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PLANNING & COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL DEVELOPMENT
MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) ORDER 2010**

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

in respect of

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW OFFICE
BUILDING AND SECURITY FENCE AND GATES IN ASSOCIATION WITH
THE USE OF THE SITE FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF READY MIX
CONCRETE AT**

at

47-49 BURROWFIELD, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, HERTS

Prepared by

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PLANNING
DEPARTMENT

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DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

PLANNING APPLICATION AT 47-49 BURROWFIELD, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, HERTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Design & Access Statement is submitted to meet the requirements of the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006 as they relate to the proposed development which comprises the construction of an office building, security fencing and gates at 47-49 Burrowfield, Welwyn Garden City in association with the use for the distribution of ready mix concrete.

1.2 This Statement, explains the design principles and concepts which have been applied in respect of the development. Accordingly, the Statement is set out by reference to the following:-

- Context
 - a) physical context
 - b) policy context

- Design Principles
 - a) amount of development
 - b) scale
 - c) layout
 - d) appearance

- Access

2.0 CONTEXT

2.1 Context is considered under two headings. The first relates to the physical context of the development (the site and its surroundings) and the second the planning policy background primarily as set out in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

2.2 Physical Context

2.2.1 47-49 Burrowfield is on the eastern side of Burrowfield at its far southern end. The site, which was previously used for the storage of portakabins and associated plant and equipment is currently being made ready for use as a ready mix concrete depot delivering ready mix concrete within an area of 20 kilometres of Welwyn Garden City.

2.2.2 The site is at the southern end of the industrial area and has a frontage onto the east side of Burrowfield of 42 metres. It is of almost rectangular shape with the Burrowfield boundary being to the west and the site running southwards beyond the head of Burrowfield some 105 metres with a width varying between 25 metres and 13 metres. The eastern boundary adjoins an earlier landfill site while to the west are electricity company and commercial uses.

2.2.3 Currently the site is screened on all sides by fencing, some recently erected, with two large 6 metre wide gates at the head of Burrowfield.

2.3 Policy Context

2.3.1 With regard to the matter of use, it is appreciated that the site is within the Burrowfield Employment Area as identified as EA2 in Policy EMP1 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005. It is accepted that generally within employment areas the Council would anticipate uses within Classes B1, B2 and B8. However, Policy EMP3 – Other Employment Generating Uses in Employment Areas is relevant to the proposals. In

this respect the site is about to be used as a readymix concrete depot which probably does not fall squarely within either a Class B2 use or a Class B8 use, albeit that the overall composition of the use involves the storage of materials for concrete and its distribution from the depot in Burrowfield. The actual mixing of the materials takes place in the vehicles at their destinations sites.

- 2.3.2 Whilst Policy EMP3 does not specifically mention types of uses outside Class B which would be acceptable, the policy contains certain criteria which can be demonstrated to be met by current use. It is relevant to make reference to the supporting paragraphs of the District Plan Written Statement justifying this policy. In particular, reference should be made to paragraph 12.22 which states as follows:-

Whilst the Council seeks to retain designated Employment Areas for uses within Class B, it is recognised that there is a need for some flexibility to meet the needs of uses such as tyre and exhaust centres, trade wholesalers, vehicle hire, plant hire and taxi vehicle depots, which are composite uses, combining a retail element with a predominately business, industrial or storage use, but which do not readily fit within Use Class B. Due to the planned nature of the district's two main towns, it is difficult to find suitable locations for these uses outside of the designated Employment Areas. Vehicles sales showrooms are a sui generis use and are dealt with separately in Policy EMP4.

- 2.3.3 The current use of the premises falls squarely within this description and thus can be considered in accordance with policy. This is really confirmed by the fact that the company has operated since the latter half of 2007 from a nearby site at 31 Burrowfield where retrospective planning permission was granted in 2008. On the basis that what is proposed at 47-49 Burrowfield is exactly the same use within the same employment area, subject to the same policy considerations, it can be reasonably assumed that on the basis of consistency of decision making, then the use of 47-49 Burrowfield by the applicant company is acceptable in accordance with Policy EMP3 of the District Plan 2005.

3.0 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

3.1 Having established in policy terms the principle that the use is acceptable, it is necessary to describe the proposed development in association with the use. The design assessment is set out in accordance with the headings provided in paragraph 1.2 at the beginning of this Statement.

3.2 Amount of Development

3.2.1 One new office building is proposed. The single-storey office building will have a floor area of 135 square metres while the existing workshop which is being retained, has an overall floor area of 340 square metres. The plans show also that the loft of the new building will be used for storage purposes.

