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Planning, Design and Access Supporting Statement

Booker, Hatfield Business Park, Frobisher Way, Hatfield,
Hertfordshire, AL10 9TR

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1. Introduction

1.1.1 Colliers have been instructed to prepare and lodge a planning application on behalf of their client, Booker, for new plant facilities, installed at Hatfield Business Park, Hatfield in Hertfordshire.

1.1.2 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the suite of documents forming part of the detailed planning application pack:

- Location Plan
- Existing Site Plan
- Proposed Site Plan
- Proposed Plant Area detail
- Pack Housing Detail
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Floor Plans
- Photographs of site
- Photo of example plant

1.1.3 This statement is set out as follows:

- Section 1 – Introduction
- Section 2 – Site
- Section 3 – Development Proposals
- Section 4 – Planning Policy Assessment
- Section 5 – Conclusions
- Appendix

1.1 Applicant

1.1.4 Booker Cash & Carry (the applicant) are a wholesale operator and subsidiary of Tesco. The building at Hatfield comprises their Distribution Centre with a Booker Cash and Carry unit located to the west of the Distribution Centre.

2. Site

2.2 Location

- 2.1.1 The property at Hatfield Business Park comprises a Booker Distribution Centre with associated car parking located within an established industrial estate to the north west of Hatfield which sits to the north of London in Hertfordshire in the borough of Welwyn Hatfield. The application site accommodates a large warehouse The site currently accommodates 89 lorry parking spaces and a vehicles service area.
- 2.1.2 The surrounding area comprises industrial buildings to the north east and west with a residential area located to the south of the site. The distribution centre is heavily screened from view by an established tree belt located to the south of the site.
- 2.1.3 The application site is 792sqm in size and is located to the north east corner of the Distribution Centre.
- 2.1.4 The site is located within the Welwyn Hatfield Council local planning authority area where the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan was adopted in 2005. A replacement Local Plan is currently at examination stage.
- 2.1.5 The building is not listed and does not sit within a conservation area.
- 2.1.6 The site is not impacted by flood risk with a very low risk identified on site for both river and sea flooding and surface water.

2.3 Site History

- 2.1.7 Welwyn Hatfield Council’s online planning portal includes a record of planning applications submitted since 1947.
- 2.1.8 The Distribution Centre at Hatfield was originally granted planning permission in 2001 (ref.: S6/2000/1307/DE). Subsequently, the following planning applications for various amendments to the building have been submitted:

Reference	Decision Date	Description	Decision
6/2019/0892/LAWP	10 June 2019	Certificate of lawfulness for erection of canopy and loading platform	Granted
S6/2012/2163/FP	20 December 2012	Installation of solar panels (PV 4kW)	Granted
S6/2010/3155/FP	17 June 2011	Installation of five diesel powered generators (which are housed in insulated container units) with two number fuel storage containers and one switch gear container and 2.5m acoustic barrier	Granted
S6/2001/0631/DE	20 July 2001	Erection of a B8 warehouse building totalling 8,513.sqm including ancillary office	Granted

		accommodation together with associated car parking, gatehouse, service yards, landscaping and access (reserved matters)	
S6/2000/1307/DE	12 January 2001	Erection of a distribution building (Class B8) together with associated parking, service yards and landscaping.	Granted

- 2.1.9 Various minor amendments to the building including additional plant and generators have been granted planning permission by the council in the past. This has set a useful precedent for the acceptability of this scale of development at this location/on this site.
- 2.1.10 The council case officer’s report for the 2010 generators application concluded that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality. It was considered that provided the acoustic barrier is erected in accordance with the details provided, the proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the residential amenity of the nearby occupiers. The generators and acoustic fence as per the requirements stipulated by the council have since been erected on site.
- 2.1.11 The proposed development was considered to be an appropriate addition which would not have an adverse impact upon the surrounding transport movements or result in a significant amount of vehicles movement to service the proposed equipment.
- 2.1.12 It is considered that the proposals for additional plant are largely consistent in terms of appearance, scale and impact when compared against previous proposals on site. As previous plant and generator planning applications have been granted on site, this has set the precedent for this type of development to be considered acceptable at this site.

