

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/23/96253

Site Address: Unit One, Strategic Park, Southampton, SO30 4DA

Case Officer: Rachael Morris

Description: Change of use from Class B8 and/or Class E (g)(iii) with ancillary offices, to a 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.

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
• Tree Preservation Order(s) • Settlement Gap • Countryside		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
• Z/32223/000/00 - Outline: Redevelopment Of Land To Provide 9568.9 Sq.M (103,000 Sq.Ft Footprint, Including An Allowance For First Floor Office Accommodation Of 10,260 Sq.Ft.) Of Industrial and Warehouse Floor Space (B1c And B8) Together with New Access, Parking, Servicing and Landscaping – Grant Outline – Apr 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 Reserved Matters – Jun 1995 • A/32223/003/00 - Siting Of 10 Metre High Externally Flood-Lit Site Entrance Signage Tower – Consent – Oct 1995 • Z/32223/002/00 - Siting of Sprinkler Tank and Pump House – Permit – Oct 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, Resiting of Sprinkler Tank, And New Pump House and Plant Store – Permit – Nov 1996 • Z/32223/005/00 - Change of Use Of 1,234 Square Metres of Production Space in Unit 2 To Offices – Permit – May 1997 • Z/32223/006/00 - Siting Of 13 Satellite Dishes to The East of Unit 2 – Permit – Jun 1997 • Z/32223/007/00 - Construction of Security Guard Gatehouse – Permit – Aug 1997 • Z/32223/009/00 - Installation of Three Chiller Units Between Industrial Units 1 And 2 – Permit – Dec 1997 • Z/32223/008/00 - Siting of Portable Building for Use as Security Gate House – Permit – Feb 1998 • Z/32223/013/00 - Construction of Temporary Car Park For 100 Cars and Formation of Embankment to North and South – Refuse – Nov 2002 • F/15/76548 - Addition of 3no. Loading Bay doors to north elevation and excavation of ramp to access two of the proposed loading bays – Permit – Aug 2015 • F/18/82299 - Alterations to existing site access. New circulation road to rear and side of existing warehouse. Relocate existing escape staircase from side to front elevation. New gate access into yard/vehicle stacking area from new road – Refuse – Jun 2018 • PN/22/93517 - Installation of 870no. photovoltaic panels on roof – Prior approval granted – Sept 2022		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☒	Newspaper ☒
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Representations:	9 West Road. Support. Plans are suited to Strategic Park. It will be a welcome boost for local employment and would also raise the profile of sailing in the Solent and surrounding area. 25 West Road. Support. Vehicle movements would have far less impact and hours are expected to be less than previous occupants.
Parish Council:	No Objection
Ecology:	The building has been assessed as having negligible bat roost potential and the main area of the site has been assessed to have negligible foraging and commuting potential for bats. Piles of bird droppings without nesting material suggests that feral pigeons may use the loading bays as temporary perches. Please note section 5.12 mentions <i>rare</i> ferns <i>Dryopteris sp.</i>, (this is probably a typo). This should probably read <i>male</i> ferns, as given the area, they are not likely to be rare. A CEMP will be required, as explained in section 7.6 and 7.10, to protect any wildlife that might be using the site or the adjacent woodland. Lighting should be minimised during construction and only on an as-needed basis, avoiding times when bats may be active. No changes in lighting have been proposed, but if needed, any new lighting must comply with BCT/ILP Guidance Note 08/23 available on the Institute of Lighting Providers and Bat Conservation Trust websites.
Environmental Health:	The Odour Technical Assessment V1 is satisfactory to address previous concerns and can be conditioned.
Tree Officer:	No Objection
Planning Policy:	No objection to this proposal provided that the noise levels can be appropriately mitigated to the satisfaction of the Environmental Health team.
Hampshire Highways:	No Objection.
Southampton Airport:	No Objection

Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
Details: 07/11/2023		

Policy:
National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance Development Plan: The <u>Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036</u> The most relevant policies are Strategic policies S1, S2, S5 and S6; and Development Management policies DM1, DM2, DM8, DM11, DM13, DM14 and DM19. Supplementary Planning Documents: Quality Places; Residential Parking Standards; Character Area Appraisals.

Assessment:
The development is considered acceptable and complies with policies DM1, DM2, DM8, DM11, DM13, DM14 and DM19 from the 2016-2036 local plan, in that: <u>Principle</u> The development site is within the Countryside where policy S5 applies. Policy S5 states that planning permission will be granted for new development in the countryside provided it is related to the extension and replacement of existing

employment uses (policy DM18) and the re-use of existing buildings (policy DM19).

