

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2010/2484/MA
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NOTATION:

The site is located within the Former Hatfield Aerodrome Site and the Hatfield Business Park Employment Area as designated by the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The application site is located on the Hatfield Business Park, which is designated as an Employment Area (EA6) within the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005. The Business Park covers approximately 85 hectares of the former Hatfield Aerodrome. Hatfield Business Park contains a mix of buildings for both commercial and industrial purposes.

The application site is located off Gypsy Moth Avenue and is accommodated by the online grocery company Ocado. The site has two access points from Gypsy Moth Avenue which serve a staff car park and service goods vehicles.

The site has an area of 8.8Ha and the main building has a floorspace of 27,406sq.m. The site comprises the main building, parking areas for staff and deliver vehicles and other ancillary buildings.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The proposed development would involve the following additions to the site:

- The installation of a plantroom including transformer and generator to the south western elevation
- To the north western elevation of the main building additional dock doors for 14 double decked lorries would be constructed and a separate single height dock door would also be constructed.
- To the south western elevation additional dock doors would be constructed for 6 vans.
- Three fire escapes would be constructed, of which one would be on the north western elevation and two would be on the south western elevation where an external goods lift would also be installed.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/2000/1307/FP – Erection of a distribution building (Class B8), together with associated parking, service yards and landscaping at Land of Former Hatfield Aerodrome – Approved

S6/2006/0043/FP – Relocation of Staff Shop – Approved

S6/2006/1603/FP – Data centre including provision of 2no. car parking spaces located independently from main building Approved

S6/2007/0338/MA – Erection of CSTM Facility extension joined to existing warehouse building, over existing loading docks and erection of new totewasher facility extension joined to existing warehouse building, over existing loading docks – Approved

S6/2007/0389/FP – Extension to relocate inbound office, extension to create new returns area and insertion of four loading doors – Approved

S6/2007/0683/MA – Erection of New Transformer Room and Screened Standby Generator Location on Roof of Existing Plant Room and New Plant Room and Smoking Shelter Enlarged and New Refrigeration Equipment and New Window – Approved

S6/2008/1758/FP – Installation of ten air conditioning units to roof – Approved

S6/2009/2334/MA – Construction of single decked car park over existing ground level car park and the use of land to the north of the site for car parking to provide 566 additional spaces; landscaping and associated infrastructure changes and provision of additional disabled parking bays in front of the main building – Resolution to approve subject to legal agreement.

S6/2010/1933/MA – Erection of a steel gantry to the side of the building, supporting a containerised generator unit and installation of a transformer unit – Approved

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

National Planning Policy:

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Communities

PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:

None.

East of England Plan 2008

SS1: Achieving Sustainable Development

ENV3: Biodiversity and Earth Heritage

ENV7: Quality in the Built Environment

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

GBSP2: Towns and Specified Settlements

SD1: Sustainable Development

D1: Quality of Design

D2: Character and Context

R3: Energy Efficiency

R19: Noise and Vibration Pollution

EMP1: Employment Areas

EMP2: Acceptable Uses in Employment Areas

EMP13: Design Criteria for Employment Development

HATAER1: Sustainable Development of the Hatfield Aerodrome Site

CONSULTATIONS

HATFIELD TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

No comment received.

REPRESENTATIONS

None. Period expired 22 June 2011.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

1. Quality of Design and Character and Context
2. Noise and Vibration Pollution
3. Other Material Planning Considerations

1. The proposal would involve operational equipment and plant for the warehouse which would generally have a functional and industrial appearance. The main warehouse building is very large and is the main focal point within the site. There are several existing features and projections that are viewed against the backdrop of the much larger building.

The proposed additions would be relatively small and would be clad to match the existing building. The proposed fire escapes have been designed to match the existing fire escapes and these additions would not appear more prominent or noticeable from the surrounding area. When viewed from outside of the site the distance separating these projections would offset their depth and prevent them from appearing any more prominent than the existing building.

