

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2013/1232/MA
APPLICATION Site:	Eisai Europe Ltd, Mosquito Way

NOTATION:

The site lies within the Hatfield Business Park, which is covered by the adopted Hatfield Aerodrome Supplementary Planning Guidance (1999) and Masterplan. Hatfield Business Park is designated as an employment area (EA6), under Policy EMP1 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005).

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The area of the proposal lies to the southern side of the buildings within the site. The wider site has an area of approximately 5.94Ha and accommodates recently constructed research, development and manufacturing plant for the pharmaceuticals company Eisai Europe Ltd. Access to the site is from Mosquito Way which bounds the site to the north-west.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

Erection of two storey extension to provide 3000sqm of office accommodation (use class B1).

PLANNING HISTORY:

Summary of relevant planning applications:

S6/2012/2641/FP – Erection of storage warehouse – Approved 08 April 2013.

S6/2006/1214/FP – Proposed phased development of a building to provide a total of 8,812sqm of accommodation for purposes within use Class B1 and 2,338sqm of accommodation for purposes within class B8, together with associated car parking, access and landscaping. (Application made in conjunction with an application on adjacent land to enable the provision of a B1/B8 headquarters campus development) – Approved 15/02/2007.

S6/2006/1210/FP – Proposed phased development of buildings to provide a total of 14,318sqm of accommodation for purposes within use Class B1, with associated car parking, access, landscaping and other ancillary buildings. (application made in conjunction with an application on adjacent land to enable the provision of a B1/B8 headquarters campus development) – Approved 15/02/2007.

S6/1999/1064/OP – Demolition of existing (unlisted) buildings, removal of runway and other hard standing areas and redevelopment for the following purposes: as a business park comprising uses within Use Class B1, B2, B8 and Sui Generis use;

housing; new university campus (Use Class D1 and D2) to include replacement De Havilland Sports and Social Club and associated playing fields; two hotels; primary school and associated facilities; district centre; works of conversion to enable recreation use existing listed hanger; Aviation Heritage Centre, together with associated highway, transport and service infrastructure (including a strategic transport corridor), landscaping and open space, diversion of Ellenbrook. Means of access to be determined – Approved 29/12/2000 subject to a section 106 agreement. Since the outline permission was granted, a series of reserved matters applications have been submitted, and development on this site has been taken forward in a number of stages.

SUMMARY OF POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Circular 03/09: Costs Awards in Appeals and Other Planning Proceedings

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

SD1: Sustainable Development

GBSP2: Towns and Specified Settlements

R1: Maximising the use of previously developed land

R3: Energy Efficiency

D1: Quality of Design

D2: Character and Context

M14: Parking Standards for New Development

EMP1: Employment Areas

EMP2: Acceptable Uses in Employment Areas

EMP13: Design Criteria for Employment Development

HATAER1: Sustainable Development of the Site

HATAER2: Mixed Use

HATAER3: Requirement for a Masterplan

HATAER4: Land Use Proposals for the Hatfield Aerodrome Site

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004

Hatfield Aerodrome, Supplementary Planning Guidance, November 1999

CONSULTATIONS:

Highways Agency: No objection.

Hertfordshire County Council Transport Programmes & Strategy: Do not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to an updated Green Travel Plan being agreed prior to occupation.

Hertfordshire Constabulary: It was recommended that the company register its IT equipment to aid recovery if items are stolen.

TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Hatfield Town Council: No response (consultation expired 02/08/2013)

REPRESENTATIONS:

This application was advertised by site notice located at the site entrance and Tamblin Way. No representations have however been received, and the period for representations expired on 07/08/2013.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

1. The acceptability in principle
2. Parking provision
3. Impact on the character and appearance of the area
4. Impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties
5. Other material planning considerations

1. The acceptability in principle

The application site is situated within the context of the wider Hatfield Business Park, which is designated as an employment area (EA6), under Policy EMP1 of the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (2005). The site is also covered by the Hatfield Aerodrome Supplementary Planning Guidance (1999), which sets out the Masterplan to guide the redevelopment of the area.

The applicant's land ownership has a total area of approximately 5.94Ha and includes 23,130sq.m of accommodation for purposes within Use Class B1, 2,338sq.m of accommodation for purposes within Use Class B8, together with associated car parking, access, landscaping and other ancillary buildings.

