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Planning Department
South Holland District Council
Priory Road
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Your ref:
Our ref: 5664019v1

11 February 2020

Dear Sir / Madam

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO BUILDING FOLLOWING APPROVAL OF CHANGE OF USE FROM GARDEN CENTRE (USE CLASS A1) TO MIXED B1 AND B8 USES AND ASSOCIATED BUILDING OPERATIONS, APPLICATION REFERENCE H02-0708-19 AT THE FORMER WYEVALE GARDEN CENTRE, POSTLAND ROAD, CROWLAND, PE6 0JB.

Please find enclosed a full planning application for the above proposed development. The purpose of this covering letter is to describe the site, set out a detailed description of the proposed development and an assessment against key planning policy and material considerations.

Please note that in addition to this covering letter, this application is accompanied by the following supporting documentation:

- Application forms and certificates
- Location Plan (drawing no 100)
- Existing and proposed site plans (drawing nos 101 and 201 revA)
- Existing and proposed ground floor plans (drawing nos 102 and 202 revA)
- Existing and proposed elevations (drawing nos 110 and 210 revA)
- Demolition Plan (drawing no P19-020 150)
- Transport Statement
- Topographical Survey (to support the flood risk assessment within this covering letter)

Background and Economic Justification

Planning permission was approved on 12th September 2019 under reference H02-0708-19 for the change of use from the former garden centre (A1 use class) to mixed (B1 & B8 uses) and associated building operations, car parking and infrastructure. The current garden centre use has since ceased and the landlord's intention is to covert the building to the approved commercial uses to enable a marketing campaign to commence and new tenants to be found.

Since the application was approved further advice from commercial agents has been sought. This advice has raised concerns about the restricted height of parts of the building and the negative impact this is likely to have on the marketability of some of the commercial units to be created with the building. In response to that advice, the roof height of part of the building (units 8 and 9) is proposed to be raised by approximately

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2m to better reflect the height of the remaining parts of the building and in order to ensure sufficient headroom for future occupiers is provided. This part of the building is also proposed to be re-clad in Profiled Metal Cladding so that it matches the rest of the building and is more appropriate for the intended use. Finally, it is proposed to make some amendments to the internal layout, two of the eight approved units are proposed to be split by introducing internal partitions in order to create a total of 10 units. The market advice received has confirmed that smaller units better reflect the needs and demands of the market and will therefore increase the potential or findings future occupiers. The proposed change also provides greater flexibility allowing businesses to acquire more floorspace in the event of needing to expand.

Planning consent H02-0708-19 established the principle of using the building for B1 and B8 use. The Officer's Report acknowledged that use of the site for B1 and B8 uses would be a good reuse of this site and would have the potential to provide local employment opportunities. The subject planning application proposes uncontroversial and relatively minor changes to the approved building plans in order to give the best possible chance of future occupiers being found and new employment opportunities being created.

The Site

The application 'site' is denoted by the red line of the accompanying site location plan and comprises a large 5,282sqm (GIA) building which was formerly the Wyevale Garden Centre, along with goods yards to the north, south and west of the building and car parking areas to the east and south , providing approximately 99 spaces. Access is taken via an access road from Postland Road. In total, the site area extends to 2.28ha.

Context

The site is previously developed (brownfield) land. It is located on the north eastern end of Crowland, off Postland Road, there is a caravan park located approximately 50m to the north east. Postland Road joins to James Road, running close to the southern boundary of the site and this links to the A16, providing convenient highways links to wider locations including Peterborough to the south and Spalding to the north. The built-up area of Crowland is located to the west of the site, albeit there is a separation distance of approximately 130m from the nearest residential areas. Further to the north, east and south of the site boundary lies open countryside, although mature vegetation surrounds the site boundaries and as such there is limited intervisibility between the site and views from the countryside beyond.

Environmental Designations

The Environment Agency's flood maps indicate that the site in its entirety falls within a flood zone 3, with a high probability of sea or river flooding (this is defined as land having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding; or land having a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of sea flooding). Flood risk and drainage is discussed in the assessment section below.