3.3 Scale

3.3.1 Scale, in this instance relates both to the new building and, also, to the security fence erected about the site. So far as the office building is concerned this is comparatively small scale in relation to the site overall and is to be provided to enable the proper management of the company once it has fully vacated from 31 Burrowfield.

3.3.2 The matter of scale should also refer to the new security fence which has been erected around parts of the site with the existing fencing retained elsewhere. The new fencing has deliberately been taken a height sufficient to ensure that the highly expensive equipment and vehicles operated by the company (worth several million pounds) are properly secure bearing in mind the peripheral location of the site in terms of the employment area. Although the fencing is high, a check through the employment area will show that it is not unreasonable and that security fencing and other structures of a similar or even greater height have been carried out within the industrial estate.

3.3.3 As Drawing No: AT372-02 shows some new fencing has been provided whilst at other places around the periphery the existing fencing retained. Dealing first with that retained, there is an existing 3m high palisade security fence along the majority of the west side of the site adjacent to the adjoining commercial premises. This fencing terminates at its northern end where the application site takes access off the turning area at the head of Burrowfield and where new gates and fencing, 4m high maximum are to be provided. The southern and the majority of the eastern boundaries of the site have been fenced with 5m high security fencing, being the most exposed boundaries of the site onto open land. A short section of existing 2.4m high palisade security fencing is retained along this boundary behind the portakabin at the north end of the site, just south of the existing workshop.

3.4 Layout

3.4.1 The site is at present primarily open following demolition and removal of the manifestations of the previous occupiers' use. The original workshop building measuring approximately 18.5 metres square is located in the north corner of the site where it abuts the southern end of Burrowfield. Also retained at this point immediately south of the workshop is a portakabin which has been on site for some years and utilised by the previous occupying company. This portakabin will be retained for a while but the new office building will be sited immediately south of this some 25 metres south of the workshop. The office building measures 17 metres by 8 metres with its longer elevation adjacent to and parallel with the eastern boundary of the site. The remainder of the site is open and available for the parking of the company's vehicles, etc. within the secure environment of the site.

3.5 Appearance

- 3.5.1 The use of the site will operate behind the mix of new security fencing and existing palisade fencing as described above. Details of the fencing and new gates are indicated on Drawing No: AT372-02. The new office building which measures 17 metres by 8 metres will have an eaves level of 2.55 metres and a ridge height of 6.28 metres. The building is constructed of brick under a gabled tiled roof. The building will have meeting/board rooms and general office space occupied by three staff with other employees of the company utilising the ground floor facilities. Storage areas will be provided in the roof space.
- 3.5.2 In addition to involving the use of the site and the construction of the new office building, the application also seeks retrospective consent for the new lengths of security fence. This is corrugated steel measuring generally 5 metres high on the southern and majority of the eastern boundaries with new gates at 4.0 metres high on the Burrowfield frontage. Although the fence is high, it is within a generally industrial environment where buildings and even the storage of plant and equipment can be substantially higher. The fence is well constructed and will be maintained adequately to ensure continuing security and its appearance will not be over-dominant notwithstanding its height. "Public" views of the fence will be limited indeed, mainly at the southern end of Burrowfield where the fencing will be seen against a considerable range of buildings and means of enclosures.

4.0 ACCESS

- 4.1 The existing access arrangements onto Burrowfield are not affected by the new development, as is manoeuvring space for vehicles within the yard area.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The application to which this Design & Access Statement refers is retrospective, in terms of the use of the premises, new building and the security fences for which permission is now requested.
- 5.2 So far as the use is concerned, the Council has confirmed earlier in respect of the planning permission for the same use granted at 31 Burrowfield in the same employment area in accordance with Policy EMP3 of the District Plan 2005.
- 5.3 With regard to the building, this is quite small in relation to the overall site and also in respect of many buildings in the Burrowfield Employment Area. The building is required to enable the business operated by the applicant to run efficiently by providing suitable office accommodation.
- 5.4 The building is constructed of appropriate materials, ensuring that its appearance will be in keeping with the general scale and appearance of buildings in the area in accordance with the Council's normal policies in respect of the design of any development within the borough. Furthermore the security fence, although quite high, is not out of keeping with the industrial character of the immediate area and is necessary to ensure proper security on an otherwise exposed site.
- 5.5 It is requested that retrospective planning permission be granted for the office building and security fencing in association with the use of the site for the distribution and readymix concrete at 47-49 Burrowfield, Welwyn Garden City.