- The development site is within the Settlement Gap where policy S6 applies. Policy S6 states that development within a Settlement Gap will be permitted provided that: it would not undermine the physical extent and/or visual separation of settlements; and it would not have an urbanising effect detrimental to the character of the countryside; or the separate identity of the adjoining settlements.
- Policy DM19 applies to development for the change of use of buildings in the countryside. Policy DM19 states the change of use of existing buildings in the countryside that are demonstrably unsuitable for continued use for their existing purpose will be permitted provided that: the proposed use is compatible with neighbouring uses and does not have an urbanising effect on the countryside in terms of external layout, lighting, noise or traffic; the building is of permanent construction and can be re-used without works detrimental to its character or that of its surroundings; access, car parking and services can be provided without having a detrimental impact on the character of the countryside; the property is sustainably located in terms of accessibility by modes of transport other than the private car.

Background

- As noted within the history section of this report, planning application referenced "Z/32223/000/00" granted outline 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.
- 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.

Change of use

- The change of use application is to include the use of a flexible use including Class E(g), Class B2 and Class B8. Class E(g) would include E(g)(i) (Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions); E(g)(ii) (Research and development of products or processes); and E(g)(iii) (Industrial processes).
- The proposed use includes B8 and Class E(g)(iii) which is part of the existing/'previous' use for the site. The additions to consider includes E(g)(i), E(g)(ii) and B2.
- When assessing against policy DM19, the proposed use is not too dissimilar to the existing use in terms of external layout, lighting, noise and traffic. Noise and traffic (highways) are assessed separately below.
- The external layout is only subject to minor change. This includes the removal of existing dock loaders, the removal and relocation of a cooling plant, an external condenser unit with associated acoustic screen, an external dust collection unit, the location of 10.no containers within the service yard, and an acoustic fence with gates. The overall units themselves are not subject to a physical change in size.
- Classes E(g) are generally considered to be an acceptable use within or close to a residential area and so is accepted here. The addition of class B2 does open the site to a variety of uses and due to the open nature of the description, could fulfil any B2 use for the future of the unit. It is noted that the adjacent unit, Unit 2, received a similar planning permission to that applied for here in February 2023. Therefore, in this case, it is considered an acceptable use in principle to its location.
- While there are neighbouring properties in proximity to the unit, it is recognised that the applicants have tried to move noisy plant/machinery away from this closest

boundary and are installing an acoustic fence. This along with an existing bund and tree canopy will assist in reducing impact to the neighbouring properties.

- Policy DM19 requires a sequential test on “any proposals for developments over 500 sq.m or that would lead to, or consolidate more than, a 30% increase in the floorspace of an established use, in use classes E(b), E(c), E(d), E(g)(i), C1, F.2(c)/(d)...”. In this case, a sequential test is not needed whereby any proposed E(g)(i) office use would be incorporated amongst the wider E(g) uses of the unit.

Impact on the Settlement Gap and Countryside

- The site is located within the countryside (Policy S5) and settlement gap (Policy S6). However, these policies will not be applicable to consider with this proposal since the principle of employment use on this site is already well established.
- It is noted that the proposal constitutes a change of use for a broader range of commercial uses along with some internal and external minor works. It is further noted that loading bay dock extensions are proposed to be removed. However, no further extensions are proposed which would alter the existing built footprint of the building.
- Therefore, it is not expected that the proposal will detrimentally impact the character of the countryside or undermine the physical extent and/or visual separation of settlements more than existing.

Pollution

- Policy DM8, Pollution, is relevant to consider particularly due to the nature of the additional B2 industrial activities proposed. This has potential to cause a loss of amenity or impact on public health or other unacceptable impacts through noise or vibration as a result of the business use and connected vehicle movements.
- The submitted a Noise Management Plan proposes a number of measures to assist the smooth running of the site. These will be necessary to ensure that the amenity of nearby residents, namely along West Road and Upper Northam Drive is maintained and not impacted by this proposal.
- The applicant has stated that low traffic movements are proposed compared to the previous distribution use or other B2 General industrial uses described in the supporting Transport Note and that plant machinery will not operate during the nighttime period. Plant/machinery is proposed to be located to the north of the building which would help to minimise noise and odour levels for residents to the south of the unit. This is with the exception of a condenser/vacuum unit on the west elevation, but this is also fitted with an acoustic screen to reduce potential harm.
- It is also stated that deliveries to the site outside of standard working hours would be very infrequent. The provision of an acoustic fence is also proposed along the southern boundary to assist in minimising the noise impact of the development on neighbouring residential properties.
- A condition requiring future uses within a B2 occupation to submit a noise management strategy has been applied to the decision. This condition covers matters such as the nature of activities/operations taking place (internally and externally), operating hours, nature, times and frequency of deliveries (and other related vehicle movement) and any other potential noise generating sources/activities.

