

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/24/98415

Site Address: Unit F1, Manaton Way, Hedge End, Southampton, SO30 2XQ

Case Officer: David Huckfield

Description: Proposed construction of single storey building to provide a coffee shop within part of existing car park area, together with associated rearrangement of car park access and layout and landscape planting.

Relevant Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Within the Urban Edge Within Designated Employment Site		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
F/13/71969	Construction of DIY retail warehouse (1909 sqm gross floor space) together with external yard (307 sqm) and outside display area (457 sqm), and parking area.	PERMIT – 29/04/2013
F/22/92638	Car park alterations to include Click and Collect bay; addition of Click and Collect door to west elevation; new first-floor window to north elevation and installation of 23no. security bollards around shop entrance	PERMIT – 27/04/2022
F/23/96438	Change of use from car park space to area for food trailer.	PERMIT – 01/02/2024

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☒	Newspaper ☐
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Representations

10A Herald Industrial Estate, Hedge End:

I have recently opened Hedge End Gym. A local gym owned by myself, a local resident, and with a team of local PTs. Looking at the planning for the Starbucks site, this looks to me like it will cover the whole of my signage that I have just spent a rather larger sum of money on. Moreover, the signage is crucial from that direction for people to know where I am. Now I can't be certain, but from what I have looked at, this Starbucks will cover my entire sign?

With the final decision imminent, please could this be taken into consideration?

We don't mind a Starbucks, but consideration needs to be given to the businesses it will effectively block.

Response to representation:

The comments received are noted, however, the potential for the development to obscure the visibility of advertisements for adjacent businesses from certain public viewpoints is not deemed to be a material planning consideration and, therefore, cannot be a determinative factor in the assessment of the planning application.

Consultation Responses

Hedge End Town Council	Object based on the lack of clarity on land ownership and how this fits with the existing mobile provision. We are conscious of the existing food and coffee outlets already in the proximity of this area.
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HCC Highways	No objection subject to conditions to require the submission of a construction method statement and delivery management plan for approval prior to commencement of development. ACCESS: As previously outlined, it is proposed that access in and out of the site continues to be via two vehicle crossovers, one to the northern end of the existing car park area, and one to the south. It was previously outlined that due to the southern vehicle crossover being relocated from its present position, even though Hamilton Way is not adopted highway, there would be a requirement for the existing southern crossover to be re-instated to full height kerbs and footway. Additionally, the new southern vehicle crossover will need to be provided prior to the development commencing, in order to fully retain access to the car park for the existing Wickes customers. It is however noted that the full length of the car park actually consists of a drop kerb, and as such no kerb works will actually be required. Appropriate signage highlighting access and egress points only will however be required, as shown on plans, and will need to be in place prior to the start of works. PARKING: As previously outlined, the parking quantum of the site will need to be fully assessed by EBC as Local Parking Authority, ensuring parking meets the EBC Parking Standards for all users of the car park. Numbers do however appear acceptable, evidenced through parking surveys. In terms of layout, this is acceptable with adequately sized bays and turning aisle widths matching the existing. TRIP GENERATION: It is not anticipated that trip rates in the local vicinity will alter significantly as a result of development, given the various other coffee purchasing options within a short distance of the site. It would be anticipated that trips will largely be pass-by, existing, or diverted trips from another local coffee destination. SERVICING: One element previously raised as a concern was that of servicing, and how it would affect car parking availability, and how well the associated vehicles could move around the site. It is noted that updated vehicle tracking drawings have now been submitted which clarify that vehicle movements can be accommodated, although at times some parking spaces will need to be closed off from public use. This however will be covered via a Delivery Management Plan, the production of which is a commitment that the applicants have made, which should be provided prior to opening, and enforceable via a condition.
Ecology	I have reviewed the Ecological Appraisal by Aluco Ecology Ltd (October 2024) and the Detailed Planting Plan and Schedule by Plantology (P04, October 2024). The proposal would provide more than 10% biodiversity net gain with planting of 9 additional trees and enhancing the diversity of existing planting areas. Swift bricks/nest boxes (x2) are proposed to be added to the new building.

