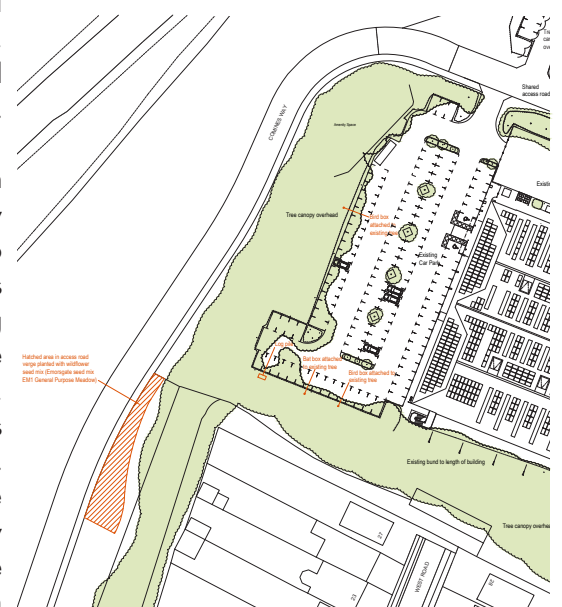
The proposals also include the installation of external plant, mainly located to the north of the premises with the exception of the freezer condenser unit on the western side of the building. These locations have been chosen as they are located away from residents and would be seen as part of the backdrop of the existing building. It is also proposed to install a 3m high timber acoustic fence to part of the site's south-western boundary (as shown in the previous application) which is in the process of being installed. There are some other minor works to the northern elevation, including new sectional quiet closing doors instead of the extended loading bays and a widened door to aid movement into the premises.

These types of alterations are considered to be appropriate given the industrial usage of the site and represent relatively minor changes to the overall appearance of the building and are considered to reflect its existing character, the nature of its use and its surroundings. The proposals would result in a materially increased physical or visual impact upon the character of the countryside, nor upon the settlement gap and thereby would not undermine its functionality. In terms of design, appearance and the impact of the proposals upon their surroundings, therefore, the application is considered to accord with the policies DM1 and S6 in this regard.

Ecology and Trees

Policy DM11 of the submitted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) stipulates that the Borough Council will work with statutory and voluntary agencies and developers to; protect, conserve and enhance areas subject to international, national and local nature conservation designations, and promote the net gain of biodiversity on all sites through the protection, enhancement and connection of existing provisions and new habitats and features compatible with the native biodiversity characteristics of the Borough.

Due to the very minor nature of the proposals, which relate to the northern facade or existing sealed hardstanding surfaces, no impacts to ecology or protected species are envisaged. In addition, the minor works will also have no impacts on existing trees or landscaping. However opportunities to further enhance biodiversity have been sought through the planting of a wildflower seed mix (Emorsgate seed mix EM1 General Purpose Meadow) along the grass verge area on the access road, Comines Way. The proposals will also include the erection of both bat and bird boxes and a log pile will be created on the southern and western bund areas. Please see the Biodiversity Enhancement Plan submitted, drawing reference 230010-A-PL-017. This is in addition to the enhancements that have already taken place as part of the Unit 2 proposals previously approved. The proposals are considered to enhance opportunities for wildlife in line with the ambitions of Policy DM11 and are therefore considered acceptable.



Biodiversity Enhancement Plan



7. Planning Assessment Continued...

Access, Highways Safety and Parking

Policy DM13 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) requires that development is or could be well served by public transport, cycling and walking and it includes measures which minimise its impact on the existing highway network. Policy DM14 of the Plan requires that an appropriate level of car parking be provided in accordance with the Council's adopted standards. The policy provisions are consistent with the requirements of the NPPF and in particular those of paragraphs 107 and 108.

The site is considered to be in an accessible location with various options for sustainable transport. The refurbishment works have also sought to encourage sustainable travel through the provision of showers and improved cycling parking to help reduce single occupancy car trips. The Highway Authority in the previous application for Unit 2 found that the existing access arrangements to Strategic Park via Comines Way (which would remain unchanged) and internal layout was acceptable. The existing car park for Unit 1 has capacity for 117 vehicles and the proposals are not seeking to amend this provision. A car parking accumulation assessment has been prepared for a B2 use and found that there is sufficient capacity for staff and visitors. This is also the case based on the number of employee's the occupier is expecting at the site.

The previous application approved alterations to Unit 2, whereby the extensive areas of mezzanine floors consisting of offices were reduced and the uses of the premises were broadened. Hampshire County Council confirmed that the proposals would reduce the number of multi modal trips compared to the previous uses. The supporting Transport Note prepared by i-Transport has reviewed the expected use of Unit 2 will generate between 24 and 35 less vehicle movements in the peak hours when compared to the previous occupiers.

If Unit 2 was occupied by 100% B2 general industrial land use, the site would generate an additional 17 to 31 two-way vehicle movements in the peak periods compared to the permitted B8 land use. This equates to one vehicle movement every two to four minutes. However it is clear when the traffic movements are combined for both premises, the additional movements sought are less than those previously associated with the industrial estate given the headroom generated by Unit 2.