3 Proposal

3.2 Introduction

3.2.1 Full planning permission is sought for *'Relocation of external refrigeration plant facilities'*.

3.3 Development Proposal

3.3.1 Booker are committed to the continuous innovation of its refrigeration systems to improve performance, reliability, ease of installation, maintenance, energy consumption and environmental impact. To meet these goals, Booker are currently replacing the existing refrigeration system at their Distribution Centre at Hatfield. This is in order for the new plant to meet the following standards:

- Refrigeration Installation & Commissioning Standard DES8186
- Refrigeration Plant CO2 Standard DES 8187
- Refrigeration Controls & Leak Detection Standard GES-R004
- Refrigerated Coldroom Standard GES-R007

3.3.2 The new plant will be transcritical dual temperature CO2 systems. The Chill Store and Coldstore shall be equally split over two systems. The CO2 plant will be located at ground level on a base adjacent to the existing Coldstore (to the north east of the existing building).

3.3.3 The majority of the replacement plant work will take place inside the unit, but some external alterations are also required, namely to provide a new external plant area to the north east of the site.

3.3.4 A new ground floor plant compound is proposed in the north east corner of the site adjacent to the main building (shown in "area c" below):

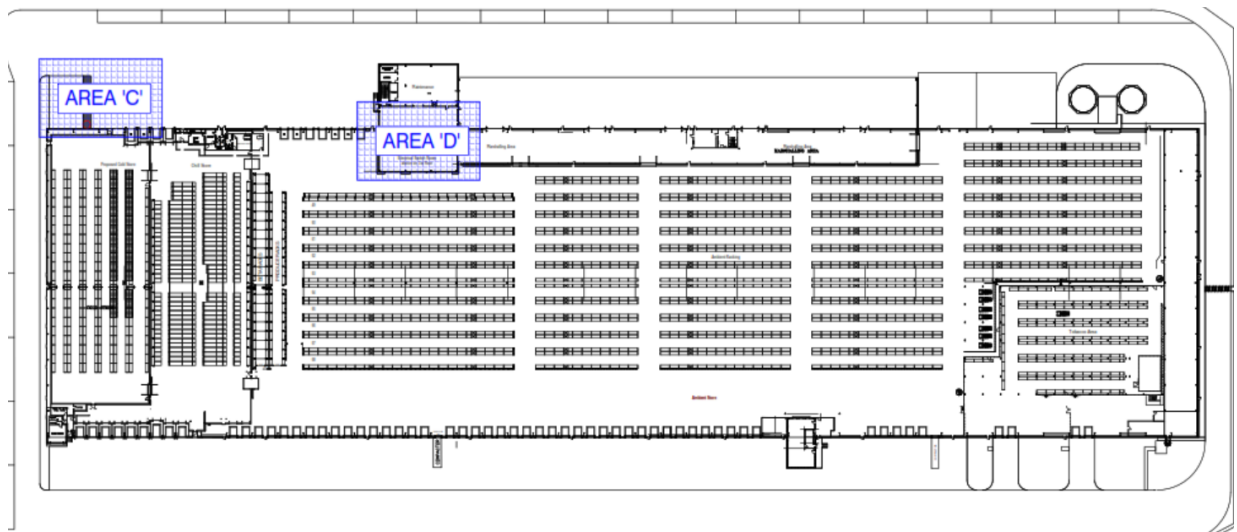


Figure 1: Existing Site Plan

Planning Statement – Booker Hatfield

- 3.3.5 The proposals involve the relocation of existing refrigeration plant (Ammonia plant) which is currently located at roof level in “area D” shown above and a small area of plant at ground floor level which currently sits to the east of area “C”. This plant equipment will be removed and disposed.



Figure 2: Existing Plant to east of "area c" to be removed

- 3.3.6 The new plant area will be provided on a smooth and level base concrete plinth and the machinery will be mounted on anti-vibration pads.
- 3.3.7 The new plant compound will include two off new dual temperate CO2 packs (2 space engineering de-superheater (DF-SJ102E3H-063M-AV)). Each pack will have a dedicated gas cooler and associated controls integrated into the pack- 16 gas coolers which will sit on concrete pads, and an Ace Acoustic Container (layout shown below).
- 3.3.8 The container will be grey polyester powder coated.
- 3.3.9 Services will run from the CO2 plant at ground level and will enter the void above the coldrooms at high level, as per the existing arrangements. The pipe access route will be clad to match the existing building cladding.

