

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
DELEGATED REPORT

APPLICATION No: N6/2015/442/MA

SITE ADDRESS: Land adjoining No 3 (Former Shredded Wheat Factory), Bridge Road/Broadwater Road/Hyde Way, Welwyn Garden City

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT: Erection of a temporary hoarding

RECOMMENDATION: Approval subject to condition

1. SITE AND APPLICATION DESCRIPTION: The site is located to the east of Welwyn Garden City town centre in the Peartree ward. The planning application boundary extends to a total area of 10.4 hectares. The site forms the major part of the Broadwater Road West development site, an area allocated for mixed use development in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan and is the subject of the Broadwater Road West Supplementary Planning Document (BRW SPD). The site is bounded on all sides with Broadwater Road (A1000 distributor road) to the east; the Taylor Wimpey housing development to the south (a mixed residential scheme which includes the re-use of the former Roche Products reception building, a Grade II listed building); the East Coast Mainline to the west; and Bridge Road and Hunters Bridge (which provides the main access to Welwyn Garden City from the east of the town) to the north.

The Pall Mall warehouse and distribution centre is also located to the south west of the site and the access to this site is currently provided via the application site. The surrounding area is mixed in character. The area was predominantly occupied by industrial buildings but has since been largely cleared. There is residential development to the south and the large Hertfordshire BioPark office and laboratory building lies to the south west, with office buildings to the east.

Welwyn Garden City town centre is immediately west of the East Coast Mainline and an existing pedestrian route extends across the site via Hyde Way. The footbridge over the railway links the wider industrial area and Peartree ward to the railway station and the town centre.

The site and its buildings are currently vacant. There are only two building groups left on the site today; the remaining buildings of the Polycell factory to the south of Hyde Way, and the Shredded Wheat Factory buildings to the north of the site designed by Louis de Soissons and his partner Arthur W. Kenyon. It should be noted that the former Shredded Wheat factory buildings date back to 1925 and are Grade II listed. This listing includes the redundant silos.

2. SITE DESIGNATION: The site lies within Employment Area EA1 (as designated in the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005) and contains the former Shredded Wheat Factory buildings which are Grade II listed. The site is also identified as a 'Mixed Use Development Site' under saved Policy EMP3 of the

District Plan. To the immediate south of the site lies Wildlife Site 199 (Twentieth Mile Bridge Allotments).

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

None applicable to this proposal

4. CONSULTATIONS:

Network Rail – No objections in principle subject to the following:

- All roads, paths or ways providing access to any part of the railway undertakers land shall be kept open at all times during and after the development
- The access to the railway should be the subject of conditions the reasons for which can include safety, operational needs and integrity of the railway

Hertfordshire County Council, Transport, Programs and Strategy - For enabling works the applicant seeks to provide 3m high hoarding around the site. The site is bounded to the North by Bridge Road (numbered B Road (B195), Secondary Distributor), East by Broadwater Road (Principle A Road (A1000), Main Distributor) and Hydeway (Unclassified Road, Local Access Road).

The hoardings protect the site for enabling works and subsequent development, with the future of the site being subject to a separate application upon which HCC are being consulted N6/2015/0293/LB & N6/2015/0294/PP Part demolition, repair, restoration, extension and conversion of the former Shredded Wheat factory complex to include demolition of all buildings and structures except the original 1920's silos, production hall, grain store and boiler house. Refurbishment and change of use of the retained listed buildings to provide 2 Class C3 residential units, a Class C1 boutique/budget hotel, Class B1(a) offices, a class Class A4 pub/bar, a class Class D1 crèche and a Class D2 gym/dance/exercise studio

The application provides for hoardings, all shown to be located at the boundary of the site with the public highway. On any grant of consent, the applicant shall be responsible for obtaining the appropriate licenses for the hoarding. In order that all supporting posts, and associated excavations do not interfere with the fabric of the public highway, it is recommended that all hoardings are set back an agreed distance from highway structures.

The proposed hoarding broadly accords with the boundary of the site – however, the Highways Authority disputes one boundary, and line of the hoarding. Hoardings are shown extending up unto carriageway edge within Hydeway, however a review of highway boundary information identifies that the highway boundary extends beyond the carriageway edge and includes verge, or portions of service accesses to the former factory. The proposals to Hydeway therefore represent the provision of hoarding structures within the Highway. Subject to being set back sufficient from the back edge of the highway, and the license being timebound (such that the area protected shall not become a permanent closure) HCC do not consider that this shall

have an unacceptable impact, with pedestrian movement along Hydeway being directed by the footway to the southern side of hydeway, with the affected northbound side not providing dedicated pedestrian facilities.

Set back of a minimum of 500mm (unless otherwise agreed on site by Highway Engineers) shall be required for all hoardings on Hydeway, in order that the structure shall not obstruct or interfere with the passage of large vehicles past the site.