Policy EMP2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan aims to safeguard designated employment areas for development within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 whilst Policy EMP13 aims to ensure that proposals for development within Classes B1, B2 and B8 reach high standards of design and site layout.

This proposal is for the erection of a two storey extension to Eisai, to provide approximately 2,900 sq.m (internal) of use class B1 office accommodation. The new floorspace will comprise packaging lines, offices, laboratories and a plant room.

Paragraph 4.139 and the corresponding table of the section 106 agreement for planning permission S6/1999/1064/OP set out the floorspace permitted for different uses on the Hatfield Business Park. A total of 190,996 sq.m of development (not including the hotel) was permitted on the Business Park, under the terms of the section 106 agreement, and to date, a total of 151,563 sq.m has been developed, and is now occupied (not including the recent Toolbank application approved under reference S6/2013/1184/MA).

Under the Section 106 Agreement the maximum permitted floorspace within the commercial area for B1 a/b uses was 96,300 sq.m. To date, 69,082 sq.m of B1 a/b floorspace has been developed, with 27,218 sq.m B1 a/b floorspace remaining. Therefore, sufficient B1 a/b floorspace remains on the Business Park to accommodate this proposal, this proposal is therefore consistent with the Section 106 Agreement and the original permission for the development of the Hatfield Business Park.

For these reasons, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle, it is contrary to the purposes of the Section 106 agreement and the agreement does not need to be varied in the event that permission is granted for the current proposal.

2. Parking provision

The proposal is for an extension to an existing building which would provide approximately 3000sqm of office accommodation use class B1. The existing site is unusual in that although the buildings are particularly large and have a large floorspace, a significant proportion of the floorspace accommodates equipment and plant for the production of the pharmaceuticals and the use is not very intensive in terms of the number of staff required to use the equipment. Therefore, the overall number of employees is relatively low for a B1 use.

The existing site is unusual in that it has not implemented all of the parking that was approved for the original consent for the site. Due to the low number of workers at the site a relevant amount of parking has been provided to suit the occupier's requirements. In the case of an intensively used site (in terms of workers) the assessment of car parking space requires careful management to reduce car usage, when looking at the size of the application site it does not have a proportionate impact upon the capacity of the highway network.

It is important that the site produces an up to date Green Travel Plan to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes to the site. When assessing the amount of parking provision required, due to the site having a relatively low number of workers and relatively low impact on road usage, the number of spaces can be gauged to the occupier's specific requirements. This would ensure that unnecessary parking is not provided, which would work with the aims of a Green Travel Plan.

The proposed extension would accommodate a large floorspace for plant and an area for the production of pharmaceuticals. This area would require a limited number of additional staff and there are not any proposals to increase the number of parking spaces for the existing 518. The approval for the site in 2007 allowed up to 618 spaces, which gives the site capacity if required in the future.

The proposal would be sited over a section of the previously approved parking space. Due to the size of the site if further parking were required in the future the areas could be rearranged to ensure sufficient space is provided.

The following table sets out the applicant's records of the number of staff on site.

Month / Year	Staff Numbers (Per Day)
Aug 12	439
Sep 12	476
Oct 12	478
Nov 12	537
Dec 12	471
Jan 13	485
Feb 13	468
Mar 13	479
Apr 13	483
May 13	477
Jun 13	468
Jul 13	473

Although the table does not note the methods of transport to and from the site, the existing Green Travel Plan shows approximately 70% of the visitors to the site are car drivers. Therefore, even when considering the proposed development could result in up to 40 additional members of staff, the existing parking provision would be sufficient and it does not appear necessary to implement any of the additional space that were originally granted.

It has been noted that the Hatfield Aerodrome SPD has a requirement of 1 space per 40sq.m of B1 floorspace during phase 3 of the Business Parks development. Therefore, if based on the floorspace that is being created 75 spaces would be required. However, for the reasons above it is not necessary to provide additional parking space.

Therefore, subject to an appropriate Green Travel Plan being agreed to take into account the proposed extension and additional capacity of the development there is not a need to provide additional on site parking. The proposed development would sufficiently comply with the requirements of Policy M14 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and the sustainable transport requirements of the Hatfield Aerodrome, Supplementary Planning Guidance November 1999.

