

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/25/99701

Site Address: UNIT 3, PEACOCK TRADING ESTATE, GOODWOOD ROAD, EASTLEIGH, SO50 4NT

Case Officer: David Huckfield

Description: Change of use of existing building from Sui Generis (Funeral Directors Facility) to B8 (Storage and Distribution).

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

Relevant Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
A/25/99775 - Display of non-illuminated fascia signage to front elevation – CONSENTED (29/08/2025) F/23/95052 - Change of Use from B2 to Sui Generis Funeral Directors Facility to include 24 hour access – PERMIT (09/06/2023) Z/19606/001/00 - Change of use of Unit 5 from light industrial to warehouse and Unit 3 from warehouse to light industrial – PERMIT (1981) Z/19606/000/00 - Erection of five units for industrial and warehouse use plus hardstanding – PERMIT (1979)		

Site Visit?	Yes ☒	No ☐
A site visit was undertaken by the Case Officer to consider the proposals in context.		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☐	Newspaper ☐
Representations	None received.		
Environmental Health	We have no concerns regarding this change of use as the site is already within a commercial area.		
Boyatt Wood Parish Council	No comments received.		
HCC Highways	In regard to application F/25/99701, having reviewed the information contained within the application pack, there would be no objection to the proposals from a highway perspective. The site layout and routes to the public highway are suitable for such a use proposed, and given the size of the unit and both previous and historical use, it would not be anticipated that any uplift in trips would be significant, and is in line with other uses in the local vicinity.		

Relevant Policy and Legislation:
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).

Other material considerations:

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):

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

- Environmentally Sustainable Development (Adopted March 2009)
- Draft Parking Standards (Not yet adopted)

National Planning Policy and 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.

The application proposes a change of use from a funeral directors facility (sui generis use) to a B8 storage and distribution use, with the former being on the basis of the most recent planning consent for the unit (F/23/95052 issued in June 2023). It is not entirely clear from the information available as to whether that consent was ever actually implemented, however, and if not, the authorised use would likely be an industrial type use based on the planning history and previous occupier of the building. In either scenario, planning permission is required to change to a B8 use.

A B8 (storage and distribution) use is defined as an employment use under the provisions of Policy S4 and is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle in this location and, whilst modest in the context of the overall Local Plan target, the proposals would also

nonetheless make a contribution towards meeting the strategic employment needs of the Borough, particularly if the previous use of the unit was established to be sui generis (which is a non-employment use as defined within the aforementioned policy).

Any subsequent planning approval is however subject to the development being considered to be appropriate in other respects, which includes in terms of its layout, design and visual impacts, as well as with regards to parking, amenity and ecology. These matters are covered below.

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

The works include no external changes to the building, aside from the addition of advertisements associated with the intended end-occupier, an electrical wholesaler, which are the subject of a separate recently granted application (see planning history above). As such, and notwithstanding these advertisements, the proposed change of use will have limited impact on the appearance of the building as seen from the public realm and it will therefore remain commercial / industrial in character in-keeping with its immediate surroundings.

A condition will, however, be imposed to prevent goods, plant or materials being deposited or stored in the open without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority. This is in the interests of controlling the visual impacts of the development, to ensure that appropriate levels of parking and manoeuvring space are maintained, as well as to ensure a consistent approach with a review of the relevant planning history showing that a similar condition also applies to the other units within the Trading Estate.

Residential amenity:

The proposals, due to their nature and siting relative to the nearest residential properties which lie some distance from the site and with extensive industrial / commercial development in-between, will not unacceptably impact upon the amenity of their occupiers, including by way of noise or disturbance and no objection has been raised by the Council's Environmental Health Team in this respect. It is also not deemed necessary in this case to impose a restriction on hours of operation having regard to the location of the site, along with the previous consents given to the unit and those elsewhere within the Peacock Trading Estate which are unrestricted in this regard.

Highway matters:

The application proposes no changes to the access to the site, the building itself or the layout of the area around it, each of which are deemed to be suitable for the nature of the use proposed. As noted by the Highway Authority, there would also not be expected to be a notable material uplift in trips to and from the unit having regard to the previous and historic uses of the site. Accordingly, it is not considered that the development would unduly impact on the highway network.

With regards to parking, whilst the Council does not currently have adopted parking standards for commercial uses, these are being sought to be introduced with public consultation having been undertaken on an updated Draft Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Following the expiry of the consultation period the Council is now 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. Whilst the timescales for this process have yet to be confirmed and the SPD attracts only limited weight due to its status, it nonetheless provides a useful indication of the 'direction of travel' in terms of the Council's likely requirements for parking provision moving forwards.

This document, within Table 4 on page 28, proposes a standard for B8 warehouse uses / distribution centres of 1 car parking space per 80-100m² of floorspace. This would equate to a requirement for between 8 and 11 spaces based on 821.9sqm of floorspace within the building, with a further 1 loading space additionally being needed. No information has been provided as to the exact level of parking that is specifically available for the unit, however from the Case Officer's site visit it was noted that there were 6 spaces immediately to the front of the premises, which is broadly similar to each of the adjacent units, as well as a loading space to the front of its roller shutter door. There is then a further bank of spaces opposite the units for the use of the occupiers of the Trading Estate.

Taking account of this, the previous uses of the site and the level of parking demand that would have been associated with them (which would likely have been higher than for a B8 use), as well as no objection being raised by the Highway Authority on parking grounds, the level of provision available is considered to be acceptable in this case.

Ecology:

As the application proposes no physical changes to the exterior of the building or the area around it (which is substantively laid to hardstanding) the *de minimus* exemption in respect of the mandatory biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements applies to the development on the basis that habitat of less than 25sqm would be affected (in this case no habitat would be directly affected). Having regard to the limited extent of the works, there are considered to be no other ecological concerns in this particular case.

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; (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.

The NPPF supports economic growth and productivity with the aim of building a strong competitive economy, and Policy S2 of the Local Plan sets a target for 103,500sqm of new employment development to be provided within the borough over the plan period as noted earlier in this report. The NPPF, Policies S1, DM2 and DM3 of the Local Plan and the Council's adopted Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use. Taking account of the nature of the proposals, the site context and the limited extent of the works proposed, the development is expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change and to have limited material impact on climate emissions, when considered relative to the existing/previous use of the premises.

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 equalities implications.

Recommendation:	PERMIT subject to conditions
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