

3/08/2114/FP – Change of use from B2 use to B2 and B8 use, including minor external alterations to the building at Industrial site east of Station Road, Standon, Herts, SG11 1NQ for Mr David Stacey

Date of Receipt: 05.01.09

Type: Full

Parish: STANDON

Ward: PUCKERIDGE, THUNDRIDGE AND STANDON

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:-

1. Three Year Time Limit (IT12)
2. Carried out in accordance (2E92)
3. Covered cycle parking facilities shall be provided, in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development and shall thereafter be implemented, retained and made available for use in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To encourage the use of cycles as a means of transport and in the visual interests of the appearance of the site, in accordance with policies TR13, TR14 and ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

4. Detailed drawings and specifications of the proposed boundary fence and gate, including a plan showing the siting of the proposed fence and gate, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any development, and thereafter shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with policy ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

5. Tree Retention and Protection (4P05)
6. Hedge Retention and Protection (4P06)
7. No-external working (6N06)
8. No external storage (5U07)

Directives:

For the avoidance of doubt, the ground-mounted air conditioning units as shown on drawing No.02A are not included in this grant of planning permission. Insufficient information in relation to the air conditioning units have been submitted with this application to enable the Local Planning Authority to fully consider the proposed units, and therefore these matters will have to be the subject of a further planning application accompanied by details and specifications of the proposed air conditioning units.

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (East of England Plan May 2008, Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular SD1, SD2, OSV1, OSV7, EDE1, EDE4, TR7, TR13, TR14, ENV1, ENV2, ENV11 and ENV19. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies is that permission should be granted.

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract, and is located within the settlement of Standon. The application site is some 1.19 hectares in size and comprises a large building of industrial appearance located at the northern end of the site, which has an internal floor space of some 3235m², and to the south of the building an area of hardstanding currently used for parking. The site currently has a total of 30 car parking spaces. The boundaries of the site are defined by existing landscaping, and the area of landscaping and the northern end of the site is protected by woodland Tree Preservation Order.
- 1.2 The application site is bounded to the north, south and west by residential properties in Meadow Walk, Rib Close, Station Road and Orchard Drive, and to the east by the Puckeridge Tributary and the River Rib.
- 1.3 This application site has been in industrial use for a significant period of time. The site was lastly occupied by a food product manufacturing company, and such a use is considered to fall within class B2 of the Use Class Order. This application seeks permission to use the building for purposes of B2 Class (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage & Distribution) of the Use Class Order. The applicant has commented that the new use of the

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building is proposed to be for the storage and distribution of personal health and safety equipment, together with a small production area for embroidering and printing personal logos on the equipment, and small associated offices.

- 1.4 This application does not involve the physical enlargement of the building, but will involve the re-planning and extension of internal office areas, some minor external changes including some additional fenestration (described later), and the erection of a new section of fencing and gate.
- 1.5 The application site is located within the Category 1 village boundary of Standon/ Puckeridge as designated in the Local Plan (policy OSV1). The site is also identified as an employment area in the Local Plan (Policy OSV7).

2.0 Site History

- 2.1 The site has an established industrial use comprising a food manufacturing and processing plant (Use Class B2). The following applications are considered to be relevant to the consideration of any applications on the site:
 - 3/78/0278/FP
Replacement of existing factory (Approved)
 - 3/98/1083/FP
Erection of workshop and installation of windows in existing building (Approved)
 - 3/99/0421/FP
Erection of boiler house (Approved)

3.0 Consultation Responses

- 3.1 The Environment Agency has no objections to the proposed development, but recommends that the applicant considers a green roof to replace the existing roof.
- 3.2 The Council's Environmental Health Section has no objection to the application but recommend conditions relating to noise and air quality issues.
- 3.3 County Highways do not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to conditions relating to: the proposed vehicle access, parking and turning space being carried out in accordance with the plans; before the use commences all on site vehicular areas shall be surfaced in a manner to the

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LPA's approval; before the use commences, the provision of secure cycle storage indicated on the approved plans be made to the satisfaction of the LPA; and all areas for parking and storage and delivery of materials associated with the construction of development shall be provided within the site on land which is not the public highway. They comment that the proposed use would lead to a 13% reduction in traffic movements in comparison to the existing B2 use class and that, given the number of employees proposed there are sufficient levels of parking. They conclude that approval of this application is likely to lead to a net reduction in traffic movements and given the existing land use of the site and its location in relation to the principal highway network, an objection on highways grounds is not justified.

