

LOCATION: ST GEORGES INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, WILTON ROAD,
CAMBERLEY

PROPOSAL: Change of use of Industrial Estate to include Class B8 use (warehousing and distribution) whilst retaining the current Class B1(c) (Light Industrial) and B2 (General Industrial) approved uses. (Additional plan recv'd 15/8/17) (Amended Plan - Rec'd 15/08/2017.)

TYPE: Full Planning Application

APPLICANT: c/o Agent
Surrey Heath Borough Council

OFFICER: Ross Cahalane

The application would normally be determined under the Council's Scheme of Delegation, however, as the applicant is the Council it is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee for determination.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT subject to conditions

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application seeks planning permission to change the approved use of the industrial estate to include Class B8 use (warehousing and distribution) whilst retaining the current Class B1(c) (Light Industrial) and B2 (General Industrial) approved uses. The existing use of the site includes Class B1(c) and B2 uses as approved as part of the original estate under 82/0478, along with Class B8 uses - which have either been implemented under additional planning permissions, or are likely to have become lawful through the passage of time under the ten year rule. The Council is the applicant having recently acquired the site and the proposed option to let the industrial estate units as B8 uses would allow the industrial estate to be marketed to a wider range of occupiers to assist with reducing vacancy rates of the units. No other internal or external changes to the industrial units or the estate layout are proposed.
- 1.2 It is considered that the proposed option to introduce additional Class B8 warehousing and distribution uses within this industrial estate would comply with Policy CP8 (Employment) of the CSDMP and would therefore be acceptable in principle. The County Highway Authority is satisfied that the proposal would not have a material impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway. No objections are raised on residential amenity grounds subject to a planning condition restricting the hours of operation for any new Class B8 use 07:00 – 20:00 Monday – Fridays, 08:00 – 17:00 Saturdays and no use on a Sunday/Public/Bank Holiday, to reduce the potential for additional disturbance to local residents arising from warehousing and distribution activities involving the use of HGVs and similar delivery vehicles. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with adopted policy and the NPPF.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The 1.41 hectare application site falls within the settlement area of Camberley and comprises an industrial estate originally granted planning permission in 1982 leading from Wilton Road forming a roundabout junction with Frimley Road and Park Road. The estate comprises 23 small industrial units to be used for light or general industrial purposes only (Class B1(c) and B2).
- 2.2 The surrounding area is mixed in character with the application site and surrounding premises to the east and south within the boundary of a Core Employment Area. Camberley Town FC grounds (Krooner Park) and residential dwellings of Krooner Road are located to the north. The Frimley Road shopping parade with residential flats behind and above the premises are located to the northeast. The public recreation ground of Crabtree Park is located to the west. Pembroke House, the vacant building to the east, is currently earmarked for redevelopment (ref: 17/0670).

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 82/0472 Erection of 23 small industrial units

Decision: Granted (implemented)

Condition 11 of 82/0472 states:

“Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1977 and the Town and Country Planning General Development (Amendment) Order 1981:

(...)

(ii) the buildings shall be used for light or general industrial purposes only within use Classes III and IV of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1972 and for no other purpose.”

Reason: To ensure that the site is retained for small and nursery industrial purposes having regard to the existing availability or proposed provision of larger industrial and warehouse units within the Borough.

- 3.2 90/0893 Change of use of premises from B1 light industrial to B8 storage and warehousing (Unit 23).

Decision: Granted (implemented)

- 3.3 91/0603 Change of use of premises from B1 light industrial to B8 storage and warehousing (Unit 2).

Decision: Granted (implemented)

- 3.4 91/1062 Removal of condition 13 attached to SU/82/472 in respect of user being located within Surrey, or in Boroughs of Rushmoor, Hart & Bracknell.

Decision: Granted (implemented)

4.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|--|
| 4.1 | Surrey County Highway Authority | No objections raised. |
| 4.2 | Environmental Services | No objection, subject to condition restricting new Class B8 use operating hours (See Section 7.4). |

5.0 REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 At the time of writing no letter of representation have been received.

6.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 6.1 The application seeks to change the approved use of the industrial estate to include Class B8 use (warehousing and distribution) whilst retaining the current Class B1(c) (Light Industrial) and B2 (General Industrial) approved uses.
- 6.2 The proposed change of use of the industrial estate to permit B8 use would allow the industrial estate to be marketed to a wider range of occupiers to assist with reducing vacancy rates of the units. The existing Class B1(c) (light industrial) and B2 (general industrial) uses throughout the site are proposed to be retained, along with seven existing units which are considered to have a lawful Class B8 use (warehousing and distribution). No external changes to any of the premises are proposed and the existing car parking and access arrangements will also not be changed.

