

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No:	S6/2012/1152/FP
APPLICATION Site:	Belgrave House, Hatfield Business Park, Frobisher Way, Hatfield

NOTATION:

The site lies within the settlement boundary for Hatfield as shown on the Hatfield Aerodrome Inset Map 3 as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE:

The site comprises an existing factory building on two stories, of white and grey coloured cladding, under a shallow pitched, double pile roof. Its front elevation containing the offices and ancillary facilities faces eastwards out onto Frobisher Way with views across the office car parking area. To the north of the building is the site access and goods yard, HCV & LCV parking area. To the north, south and east are adjoining factory buildings, whilst open land with a covering of trees and shrubs attached to Astwick Manor lies to the west. This area of open land lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL:

The full planning application seeks permission for a change of use from the present Use Classes B1 (Light Industry/Offices/Research & Development) & B2 (General Industry) to a more flexible form of use comprising Class B1, B2 and B8 (Warehousing & Distribution). No changes to the character and fabric of the building or site are proposed. A transport statement, and HCV tracking templates (Swept Path Analyses) are included with the application.

PLANNING HISTORY:

S6/2012/0478/FP Change of use from Class B1/B2 to a flexible use comprising of B1, B2 & B8 - Withdrawn 08/05/2012.

S6/2006/1383/FP Part change of use of warehouse to form temporary retail outlet (until Jan 2007) refused 13/12/2006.

SUMMARY OF POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework

East of England Plan 2008 Policies:

SS1: Achieving Sustainable Development

ENV7: Quality in the Built Environment

T14: Parking

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011: None

SD1: Sustainable Development

GBSP2: Towns and Specified Settlements

M14: Parking Standards for New Developments

D2: Character and Context

D5: Design for Movement

EMP1: Employment Areas

EMP2: Acceptable Uses in Employment Areas

EMP13: Design Criteria for Employment Development

Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Design Guidance, February 2005

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

Hatfield Aerodrome SPG (November 1999) – The Hatfield Aerodrome Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) sets out the masterplan for the re-development of the Hatfield Aerodrome site and outlines the key principles that any development on the site should include. Policy BAE 5 “Employment Uses” indicates that the British Aerospace Inset Site should provide for at least 125,415 sq m (1.35 million sq feet) of floorspace for employment uses up to 2001 including the figures outlined in Policy BAE 5 Dynamic Uses Site providing 89,422 sq m (962,562 sq feet) of B1, B2 and B8 floorspace.

CONSULTATIONS:

Hertfordshire County Council (Local Highway Authority): Raises no objections to the proposed change of use subject a condition requiring a parking layout showing both HGV and car parking being submitted and approved prior to first occupation as a B8 use.

Network Rail: Comments that it has no observations to make.

TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL COMMENTS: None

REPRESENTATIONS:

None, period expired

DISCUSSION:

The main issues are:

1. The principle of development
2. Traffic generation and on-site parking and turning
3. Hours of operation
4. Other Material Planning Considerations

1. The site lies within Hatfield Business Park, which is a designated employment area as shown on the Hatfield Aerodrome Inset Map 3 as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005. It lies adjacent to the area covered by the Hatfield Aerodrome SPG (November 1999) which outlines the masterplan guiding the re-development of the adjoining Hatfield Aerodrome site. Its current authorised use is for Use Classes B1 and B2. Nearby land uses comprise factories, offices and storage depots. The site itself lies on the former 'Dynamics' site which was consented for B1, B2 and B8 development by planning permission Ref: S6/1991/0223/OP. The accompanying S.106 Agreement dated 22 May, 1992, indicates the provision of a maximum floorspace of 89,422 sq m for B1, B2 and B8 uses over the whole Dynamics site. This figure is unlikely to be breached given that the proposal is for an additional use over 4,237 sq m of floorspace, and the existing permitted B1 and B2 uses are able to continue should any future occupier be interested. Therefore, a change of use to include Use Class B8 (Storage and Distribution) as an alternative use to the existing B1 and B2 use classes is acceptable in principle.
2. The main concern regarding the inclusion of the use of the site as a B8 Use relates to the increased requirement for both Light and Heavy Commercial Vehicles parking spaces, and the movements of such vehicles on and off the highway and along the local distributor road network. The LHA has raised no objection to the proposal on highway safety and traffic generation grounds subject to a condition requiring a parking layout showing both HGV and car parking being submitted and approved prior to first occupation as a B8 use. The applicants have submitted HGV tracking templates (Swept Path Analyses) for the site indicating the on-site turning paths and the access path of HGV's to and from Frobisher Way. These indicate that such vehicle movements can be achieved safely.