- 3.4 The Council's Landscape Officer recommends consent for this application. They comment that the only material changes are the provision of new fencing as well as a bike and bin store, and recommends that conditions relating to the colour/ style and appearance of the fencing and the bike store are attached to any grant of permission.

4.0 Parish Council Representations

- 4.1 Standon Parish Council has commented that they fully support this application as it will provide increased job opportunities within the Parish. However, more information is requested on the new Euro style fencing proposed for the frontage.

5.0 Other Representations

- 5.1 The applications have been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.
- 5.2 Two letters of representation were received. Both raised no objections to the proposed development, however a number of conditions were suggested relating to the type and height of fencing; trees, boundaries and landscaping; control of waste water – discharge into the River Rib; hours of operation, restriction on site lighting and the operation of the alarm.

6.0 Policy

- 6.1 The main policies relevant to this application are East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 policies:

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SD1	Making Development More Sustainable
SD2	Settlement Hierarchy
EDE1	Employment Area
EDE4	Storage and Distribution Uses
TR7	Car Parking – Standards
TR13	Cycling – Facilities Provision (Non-Residential)
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
ENV2	Landscaping
ENV11	Protection of Existing Hedgerows and Trees
ENV19	Development in Area Liable to Flood
OSV1	Category 1 Villages
OSV7	Employment Areas

7.0 Considerations

7.1 The main considerations in relation to this application are:

- The principle of proposed use
- The impact upon neighbour amenity
- The proposed alterations to the building and the site
- Parking provision and highway considerations

Principle of Proposed Use

7.2 The application site is designated as an Employment Area in the Local Plan, wherein policy OSV7 of the Local Plan states that the site will be reserved for industry comprising use classes B1 and B2 and where well related to the transport network B8. Having regard to this policy there is therefore no objection in principle to the proposed development. Policies EDE4 and OSV7 also state that storage and distribution developments will only be permitted on sites which are well related to the transport network. This site is located approximately 220 metres from the junction of Station Road and the A120, which is the main east – west route across the District and close also to the north – south route of the A10. In Officers opinion therefore the site is well related to the transport network and there is therefore no objection to a storage and distribution use at this location.

Impact upon neighbour amenity

7.3 With regards to part(d) of policy ENV1 of the Local Plan, consideration is to be given to respecting the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring buildings to ensure that their environments are not harmed by noise and disturbance or by inadequate daylight, sunlight or privacy or by overshadowing.

- 7.4 As stated earlier in this report, this site has been in industrial use for many years, and local residents are aware of its existence, and possible disturbance from it. The main issues to consider however in relation to this application and its impact on local residents, is whether the introduction of a B8 use on this site would result in an unacceptable level of noise and disturbance to local residents, and whether the proposed alterations to the building's fenestration would result in any overlooking and unacceptable loss of privacy to local residents.
- 7.5 Turning firstly to the consideration of the impact of the proposed B8 use, it is Officers opinion that the proposed B8 use of the site would not result in any unacceptable impact in terms of noise and disturbance to local residents. County Highways have undertaken a TRICS assessment for the proposed use and have stated that the proposed development would lead to a 13% reduction in traffic movements when compared against the existing use class. Taking this reduction in traffic movements into account, the noise generated from the operations inside the building and the possible noise and disturbance that can be associated with the existing B2 use, it is considered that the proposed use would not result in an unacceptable level of noise and disturbance to local residents that would warrant refusal of the application.
- 7.6 During consultations on the application, both a local resident and the Council's Environmental Health Section suggested that hours of operations conditions be attached to any grant of permission. The previous permissions for the factory on the site have not been subject to any conditions which restricts the hours of operation on the site. Taking into account that a Class B2 Industrial use can be currently undertaken on the site without restriction, and that the proposed use is likely to result in a reduction in noise, disturbance and traffic movements to and from the site, it is considered that it would be unreasonable to now attach conditions to limit activities on the site, especially as such restrictions were previously not in place for what can arguably be considered a use which would be more likely to result in a detrimental impact on the amenities of local residents. Notwithstanding the above comments however, it is recommended that a condition is attached to any grant of permission to ensure that no processes are undertaken outside of the building.
- 7.7 Turning now to the impact of the proposed changes to the fenestration of the building, it should be noted that there is a distance of 70 metres between the southern elevation of the building and the rear of dwellings in Rib Close and 30 metres between the northern elevation and Meadow

Close. Having regard to these distances therefore it is unlikely that the proposal will result in any detrimental impact on the privacy of local residents.

