

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Target Date: 13/10/2022

Extended Target Date: 31 May 2023 (ext.)

Application No: 221231/FUL

Address: 35 Boulton Road, Reading

Proposal: Demolition of part front and rear with erection of new rear warehouse with access and parking alterations

Case officer: Claire Ringwood

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The application site comprises an existing two storey front office building with a tunnel to access the rear and a rear warehouse area. The site has parking to the frontage but the tunnel entrance to the rear is not suitable for larger vehicles. Located within an industrial estate the site is surrounded by industrial warehouse buildings of a range of sizes with a small area of woodland at the southerly end of Waterloo Meadows to the rear.



The site is located within a Core Employment Area as Designated by Policy EM2e of the Reading Borough Local Plan and within an area of potential contaminated land.

Proposal

The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the left-hand side of the office building fronting Boulton Road to open up access to the rear of the site. The existing rear warehouse and part of the remaining two storey office building is also proposed to be demolished and replaced by a larger warehouse. The proposed new warehouse measures 372sqm compared to 314.5sqm of existing warehouse. The existing offices provide 350.25sqm whilst the proposal would reduce this to 264sqm.

Alterations to the fenestration of the remaining office building is also proposed including new first floor front and side windows and replacement materials to the first floor to match those proposed on the warehouse.

The materials to the roof and walls will consist of plastisol coated profiled sheet cladding in Goosewing Grey with white UPVC windows and galvanised mild steel roller shutters.

Plans Considered

The agent submitted the following plans and information, received by the Local Planning Authority on 19th August 2022:

Location Plan

Drawing No: B 3187 01 - Existing Site Plan & Ground Floor Plan

Drawing No: B 3187 02 - Existing First Floor Plan & Elevations

Drawing No: B 3187 10A - Proposed Ground Floor & Site Plans

Drawing No: B 3187 11A - Proposed First Floor Plan & Elevations

Planning Statement

Phase 1 Daytime Bat Assessment by Dr Jonty Denton dated 25th November 2021

The agent submitted the following plans and information, received by the Local Planning Authority on 4th April 2023:

Bat Mitigation Strategy Issue 2, by The Ecology Partnership, dated December 2022

Relevant Planning History

90/00262/ADV (Civica Ref: 901000) - Erection of internally illuminated fascia sign. Permitted 14/06/1990.

98/00550/FUL (Civica Ref: 980305) - Alterations to porch and new roof. Permitted 24/08/1998.

02/00456/ADV (Civica Ref: 021248) - Frame and acrylic panel sign with acrylic cut out letters on east elevation of building. Permitted 31/05/2002.

04/00188/FUL (Civica Ref: 040216) - Enlargement of archway with new pitched roof to provide office space in the roof. Refused 16/04/2004.

04/00709/FUL (Civica Ref: 041234) - New enlarged access area, new pitched roof with room in the roof and offices over (re-submission of planning application 04/00188). Permitted 04/08/2004.

Consultation Responses

RBC Transport

No objection subject to conditions and informatives.

RBC Environmental Protection

No objection subject to conditions and informative relating to unidentified contamination, submission of a construction method statement and no burning of waste.

RBC Ecology

No objections subject to conditions

Public Consultation

21-23, 33 and 37 Boulton Road were notified of the application by letter. A site notice was displayed at the application site on 27th September 2022. No letters of representation have been received.

Equality Act 2010

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE

CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EM1: PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

EM2: LOCATION OF NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

EM3: LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT LAND

EM4: MAINTAINING A VARIETY OF PREMISES)

EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND

EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES

TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)
Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

Appraisal

Principle

Policy EM1 (Provision of Employment Development) seeks to support a net increase in warehousing spaces within the Borough. Policy EM2 (Location of New Employment Development) seeks that employment uses such as industrial and storage and distribution uses are located within the designated core employment areas. The site is located within the North of Basingstoke Road core employment area as designated by Policy EM2e within an existing industrial estate and on the site of an existing office/warehouse building. Policy EM4 states there should be a *“variety of sizes and types of employment premises...including seeking more modern and flexible employment space in the designated industrial areas.”*

The principle of altering and extending an existing building for B8 (Storage/Distribution Use) with smaller offices (the submitted Planning Statement refers to the offices as Class E(g)) is therefore considered to be acceptable and to comply with Policies EM1 and EM2.

Policy EM3 (Loss of Employment Land) seeks to maintain the overall level of employment land provision within the core employment areas. The proposal would continue to provide a warehouse unit with a marginally larger footprint as the existing and therefore would not result in a loss of employment land and would accord with Policy EM3.

Design and Appearance

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that new development maintains and enhances the character of the surrounding area.

The proposal involves the demolition of the front left-hand side of the office building and the single storey warehouse to the rear including a section of the two-storey rear building that is to be retained. The proposed warehouse would reflect the footprint of that which is to be demolished, other than extending a further 1.2m further to the rear. The proposed warehouse would be higher than the existing warehouse which currently measures approximately 3.75m to eaves level and 6.3m at its highest point. The proposed warehouse would have a height of 6.95m to eaves level and 8.1m to its ridge.