There are no designated heritage assets on the site or within close proximity and there are no other relevant environmental designations affecting the site.

Planning Policy Designations

The Proposal Maps of the adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (March 2019) indicate that the site is located just outside of the settlement boundary, located west of the access point. It lies within a mineral safeguarding area for sand and gravel and there is a housing allocation (Cro050) located approximately 140m to the west of the site.

Planning History and Lawful Use

Planning permission was granted for the change of use of the former Welland Holiday Hire business to a garden centre and use of 2 buildings for B1 (business) purposes on 10th July 2001 under planning application reference H02-0218-01. This previously established the former lawful use of the site as a garden

centre. The two buildings granted for B1 use are located within the adjacent Crowland Caravans and Camping site and are therefore outside of the subject application site and are not relevant to this application.

As discussed above, planning consent was granted on 12th September 2019 (under reference H02-0708-19) for the Change of use from garden centre (A1) to mixed (B1 & B8 uses) and associated building operations, car parking and infrastructure. This granted the proposed change of use to B1 and B8 uses and some minor building operations to facilitate the conversion. The subject application proposes some amendments to the approved plans to help to ensure that the proposed units meet the demands of likely occupiers.

There are no other relevant planning applications covering the site as registered on South Holland District Council's online planning application search facility.

Proposed Development

The description of the proposed development is as follows:

'Alterations and extensions to building following approval of change of use from garden centre (Use Class A1) to mixed B1 and B8 uses and associated building operations, application reference H02-0708-19".

More specifically, the proposed development involves the following:

- Raising the roof of part of the building (units 8 and 9) by approximately 2m.
- Proposed alterations to the external cladding and fenestration of part of the building (units 8 and 9) to be Profiled Metal Cladding and Aluminium double-glazed windows and doors to match the rest of the building.
- Internal alterations, including introducing partitions to create 10 units.

The plans which were approved under H02-0708-19 and are to be amended are as follows:

- Proposed Site Plan (approved drawing number P19-020_201) is substituted by revision A
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan (approved drawing number P19-020_202) is substituted by revision A
- Proposed Elevations (approved drawing number P19-020_210) is substituted by revision A

The gross internal area (GIA) of the submitted plans (4,928sqm) is slightly greater than the previous approved plans (4,913sqm). This 15sqm increase is due to the amendments proposed to the internal walls of units 8 and 9, which will be reduced in width. The change in floorspace is therefore only very slight and will not affect the external footprint of the building.

Planning Policy Context and Assessment

The statutory development plan comprises the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2011-2031), which was adopted in March 2019. Planning law dictates that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The key policies of the Local Plan which are of relevance to the proposed development are as follows:

Policy 2 (Development Management)

Policy 3 (Design of New Development)

Policy 4 (Approach to Flood Risk)

Policy 7 (Improving South East Lincolnshire's Employment Land Portfolio)

Policy 33 (Delivering a More Sustainable Transport Network)

Policy 36 (Vehicle and Cycle Parking)

Principle of Development.

The principle of the change of the use of the building to B1 and B8 uses has already been established under planning consent H02-0708-19 and is supported by Policy 7 of the Local Plan. Furthermore, the proposed development is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework which supports the efficient re-use of previously developed land and supports developments which meet the changing needs of businesses and generate investment and growth. The proposed development will result in the sustainable reuse of a vacant site to accommodate new employment uses.

The subject planning application involves some amendments to the building plans, which are explained in the 'proposed development' section above. Subject to the amendments being in accordance with the relevant policies of the Local Plan, the proposed development should be approved.