It should be noted that the trip generation assessment for Unit 1 is robust as the highest trip generator has been used. In reality, it is unlikely that both premises would be occupied solely for a B2 general industrial use at any one time and even then, only 50% of the warehouse would be used for manufacturing, with the remaining typically used for storage purposes. It is clear that the changes sought are likely to lead to less traffic movements than the previous two occupiers at the site when reviewed together.

It is also clear that the intended occupier will generate far less vehicle trips than the above scenarios or the former distribution use, given the estimated staff numbers (approximately 50) and low number of deliveries required during most of the year. The occupier has indicated that generally there will only be one HGV delivery each day, with other products delivered by light goods vehicles as and when they are required. This is based on their experience of their overseas facility in New Zealand.

To help give some further background in the types of movements, the racing league has 11 catamarans in their racing fleet currently, which will be maintained and serviced during the 4-month shut down period from July until October. They will arrive and return by shipping containers from the Port of Southampton during this period. Outside of this period manufacturing and innovation of catamaran components will generally take place to support events taking place.

It is not envisaged that catamarans will be constructed from the premises in full, or if they are, only a few additional F50s are envisaged to be added to the racing series in the coming years. This again helps to demonstrate that low traffic movements are proposed compared to the previous distribution use or other B2 General industrial uses described in the supporting Transport Note.

Generally, operations will be during the daytime periods, but there may be times when longer working hours are required due to a deadline of an event or similar, but this will be very infrequent.

The low number of deliveries is also evident by their request to remove the extended loading dock bays the previous occupier installed. The shut-down period will be the busiest time of year, set aside from storage and innovation that will take place here. The likely traffic movements proposed at the site are more akin to a light industrial use and this was found to be the case for a similar international yacht racing facility for Ben Ainslie Racing (BAR) in Portsmouth, approved under planning reference 14/00489/FUL.

During the peak hours, the additional vehicle movements generated by the potential B2 general industrial use can be accommodated within the headroom in vehicle movements created by the expected future occupier of the adjacent Unit 2. Overall, the development proposal would not generate an adverse impact on the local highway network during the network peak hours. On this basis, the Technical Note prepared has demonstrated that the change of use application will not have an unacceptable highways impact.

Residential Amenity

As noted within the history section of this statement, planning application referenced Z/32223/000/00 granted consent for the construction of both Unit 1 and Unit 2 in the mid-1990s. The application approved the use of the units, which comprised B1(c) (industrial processes) and B8 (storage and distribution). Whilst the planning history notes there have been alterations, and changes of use, the units appear to have always included and retained elements of B1(c) and B8 operations. The last occupier of Unit 1 was a distribution facility, whereas Unit 2 was more akin to an office use. Further to this, there were no restrictive conditions imposed as part of the original permission, and therefore both units can currently operate 24 hours a day 7 days a week, with no specified delivery times, or noise controls.

Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036), amongst other matters, stipulates that all new development should not have an unacceptable impact upon the residential amenities of both new and existing residents. Policy DM8 of the Plan stipulates that development will not be permitted if it is likely to cause loss of amenity or impact upon public health or other unacceptable environmental impacts; air pollution (odours/ emissions), and noise or vibration.

Due to the nature of the proposals, a Noise Impact Assessment has been prepared by 24-Acoustics. Proposals comprise refurbishment of the Unit 1 warehouse building and include installation of replacement plant, most of which is catering for a specific occupier. Existing extended HGV loading bays will also be removed and replaced with quiet closing sectional doors (as is the case for Unit Two) and an existing loading door is proposed to be widened. A Noise Management Plan accompanies the proposals (reference R10262-2 Rev 2) and includes noise mitigation measures to be implemented. A solid acoustic barrier / gate, of height 3m, is being installed to the south-eastern boundary under planning consent F/22/93417 which applies to a change of use for the adjacent Unit 2.

The normal hours of operation for the site are anticipated to be 07:00 – 20:00 with very infrequent later working by the intended new B2 occupier. Plant will not operate during the nighttime period. Access is required 24 hours a day 7 days a week. It is anticipated that access and deliveries outside of standard working hours will be very infrequent, but it is noted that the site currently benefits from unencumbered 24-hour use. The Noise Report prepared report reviews noise emissions from the proposed external plant and HGV movements within the service yard.

Typical background noise levels measured during daytime (07:00 to 19:00 hours) were 52 dB, evening (19:00 to 23:00 hours) were 50 dB and night-time (23:00 to 07:00 hours) periods were 40 dB. Noise levels on site are dominated by road traffic on M27 and surrounding road network.