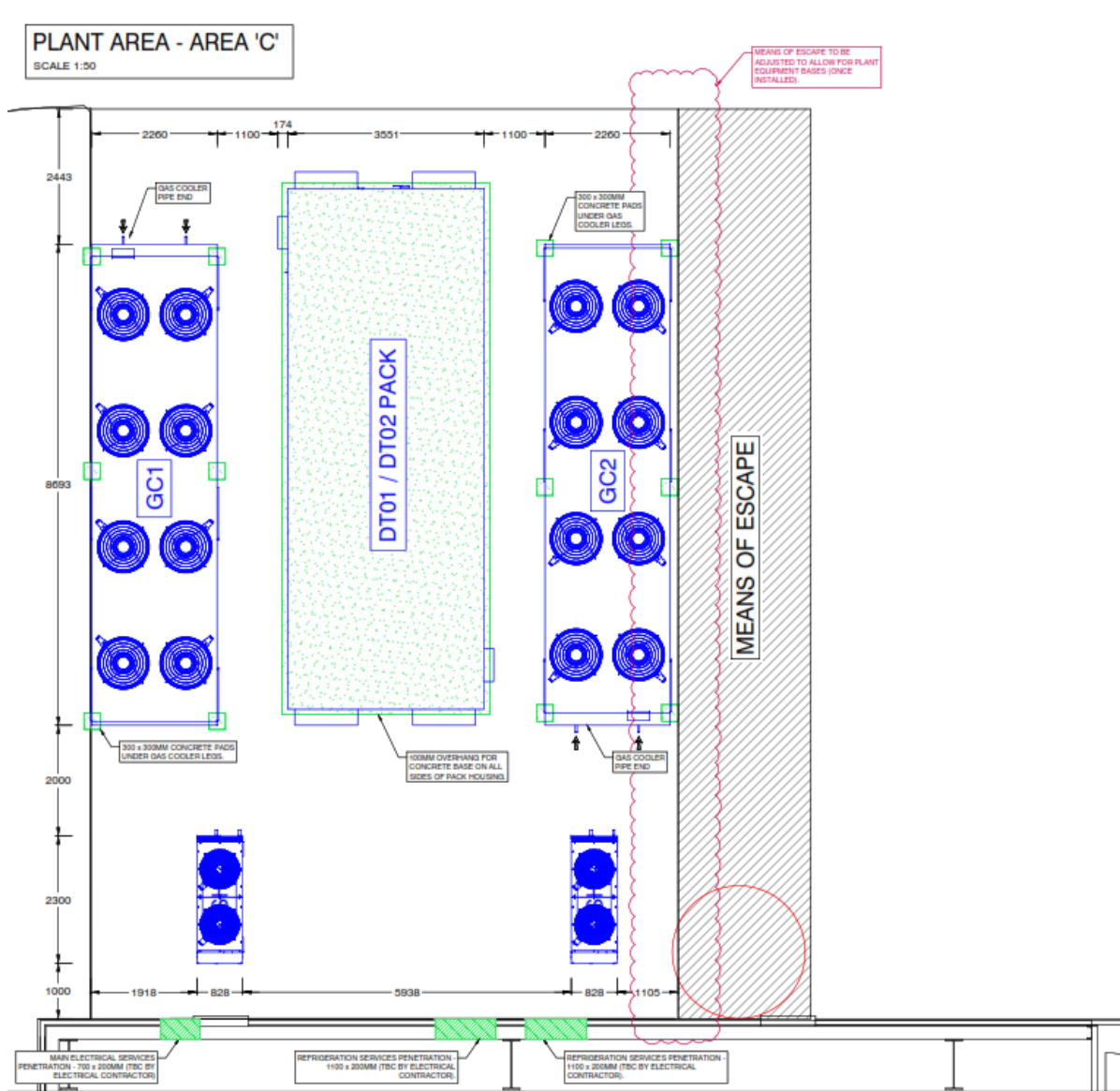


Figure 3: Proposed layout of new plant facilities within "area C"

3.3.10 Protective fencing as per existing fencing on site (palisade fence with armco barrier at low level) will be provided around the new plant area and lighting will comply with all CDM and H&S requirements. The plant will match that of another Booker site where the plant has already been installed, see below:



Figure 4: Appearance of new proposed plant once installed

3.3.11 The plant and gas coolers will not exceed a combined noise level of 60 dB(A) at 10m (further information contained in the enclosed Noise Assessment).