The proposed plant room would be a relatively small addition which would have an ancillary appearance which would not appear out of place for a large warehouse site. This addition would not appear overly prominent or dominant.

The proposed additions would generally not exceed the depth of existing projections on the building. Although the resultant building would have the appearance of having more openings and additions, these would not appear out of place or dominate the appearance of the building as a whole.

The resultant building would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality.

2. The proposed additions would be largely screened from the neighbouring residential areas by the existing building. Due to the distance separating the nearest sensitive receptors the proposal would not result in any adverse noise and disturbance to the neighbouring properties.

Some additions would be to the south eastern side of the building however these would not generate additional noise and disturbance.

Although the loading bays would allow more vehicles to operate from the south western side of the site, the distance separating the neighbouring occupiers is sufficient to prevent an adverse impact. Furthermore, the existing yard generates a

reasonable amount of noise due to the vehicular movements and the proposed development would not significantly worsen this existing arrangement.

The proposed development would therefore meet the requirements of Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

3. Energy Efficiency and Sustainability: The application has been submitted with sustainability checklist which notes the development would follow the waste strategy hierarchy of minimisation. Although the proposed works are not specifically for energy efficient equipment, all of the alterations would allow the company to operate more effectively. The company delivers groceries and therefore reduces the amount of vehicles that travel to supermarkets by car and the energy inefficiencies of a traditional supermarket. Considering the proposal comprises relatively minor additions to the existing site, the application would meet the requirements of Policies SD1 and R3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

Chalk Mining: The application site is not within the area of Hatfield that requires a chalk mines risk assessment.

Protected Species: The presence of protected species is a material consideration, in accordance with PPS9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation), Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (section 40), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as well as Circular 06/05. In the UK the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive is implemented by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the Conservation Regulations 2010). Where a European Protected Species ('EPS') might be affected by a development, it is necessary to have regard to Regulation 9(5) of the Conservation Regulations 2010, which states: *"a competent authority, in exercising any of their functions, must have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive so far as they may be affected by the exercise of those functions."* The Conservation Regulations 2010, (Regulation 41) contains the main offences for EPS animals, however the existing site and development is such that there is not a reasonable likelihood of EPS being present on site nor would an EPS offence be likely to occur. It is therefore not necessary to consider the Conservation Regulations 2010 further.

East of England Plan 2008: The application has been considered against policies in the East of England Plan, which at the time of this decision forms part of the development plan for the borough.

On 10th November 2010, The High Court quashed the decision of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to unilaterally revoke Regional Spatial Strategies in England on two grounds:

- That he acted outside his statutory powers in circumventing the need for parliamentary scrutiny of such a fundamental change to the national planning system; and
- He failed to consider the likely environmental effects of revoking Regional Strategies

Whilst the Government is still committed to the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies through the Localism Bill, the policies in the East of England Plan are currently re-established and form part of the development plan again and are therefore a material consideration which can be taken into account in reaching a decision.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality or the residential amenity of the neighbouring occupiers. The application is considered to be acceptable and would meet the relevant requirements of Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1: Standard Time Limit
2. C.13.1: Development in accordance with approved plans/details LEG-0003-05 Sheet 1 of 2 & LEG-0003-31 Sheet 1 of 2 Issue C & LEG-0003-31 Sheet 2 of 2 Issue C & LEG-0003-32 Sheet 1 of 2 Issue B & LEG-0003-31 Sheet 2 of 2 Issue B received and dated 10 May 2011.
3. C.5.2: Material to Match

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

Reason for Grant of Full Planning Consent:

The proposal has been considered against Planning Policy Statement/Guidance PPS1, PPS4, PPS9, East of England Plan 2008 policies SS1, ENV3, ENV7 and development plan policies SD1, GBSP2, D1, D2, R3, R19, EMP1, EMP2, HATAER1, EMP13 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, which, at the time of this decision indicate that the proposal should be approved. Material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the development plan (see Officer’s report which can be inspected at these offices).

INFORMATIVES: None.

Signature of author..... Date.....