The footprint of the building equates to 3,312m² with an overall floorspace of 4,237 m². The proposed development will provide 39 car parking spaces, 1 space less than the site when presently used in either Class B1 or B2. In the event of an approval for a B8 Use being granted but not implemented, and the use of the site remaining in either a B1 or B2 Use, then 40 car parking spaces will remain. The Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Parking Standards, January 2004, advises that maximum car parking standards of 1 space per 74m², would be the most that is required for the site. The current parking provision of 39 spaces would equate to 1 space per 108 m² of floorspace which is below the maximum number of spaces provided. This is considered to be acceptable in the context of the use proposed, and the Council's adopted car parking standards.

3. Hours of operation – The Transport Statement indicates that during the daily period 07:00 – 19:00 the B8 Warehouse use would generate 209 two way vehicle trips, compared with 263 such trips for the B2 use and 311 for B1 Offices. This indicates a reduction in traffic flows and trip generation to and from the site arising from a B8 use. It is noted, however, that the nature of the vehicles visiting the site will change resulting in a higher proportion of HCV and LCV vehicle movements than for either a B1 or B2 use.

4. Other Material Planning Considerations

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 a EPS offence be likely to occur. It is therefore not necessary to consider the Conservation Regulations 2010 further.

East of England Plan 2008: The application has been considered against policies in the East of England Plan, which at the time of this decision forms part of the development plan for the Borough. The weight accorded to these policies, in light of the Government's stated intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies has been carefully considered in reaching a decision.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed development for the B8 use of the site is considered to be acceptable in principle. There will be sufficient car parking spaces and turning and parking for HCV's and LCV's. Traffic flows are very likely to be less than for the permitted B1 and B2 uses. The use of the site for these existing permitted uses will remain with the B8 use in addition to them. No other material considerations arise and the application should be approved.

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 Time limit for commencement of development
2. The development/works shall not be started and completed other than in accordance with the approved plans and details comprised in the Site Location Plan (1:1250) & proposed ground & first floor plans & external alterations received and dated 31 May 2012, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved drawings and any changes must be agreed in advance in writing by the local planning authority.

Pre-commencement

3. Prior to the first use of the development for Use Class B8 (Storage & Distribution) purposes, a parking layout showing both HGV and car parking on

the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The parking layout shall thereafter be permanently maintained for the accommodation of occupiers vehicles and shall not be used for any other purpose.

Reason: To ensure that sufficient spaces are provided for the use permitted prior to the occupation of the units for Use Class B8 purposes in the interests of highway safety.

Post-commencement

4. NO OUTSIDE STORAGE

There shall be no outside storage of goods or materials on the site unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority. Refuse from operations on site shall be stored in areas/containers/bins specifically set aside for this purpose and shown on a plan submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

The proposal has been considered against the National Planning Policy Framework, East of England Plan 2008 policies SS1, ENV7 and T14, and development plan policies SD1, GBSP2, M14, D2 and D5 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005, in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998, which, at the time of this decision indicate that the proposal should be approved. Material planning considerations do not justify a decision contrary to the development plan (see Officer's report which can be inspected at these offices).

INFORMATIVES: None

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