Policy 2 of the Local Plan (Development Management) states that proposals will be permitted provided that sustainable development considerations are met. The proposals are assessed (in bold) against the criteria of Policy 2 as follows:

'Proposals requiring planning permission for development will be permitted provided that sustainable development considerations are met, specifically in relation to:

1. *size, scale, layout, density and impact on the amenity, trees, character and appearance of the area and the relationship to existing development and land uses;* **The proposals are to raise the roof of the lowest part of the existing building by approximately 2m. This increase in height is modest and does not raise the building significantly above the height of the rest of the building; furthermore, there is a reduction proposed in the ridge height. Therefore, the proposals do not substantially increase the scale of the building in any way which would result in adverse impacts upon the character and appearance of the local area. The building is also well screened from view.**
2. *quality of design and orientation;* **The proposed recladding of units 8 and 9 will make these more consistent with the appearance of the remainder of the building and are typical in appearance to what one would expect of a commercial unit.**
3. *maximising the use of sustainable materials and resources;* **The proposed materials are high quality and durable and assist with building insultation to conserve energy use.**
4. access and vehicle generation levels; **The proposals are only for minor building operations and will not affect vehicle generation. This is discussed further in the relevant section below.**
5. *the capacity of existing community services and infrastructure;* **The proposals are only for minor building operations and will not affect demand for existing community services and infrastructure.**
6. *impact upon neighbouring land uses by reason of noise, odour, disturbance or visual intrusion;* **The proposals are only for minor building operations and will not affect neighbouring amenity.**
7. *sustainable drainage and flood risk;* **The proposals are only for minor building operations, they do not introduce any additional hard surfaces and therefore are not expected to increase flood risk.**
8. *impact or enhancement for areas of natural habitats and historical buildings and heritage assets;* **The proposed works will not in any way impact natural habitats, there are no heritage assets on the site or nearby which may be affected; and**
9. *impact on the potential loss of sand and gravel mineral resources.* **The site already hosts a building and is not available for mineral extraction.'**

Design

The building comprises a relatively large steel frame structure, with brick and steel-clad walls, and has the utilitarian appearance of a typical warehouse. The proposed development will introduce new cladding and external alterations to units 8 and 9 so that these are consistent with the remainder of the building and appropriate for the proposed use. The proposed development is therefore acceptable in terms of its design and is in accordance with policy 3.

Transport and Parking

The proposed development was fully assed under planning application reference H02-0708-19 to be acceptable in terms of highways and transport impacts. The amendments under the current application do not materially affect the overall floor space of approved B1 and B8 uses. Therefore, the predicted highway impacts remain unchanged.

The Transport Statement which supported the previous application has been re-submitted along with the subject application for completeness. Whilst this statement was prepared for the previous application and has not been updated, the proposed floorspace has not materially changed (the GIA has increased by 15sqm only due to the new external wall configuration of units 8 and 9) and therefore the assessment of the highways impacts remains relevant and up to date. The Transport Statement provides an assessment of the site access and the predicted trip rates on local highways and these are found to be acceptable, a view clearly endorsed by the approval of the 2019 application.

The proposed development is therefore in accordance with Policies 33 and 36 of the Local Plan.

Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage

The Environment Agency maps indicate that the application site is located in a Flood Zone 3. However, the previous application (H02-0708-19) was supported by a flood risk assessment and assessed to be acceptable through the application process. The relatively minor changes proposed within the subject application do not increase in any way the susceptibility of the proposed development to flood risk; furthermore, the proposed uses are categorised as less sensitive to flood risk.

Drainage

The site will continue to drain to the surrounding land drainage system as it does at present. The proposed development does not involve introducing new impermeable surfaces and there are no anticipated changes to surface water impacts than exist at present.

Conclusion

This covering letter has provided a detailed description of the site and the proposed development, along with an assessment against the development plan and material planning considerations.

The acceptability of the change of use of the building has already been established under planning approval H02-0708-19. The proposed development simply involves some relatively minor and uncontroversial amendments to the building plans so that the development meets market demands and to help to ensure occupation of the units without delay. The economic and employment benefits will be significant, and the proposals constitute sustainable development.

The planning assessment within this letter explains how the proposals are in accordance with the development plan and we would therefore respectfully request for the planning application to be supported and for a determination to be issued as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully

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