

# PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

May 2012

**STRUTT  
& PARKER**



International Greetings PLC



**Change of Use from Class B1/B2 to a flexible use comprising B1, B2 or B8 (Resubmission of withdrawn application S6/2012/0478/FP)**

**Unit 9600, Hatfield Business Park, Hatfield, AL10 9TQ**

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**Introduction**

This Planning, Design and Access Statement is in support of a revised Full Planning Application for Change of Use from Class B1/B2 to a flexible use comprising B1, B2 or B8 at Unit 9600, Hatfield Business Park, Hatfield, AL10 9TQ following the withdrawal of an undetermined application (Ref: S6/2012/0478/FP). This statement has been prepared by Strutt and Parker LLP for and on behalf of International Greetings Plc. It should be read in conjunction with the Existing and Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations, and Swept Path Analysis Plans.

This statement provides information on the background to the site, relationship to surrounding buildings, planning policy at a national, regional and local level and sets out an assessment and justification of the proposal. This statement has been prepared in full accordance with Government guidance, including DCLG Circular 01/2006.

### Site and Surroundings

Frobisher Way is located approximately 2 mile west of the centre of Hatfield; approximately 1 mile west of the A1(M) which runs in a north/south direction. Within the centre of Hatfield is a mainline Train Station which connects with the wider railway network.

The site is on the western side of Frobisher Way, accessed via Hatfield Avenue, which acts as a secondary access road between Hatfield and St Albans. The unit borders a trade counter company (Class B8) to the south and distribution centre (Class B8) to the north. To the east of the site, are a mix of industrial units comprising Class B1 and B8. To the rear of the site is open farmland.

The application site comprises one industrial unit, with parking to the north. The building is some 46 metres in length and 72 metres in depth with maximum height of xx metres. Pedestrian access is gained from a main lobby entrance in the east facing elevation.

The industrial unit contains 17 offices, 9 store rooms, 3 presentation rooms and associated service areas over the ground floor with mezzanine above. The western part of the building is a single open area. The footprint of the building equates to 3,312m<sup>2</sup>, with an overall floorspace of 4,237m<sup>2</sup>.



Figure A - Site and Surroundings

Picture 1 - East facing elevation of Application Building



Picture 2 - Access & Servicing Area



### Planning History

The planning application register held by the District Council has been inspected as part of the preparation of this application. The following applications are of relevance:

S6/1991/0223/OP

Demolition of existing buildings; redevelopment of land and buildings for purposes within Classes B1, B2 and B8; improvements to Manor Road and provision of associated car and lorry parking - OUTLINE  
Land at Dynamics site 56 Hatfield Aerodrome Manor Road Hatfield  
Approved: 12/05/1993

S6/1994/0228/FP

Erection of industrial building (B1, B2 Use) Reserved matters pursuant to Outline Permission S6/0223/91/OP  
Plot 9600, Hatfield Business Park  
Approved: 12/05/1994

S6/1995/0859/FP

Erection of security fencing (2.4m high) and use of part of parking area for storage of forklifts  
Plot 9600, Hatfield Business Park  
Approved: 19/12/1995

S6/1996/0053/FP

Erection of regional distribution centre (Class B8) and vehicle repair workshop (Class B1c/B2 Development)  
Former Dynamics Site, Hatfield Business Park  
Approved: 17/05/1996

S6/1999/0184/FP

Installation of thirty three windows to existing elevation and new reception entrance  
Plot 9600, Hatfield Business Park  
Approved: 26/04/1999

S6/1999/0472/FP

Installation of plant room to rear, and water tank  
Plot 9600, Hatfield Business Park  
Approved: 16/08/1999

S6/2002/1136/FP

The erection of thirty units for light industrial B1(c) Use, General Industrial B1 Use, and Storage and Distribution B8 Use  
Land at Hatfield Business Park, off Gypsy Moth Lane  
Approved: 31/03/2003

S6/2012/0478/FP

Change of use from Class B1/B2 to a flexible use comprising of B1, B2 & B8  
Plot 9600, Hatfield Business Park  
Withdrawn prior to determination

Hertfordshire County Council requested further information relating to traffic movements within the site, and traffic generation from the proposal. This information could not be provided prior to the Council's target determination date.

### Planning Policy

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material consideration indicates otherwise. Section 38 (3) states that the Development Plan includes the Regional Spatial Strategy and other Development Plan documents. The Development Plan comprises the East of England Plan, and the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan.

### National Guidance

National Guidance has undergone significant change in recent months, with the publication of the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which has replaced all previous Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS).

Paragraph 6 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 lists three dimensions of sustainable development, one of these is:

- **An economic role** - contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation.

