

Planning Statement

Flexible Use

**Unit F3, Hamilton Business Park,
Hedge End**

Summerbrook Ltd



Property Reference:

HEHAF-F3-01

Location:

Unit F3, Hamilton Business Park, Hedge
End, SO30 2XW

Date:

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Author:

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This application is submitted by Hargreaves Management Ltd who are the managing agent for Summerbrook Ltd, the owners of Unit F3 Hamilton Business Park, Hedge End.
- 1.2. The application seeks a flexible use of Unit F3, in light of ongoing trading difficulties by the current tenant Magnet. The unit has been occupied by Magnet since 2012, with the existing use as a warehouse with trade counter, together with a large showroom, established in 2012.
- 1.3. Following difficult trading conditions, Magnet has been acquired by Alteri Investors at a peppercorn rate of £0. On 1st July 2026, Summerbrook were advised that Magnet has proposed a Company Voluntary Arrangement (CVA) as part of wider restructuring in an attempt to restore the future viability of the Company's business. It is clear that uncertainty remains about the company's future and a flexible use would widen the potential of the unit in the event of vacancy or to assist Magnet should they wish to change their business operations at this unit.
- 1.4. The proposed description of development is as follows:

"Proposed flexible use of Unit C (known as Unit F3) for any one of the following uses: Class B8 storage and distribution with ancillary trade counter and showroom; Class E(g)(ii) research and development; Class E(g)(iii) industrial processes; or Class B2 general industrial use."
- 1.5. The submission is supported by:
 - The relevant application form, CIL form and fee;
 - Location plan & block plan
 - Existing and proposed plans; and
 - This planning statement.

2. The Site and Surroundings

- 2.1. The site comprises a 12,000 sqft warehouse constructed in 2012 and occupied by Magnet since that time. It sits within the wider Hamilton Business Park, part of an established commercial area at the north of Hedge End. Other units within the immediate proximity include Wickes to the southeast, and a newly constructed Starbucks to the south.

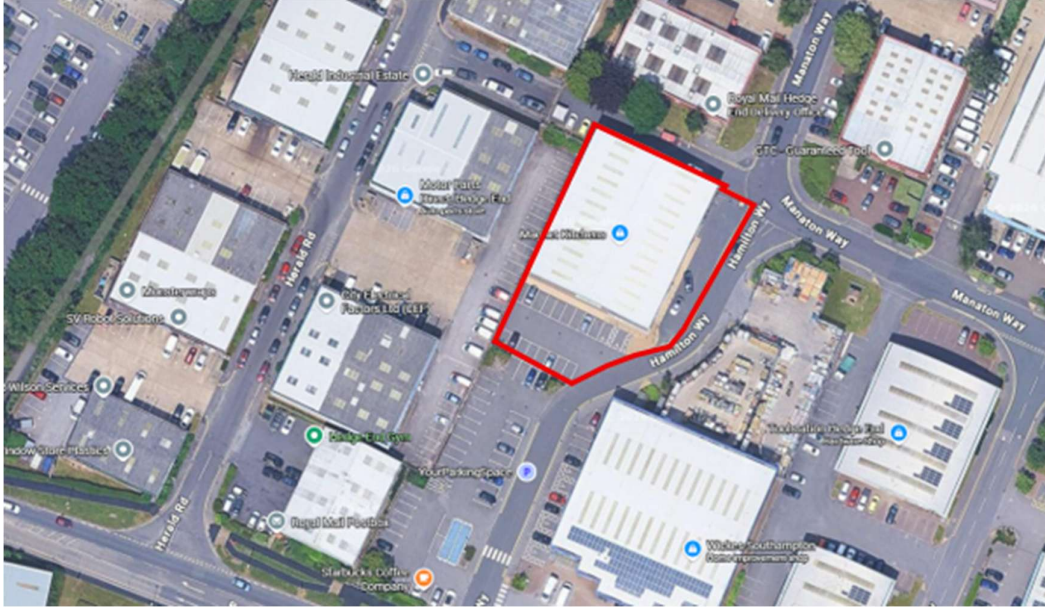


Figure 1: Unit F3 Hamilton Business Park



Figure 2: Unit F3 South Elevation



Figure 3: Unit F3 East Elevation



Figure 4: New Starbucks to south of Unit F3

- 2.2. The unit has 18 car parking spaces, 10 cycle parking spaces and is accessed from Hamilton Way. There is an additional open yard area by the trade counter/warehouse entrance on the eastern elevation, also used by trade vans. The site is approximately 1 km from the M27 via the Hedge End Interchange.