4 Planning Policy and Assessment

4.2 Context

4.2.1 The Town & Country Planning Act 1997 specifies that making a material change to the use of land or buildings is defined as ‘development’ and requires a planning permission. Section 38(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 places a legal obligation on decision makers to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.2.2 The adopted Development Plan Comprises the following:

- Saved policies of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan (adopted 2005)
- The Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan (adopted 2012-2014)
- The Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan (adopted 2007)

4.2.3 Material Considerations include the following:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

4.2.4 The Welwyn Hatfield District Plan was adopted by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council in April 2005. The majority of the policies were saved in April 2008. The replacement Local Plan is currently at examination stage, this will replace the District Plan saved policies. The current adopted Plan is used for the purpose of this planning statement.

4.2.5 The below section includes a summary of relevant planning policies and the assessment of the proposals against the criteria:

4.3 National Planning Policy Framework

4.3.1 Published by the UK Government in 2012 and reviewed in 2021, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) ‘sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced’.

4.3.2 The NPPF key policy objectives relevant to this proposal include:

- Achieving sustainable development
- Making effective use of land
- Achieving well-designed places
- Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Assessing the proposed development against NPPF policies, we have found the following paragraphs as the most applicable:

4.3.3 Section 2. Achieving Sustainable Development highlights that any proposed development should support sustainability on economic, social, and environmental level. These are interdependent but need to be ‘mutually supportive’. Considering the proposed development serving a function of

enhancement of the environment while providing a more efficient refrigeration system for the site, it is supportive of the Sustainable Development principle.

4.3.4 Considering the visual aspect of the proposal, Section 12. Achieving well-designed places states that proposed developments:

- *function well and add to the overall quality of the area not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development*

4.3.5 The proposed development would be sited within a large industrial site so the proposed development would be wholly consistent with the existing surrounding industrial development and park. The new plant will be neater and more compact than the existing two areas of plant currently on site so will enhance the appearance of this elevation. Existing plant which currently sits at first floor level will also be removed and relocated to this new plant area which will be less visually intrusive at ground floor level.

4.3.6 The distance separating the proposal from the surrounding areas is considered sufficient to offset the impact of the proposed additions.

4.3.7 Therefore, the proposals comply with National Planning Policy.

4.4 The Welwyn Hatfield District Plan

Location and Principle of Development

4.4.1 The proposed plant facilities are located to the north east of the site which benefits from existing established tree belt screening and close proximity to other industrial buildings as part of the wider industrial estate.

4.4.2 The property sits within a protected employment area.

4.4.3 The policy allocation for the industrial park, Policy EA6 – Hatfield Business Park, Hatfield supports development in the area which fall under Class B use classes (including storage and distribution) and therefore we are of the opinion the proposal is supported by local planning policy.

4.4.4 Any further development within employment areas will be subject to the following criteria set out in Policy EMP2- Acceptable Uses in Employment Areas:

- i. The proposal would not, due to the scale of employment generated, have an unacceptable impact on the demand for housing in the travel to work area;*
- ii. The proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the local and/or strategic transport infrastructure;*
- iii. The proposal would not harm the amenities of any nearby residential properties;*
- iv. The development would provide adequate parking, servicing and access;*

