

TW/199

22nd December 2017

town and country
planning consultants

Mark Simmonds
Planning Department
South Holland District Council
Priory Road
Spalding
Lincolnshire
PE11 2XE

Dear Mark,

Lincs Gateway business Park, Spalding – Provision for a Conference and Function Centre

I have today submitted an application, pursuant to section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, which seeks to alter outline planning permission 16-0025-15.

The outline planning permission envisaged that a conference and function centre (use classes D1 and D2), with accommodation for 400 people, would be accommodated within Land Parcel B2. However, full planning permission has since been granted for this area to be used for offices. These are to be the new offices for my Client, Ashwood Homes, and construction work is well advanced with the office building. The outline permission does not make any allowance for the conference and function centre to be located elsewhere on the business park site. This s73 application therefore seeks to alter the outline permission, to allow for it to be accommodated on the northern part of the site, within the area identified by the outline permission as Land Parcel A3.

A separate application has also been submitted today, seeking approval for reserved matters for much of the site. This sets out the detail of the proposed development, such as the position and use of the various buildings. It includes provision for the conference and function centre within the landmark building at the site's frontage, identified in that application as Building F.

This s73 application seeks an amendment to condition 2, in relation to approved drawing 1219/07A, the Site Plan. We propose that this should be replaced with Drawing 199/004, which accompanies this application. This drawing would make the following changes to the outline application proposals:

- Parcel A3 would now have outline permission for a range of uses which includes a D1/D2 conference and function centre;
- The boundary for Parcels A1 and A3 would be modified, to reflect the proposals in the current reserved matters application – this simply places the internal road in a slightly different position;

- The boundaries for Parcels B4 and B5 would be altered, to reflect a change in the design of the proposed hotel and pub/restaurant, which no longer require as much space – consequently, the proposed commercial buildings within Parcel B5 have been redesigned, to make use of the larger area available to them (again, see the reserved matters application for the wider site, and also separate applications made for Parcel B4, H16-1029-17 and H16-1029-17).

We believe it is important for the conference and function centre to be included within the site, as it was one of the uses which were originally identified as being important to the success of the business park as a whole. The *'Economic Case for the Proposed Lincs Gateway Business Park, Spalding'*, a report by independent consultants SQW, identified the need for high quality conferencing facilities. This report noted the following:

'The development of new commercial facilities, and in particular a new hotel and conference centre alongside the business park, will enhance the economic positioning of Spalding, provide the town with a more attractive commercial profile, and widen the potential for other development in line with changing business needs.'

The conference and function centre was therefore always envisaged as being an important element of the business park, which itself was envisaged as being key to plans to diversify the local economy. The Officer report for the original outline planning permission noted the following:

'The other uses such as the hotel and conference centre, would address strategic deficits in the local business offering, plus the conference centre would also be available for local community use.'

'The supporting uses are proposed for the smaller part of the site, Section B, and would include a conference/function centre (D1 and D2 use), hotel (C1 use), pub/restaurant (A3 and A4 uses) and petrol filling station (sui generis use). These uses are considered to have a synergy with a business park, and would help to make it a success. The hotel and conference/function centre would in particular meet established local needs, and would be of benefit to the wider business community.'

'The need for a conference centre is also identified in the SQW report, which notes that business consultees identified a need for a decent meeting space, and that they currently tend to travel to Peterborough for this type of facility. It is considered this would help to retain business within the area and encourage new businesses to locate in Spalding.'

'The proposed conference and community centre would generally be used for business functions during the working day, but would also be available for hire either on a one-off basis for events, or for the regular use of local community groups. It is intended that the centre will be run by the applicants themselves and it is anticipated there will be a substantial community demand due to a lack of similar accommodation elsewhere in the town.'

The need for the conference and function centre was clearly established at the time of the original application. This included the role it would play both in terms of the business park, and also as a valuable facility for the local community.

We note that a conference centre is normally considered a town centre use, but the principle of its being located on this site has already been established as being acceptable by the outline planning consent. We assume that it is not necessary to undertake a sequential assessment in this regard. This issue was discussed in relation to the outline application, and the Council concluded at that time that the combination of a lack of space in town centre and edge of centre sites, and the particular benefits of the site's "gateway location", justified its being located here. We do not believe that there has been any change in circumstances in this regard. We also believe that the alternative, of having the business park without a conference and function centre, would weaken the site's attractiveness to the business community, and this could undermine its delivery.

I look forward to your confirmation that this application has been registered.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Waller', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tim Waller MRTPI
Director
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