3. Planning History

- 3.1. Outline planning consent was originally granted in October 2007 for Site F (former Ryvan Chemicals and Simmons Engineering site) for flexible business accommodation (B1/B2/B8) not exceeding 3732sqm (application reference O/7/60590).
- 3.2. Reserved matters were subsequently approved in January 2011 (application ref R/10/68100) and further to an agreed extension of time. The Magnet unit, now known as Unit F3, was referred to as Unit C within this application.
- 3.3. An application to remove condition 6, which sought to restrict trade counters and retail uses, was approved on appeal in December 2011 (application reference X/11/68593).
- 3.4. Wickes, and more recently Starbucks, which are also located on the former Ryvan Chemicals and Simmons Engineering site, were later permitted under separate, full planning applications (F/13/71969 and F/24/98415 respectively).
- 3.5. Unit F3 was built and fitted out to Magnet's requirements in 2012 and has remained unchanged since this time. It has therefore been trading in this broad configuration for approximately 14 years.

4. The Proposal

- 4.1. The proposal seeks the following:

"Proposed flexible use of Unit C (known as Unit F3) for any one of the following uses: Class B8 storage and distribution with ancillary trade counter and showroom; Class E(g)(ii) research and development; Class E(g)(iii) industrial processes; or Class B2 general industrial use."
- 4.2. The proposal therefore simply seeks to restore the flexibility established within the original planning permission in 2007, as amended in 2011, to expedite reletting the unit in the event that Magnet cease trading. It also gives Magnet the flexibility to alter their operations if desired, in the event of a restructure of their business. Of note, a well-established showroom has been a feature of the unit since 2012.
- 4.3. For the avoidance of doubt, there are no external alterations proposed, which would be subject to a separate planning application if required in the future. In the absence of identified end-users being established, it is also proposed to secure any detailed matters by condition.
- 4.4. However, as the unit is located within an established commercial area, with no immediate residential neighbours, and has been trading without issue since 2012, it would be unreasonable to condition matters beyond the existing consent. Of note, there are no controls over opening hours or deliveries, and with 7-day trading currently supported.

5. Planning Policy Context

5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.1.2. The relevant Development Plan in this case comprises the Adopted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2026 (Adopted 2022).
- 5.1.3. Other material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and other Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and guidance. Locally, the Parking Standards SPD (2025) is also relevant.

5.2. National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework)

- 5.2.1. The Framework sets out the government's objectives for the planning system. It also details strategic planning policies, which seek to provide sufficient housing and other development in a sustainable manner. **Paragraph 10** states that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the Framework, with **paragraph 8** outlining economic, social and environmental objectives.
- 5.2.2. **Paragraph 11** sets out how the presumption in favour of sustainable development operates, with **paragraph 11(c)** explaining that for decision taking, development should be approved without delay where it accords with an up-to-date development plan. **Paragraph 11(d)** explains that where there are no relevant plan policies, or those most important for determining the application are out of date, then permission should be granted unless there are policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance and provide a clear reason for refusing development, or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies within the Framework taken as a whole.
- 5.2.3. Of relevance to this application is **Chapter 6** (Building a strong, competitive economy). **Paragraph 85** explains that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, considering both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 5.2.4. **Chapter 11** (making effective use of land) sets out at **paragraph 124(c)** that planning policies should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs.
- 5.2.5. Whilst a revised Draft NPPF was published in December 2025, its final publication has been delayed and therefore attracts no weight.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- 5.2.6. The PPG provides detailed guidance and expands upon policies within the NPPF and is attributed equal weight to it and is referenced as necessary in the planning appraisal section.

5.3. The Development Plan

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2022

- 5.3.1. The site is allocated within an Existing Employment Site The main policy of relevance is Policy DM15 (Safeguarding existing employment sites):

Policy DM15, Safeguarding existing employment sites

1. The major existing employment sites as identified on the policies map shall be retained predominantly in employment use classes B2, B8 and E(g). Within these sites the Borough Council will permit:
 - a. the redevelopment and intensification of use of sites for Use Class B2, B8 and E(g)(ii)/(iii) employment uses;
 - b. changes of use between use classes B2, B8 and E(g)(ii)/(iii); and
 - c. workforce training opportunities as defined in policy DM16 below;subject to the general development criteria and transport policies of this Local Plan including the impact on residential areas.
2. Exceptionally, employment uses other than those in use classes B2, B8 or E(g)(ii)/(iii) (but not E(a)/(b)/(c) uses or pubs, drinking establishments or hot food takeaways) may be permitted on these sites provided that:
 - a. they would not have a significant impact on the continued primary use of the site
 - b. the existing site is causing, or could cause, significant harm to highway safety or to the amenities of the area or to local residents
3. The redevelopment or change of use of other existing employment sites not identified on the policies map currently in class B2, B8 or E(g)(ii)/(iii) uses to non-employment uses, where this is not permitted development, will be permitted provided that it can be demonstrated that the site is no longer in demand for employment use and that criteria a. and b. above are satisfied.