	Swift nest boxes are best positioned under the eaves or on walls facing north, northeast or north-west out of direct sunlight, five metres above the ground, with clear adjacent airspace so swifts can access them in a high-speed direct flight. (https://www.swiftconservation.org/Nestboxes%26Attraction.htm). The ecological appraisal report recognises that these boxes are not likely to be used by swifts in this location and that they would not be able to be located at a height of 5m due to the size of the building, but they are a good universal bird box and are able to be used by other birds such as house sparrows when swifts are not in residence. Built in nest boxes are preferred as they do not need maintenance and cannot fall off. Any vegetation to be removed to facilitate the development must be removed outside of bird nesting season (which is usually between the beginning of March and the end of August) or if this is not possible then only after being checked for nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hours before the start of works. If any active nests are found, work must stop, and a 5m buffer must be erected around the nest to protect it from disturbance until after the birds have fledged and left the nest. Any new exterior lighting must avoid shining on vegetation or existing dark corridors and comply with best practice recommendations available at Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting Institution of Lighting Professionals (theilp.org.uk). The existing surface water drainage strategy is appropriate. The use of water butts to collect rainwater to water the planted areas is encouraged. A detailed landscape management plan can be conditioned.
Trees	No arboricultural information has been provided, but it appears that 4 trees will be removed to facilitate the development (the planning statement states 5). These trees are adjacent to Botley Road and would have been planted as part of the landscaping scheme for the original development. Whilst some of the landscaping scheme has not established well, these trees are some of the better specimens - they provide amenity to the highway and soften the industrial appearance. In response, it appears that nine new trees will be planted. Whilst we defer to the landscape officer, there are several problems with the proposal: • The beds are already planted with shrubs and trees. • The addition of 3, 4 and 3 trees into the three existing beds would not allow enough space for those trees to mature. • There would be a loss of trees adjacent to the public realm, with mitigation – if feasible – being set further into private land. Ultimately, therefore, we are not supportive of the application as it currently stands because of the loss of trees.
Southern Water	Southern Water requires a formal application for a connection to the public sewer to be made by the applicant or developer. Details of foul and surface water drainage provisions requested to be submitted for approval.

Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
A site visit was undertaken by the Case Officer to review the proposals in context		

Policy:

Legislative Background:

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan:

The Development Plan comprises of the Policies of the adopted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036. The following policies are of relevance to the application: S1 (Delivering Sustainable Development), S2 (Approach to New Development), S4 (Employment Provision), DM1 (General Criteria for New Development), DM2 (Environmentally Sustainable Development), DM3 (Adaption to Climate Change), DM11 (Nature Conservation), DM13 (General Development Criteria – Transport), DM14 (Parking), DM15 (Safeguarding Existing Employment Sites), DM21 (New Retail Development).

Other material considerations:

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):

The following SPDs and Background Papers are of relevance to the proposals:

- Draft EBC Parking Standards (Not yet adopted)
- Trees and Development

National Planning Policy/Guidance:

The latest iteration of the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF or Framework) was published in December 2024 and, as set out within paragraph 231, the policies contained within it are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication. The Planning Practice Guidance provides additional guidance in support of the policies within the Framework and is also a material consideration in the determination of the application.

Assessment:

Principle of development:

The application site lies within the urban edge and forms part of an established employment site within the Council's adopted Local Plan. Policy S2 sets a target of 103,500sqm of new employment development within the Borough across the Plan period (2016-2036), with Policy S4 setting out the strategy for how this will be sought to be achieved. This strategy includes retaining existing (and allocated) employment sites which have the potential to contribute towards future employment needs, and intensifying their use in accordance with the provisions of Policy DM15.

Policy DM15 goes on to state that employment uses other than those in Use Classes B2, B8 or E(g)(ii)(iii) may exceptionally be allowed on employment sites, however, this specifically excludes uses within Classes E (a)/(b)/(c) (amongst others). In the strictest terms, therefore, the development proposals, which are for the construction of a coffee shop (a Class E(b) use), are contrary to the provisions of this Policy.

In addition, and whilst the level of floorspace proposed is below the thresholds within local and national policy whereby an impact assessment is required to consider the effects of development upon the vitality and viability of existing centres, as the development constitutes a main town centre use there is a requirement for a sequential test to be

carried out. In this regard, Paragraph 91 of the NPPF states that main town centre uses should be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations; and only if suitable sites are not available (or expected to become available within a reasonable period) should out of centre sites be considered. No sequential test has, however, in this case been carried out to demonstrate that this requirement would be complied with.