The appearance of the warehouse building in terms of the proposed shallow gable pitched roof and set back of 8m from the front office building together with its height and including the alterations to the remaining office building would reflect that of surrounding buildings within the industrial estate. The proposed use of materials with the walls and roof of the warehouse to be clad in goosewing grey is also considered to be acceptable and reflect the mix of warehouse styles surrounding the site. Two roller shutters are proposed to the south elevation of the building facing 33 Boulton Road.

The proposals are considered to accord with Policy CC7 and are acceptable.

Amenity

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks to ensure development protects the amenity of existing and future surrounding occupiers. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks to mitigate impacts of pollution associated with development.

The site is located within an existing industrial estate within a designated employment area which is considered an appropriate location for Class B8/E(g) uses.

The site is located to the west of the industrial estate separated from the nearest residential occupiers located approximately 320m to the east on Basingstoke Road and by numerous other industrial warehouse units. The location of the development is such that it is not considered to result in any adverse harm to residential occupiers. In the eventuality that any mechanical plant is proposed to be installed as part of the development, a condition is recommended to require submission and approval of a noise assessment prior to the installation of any noise generating plant to be installed.

Subject to the above condition it is considered that the proposals would accord with Policies CC8 and EN16.

Transport

The existing building comprises of a two storey office building and a rear warehouse accessed via tunnel arrangement. It is stated that the current arrangements result in servicing taking place on the highway as the access is too small for larger vehicles to access the warehouse to the rear.

The proposals result in a loss of overall floor space. However, the warehouse floor area increases from 314.5sqm to 372 sqm. The application will open up the frontage and allow vehicles to service the building off the highway.

The site is located within the Zone 3, the Secondary Core Area but on the periphery of Zone 2, Primary Core Area. In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide a parking provision of between 5 and 7 parking spaces based on the proposed floor area(s). The proposed Block Plan states that 8 parking spaces can be achieved on-site which is acceptable

Given that the development is comparable in size to the former industrial unit, it is anticipated that the transport implications of this proposal are unlikely to have a significant impact on the surrounding highway network. The provision of an off-street servicing area is considered to improve the existing access and servicing arrangements.

Cycle parking must be provided at a ratio of 1 space per 350m². All cycle parking provisions must be provided in a secure, covered store. However, I am happy to cover this by condition.

There are no transport objections to the application subject to the conditions below.

Subject to the recommended conditions it is considered that the proposals would accord with Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5.

Ecology

The site is located next to a small area of woodland at the southerly end of Waterloo Meadows. The Bat Survey report submitted with the application has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concluded that because of spaces in the fascia above the guttering, a further survey should be undertaken to confirm whether the building hosts a bat roost.

A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment and three emergence surveys have been provided in an amended Bat Survey report which confirms that the building is being used by at least three soprano pipistrelle bats. It is therefore very likely that the proposed works will disturb or harm roosting bats. As such, a licence for development works affecting bats will need to be obtained from Natural England for derogation from the provisions of the Habitat Regulations before works which could impact upon the roost can commence.

The report initially did not include a bat mitigation strategy - the agent has submitted this and this was found acceptable by the Ecology team, subject to conditions.

The site is located within an area of the Borough identified in the Council's adopted tree strategy as having a tree canopy cover of 10% or less. Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands) seeks that new developments should assist in extending the Borough's vegetation cover. However, there are existing car parking spaces directly to the front of the site and there is little opportunity for any planting within the site due to the proximity of neighbouring units. As such, in this instance, and as the unit backs onto a small woodland area, the lack of any proposed landscaping although unfortunate is accepted.

Sustainability

Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) seeks that the all minor non-residential developments meet a BREEAM standard of Very Good. Policy CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change) seeks that all developments are designed to incorporate measures to tackle climate change. This can be dealt with by way of two conditions requiring an interim BREEAM certificate and a final BREEAM certificate.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The proposed B8 use is not liable for CIL.

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT Planning Permission, subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

TL1 Time Limit
AP1 Approved Plans
M3 Materials (as specified)
DC1 Vehicle Parking (as specified)
DC6 Cycle parking (to be approved)
C2 Construction Method Statement (to be submitted)
C1 Hours of Construction/Demolition
C4 No bonfires
N2 Mechanical Plant (Noise Assessment Required)
CO6 Unidentified Contamination
N20 No External Lighting
L11 Bat Licence (to be submitted)
Bat Mitigation Strategy
SU5 BREEAM Non-Residential - Interim (to be approved)
SU6 BREEAM Non-Residential - Post Construction (To be approved)

Informatives

IF1 Positive and proactive
IF2 Pre-commencement conditions
IF3 Highways
IF5 Terms
IF6 Building Control
IF7 Complaints about construction
IF8 Encroachment
IF9 Contamination
I11 CIL