

**WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT**

DELEGATED APPLICATION

Application No: 6/2016/0318/MAJ
Location: Media House, Sopers Road, Cuffley, Potters Bar, EN6 4RY
Proposal: Erection of additional floor to provide 1719 sq metres of B1a (Office) floorspace in association with the use of the premises for B1 offices together with elevational alterations to the remainder of the building
Officer: Ms F Nwanze

Recommendation: Granted

6/2016/0318/MAJ

Context			
Site and Application description	<p>The subject site is a two storey B1 industrial building which is located on the western side of Sopers Road on an industrial estate.</p> <p>The site is located within the designated Green Belt however the surrounding area is predominately industrial in character and comprises of single and double height industrial sheds and buildings.</p>		
Constraints (as defined within WHDP 2005)	<p>EMPL - (:)</p> <p>GB - Greenbelt</p> <p>LCA - Landscape Character Area (Cheshunt Common)</p> <p>PAR - PARISH (NORTHAW AND CUFFLEY)</p> <p>WARD - NORTHAW AND CUFFLEY</p> <p>ALA - Broxbourne</p> <p>A4D - ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION (Glasshouse)</p>		
Relevant planning history	None		
Consultations			
Neighbour representations	Support: 0	Object: 0	Other: 2
Publicity	<p>Site Notice Display Date: 29 March 2016</p> <p>Site Notice Expiry Date: 19 April 2016</p> <p>Press Advert Display Date: 23 March 2016</p> <p>Press Advert Expiry Date: 6 April 2016</p>		
Summary of neighbour responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No neighbour responses have been received. 		

Town / Parish representations	<p>Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council – No objection in principle. However the Parish Council would wish permitted development right for conversion to residential to be withdrawn.</p>
Consultees and responses	<p>Councillor George Michaelides - No response Councillor John Nicholls – No response Building Control - No response Fiona Lai – No response Mr John Parker – No response Hertfordshire Transport Programmes & Strategy – No objection- suggested conditions and informatives.</p> <p>Application is described as providing 1719 sq metres of B1a (Office) floorspace however section 18 of the application form confirms that the net additional gross internal floorspace following development shall be 1378m² of floor area following the necessary internal changes to facilitate the proposed additional floor. I have assessed the proposals on the basis of this net additional floor space.</p> <p>HCC would require a development within this use class (B1) to be provided with a Transport Statement where the floor area was in excess of 1500m², and therefore a TS is not required. The Design and Access statement suggests that the proposals serve to relocate staff from a local employer who are required to move as a result of prior approval consent for B1 to housing to an adjacent site. It is my understanding that this may relate to District Reference S6/2015/1119/OR - Prior approval for the change of use from Class B1(Office) to Class C3 (Dwellinghouses) Everest Ltd Everest House, Cuffley, to which my comments dated 10/6/2015 refer.</p> <p>HCC have previously accepted the loss of the vehicle movements associated with the B1 use, and replaced by a reduced residential demand. This present application would serve to reintroduce these movements.</p> <p>I consider B1 use of 1378m² floor area has the potential (TRICS assessment) to generate circa 6.5 vehicle trips / 100m² of floor area across the day, and therefore generate approximately 89 two way vehicle trips. In the AM peak arrivals may reasonably be expected to be circa 20 inbound movements and a similar level of trips in the PM peak. Such a level of vehicle arrival equates to approximately 1 every 3 minutes during the peaks and would be negligible in terms of vehicle flows on Station Road being in excess of 1000 vehicles in the AM peak (E/W, 2014 figure). The earlier application (Everest Ltd, Everest House, Potters Bar) provided a total of 45 dwellings in place of the B1 floor area, HCC would have considered at this that such a development might give rise to circa 30 movements in the peaks. The development now considered shall therefore reintroduce inbound trips to Sopers Road in the AM peak at an approximate level of 45, and these shall be trips already on the network currently and evident in visible daily traffic flows on Station Road and the wider network. In net terms, if consent is granted, the area shall experience a slight increase in trips on the network which in real terms represents the additional</p>

housing considered previously, if accepting that employment trips remain largely unchanged. Trips for the two uses are opposite and opposing.

Sopers Road Industrial Estate is a small trading estate located to the south-east of the railway station. The trading estate is located on the edge of the village, separated from residential development by the railway line.

The site is in a very sustainable location, located on the periphery of the village centre, and in close proximity to Cuffley Station providing access to 3 trains per hour (off peak) to Moorgate with trains also to Hertford North and Letchworth via Stevenage. Local shops, and other facilities exist nearby this as well as access to bus routes 302, 380 and 242.

The application describes that parking for 92 vehicles shall be provided, and shall be for the LPA to determine whether provides sufficient parking is provided to serve the requirements of the increased employment space, however the Highway Authority note that in close proximity to the site is public car parking in the control of the Parish Council and parking controls exist locally (part) to control / deter parking in inappropriate locations. Any shortfall in parking is unlikely to have a significant highway impact.