Accordingly, the proposals are contrary to the provisions of both the development plan and national planning policy. As such, and for planning permission to be granted, there would have to be material considerations that are sufficient to outweigh this conflict.

In this regard, the consent which was granted for the change of use of part of the car park where the proposed development would be situated, to an area for the siting of a food trailer (F/23/96438), is a notable material consideration. Whilst the trailer is, evidently of a smaller scale than the building that is now proposed and did not in itself involve the construction of a physical permanent structure, nonetheless, this consent did establish the acceptability in principle of the introduction of a non-employment use and, indeed specifically, a catering related use, at the site.

Further, and whilst again acknowledging that the development would be more extensive than that which was previously approved and would both take up a greater proportion of the existing car park, as well as creating a greater level of parking demand for the use itself, as set out in the sections below, this can be adequately accommodated for within the space available and adequate parking capacity would still be maintained and provided for both the existing and proposed uses. The development would not thereby undermine or compromise the ability of the existing employment uses to function or operate, nor would the development directly result in a reduction or loss of employment floorspace.

In this particular case, therefore, and having regard to the above factors, the principle of the development proposed is deemed to be acceptable and there are sufficient material considerations to justify a decision otherwise than in accordance with the development plan in this respect. Any subsequent planning approval is however subject to the development being considered to be appropriate in other regards, which includes in terms of its layout, design and visual impacts, as well as in relation to ecological, amenity, arboricultural, and highway related considerations. These matters are covered below.

Design, layout and impact on the character of the area:

The proposed coffee shop building is of a simple but modern design, with it being of a rectangular footprint and single storey height, with a mono pitch roof form. Its exterior walls are proposed to be finished in predominantly off-white render which is complemented by sections of timber cladding to add variety and visual interest, with the elevations then being further punctuated by sections of glazing of varying extents on the more prominent public sides of the building.

In terms of its siting, whilst the building will be situated in relatively close proximity to the highway footway which it is acknowledged is notably advanced of the prevailing building line of the premises to the east along Botley Road, the buildings to the west, which are in closer proximity to the development, are set further forward. Taking account of this, as well as the more modest scale of the structure and its single storey and low-profile height relative to neighbouring properties, it is not considered that the building would appear as an unduly prominent feature in the street scene, nor would it detract from the character of its surroundings.

Whilst the development will necessitate the removal of some existing trees (see the section below on 'Trees' for further detail), a degree of planting will be maintained along the frontage of the site which will assist in softening the appearance of the building to a degree, with additional tree planting and supplemental landscaping being proposed around the car parking area. It is not deemed, therefore, that the amenity of the area would be unacceptably adversely affected.

Overall, and taking account of these range of factors, the design of the development is considered to be appropriate for its purpose and function, as well as for its setting, with the building being complementary to the appearance and form of the neighbouring commercial premises and the character of the surrounding area. The development thereby complies with the requirements of Policy DM1 of the adopted Local Plan in these respects.

Highway matters:

The application is supported by a Transport Statement (TS) which seeks to describe the transport related aspects of the development proposals, including access and servicing arrangements, the impacts on the highway network and car parking provision, as well as the connectivity of the site by sustainable modes of travel. The TS has been supplemented by a subsequent Technical Note (TN) which was provided during the course of the application process in response to the initial comments of the Highway Authority, Hampshire County Council.

As set out within the submitted TS, access to the site, which is currently provided by way of three entrance points from Hamilton Way, is proposed to be rationalised with a new access point to be provided at the southern end of the site and the existing northernmost access to be retained. This will allow for a one-way clockwise system to operate for the car park with vehicles entering via the former and leaving via the latter, with this being intended to improve safety and minimise potential vehicle conflict. The remaining existing access points will be closed off. Pedestrian and cycle access will be provided to the south of the new vehicular entrance point, with a relocated zebra crossing on Hamilton Way providing a connection to the footway network on either side of the road. The Highway Authority has raised no objections to the proposed access arrangements subject to conditions which will be imposed accordingly.

In respect of the impact of the development upon the highway network, the TS states that the coffee shop will be expected to generate between 5 and 10 new vehicle trips during the weekday peak periods when taking account of the reduction factor applied for the likelihood of the majority of the visits to the unit being 'linked' or 'pass-by' trips. This methodology has been accepted by the Highway Authority who have raised no objection on the grounds of the impacts of this limited number of additional trips on the highway network, with an existing coffee facility already being present on the site also being a material consideration in this regard.