Paragraph 21 of the NPPF refer to building a strong, competitive economy. It states that in drawing up Local Plans, Local Planning Authorities should:

- Set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth;
- Support existing business sectors, taking into account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area;

Paragraph 35 of the NPPF states that plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. Therefore, developments should be located and designed where practical to:

- Accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies
- Give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities

**Regional Spatial Strategy – East of England Plan**

Policy E2: Provision of Land for Employment, states that Local Development Documents should ensure that an adequate range of sites/ premises (including sites within mixed-use areas and town/district centres) is allocated to accommodate the full range of sectoral requirements to achieve job targets. Sites of sufficient range, quantity and quality to cater for relevant employment sectors should be provided at appropriate scales in urban areas, market towns and key rural centres at locations which minimise loss of, or damage to, environmental and social capital and, where necessary, substitute for any losses and secure positive enhancements. This will often mean giving preference to the re-use of previously developed land and the intensification of development within existing sites over the release of greenfield land

**Welwyn Hatfield District Plan**

The Welwyn Hatfield District Plan was adopted in 2005. A number of policies have been 'saved' until it is replaced by a Local Development Framework.

Policy SD1 refers to Sustainable Development. It states that “Development proposals will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the principles of sustainable development are satisfied and that they accord with the objectives and policies of this plan.”

Policy EMP1 refers to Employment Areas. It confirms that Hatfield Business Park Hatfield is a designated Employment Area. Supportive text is paragraph 12.21 states that “The council will give favourable consideration to proposals for redevelopment of existing employment sites, in the designated Employment Areas, which would update and improve the quality of the employment stock in the district.” This is supported in Policy EMP2, which confirms that in the designated Employment Areas, “proposals for development within Use Classes B1, B2, and B8 will be permitted, subject to the following criteria:

- 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, serving and access.

Proposals for Class B8 development should also be well located in relation to the primary road network.”



Figure B - Extract from Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Proposals Map

This application envisages a change of use to the building from B1 (Office) and B2 (General Industrial) to a flexible use, comprising B1 (Office), B2 (General Industrial) or B8 (Storage and Distribution). No physical changes or other operational development is proposed.

It has become apparent that there is demand from potential occupiers seeking a unit under Class B8. The intention however, is to have a flexible permission for this unit so as not to restrict possible tenants.

Government guidance in the form of the NPPF emphasises a need for Local Planning Authorities to maintain a flexible response to use of employment land, in order to provide business units which are capable of change. This approach is also supported in Policy E2 of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

The application site is located within Hatfield Business Park, a designated Employment Area in the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan. Policy EMP2 of the District Plan seek to protect employment uses within Employment Areas. The unit would remain in employment use, but the Use Class would sit within Class B1, B2 or B8. The policy also sets out criteria for uses falling within B-Use Classes:

“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”

The scale of development is dictated by the existing building. The building currently has permission for B1 or B2 Use. Adding a B8 Use to this already flexible permission will not exacerbate the levels of employment to such a level that detrimental impacts on the demand for housing. Generating employment is regarded as an important element of boosting the country's economy.

*“...not have an unacceptable impact on the local and/or strategic transport infrastructure”*

Adding a B8 Use to the already flexible permission, would not significantly increase vehicle movements.

Furthermore, the site is well located to public transport. Figure C shows the location of the nearby bus stops.

“...not harm the amenities of any nearby residential properties”

The unit is set within a business area, characterised by B1, B2 and B8 Uses. A flexible use of B1, B2 and B8 would be compatible with the surrounding area. The nearest residential properties are some 0.5 miles to the east.



Figure C - Proximity of site to Public Transport

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*“...would provide adequate parking, servicing and access.”*

The proposal is for a flexible permission, comprising Classes B1, B2 and Class B8. The building provides parking for in-excess of 40 cars, which a large servicing area to the north. The addition of Class B8 to the flexible permission is unlikely to increase vehicle movements, as mentioned over the page, and the existing parking arrangements will be sufficient.

Swept Path Analysis Plans has been included with this planning application. These indicate that an articulated lorry can enter and exit the site in forward gear.

Policy EMP2 also sets out one particular test that proposals for Class B8 must achieve:

*“Proposals for Class B8 development should also be well located in relation to the primary road network.”*

As seen in Figure D, the site is easily accessible by the A1(M). Elsewhere in the Business Area are companies operating under Class B8.



