

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	<u>N6/2007/0126/FP</u>
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NOTATION:

The site is located within an Employment Area within Welwyn Garden City as designated by the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The site is located off Burrowfield stretching to the end of the cul-de-sac at East Burrowfield. Access can be gained from both Burrowfield to the north and East Burrowfield south west of the site. The site is 0.02ha measuring 102m x 19m with playing fields bordering the southern boundary of the site and industrial/commercial properties located to the east and west and a recessed access off Burrowfield to the north.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The application is for the change of use to a coach depot including part demolition of existing building. The site is currently vacant and was previously used as a vehicle parts depot. The new use would include the parking and storage of coaches, together with their maintenance and repair within the building. The proposal includes the demolition of 345sqm of the existing single storey commercial building and retention of 350sqm. It is proposed that 28 commercial vehicles are likely to visit the site during a normal working day, 14 of a morning and 14 of an afternoon.

PLANNING HISTORY:

None.

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES:

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011:

14 – Development for Employment Needs

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005:

GBSP2 – Towns and Specified Settlements

D1 - Quality of design

EMP1 – Employment Areas

EMP2 – Acceptable Uses in Employment Areas

M14 - Parking standards for new developments

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

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

CONSULTATIONS:

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS:

None received.

Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority – does not wish to restrict the grant of permission. They consider that sufficient parking is provided on the site and access arrangements are unchanged and the proposal would not have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highways.

REPRESENTATIONS: Three. Notification period expired 16 March 2007.

Issues raised include:

Safety of the retaining wall and request for condition to secure and strengthen the wall and/or ensure a secure boundary is erected.

Welwyn Hatfield Access Group – request the application is considered subject to the standards and criteria of policies D3d & D5 and Building Regulations Part M and BS8300 Code of Practice – Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people.

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

- 1) Acceptability of use in this location;**
- 2) Potential highway implications on the surrounding area;**
- 3) Potential affect on neighbouring properties;**
- 4) Other material planning considerations.**

1) The use of the site as a coach depot is classed as being sui generis in the nature of the operations being carried out as the parking and storage of coaches together with the maintenance and repair of coaches within the building on site. Given that the site is located within an Employment Area as designated by policy EMP1, Policy EMP2 is of importance in the determination of this application. This states criteria within which Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 would be permitted and proposals for other uses should generally be resisted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the existing land or premises are no longer required to meet future employment requirements and business and community needs.

It is however recognised that there is a need for some flexibility to meet the needs of uses which are composite uses but which do not readily fit within Use Class B and it is difficult to find suitable locations for these uses outside of the designated Employment Areas. Taxi vehicle depots are listed as a suitable use within this area compared against which this proposed use as a coach depot is not dissimilar although the composite use being predominantly storage does not have a retail element attached to it.

It is considered that the proposed use is acceptable in this area which is industrial in nature and due to there being a lack of other suitable sites in the Borough for such works.

2) The Highway Authority considers that the proposal would not have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining highways and there is sufficient parking space on the site and access arrangements are unchanged. It appears from the information provided that there is scope to park all 14 coaches on site (4 No. 8m midi buses to the south of the site and 10 No. 12m coaches) with space remaining for manoeuvring within the site although limited information is available as to how all of the parking bays would be accessed and how all coaches would enter and leave the site in forward gear. Although the highway authority does

not have any issue with the parking and manoeuvring on site, to ensure limited impact upon neighbouring property users it is necessary to receive further information with regard to this.

3) The site lies some distance from residential properties given it is sited well within the employment area. Therefore the hours and type of use would be more associated with neighbouring uses, although it is still necessary to ensure that full access can be gained to other sites and disruption is limited so other sites can operate effectively. The manoeuvring of coaches is considered to be the main cause of disruption with coaches turning and reversing into spaces within the site with engines running, although there would be an element of repair works being carried out throughout the day this would not be above what was carried out on the site previously. Coaches leaving of a morning and arriving of an evening would be the main activity. This is not considered to be excessive for the given area provided that the applicant can show the paths for the manoeuvring of vehicles to ensure there is no impact on the highway which already has some on street parking by vehicles at certain times of the day which cannot be exacerbated by the parking of coaches.

The boundary treatment is of concern to the neighbouring eastern property given the safety of the existing retaining wall in this location. This could be dealt with by condition however if the application was to be recommended for approval.

4) Noise is a material planning consideration to take account of, however it is not envisaged that this use would cause any additional noise above that of the previous use as a vehicle parts depot and as such it is not considered to be an issue.

CONCLUSION:

The application proposes an acceptable use within the specified Employment Area. Given that the applicant has supplied detailed layout drawings that show that the coaches can enter and leave the site in forward gear without impinging on the existing level of parking within the site it is considered that the proposal complies with Policies GBSP2, D1, EMP1, EMP2, M14 and Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE SUBJECT OT THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 – Time for commencement
2. C.8.8 – Vehicle parking staff
3. C.8.9 – Vehicle turning
- 4.

INFORMATIVES:

None.

DRAWING NUMBERS:

6100/T1, 6100/T3, 6100/T4, 6100/T5, 6100/T6, 6100/T7, 61000/T8, AT/189/01a, 6100/T2A, 6100/T9, 6100/T10, 6100/T11 & 6100/T12 received and stamped dated 24 January 2007 and 26 March 2007.

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