The Highway Authority, in their initial comments, had requested the provision of additional/revised tracking to seek to limit impacts arising from servicing of the site (by way of deliveries and refuse vehicle collections) upon the availability of certain parking spaces. Further tracking information has subsequently been provided during the course of the application process with this being supported by the above referenced TN. This demonstrates a worse-case scenario of a maximum of 5 car parking spaces being temporarily unavailable during deliveries by HGV. Such deliveries would, however, occur infrequently (only once a week) and would be controlled through a delivery management plan which, as recommended by the Highway Authority, will be required by condition to be submitted to and approved by the LPA prior to the development first being brought into use, and thereafter adhered to.

In terms of car parking provision, the Council does not currently have adopted parking standards for commercial uses and as such, each application is at present, considered on its own merits and on a case-by-case basis. Notwithstanding this, the Council's Draft Parking Standards SPD, whilst attracting limited weight at this stage owing to its unadopted status, provides a useful indication of the 'direction of travel' in terms of the Council's likely requirements for commercial parking provision moving forwards. This document has been subject to public consultation (which ended in September 2023), with the Council currently in the process of reviewing the feedback received with a view to thereafter updating the document as required and then seeking Cabinet approval for its adoption.

The proposed development will be situated within an area which currently provides for car parking in association with the adjacent Wickes unit, save for the part for which consent was given for the siting of a food/coffee trailer. Accordingly, there will be a resulting reduction in the level of car parking that is currently available for existing uses, with the proposed coffee shop also, in addition, generating its own level of car parking demand. Accordingly, and taking account of these factors, the TS includes a parking survey which was undertaken on three separate days of the week (Saturday, Thursday and a Bank Holiday Monday), with this showing that the existing car park is notably underutilised with a peak occupancy of 41%, at which point 45 parking bays remained empty.

The siting of the proposed coffee shop will result in a net reduction of 2 car parking spaces (taking account of the consent that has already been given for the siting a food/coffee trailer at the southern end of the car park (F/23/96438)), with the new use itself stated to generate a peak parking demand of 13 spaces based upon a parking accumulation assessment which is detailed in the TS. Whilst this level is notably lower than would be required by the aforementioned Draft Parking Standards, whereby 1 space is required per 5m² of floor space for eating and drinking establishments (a total of 28 spaces based upon the 140m² building proposed), in either scenario there is sufficient capacity available, even taking account of the temporary reduction in spaces associated with the infrequent HGV deliveries referenced above.

In addition to vehicular parking, there is also a requirement for cycle parking to be provided in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of travel. The Draft SPD requirement in this respect is for 1 space per 5 staff members and 2 spaces per establishment, which is a total requirement in this case of 4 cycle parking spaces (based on 9 FTE members of staff as stated on the submitted application form). These would be provided through the use of Sheffield cycle stands to be sited adjacent to the store entrance, with their provision prior to the store being first brought into use being proposed to be covered by condition.

Finally, given the siting of the proposed building and its proximity to the Botley Road / Hamilton Way junction, there is the potential for highway safety implications to arise from construction works if these are not appropriately managed. This, however, can adequately be covered by a condition requiring the submission a Construction Method Statement for approval prior to the commencement of development, with this Statement to address such matters as arrangements for contractor parking, the location of site buildings and compounds, construction delivery arrangements etc.

Overall, and with the range of conditional controls proposed, it is considered that the development is acceptable in highway terms and the application therefore complies with the requirements of Policies DM13 and DM14 of the adopted Local Plan.

Residential amenity:

The proposals, due to their nature and siting relative to the nearest residential properties, will not unacceptably impact upon the amenity of their residents in terms of noise or disturbance, loss of light, privacy or outlook, nor will the development be unduly overbearing.

Drainage:

The site lies within Flood Zone 1, in an area which is at low risk of flooding and where development of the nature proposed is considered to be appropriate in principle. In terms of drainage provisions, the area where the proposed development will be situated is predominantly hard surfaced in the form of a car parking area which is laid to tarmac. The construction of the development proposed therefore would not result in a significant increase in impermeable area at the site. Taking account of these factors, it is not considered that the development would be at undue risk of flooding, nor would it materially increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

With regards to foul drainage, the development proposes to connect to the existing foul sewer which runs adjacent to the site along Hamilton Way. Whilst the comments of Southern Water are noted in terms of requesting a condition to cover the drainage details, in this case and given the modest scale of the development it is considered that this would be adequately covered by building regulations and by Southern Water's own connection approval processes. An informative will be added to the decision notice with regards to the requirement for the latter.

