

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL
PLANNING CONTROL BOARD
27TH SEPTEMBER 2001
REPORT OF THE CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

PCB 27.09.01
PART 1
FOR DECISION
CPO

S6/2000/1213/FP
ERECTION OF INDUSTRIAL UNITS
LAND ADJACENT TO NELSON HOUSE, SOPERS ROAD,
CUFFLEY, POTTERS BAR

APPLICANT: SIR WILLIAM BURNETT & CO

(Northaw & Cuffley)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site is located on the east side of Sopers Road within the Cuffley employment area. The site measures 74m x 43m and forms half of a larger site occupied by an operating sawmill and timber merchants. The ground level falls away moving south along Sopers Road and the site is bounded by other industrial premises to the north, west and south and by open green belt land to the east. The administrative boundary with Broxbourne Borough Council also runs along the eastern boundary of this site. There is one main vehicle access in the north western corner of the site and two closed-off accesses further along the western boundary.
- 1.2 The application site is currently used for the open storage of timber and builders materials with two high level, open-sided sheds in the north western corner and one similarly sized shed along the eastern boundary.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This application seeks permission for the redevelopment of this site for small industrial units. The applicants originally proposed 9 units in a single row, sited along the southern boundary of the site. However, following concerns expressed by the Local Planning Authority regarding the impact of the development on the offices of the premises to the south, an amended scheme was submitted which proposes 10 units provided in two rows on the northern and southern boundaries. It is proposed to enlarge the existing access to the site, providing a service road through the centre of the site which terminates in a turning head. Car parking would be provided in two bays beside the main access and also in front of the units themselves.
- 2.2 The industrial units proposed are all of the same design , with average footprints of 17.9m x 7.6m and a maximum height of 7.4m. They would be finished in brick at low level with profiled metal cladding at high level and a shallow pitched roof. Each unit would be equipped with a roller shutter on the front elevation and a small office internally.

3.0 POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Alterations No.1, 1998

Policy EMP1 Employment Areas
Policy EMP2 Limitations to development in Employment Areas
Appendix A Employment Development Design Criteria

4.0 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

- 4.1 This application was publicised by the posting of a site notice and the direct notification of adjoining premises. One letter of objection was received from an adjoining industrial premises stating that small industrial units would be out of keeping with the larger occupiers surrounding the site, that the extra traffic the development would generate would cause highway problems and that the development overshadowed the offices to the south of the application site. Following submission of amended proposals, a further letter was received from the objector, acknowledging that the revisions removed the overshadowing of their offices but otherwise reiterating their other objections.
- 4.2 Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council object on the grounds that the proposal represents an overdevelopment of the site that will exacerbate the parking in Sopers Road, that there is inadequate lorry parking and that increasing the industrial capacity of Cuffley will be detrimental to the parish.
- 4.3 Broxbourne Borough Council have no objection subject to planting along the eastern boundary being reinforced.
- 4.4 No objections from Thames Water and the Environment Agency.

5.0 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The application site is within the Sopers Road employment area designated in the adopted district plan and there is a shortage of small industrial units within the district. Therefore, there is no objection to the proposal in land use policy terms subject to the development meeting adopted employment design criteria and having no adverse impact on adjacent occupiers.
- 5.2 The application site is at a higher ground level than the industrial premises on its southern side and this boundary is formed by a retaining wall and high chain link fence. The scheme as originally proposed resulted in the rear elevation of the units being sited 11m from the office windows on the adjacent property. Although the units would only have an eaves height of 5.6m, their impact would be exacerbated by the difference in ground levels at this point which would be unacceptable. However, the revised scheme moves the buildings away from this area and I am satisfied that the relationship with the adjacent property is now acceptable.
- 5.3 The original scheme sited the units close up against the western boundary. I considered that this would result in a cramped development which would appear visually intrusive when viewed along Sopers Road. I am satisfied that the revised scheme which sets the buildings back from the road will result in an acceptable

appearance in the street. The design of the units themselves are acceptable within an employment area.

- 5.4 The total floor area of the proposed scheme is 1178 square metres. The applicants are seeking an unrestricted industrial use on this site and, as the units are individually under 1000 square metres in area, I would impose the more onerous parking standard of 1 space/25 square metres of floorspace. This would place a requirement of 47 spaces on the site and the scheme proposes 50 spaces. Therefore, I am satisfied that the proposal would not be likely to increase on street parking in the area. The Highways Authority have raised no objections to the proposal subject to our car parking standards being met. Similarly, due to the small size of the units, I am satisfied that the turning facilities provided on site are adequate.
- 5.5 The applicants have proposed a scheme of tree planting along the eastern boundary of the site to screen the development in views from the open land beyond. The units now proposed are lower in height than the high level shed currently on this boundary and I am satisfied that the visual impact of the development on this boundary is acceptable.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposed development is acceptable in land use policy terms and, following revisions to the layout, I am satisfied that the impact on adjacent premises is acceptable. The proposal therefore accords with policy EMP2 of the district plan. Car parking is provided in accordance with our adopted standards and the scheme raises no other highway issues. The design of the scheme is acceptable as is the visual impact on the surrounding area.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 I recommend that planning permission be granted in respect of application reference no. S6/2000/1213/FP, subject to the following conditions;
1. SC01-Time Limit Full Permission
 2. SC19-Materials: details to be submitted
 3. SC09-Landscaping Scheme Full Permission
 4. SC24-Parking Maintained
 4. SC31- No Open Storage

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning application File S6/2000/1213/FP

810/18/09/01