3. Impact on the character and appearance of the area

The proposal is sited to the rear of the Eisai Europe Ltd site within an open landscaped area and would partly infill a space adjacent to an existing projection. The proposed extension would be visible from Tamblin Way to the south, but these views would be quite distant. In addition to the separation from the highway, the proposed building would be seen against the backdrop of the existing main building which it adjoins the north. The proposed extension would be simple and functional in design and would be similar in appearance to the Energy Centre building. The extension would be subordinate in scale and it is proposed to finish the elevations in profiled metal cladding to match adjacent buildings.

It is of note that any glimpses from the adjacent occupiers to the east and west would be minimal and the resultant building would not affect the appearance of these areas. It is appropriate that the landscaping surrounding the proposal is amended to help soften the appearance of the new development. The submitted landscaping plan illustrates the existing trees would be relocated and this is considered to be

sufficient. The impact on the character of the area would not be significant and the proposal is therefore in accordance with Policies D1, D2 and EMP2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

4. Impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties

The proposal would accommodate a relatively small area of the whole Eisai site. Due to the site of the wider site and distance from the boundaries of the plot, the size and appearance of the proposal would be offset when viewed from the nearest adjacent occupiers. The proposal would retain a distance of approximately 46.5m from the southern boundary of the site. The apartments (Clarkson Court) on the opposite site of Tamblin Way would retain a sufficient distance from the proposal to prevent it from appearing too prominent or overbearing. The proposed extension and resultant building would not have an adverse impact upon the outlook from the apartments, subject to appropriate landscaping to the area surrounding the proposed extension.

The distance separating the proposal from the adjacent buildings would be sufficient to prevent any further overlooking or a loss of privacy to the adjacent occupiers.

Due to the orientation of the site and distance from the neighbouring occupiers the proposal would not result in any overshadowing or a significant loss of light to the main habitable areas of any properties.

The proposed development is therefore in accordance Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Supplementary Design Guidance 2005 (Statement of Council Policy).

5. Other material considerations

Sustainable Development: The applicant has completed a sustainability checklist which highlights that the scheme generally responds positively to the topic areas that are required to be considered in accordance with Policies SD1 and R3 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 and Supplementary Design Guidance, 2005.

Protected Species: The presence of protected species is a material consideration, in accordance with the National Planning Policy, Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (section 40), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as well as Circular 06/05. Protected species such as great crested newts, otters, dormice and bats benefit from the strictest legal protection. These species are known as European Protected Species ('EPS') and the protection afforded to them derives from the EU Habitats Directive, in addition to the above legislation. Water voles, badgers, reptiles, all wild birds, invertebrates and certain rare plants are protected to a lesser extent under UK domestic law (NERC Act and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981). 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 and amended 2012 Regulations further.

CONCLUSION: The proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality or the residential amenity of the adjoining occupiers. The proposal would retain a sufficient distance from the

boundaries of the plot to offset any adverse impact of its size and sufficient landscaping would be retained to help soften the appearance of the resultant building. The occupiers of the application site have a relatively low number of staff when considering the floorspace that the site accommodates and the proposal would not require any additional parking provision. Subject to conditions the proposal is considered to be acceptable and complies with the relevant requirements of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1: Standard Time Limit (3 Years)
2. C.13.1: The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details L(--)-100 & L(--)-101 & L(--)-201 & L(--)-203 & L(--)-210_Section & L(--)-211_Section B & L(--)-220_Elevation A & L(--)-222_Elevation C & L(--)-290 received and dated 20 June 2013.

PRE-OCCUPATION

3. Two months prior to the first occupation of the development the applicant shall update the current "Green Travel Plan" to reflect the changes in staffing level and parking provision with the object of reducing the staff and visitors travelling to the development by private car which shall be first submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval by the Planning/Highway authorities. The Travel Plan shall be implemented and maintained to current Hertfordshire County Council's criteria, in full throughout the life of the development.

REASON: To promote sustainable transport measures to the development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with the site wide S106 Agreement.

POST-DEVELOPMENT

4. C.5.2: Matching Materials

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The decision has been made taking into account, where practicable and appropriate the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework and material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the development plan (see Officer's report which can be viewed on the Council's website or inspected at these offices).

INFORMATIVES: None.

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