Picture 3 - Adjacent Class B8 Use

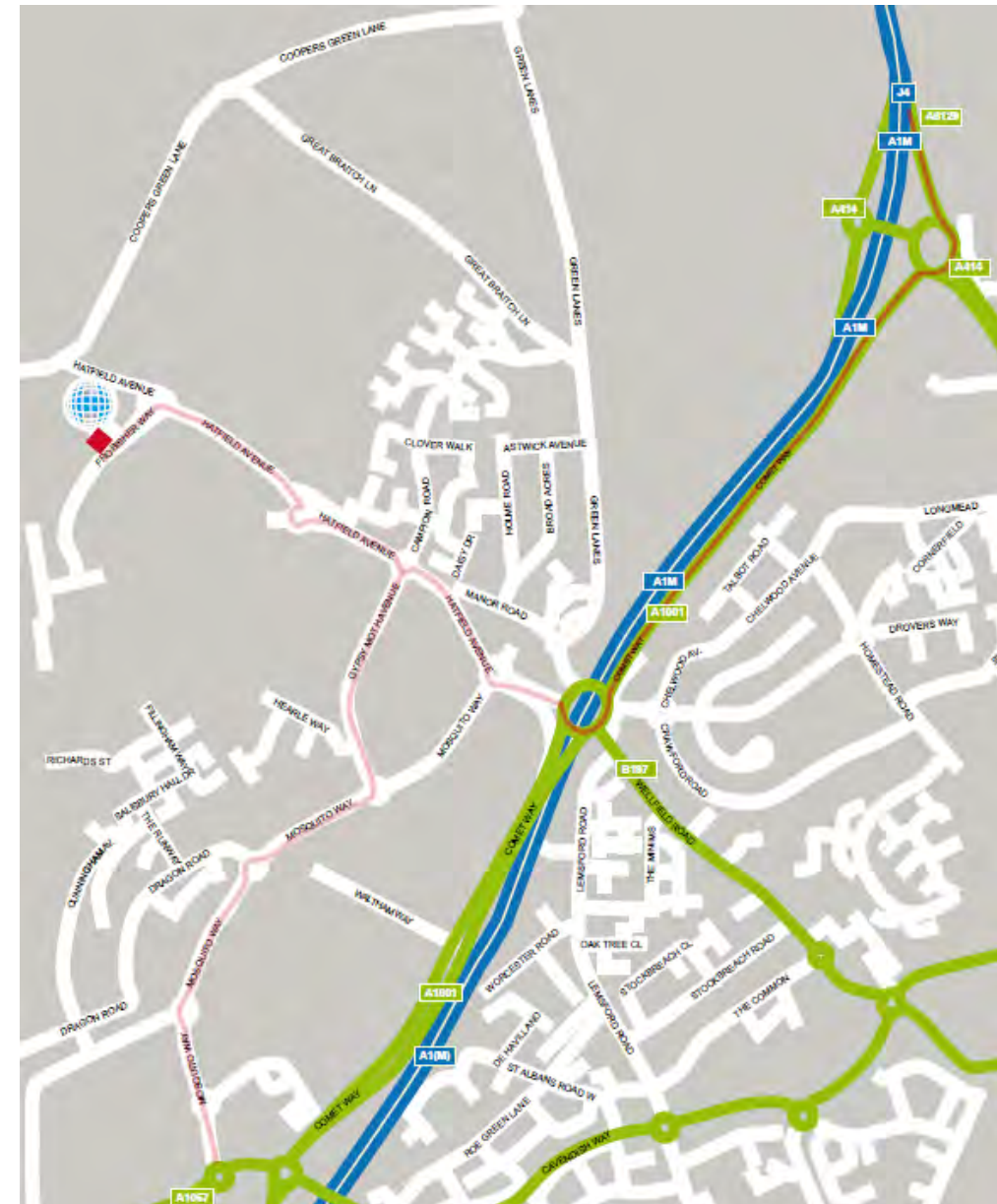


Figure D - Public Transport Options

**Conclusion**

This application is a Change of Use from Classes B1 and B2 to a flexible use comprising B1, B2 or B8. No physical changes or other operational development is proposed. The intention is to have a flexible permission for this unit so as not to restrict possible tenants.

The application site is located within Hatfield Business Park, a designated Employment Area in the adopted Welwyn Hatfield District Plan. Policies within the Local Plan seek to retain business uses in these areas, which the proposal is in accordance.

A flexible use of B1, B2 and B8 would be compatible with the surrounding area which is characterised by a mixture of all three use classes. No internal or external changes are proposed to the fabric of the building, therefore the unit could easily be used for either.

The proposal does not envisage any physical alteration to the building or any increase in existing level of floor space. As a result, there will be no undue impact on surrounding amenities, in particular other business units. The proposal is therefore in accordance with the NPPF, Policy E2 of the East of England Plan, and Policies EMP1, and EMP2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan.



Picture 4 - Unit 9600