- 5.3.2. The other policies of note are:

- Strategic Policy 1 (Delivering sustainable development)
- Strategic Policy S4 (Employment provision)
- Policy DM1 (General criteria for new development)
- DM13 (General development criteria – transport)
- DM14 (Parking)

6. Planning Appraisal

6.1. Introduction

- 6.1.1. Planning legislation states that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless the policies are out of date or material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.1.2. Case Law has also confirmed that to be found in accordance with the development plan, proposals need to be assessed against the Plan as a whole, as it is commonplace for policies to pull in different directions. Whether a proposal is in accordance with the Plan is therefore a question of judgement, having regard to the importance of relevant policies and extent of compliance or breach with them.

6.2. Principle of Development

- 6.2.1. Policy DM15 safeguards existing employment sites for predominantly use classes B2, B8, E(g)(ii) and E(g)(iii). It additionally permits changes of use between these uses as well as their intensification. The proposed flexible use of the unit is therefore wholly in accordance with this policy.
- 6.2.2. This application seeks continued trade counter and retail showroom use within the building, which accords with the 2007/2011 approvals, and which has been lawfully trading in this manner since 2012. In any event, the unit, and indeed the wider employment site, would remain predominantly in employment use as required by Policy DM15.
- 6.2.3. Also of note, the original planning consent granted in 2007, and amended in 2011, established a flexible consent for the uses currently sought and it is now proposed to restore flexibility for the unit in event of vacancy.

6.3. Residential Amenity

- 6.3.1. Policy DM1 seeks to protect residential amenity. The site is within an existing employment area and is wholly surrounded by other commercial units. The nearest residential properties are over 160m away, off Hansen Gardens, and separated by other intervening commercial buildings within the employment area.
- 6.3.2. The application is for a change of use only, meaning there is no change to privacy, overlooking, outlook, sunlight or daylight as a result of the proposal. In any event, no impacts on residential amenity are anticipated as a result of the change of use, given the building's location.
- 6.3.3. Continued occupation of the unit for flexible employment use would therefore not cause harm or injury to residential amenity, in compliance with Policy DM1.

6.4. Transport, Parking and Servicing

- 6.4.1. Unit F3 is in an established employment area, with easy access to the Botley Road and in turn to Junction 7 of the M27.

- 6.4.2. Servicing for the unit is undertaken adjacent to Hamilton Way and would take place in the same manner.
- 6.4.3. There are 18 car parking spaces currently associated with the unit, with further spaces within the wider employment area and notably opportunities for linked trips, including with the Starbucks to the south. Additionally, van parking currently occurs alongside the eastern elevation by visitors using the trade entrance. There are 10 existing cycle parking spaces. This broadly accords with current standards, and this figuration is considered to be appropriate for this unit.
- 6.4.4. The site is incredibly well connected by bus routes, being 160m from bus stops on Botley Road, which is served by bus stop 3 and 14 (regular services between Eastleigh and Southampton). It is also within easy walking distance of bus stops at Bradbeers Retail Park (350m) and Hedge End Retail Park (320m) which are additionally served by routes 49 (Bishops Waltham to Hedge End Park), 24 (Eastleigh to Hedge End) and 425 (college service).
- 6.4.5. The proposal offers safe and suitable access, including by sustainable transport modes, with suitable car parking provision and servicing provision and therefore complies with policies DM13 and DM14. In accordance with paragraph 116, there are no severe highway impacts which would warrant refusal of the application.

6.5. Sustainable Development and Re-use of Brownfield Land

- 6.5.1. Securing a wider range of potential uses on the site would assist with reletting the unit in event of vacancy, enabling a continued productive use of brownfield land. Paragraph 85 explains that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, considering both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 6.5.2. The proposal is also for a sustainable form of development. It delivers economic benefits through generating income and jobs for the local economy, social benefits by providing goods and services, and environmental benefits in seeking to secure the continued use of a brownfield site.

6.6. Other Issues

- 6.6.1. The application is for change of use only and exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain by virtue of the *de minimis* criteria.

7. Conclusions and Planning Balance

- 7.1.1. Flexible use is sought for Unit F3, for either continued use as a warehouse (use class B8) and with trade counter and retail showroom or for use class B2, E(g) (ii) or E(g)(iii). The units are located within a protected employment site, where the continued employment use of the site is acceptable in principle.
- 7.1.2. A flexible consent permitting these uses fully chimes with national and local policy to support businesses, generate jobs and to support the re-use of a brownfield site in event of vacancy. The flexible nature of the consent would attract a wider range of occupiers and support job generation.
- 7.1.3. Compliance has been demonstrated within the Development Plan, most notably Policy DM15, and it is requested that a flexible change of use be granted accordingly.