The Noise Assessment prepared by 24-Acoustics

Air conditioning plant previously located to the south of Unit 1 has been decommissioned and removed. Replacement plant will include four air conditioning condenser units and an air scrubber for a spray booth located to the north of the building. Air intakes and exhausts for the air scrubber will be located in the northern façade of the building and will be fitted with silencers. A dust extractor unit will also be located to the north of the building with the majority of the ductwork running internal to the building. A single freezer condenser will be located to the west of the building. Noise has been taken into account in developing the site layout ensuring that the majority of external plant is located to the north of the building which will maximise screening from the building itself and hence minimise noise levels at the nearest residential receptors to the south.

Proposed plant selections are still being finalised. In choosing external plant items, consideration will be given to sourcing low noise options along with silencers, screening and acoustic enclosures as required. These measures will ensure that all external plant meets the target rating noise level of 5 dB below the background noise level at the nearest residential receptors.

The report demonstrated calculations undertaken to determine noise levels from the external plant proposed at the nearest residential property and include corrections for distance and screening provided by the intervening building where appropriate. The values were found to be significantly lower than the prevailing background noise level and will meet the requirements of the likely planning condition (if the Council imposes the same one as Unit 2). This was to ensure all external plant meets the target rating noise level of 5 dB below the background noise level at the nearest residential receptors.

The future occupier is a manufacturer of carbon fibre race yachts and associated components. The facility will be used to accelerate its research and development programme which previously operated overseas and used to help maintain the cutting-edge F50 catamarans used in a global racing series. The warehouse will also be used to store equipment associated with events, alongside a temporary storage compound area consisting of single and double stacked storage containers during their 4-month shut down period.

As such, some plant and machinery will be located internal to the building. The internal design for the building is such that processes that may generate noise, will be enclosed within dedicated spaces as shown in Figure 3 e.g. woodworking room, grinding room and machine shop. These rooms will be designed to reduce noise break-out into the main warehouse space and hence minimise noise break-out from the building. Levels will be controlled to 5 dB below prevailing background at all times.

A spray booth will be located internally to the north of the building. The spray booth air intakes and exhausts will be located in the northern façade of the building. A sound power level of 88 dBA is quoted for both the discharge and intake. Both the air discharge and intake will be fitted with silencers to minimise noise emissions. External fire escape doors to the south and east of the building will remain closed at all times other than in an emergency.

The Highways and Transport Statement by I-Transport (technical note reference: SJ/GT/ITB19404-001) provides predicted maximum HGV movements of 4 per hour based on 24-hour Class B2 operations. I-Transport has further predicted 5 HGV movements per hour during evening (19:00 to 23:00 hours) and night-time (23:00 to 07:00 hours) periods. The assessment found that noise levels from the HGV movements associated with the use of the service yard will be significantly lower than the prevailing ambient noise levels and, therefore, no increase in noise level will arise.

It is understood that the intended occupier of Unit 1 will generate significantly less movements than described above. This is due to the number of staff employed at the site, with only one HGV delivery expected each day outside of the 4-month racing series shutdown period, with other deliveries carried out in light goods vehicles. Please see the accompanying Transport and supporting Planning Statement for further details. On the above basis, of an external plant condition alongside the Noise Management Plan measures, the proposed operations will not cause a significant adverse impact at nearby existing residential properties and are acceptable.



8. Conclusion

As the site is an established employment site and the proposals relate to the alteration of an existing building for employment purposes, the development is considered to be acceptable in principle. The planning assessment have reviewed the particular details and impacts of the scheme, including upon the settlement gap, being deemed to be appropriate and to accord with the relevant planning policies and guidance.

The increased range and flexibility of business use for Unit 1 will assist in the commercial viability of the unit and will benefit the local economy. The impacts of the proposed uses on residential amenity have been assessed and the B2 element can be effectively controlled through the use of a noise management strategy condition that would apply to all new B2 users of Unit 1. The provision of an acoustic fence along the southern boundary should also assist in minimising the noise impact of the development on neighbouring residential properties. The improved loading arrangements should also assist in the day to day activities proposed at the site. In addition to this, it is envisaged that the changes to both premises will lead to an overall reduction in overall trip rates during peak hours and that given no changes to the access are proposed that this is considered acceptable for the industrial uses. Given the similarity to the previous proposals at Unit 2 opposite, it is hoped that HCC highways will again raise no objections to the proposed development.

The refurbishment works has also included biodiversity enhancements and the provision EV car charging points. This site benefits from prior approval PN/22/93517 which granted the installation of solar panels on the roof, which also contributes towards sustainability utilising renewable energy sources, as such would be a positive facet of the scheme.

Based upon the above assessment the proposed development is considered acceptable and complies with the relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan. It is therefore hoped that the Council will approve the application without delay.



Car park entrance for Unit 1





STRATEGIC PARK SOUTHAMPTON



FELLOWS
PLANNING

This Statement has been prepared by Fellows Planning on behalf of our client

Columbia Threadneedle Real Estate Partners LLP / F&C Property Holdings Ltd

For further information please contact:

Natalie Fellows BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

Fellows Planning Ltd

E: info@fellowsplanning.co.uk