Ecology:

The application is supported by an Ecological Appraisal which seeks to assess the habitats present on site, establish an ecological baseline and to determine whether ecological receptors such as protected species were likely to be present. The report also includes guidance, mitigation and best practice measures in respect of construction in order to avoid endangering protected species, as well as recommendations for ecological enhancements to be incorporated within the development. In addition, and in line with the provisions of the Environment Act, the application is subject to the mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirement with the submission being supported by the completed BNG statutory metric and a BNG assessment in this regard.

The Ecological Appraisal notes that the site is formed predominantly of a car parking area which is laid to hardstanding, with limited areas of ornamental shrub planting. Taking account of this context, the Appraisal concludes in respect of the potential for protected species and species of conservation, that the zone of influence contains a very limited number of ecological features, including potential for nesting birds, and negligible foraging and commuting habitat for bats. Negligible habitat for reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates was also identified. Recommendations are provided for mitigation and enhancements where required, with this including the installation of 2 no. in-built bird boxes as part of the development, recommendations in respect of any exterior lighting to be installed as well as in relation to the timing of any vegetation removal to protect nesting birds, and a range of landscaping measures as detailed on the submitted landscaping plan.

The BNG assessment, which is incorporated into the Ecological Appraisal, shows a 16.33% net change in habitat units, which would exceed the mandatory 10% requirement. This will be achieved through the above referenced landscaping scheme which incorporates the planting of 9 trees as well as the enhancing of the diversity of existing planting areas. A detailed landscape management plan for these areas, can be covered by condition as suggested within the submitted Ecological Appraisal.

The Council's Ecologist has reviewed the submitted information, with no objection being raised to the proposals subject to conditions. The application is therefore considered to comply with the provisions of Policy DM11 of the Local Plan in relation to its ecological impacts.

Trees:

As a result of the siting of the proposed building, the development proposals require the removal of 4 trees which lie within a planted area in the south-western corner of the site. These trees formed part of the landscaping scheme associated with the construction of the adjacent Wickes store and, as a result of their siting in close proximity to Botley Road and thereby their visibility from the public realm, they do have some amenity value.

The Council's Tree Officer has objected to the removal of these trees on the grounds of the resulting loss of amenity, with them also noting that the proposed mitigation planting is set further into the site and would thereby potentially have less visibility and, subsequently, amenity value from the public realm. Whilst these comments are noted and it is regrettable that the existing trees are not able to be retained as part of the development, in this case and very much on balance it is not considered that their loss

would have such a detrimental impact upon amenity and the character of the area as to justify the refusal of the application on these grounds.

The trees are relatively immature specimens which are not subject to a preservation order or other form of protection, with the minimum period for which they must be replaced if removed (5 years as prescribed by condition 9 of planning approval F/13/71969) also having passed. Their removal would not therefore, in itself, require formal approval with this being a notable material consideration when assessing this matter. Additional trees would also be planted elsewhere on the site with the level of planting proposed being on a more than 2:1 basis for the trees that would be removed and, whilst, noting the areas where they would be situated are further into the site and thereby less prominent from the public realm, nonetheless there is the potential for an overall increase in tree canopy coverage in the locality.

The comments concerning the space available for the proposed planting are also noted, however, the landscaping scheme is not considered to be an unreasonable approach in the circumstances. A condition will also be imposed to require a landscape management plan to be submitted for approval and adhered to as noted above, with a requirement to replant any trees that die or removed for a period of 10 years being imposed, with these measures being considered to give the new trees the best opportunity of establishing effectively.

Taking account of these factors, there is considered to be no unacceptable conflict with the provisions of Policy DM1 of the Local Plan or the Council's Trees and Development SPD in respect of the arboricultural impacts of the development proposals.

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 also part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted local plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts. When considering the impact of climate change and taking account of the nature of the application, the proposed development raises no significant concerns.

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.

Recommendation:

PERMIT ☒

REFUSE ☐