4.4.5 We believe that the proposals meet the above criteria as follows:

- i. the proposals are extremely small scale in nature and replace existing plant provided on site so will not have an unacceptable impact on the demand for housing in the travel to work area
- ii. the proposals will not have any impact on the current level of traffic generated on site, the proposals are for replacement plant only so the proposal will not have an unacceptable impact on local and strategic transport infrastructure
- iii. As confirmed by the enclosed Noise report, the resultant noise levels at the two nearest noise sensitive properties will be at least 10 dB below the underlying background noise levels and will be unlikely to disturb the residents. The plant is positioned to the north east of the site, further away than the existing plant sits to the nearby residential area and is heavily screened due to an existing established tree belt. Therefore, the proposal will not harm the amenity of nearby residential properties
- iv. The proposals will not result in the reduction in the number of parking spaces for lorries on site which is substantial (81 spaces on site). Sufficient space within the site remains for vehicles to manoeuvre and wait clear of the carriageway, therefore the proposals would not have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highways and the site will continue to provide adequate parking, servicing and access

4.4.6 The proposals therefore comply with Policy EMP2.

Design

4.4.7 Policy D1 - Quality of Design states that the Council will require the standard of design in all new development to be of a high quality. The design of new development should incorporate the design principles and policies in the Plan and the guidance contained in the Supplementary Design Guidance. This includes the following design principles:

- Character
- Continuity and Enclosure
- Quality of the Public Realm
- Ease of Movement
- Legibility
- Adaptability
- Diversity

4.4.8 The proposed development would be sited within a large site, which is set away from the adjacent public rights of way. The distance separating the proposal from the surrounding areas is considered sufficient to offset the impact of the proposed additions. The proposal will include a separate metal container that would have a similar appearance to a small shipping/storage container. The container would have various doors and vents on the elevations. As shown in the example image in figure 4 above.

4.4.9 When considering the size and industrial appearance of the main building within the site and the appearance of the surrounding business park buildings, the proposal would have an appropriate appearance and would not appear out of place. The proposed plant area would not appear overly prominent.

- 4.4.10 The proposals should be viewed in the context of the existing landscaping which surrounds the boundaries and softens the appearance of the existing development. The existing landscaping would partly screen the proposed development and be sufficient to soften the appearance of the additional built development.
- 4.4.11 The proposed plant area would be sited to not appear too prominent or intrusive from the neighbouring residential properties or the workplaces that are nearby. The proposed development would not have an overbearing impact or result in a loss of light to the neighbouring properties.
- 4.4.12 Therefore, the proposals comply with Policy D1.

Noise and Vibration Pollution

- 4.4.13 Policy R19 states that proposals will be refused if the development is likely to generate unacceptable noise or vibration for other land uses.
- 4.4.14 As confirmed by the enclosed Noise report, the resultant noise levels at the two nearest noise sensitive properties will be at least 10 dB below the underlying background noise levels and will be unlikely to disturb the residents. The plant is positioned to the north east of the site, further away than the existing plant sits to the nearby residential area and is heavily screened due to an existing established tree belt. Therefore, the proposal will not result in any unacceptable noise impacts for other surrounding land uses.
- 4.4.15 The proposals incorporate anti-vibration mats under all equipment which ensure that no vibration will be felt by surrounding users.

Energy Efficiency

- 4.4.16 Policy R3 states that the council will expect all development to include measures to maximise energy conservation and incorporate the best practical environmental option for energy supply.
- 4.4.17 The proposed development aims to replace redundant, less energy efficient plant with new refrigeration facilities for the site which will improve energy conservation on site. This aims to incorporate the best practical environmental option as an alternative to the existing plant machinery and equipment. This will result in an energy saving reduction of a round £200,000 per annum due to significantly lower energy consumption of the new refrigeration plant.
- 4.4.18 The proposals therefore comply with Policy R3.

5 Summary and Conclusions

- 5.2.1 It is held that the proposed new refrigeration plant facilities should be granted full planning permission.
- 5.2.2 The proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the locality. The proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the residential amenity of the nearby occupiers. The proposed development is considered to be an appropriate addition which would aid the upgrade of the existing historic and inefficient refrigeration system on site.
- 5.2.3 The proposal would not have an adverse impact upon the surrounding transport movements or result in a significant amount of vehicles movement to service the proposed equipment.
- 5.2.4 Following a thorough policy assessment, it is found that the proposed development accords with national planning policy and the local plan and there are no material considerations which outweigh this assessment.
- 5.2.5 It is therefore respectfully requested that Welwyn Hatfield Council grants the proposal for replacement plant planning permission.