7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATION

- 7.1 This application site is in Camberley and within a settlement area as defined in the proposals map of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy & Development Management Policies 2012 (CSDMP). The site is also within the Industrial Estates and Infrastructure character area as defined under the Western Urban Area Character Supplementary Planning Document (WUAC SPD). The proposal is considered against the principles of Policies CP2 (Sustainable Development and Design), CP8 (Employment), DM9 (Design Principles) and DM11 (Traffic Management and Highway Safety) of the CSDMP and the National Planning Policy Framework. It is considered that the main planning issues to be addressed are:
- The principle of the change of use;
 - The impact on the character of the area;
 - The impact on residential amenities, and;
 - The impact on highway safety.

7.2 The principle of the change of use

- 7.2.1 Based on the planning history of the site, the lawful use of the site is considered to be Class B1 and B2 as originally approved and implemented. Based on the stated reason under the restrictive use Condition 11 attached to the 1982 planning permission for the industrial estate as-built, it appears that the condition was imposed to ensure that the site is retained for small/start up industrial purposes having regard to the availability at the time within the Borough.
- 7.2.2 Two units have subsequently benefitted from planning permissions for change of use to Class B8 in the early 1990s (See Section 3 above). A site visit and research of past uses has revealed that a number of additional units within the industrial estate currently fall under Class B8 uses, including electrical, window/fascia and plumbing trade wholesalers. In the officer's opinion, it is likely that the B8 use of six additional sites have become lawful over the passage of time under the ten year rule.
- 7.2.3 The proposal site is within a Core Employment Area as defined by Policy CP8 (Employment), which states that Core Employment Areas, as identified upon the Proposals Map, will be retained for employment use and along with Camberley Town Centre will be the focus for economic regeneration and inward investment. Policy CP8 states that new development in Core Employment Areas should not result in an overall loss of industrial floorspace (Use Classes B1c or B2) with start-up industrial and incubation units for high technology sectors encouraged. However, proposals for Class B8 dependent on having good access to the strategic road network will also be encouraged to locate within these areas.
- 7.2.4 It appears that the existing Class B8 uses within the estate benefit from the site's proximity to the A30 and the A331 Blackwater Valley route that leads to the M3, and it is considered that this infrastructure would support additional B8 usage within the site. Additionally, it is considered that the larger units in particular lend themselves to trade wholesaler/warehouse uses, given their height with high secure vehicular building entrances to open-plan areas and separate front entrances to smaller office/trade desk areas, with each unit also benefitting from space at the front for loading/unloading. Indeed, a site assessment undertaken in December 2016 as part of the Council's Employment Land Review update identifies St Georges Industrial Estate as having characteristics of a warehouse/distribution park and general industry and business area, rather than as a heavy or specialist industrial site.
- 7.2.5 It must also be noted that a permitted development right was introduced by the government in 1995 to allow B1 (c) and B2 premises to be changed to an unrestricted B8 use of up to 235 sq. m (updated to 500 sq. m in 2015) without planning permission. All the existing units within the application site are significantly smaller than this 500 sq. m permitted development limit. Additionally, three units appeared to be vacant at the time of the case officer site visit in August 2017 and two were recorded as vacant during the Employment Land Review update in December 2016. Therefore, it is clear that national planning policy supports the general principle of the change of use of small office/industrial units to warehouse/distribution uses.

7.2.6 In light of all the above, it is considered that the proposed option to introduce additional Class B8 warehousing and distribution uses within this industrial estate would comply with Policy CP8 of the CSDMP and the NPPF. The principle of the proposal is therefore considered acceptable.

7.3 The impact on character of the area

7.3.1 Policy DM9 (Design Principles) continues to promote high quality design that respects and enhances the local environment, paying particular regard to scale, materials, massing, bulk and density. The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to secure high quality design, as well as taking account of the character of different areas.

7.3.2 No external alterations are proposed, and a significant portion of the surrounding area is industrial or commercial in character. As such, it is not considered that the proposed additional warehouse/distribution use would be out of character with the nature of uses in the surrounding area. It is therefore considered that the Class B8 use proposed would be in compliance with the character requirements of Policy DM9 of the CSDMP.