I would observe that some parking is in tandem, but it is not unreasonable in a work environment for such an arrangement to be workable. Spaces parallel to direction of travel are shown at 2.4m x 4.8m and commonly a distance of 6m is recommended for such bays to ensure they're accessibility even when adjacent bays are occupied, but it is again not unreasonable to expect within an employment situation to consider this workable. Parking in such a situation can, at times, provide an informal arrangement, but I would recommend that all parking areas provided are identified with marked bays in order that the level of parking described shall be achieved representing effective use of site area. I present no objection that parking arrangement precludes through movement within the site, removing an access / egress arrangement and instead providing flows at both points of access, noting that footway activity is likely to be low.

No new or amended access is provided as part of the development, and existing access points (two off) are constructed to serve the industrial nature of the site providing wide vehicle crossovers a both points. As the development proposals include loss of B1(c) use (Light industrial) and the use becomes solely B1(a) offices, these accesses as presently provided are in excess of operational requirements. The Highway Authority would recommend that concurrent with any grant of consent, and prior to occupation, the access points be reduced in width to reflect the change in vehicle type attending the site. Such a requirement shall improve footway conditions at this point (as well as potentially provide additional on-street parking capacity) Cycle parking is described as remaining at 10 spaces, it is unclear on submitted plans

Relevant Policies	
NPPF D1 D2 GBSP1 GBSP2 M14 Others	
Main Issues	
Design (form, size, scale, siting) and Character (appearance within the streetscene)	<p>The B1 property has existing floorspace of 3427 sq metres. The proposal seeks to add 1719 square metres to the premises. However the proposal involves some demolition of ancillary buildings at the site and as such the net gain in floorspace will be 1378square metres. This represents an increase of approximately 40% in floorspace.</p> <p>The principle of this development is considered to be acceptable as although the building is located within the Green Belt, the development meets the exemption criteria outlined in paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which permits inter alia:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. <p>The proposed additional floor will take the building from its varied height of between 7 – 8.2m to 9.5 metres. The extension will span 59 metres across the front and rear elevations and 33 metres across the side elevation. The proposal also seeks to make changes to the elevations by altering windows, doors and changing the materials used on the facades of the building. The design, height and form of the proposed extension and the elevational alterations proposed are all considered to be appropriate for its setting in the streetscene.</p> <p>Neither the quantum of additional floorspace proposed, nor the height, form and design of the extension make this a disproportionate form of development. In this regard the proposal complies with the NPPF and the above mentioned policies as a contained in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.</p>
Impact on neighbours	The surrounding area is predominately industrial in nature and comprise of buildings which vary in height from 1 – 3 storeys. The proposed development is not expected to adversely affect the general amenity of the occupants of neighbouring buildings
Access, car parking and highway considerations	<p>The site will utilise existing access points and car parking spaces. However there is a need to insert a condition requiring the applicant to provide and identify the disabled parking. This will ensure that the development is inclusive.</p> <p>Other conditions/informatives suggested by HCC have been included as recommended.</p>

Landscaping Issues	N/A
Other Material considerations	
Contaminated Land	N/A – proposal seeks to add an additional floor to an existing building.
Archaeology	N/A - proposal seeks to add an additional floor to an existing building.
Waste Management	N/A – existing arrangements will continue.
Foul Sewage Disposal	N/A – existing arrangements will continue.
Planning Obligations	N/A - proposal seeks to add an additional floor to an existing building.
Any other considerations	None.
Conclusion	
The proposal, which would provide additional B1 (c) floorspace, is considered to be acceptable. The additional floorspace proposed is considered to be proportionate to the size of the original building and sensitive to its location within the Green Belt. Subject to the insertion of appropriate conditions regarding cycle and disabled parking, the proposal is considered to be acceptable. It is therefore recommended that Planning Permission be GRANTED.	

Conditions:

1. The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details:

AT420 - 01
AT420 - 02
AT420 - 03
AT420 - 04
AT420 - 05
AT420 - 06
AT420 - 07
AT420 - 08
AT420 - 09
AT420 - 10
AT420 - 11
AT420 - 12

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and details.

PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT

2. No development shall take place until a revised plan has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing showing the following

amendments, which shall be incorporated into the design for the development/works hereby permitted. The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved plan.

* Cycle parking provision

* A minimum of 10% disabled parking provision.

REASON: To ensure that an appropriate form of development is provided and to in order to ensure adequate disabled parking provision is made in accordance with Policies M14 and D9 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

Vehicular Access

On site Car and Cycle Parking

1. POSITIVE AND PROACTIVE STATEMENT

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:

Advisory Note

Advisory Note

Advisory Note

1. The decision notice contains conditions which require you to submit information to the Local Planning Authority and have it approved in writing before any development relating to the approval takes place. There is a formal procedure for applying to discharge conditions and further information can be found at <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=834> . Failure to comply with this type of condition may result in the development being considered unlawful and enforcement action could be taken. If you require any clarification or information please contact the section on 01707 35700.

Determined By:

Mr C Haigh

10 June 2016