Proposed alterations to the building and the site

- 7.8 As mentioned above, this application proposes some changes to the fenestration of the building specifically the addition of further openings in the north and south elevations. The proposals for the south elevation includes the insertion of a door at ground floor level, a window to the first floor serving the offices, together with a door next to an existing large roller-shutter door and a strip of six windows serving the mezzanine. The northern elevation changes include the loss of all of the existing windows and the insertion of two fire exit doors. The applicants comment that the repainted and refurbished building will be a considerable improvement in the appearance of the site and enhance the character of the site. It is the opinion of Officers that these changes to the fenestration are not detrimental to the character of the building and its setting and it is recommended that the minimal changes in appearance accord with policy ENV1 of the Local Plan.
- 7.9 The application also proposes the erection of a fence with gates along part of the boundary of the site with Station Road. The fence is proposed to be some 1.8 metres in height and 2 metres in height for the gates. The Design & Access Statement proposes a 'more modern (Euro) fence and less industrial looking gate but limited details of the design, appearance and colour of the fence and gate have been submitted. There is no objection in principle to the erection of a gate and fence in this position. Much of the fencing would be obscured by the existing planting along the boundary with Station Road, and it is therefore considered that it would not result in any detriment to the character and appearance of the area. However, it is recommended that a condition be attached to any grant of permission which requires the detailed design, materials and colour of the gate and fence, and its exact position, to be submitted to and agreed by the Council prior to its erection.
- 7.10 Drawing reference No.02A shows the installation of six ground-mounted air conditioning units to be placed along the western boundary of the site. These are proposed to be positioned between the flank wall of the building and the proposed new fencing. Details of the size, scale and specification of these units were not received as part of this application, nor were they included in the description of the application and Officers have therefore

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been unable to fully assess the impact of these units. It is therefore recommended that a further application be submitted for these units to allow the Council to full assess their physical and environmental impact upon the site and its surroundings.

- 7.11 The application also proposes to re-organise the existing parking arrangements to allow for the parking of some 45 vehicles, in comparison to the 30 spaces that are currently provided. It appears that the proposed re-organisation would not result in any need to increase the amount of hard-surfacing within the site. As such these alterations would not constitute development.

Travel plans and parking provision

- 7.12 The supporting information submitted with the application states that the proposed development would result in traffic generation of 15 to 20 staff arrivals and departures daily (confined to early morning and evening) and major bulk deliveries arriving by container (Infrequently/ quarterly) or one lorry per week, and the distribution of good to clients by courier on a daily basis of an average of 3 per day. County Highways undertook a brief TRICS assessment (based upon worst case scenario figures) comparing the traffic generation from the existing B2 use of the site against that from the proposed development of mixed industrial uses. Their assessment, as outlined earlier in this report, suggested that the proposed development would lead to a 13% reduction in traffic movements when compared against the existing use class. Having regard to the comments of County Highways, and the predicted reduction in traffic generation associated with the proposed use in comparison to the existing use, it is considered that the proposed development would not result in any detrimental impact on the highway capacity or safety issues that would warrant refusal of the application.
- 7.13 Turning now to the issue of car parking, the application proposes a total provision of 45 parking spaces, which is an increase of 15 spaces on the existing. Considering the Supplementary Planning Document – *Vehicle Parking Provision at new Development* and Appendix II of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007, if the parking requirements were to be assessed for each individual element (B1, B2 & B8) a maximum of 66 spaces (+ 5 lorry spaces) should be provided. Clearly these are the maximum number of spaces required, and in determining the appropriate level of parking provision regard should be had, in accordance with policy TR7 of the Local Plan, to the proposed use, location and availability of, or potential for access to, modes of transport other than the private car. This report has already commented on the accessibility of the site, and its

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proximity to public transport links together with the provision of 12 cycle and motorcycle spaces. County Highways have also noted that since the proposed staffing levels highlighted in the application fall well below the number of parking spaces proposed, the level of parking provided would exceed that realistically required. Having regard to this, Officers are satisfied that in this instance the level of parking proposed is acceptable, and would accord with policy TR7 of the Local Plan.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 In conclusion, Officers consider that the proposal accords with the policies of the Local Plan and will not result in any detriment to the character of the locality or adversely affect the amenities of the neighbouring residents.
- 8.2 It is therefore recommended that planning permission is granted, subject to conditions.