Drawing 2455-1-00-1425-ZXX Rev 01 provides for 4 gated access to the site. Limited detail is provided. Whilst we accept that gated accesses are provided at points reasonably serving such a function, I would object to the access as proposed direct to Hydeway, some 94m (approx.) west of the junction of Hydeway with Broadwater Road. The provision of this access would not provide adequate visibility from the access in either direction. Whilst Hydeway is subject to 30mph speed limits, its' no through road nature and alignment suggests vehicle speeds will be lower than this, however the provision of a gate in a hoarding line directly abutting the carriageway edge provides zero visibility. The very westernmost access to Hydeway Way is acceptable as it falls beyond the limits of the public highway. Northern accesses are similarly outside the extent of the highway boundary, and respect existing accesses.

Assessment of the matters presented do not consider any construction traffic management associated with any subsequent implementation of the development – such matters likely to be addressed through the outline consent (and therefore my comments are offered without prejudice to any formal decision in the related matter), however without adequate provision for visibility at the access onto Hydeway the proposals would be prejudicial to highway safety. Given 30mph limits, visibility from the access should be 43m in each direction measured 2.4m back from the carriageway edge. HCC recognise that these splays consider vehicles at 30mph, and that average speeds will be beneath this, but presently object to the provision of gates in the hoarding at this location, and consequently are required to recommend that the application be refused, or amended such that no access at this location is provided.

As an informative to be attached to any subsequent grant of consent, the applicant should be advised that the grant of consent does not remove the need to enter into the appropriate license (Highways Act 1980 Section 172) with the County Council as Highways Authority for the hoardings, and any structures within the highway. The application fee for each application will be £87 (non-refundable) for a licence up to fourteen days and £39 for each additional seven day period. The hoarding will only be permitted on the highway if it does not cause an unreasonable obstruction and there are no reasonable convenient alternative means to carrying out the intended works in a less obstructive manner. The applicant is directed to <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/highways2/hnonlineservices/scaffhoard/> or contact the CSC on 0300 123 4040

Following discussions with the highway authority amended plans have been received showing visibility splays have been provided to the 'problem' access to a size of 25m x 2.4m. Such a splay would be appropriate to vehicle speeds of 20 miles per hour (SSD Adjusted for bonnet length). Given the no through road nature of Hyde Way – we have previously considered that vehicle speeds are not likely to be above that.

The revised hording line would be appropriate and would ensure that any potential use of the access would provide adequate visibility, particularly if – subsequent – construction management plans push construction traffic through this access during site preparation / construction.

As the hoardings do fall upon land considered maintainable at public expense – they will remain subject to separately obtaining hording licenses from Highways.

Thames Water – No objections

5. NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS: This application has been advertised and one representation has been received from the public which can be summarised as follows:

- Sounds like a positive start to the development and a chance no doubt for Spenhill to showcase some of the positive changes on their way. It would be great to see work underway.

6. TOWN/PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIONS

No representations have been received from a Town/Parish Council.

7. MAIN PLANNING ISSUES AND RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:

The main planning issues with this application are:

- a) The impact of the temporary hoarding on the setting of the Grade II listed buildings, the character and appearance of the area and highway safety (NPPF and Policies D1 and D2 of the District Plan)

8. ANALYSIS:

- a) The hoarding is a temporary hoarding that is required due to ongoing issues relating to the security of the Grade II listed former Shredded Wheat Factory complex that the owner has experienced whilst the future redevelopment proposals are considered and determined. The hoarding would be constructed from plywood and softwood to a height of 3m and blue in colour. There would be four access points into the site 3.8m wide and the hoarding is proposed for a temporary period of two years.

The hoarding would have an impact on the character and appearance of the area, the Broadwater Road and Bridge Road streetscenes and the setting of the Grade II listed buildings. However given its temporary nature the impact would be reversible and can be secured by condition. As a result the setting of the designated heritage asset and character of the area would not be materially affected to a degree that

would be sufficiently harmful to warrant refusal on these grounds. Given the amendments to the plans to address the original comments of the highway authority there are no implications in relation to highway safety.

9. CONCLUSION: Subject to a condition requiring removal of the hoarding after a period of two years, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in accordance with the NPPF and policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan. If the hoarding is to form part of any future construction hoarding that may be required if planning permission for the wider redevelopment proposals is given, then the further consent of the Local Planning Authority would be required.

10. CONDITIONS:

1. C.2.1 - Time limit for commencement of development
2. C.13.1 - Development in accordance with approved plans and details 2455-1-00-1426-ZXX Rev 02 & 2455-1-00-1400-ZXX Rev 01 & 2455-1-00-1427-ZXX Rev 02 received 20 March 2015 & 2455-1-00-1425-ZXX Rev 03 received by email on 12 May 2015

Post Development

3. The hoarding and all associated fixtures, fittings and foundations hereby approved shall be completely removed from the site by 19 June 2017.

REASON: The hoarding is only allowed as a temporary security measure to protect the Grade II listed buildings whilst the wider redevelopment proposals pursuant to N6/2015/0294/PP and N6/2015/0293/LB are determined and the permanent retention of the hoarding would have a detrimental impact on the character of the area and visual interests of its surroundings, in accordance with the NPPF and Policies D1 and D2 of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan, 2005.

SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE GRANT OF PERMISSION:

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 inspected at these offices).

INFORMATIVES:

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