7.4 Impact on residential amenity

7.4.1 Policy DM9 (Design Principles) of the Core Strategy ensures that the amenities of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties and uses are respected. The thrust of one of the core planning principles within the NPPF is that planning should always seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

7.4.2 The site is located within a large long-established industrial estate. Unit 22 containing a plumbing merchants is approx. 1.2m from a site containing a two storey residential building containing four maisonette properties as approved under 13/0428, with its rear garden amenity space adjacent the front parking area of unit 22. Units 20-22 are sited approx. 11m from the rear garden boundaries of the southern Krooner Road residential properties, with Unit 19 approx. 8m from No. 11 Krooner Road. However, as demonstrated on the submitted site plan, Units 19 and 22, along with five other units significantly further away from residential properties, are in existing B8 use and in the case officer's opinion, these uses have become lawful over the passage of time under the ten year rule.

7.4.3 Notwithstanding this, unlike other industrial estates/business parks nearby, the site does not benefit from access from a non-residential area. As such, the sole access is from the Frimley Road/Park Road roundabout, with these roads containing numerous residential properties. Therefore, additional unrestricted B8 warehouse/distribution involving large vehicles would have the potential to impact the amenities of surrounding residences in terms of noise and disturbance at night time and outside of normal working hours.

7.4.4 The Council's Senior Environmental Health Officer (EHO) has been consulted and has raised no objection to the additional B8 use option, subject to a planning condition restricting the hours of operation 07:00 – 20:00 Monday – Fridays, 08:00 – 17:00 Saturdays, with no use on a Sunday/Public/Bank Holiday. The EHO considers that these operating hours would sufficiently reduce the potential for additional

disturbance to local residents arising from warehousing and distribution activities involving the use of HGVs and similar delivery vehicles.

- 7.4.5 It is however not considered reasonable or necessary to restrict the hours of operation of the existing Class B8 uses, as the EHO has commented that there is no evidence that noise issues have arisen from these existing uses. Additionally, such a condition may lead to the existing Class B8 operators having to leave the units and therefore may lead to additional vacancy in the industrial estate.
- 7.4.6 The Class B8 use proposed is therefore considered to comply with the amenity requirements of Policy DM9 and the NPPF, subject to the restrictive hours of operation condition as outlined above to cover the additional warehouse/distribution uses only.

7.5 Impact on highway safety

- 7.5.1 Policy DM11 (Traffic Management and Highway Safety) states that development which would adversely impact the safe and efficient flow of traffic movement on the highway network will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that measures to reduce and mitigate such impacts to acceptable levels can be implemented.
- 7.5.2 The Class B8 use proposed would retain the existing site access and parking arrangements across the site, which include hardstanding areas in front of each unit for staff/customer parking and also for loading/unloading to and from the units. The planning statement asserts that allowing a change of use to B8 for the industrial park could reduce the number of vehicle movements in and out of the site, with industrial warehousing not generally employing large workforces. To support this claim, reference has been made to the Surrey County Council Parking Standards, which advises that Class B1 office/B2 general industrial uses need up to one car parking space per 30m² of floor area, whereas a B8 storage/distribution use as proposed needs a lower provision of one car parking space for every 70-100m².
- 7.5.3 The County Highway Authority (CHA) has been consulted and has undertaken an assessment in terms of the likely net additional traffic generation, access arrangements and parking provision and is satisfied that the proposal would not have a material impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway. No objections were therefore raised on safety, capacity or policy grounds. The Local Planning Authority is therefore satisfied that the proposal would not conflict with the aims of Policy DM11.

8.0 ARTICLE 2(3) DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) ORDER 2012 WORKING IN A POSITIVE/PROACTIVE MANNER

- 8.1 In assessing this application, officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner consistent with the requirements of paragraphs 186-187 of the NPPF. This included:
- a) Provided or made available pre application advice to seek to resolve problems before the application was submitted and to foster the delivery of sustainable

development.

- b) Provided feedback through the validation process including information on the website, to correct identified problems to ensure that the application was correct and could be registered.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT subject to the following conditions:-

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions and in accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Apart from Units 1, 2, 3, 15, 16, 19 and 22 (as identified on the location plan received on 19 September 2017), the Class B8 (warehousing and distribution) use hereby approved shall not operate outside the hours of 07:00 - 20:00 Monday - Fridays, 08:00 - 17:00 Saturdays and at no time on a Sunday/Public/Bank Holiday.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities enjoyed by neighbouring residents and to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informative(s)

1. Decision Notice to be kept DS1