Ecology and Trees

- Due to the potential for nesting birds and bats to be using this site, the changes to fenestration, and addition of external plant and storage areas a preliminary ecological appraisal was required and submitted for review.
- This report was agreeable and will be conditioned in full. This included ecological enhancements. Moreover, a separate biodiversity enhancement plan was submitted and will be conditioned as a plan number.

- The existing trees on site will not be detrimentally impacted and the tree officer has offered a no objection response to the proposal.

Highways

- Access in and out of the site is via Comines Way, with pedestrian footways leading to the surrounding residential areas of Hedge End, West End, and the wider Southampton area. Combined with localised bus stops and cycling opportunities, the site is in a location where sustainable travel options are available.
- Vehicle access is also achieved via Comines Way, with the adjacent Kaneshill roundabout providing easy access to the same residential areas, as well as the strategic highway network with junction 7 of the M27 located approximately 1KM to the east.
- The internal site is not being put forward for adoption, with Comines Way becoming a private road just east after its junction with Upper Northam Road. This shows that vehicle access is easily achievable for all types of vehicle, as has been the case for historical uses, and with no site layout changes being applied for, other than for the removal of existing dock loaders, this is acceptable.
- It is noted that parking is covered within the submitted Transport technical Note. This outlines that the existing parking quantum of 117 vehicle parking spaces allocated to Unit 1 are not proposed to be amended in terms of layout or number.
- Onwards, a parking accumulation exercise has been undertaken in combination with trip rates generated from the TRICS trip rate survey database, and this suggests that as a maximum, 62 vehicle parking spaces would be required at any one time, representing a 53% capacity utilisation. As such, with regard to the parking quantum, there are no concerns raised with the number of parking spaces proposed from a highway perspective.
- The layout of the car park is also acceptable, with no changes proposed to the existing layout and with adequately sized parking bays and aisle widths within which to easily turn.
- The submitted Transport Technical Note covers various scenarios of anticipated vehicle trip generation associated with the differing potential combination of uses that the application proposals would allow.
- As a worst-case scenario, interrogation of the TRICS database has shown that if the site were to be utilised as 100% B2 General Industry, there is the potential for an additional 763 two-way vehicle trips to be generated on the local highway network, being 370 in and 394 out during a typical 24 hour period.
- Interrogated further, in terms of the key peak period trip rates, when comparing existing permitted development and worst case (100% B2) scenario data, the Transport Technical Note outlines that an anticipated increase in trip rates across the peak hour would be:
 - AM Peak Trip Generation: +31 Two-way vehicle trips (20 in / 11 out); and
 - PM Peak Trip Generation: +17 Two-way vehicle trips (5 in / 12 out).
- Whilst any increase in vehicle trips could obviously have an impact on the local highway network, it should be noted that split evenly over the peak hours, this would equate to a maximum of approximately 1 vehicle movement associated with the site every 2 minutes. Additionally, whilst not outlined within the Transport Technical Note, if this were to be applied as a percentage increase compared to existing traffic flows on the local network, such as the A27 Moorhill Road / Kaneshill or the A334 Charles Watts Way, it would be anticipated to be in the region of 1.5% to 3%.
- It should be further noted that it is outlined within the Transport Technical Note that a tenant for the unit has reportedly been lined up for the occupation of the building. Whilst this proposed tenant could of course change, particularly over the life span of the building in future years, the potential end user is described within the Transport Technical note as being a low trip generator with '35-50 staff members' working on site and 'it is envisaged only one HGV movement per day, with a low number of deliveries once up and running from smaller vehicles, and trips generated by staff based at the premises'. As such it would be anticipated that

overall 'user specific' trips rates will be significantly lower than standard proposed or existing.

- Given the above, it would not be anticipated that the effects that likely trip generation would have on the local highway network would be a justifiable reason for a refusal, particularly given the proximity of the site to the Strategic Transport Network (M27), the direction of which would be anticipated to be the primary route in and out of the site.

Climate Change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF, development plan and adopted local plan policy do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and local plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted local plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

Equalities Implications:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications

Conclusion:

Recommendation:

PERMIT ☒

REFUSE ☐

Comments ...