

## 17 January 2024 PLANNING COMMITTEE

**6b PLAN/2023/0745**

**WARD:** Canalside

**LOCATION:** Thameswey, Unit 16 and 17 Wintonlea, Monument Way West, Woking, Surrey, GU21 5EN

**PROPOSAL:** Change of use from Class F1 (Learning and non-residential institutions) to Use Class E (g) (offices, research and development, industrial process), Class B2 (General Industrial) and Class B8 (Storage and distribution).

**APPLICANT:** Mr Kyle Gellatly

**OFFICER:** Emily Fitzpatrick

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### **REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:**

The applicant is Woking Borough Council.

### **SUMMARY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

Change of use from Class F1 (Learning and non-residential institutions) to Use Class E (g) (offices, research and development, industrial process), Class B2 (General Industrial) and Class B8 (Storage and distribution).

### **PLANNING STATUS**

- Contaminated Land
- Employment Area
- High Pressure Gas Main
- Priority Places
- Site Allocations UA27
- Surface Water Flood Risk (medium)
- Thames Basin Heaths SPA Zone B (400m-5km)
- Urban Areas

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**GRANT** planning permission subject to conditions.

### **SITE DESCRIPTION**

Unit 16 and 17 Wintonlea Industrial Estate are sited within the Monument Way West Industrial Estate. The units form part of an array of adjoined units (Unit 12-19) known as the Wintonlea terrace of industrial units. The site was originally two units however has now been merged into one. The site no longer has a mezzanine floor. The application site is single-storey and has a gross internal area of 220.76sqm. The height of the units are 6m, with a footprint of approximately 14.6m in depth x 6.3m in width. The units are designed in white cladding with a flat roof and shutter doors and a window above ground floor level. On-site parking provision of x6 spaces and loading areas serve the front elevation of both units.

### **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

(Not an exhaustive list)

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PLAN/2019/1039	Change of use from Industrial units (Use Class B1 Business, B2 General Industrial and B8 storage and distribution) to Use Class D1 (Training and Education Centre) and external alterations (permitted 07.02.2020)
PLAN/2003/0257	25m galvanised 2400mm high palisade fence and 7m gate to be installed at entrance to site (amended proposal and amended location) (permitted 10.04.2003)
DC 86/1322	Servicing and repairs of motor vehicles A.R.M 85/0494 (Unit 7) (permitted)
DC 86/1029	Change of use from class III light industrial to bread storage and distribution (permitted)
DC 85/0803	Erection 20 factory units together with areas at west end of site and associated access roads and offices (permitted)
DC 85/0494	Erection of 2810 sqm of light industrial premises and 411 sqm of offices together with associated car parking and access (permitted)
DC 84/0734	Erection of 24,015 sq ft of industrial premises with industrial estate road A.R.M 83/0732

### **CONSULTATIONS**

Contamination Land Officer: No comments to make.

Environmental Health: No comments to make.

HSE: Do not advise against

Planning Policy: No objection

SCC Highways: No objection

### **REPRESENTATIONS**

No letters of representation were received.

### **RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES**

#### National Planning Policy Framework (2023):

Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 4 – Decision making

Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy

Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

#### Woking Core Strategy (2012):

CS5 – Priority Places

CS9 – Flooding and water management

CS15 – Sustainable economic development

CS18 – Transport and Accessibility

CS21 – Design

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CS25 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Woking Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2016):  
DM8 – Land Contamination and Hazards

Woking Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2021):  
UA27 – Monument Way Industrial Estate, Monument Way West, Woking, GU21 5EN

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):

Parking Standards SPD (2018)

Woking Design (2015)

Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight (2008)

### **PLANNING ISSUES**

1. The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application is the principle of development, impact on character of the area, residential amenity, impact on highways and parking, impact on land contamination, impact on flood risk.

#### Principle of Development

2. The application site falls under Policy UA27 of the Site Allocations DPD (2021). The policy identifies the 4.3ha site as allocated for redevelopment for industrial/warehousing, for road infrastructure in the form of a fourth arm to the Sheerwater link road. The key requirements of this policy says development of the site will be required to: i) be of a high design quality that takes account of and seeks to improve the character and appearance of the locality, and a scale and density that maximises the efficient use of the site whilst reflecting the development grain of the surroundings. Officers' note the proposal concerns a change of use only and no redevelopment of the site, nevertheless this policy supports reinstatement of the original use.
3. With regards to B Class Uses Policy CS15 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012) states '*Safeguard land within the employment areas for B uses, except in:*
  - *The Butts Road/ Poole Road employment area where redevelopment for mixed office space and residential use will be supported if it does not result in an overall loss of employment floorspace.*
  - *The Forsyth Road employment area where redevelopment of vacant sites will be encouraged for B uses, unless redevelopment is for an alternative employment generating use which contributes to the aims of policy CS5 (priority places) and would not jeopardise the B use led nature of the employment area*'.
4. Policy CS5 states '*The Council will safeguard land within the existing employment areas in Maybury and Sheerwater for B uses and encourage proposals that create new opportunities for local employment within them. In the Forsyth Road employment area redevelopment of vacant sites will be encouraged for B uses, unless redevelopment is for an alternative employment generating use which contributes to the aims of this policy and would not jeopardise the B use led nature of the employment area. The Council will promote local labour agreements with developers to enable local people in the Priority Places to secure employment and skills development.*'
5. Policy CS19 states '*The Council will work with its partners to provide accessible and sustainable social and community infrastructure to support growth in the Borough. It will do so by promoting the use of social and community infrastructure for a range of uses.*

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*The loss of existing and social community facilities or sites will be resisted unless the Council is satisfied that:*

- *There is no identified need for the facility for its original purpose and that it is not viable for any other social or community use, or*
- *Adequate alternative facilities will be provided in a location with equal (or greater) accessibility for the community it is intended to serve*
- *There is no requirement from any other public service provider for an alternative social or community facility that could be met through change of use or redevelopment.*

*Applicants will be expected to provide evidence that they have consulted with an appropriate range of service providers and the community.'*

6. The application site is located within the Monument Way West Industrial Estate and is a designated employment area. The proposal is for the change of use of Unit 16 and 17 from Use Class F1 (Learning and non-residential institutions) to revert back to Use Class E (g) (offices, research and development, industrial process), Class B2 (General Industrial) and Class B8 (Storage and distribution).
7. Whilst the application site is not within Forsyth Road the application site is vacant and sited within the priority places area. The current permitted use was granted by PLAN/2019/1039 in 2020, for Educational use by the Ribat Institute which is a religious charity. The change of use to education was permitted due to the community benefits. However, following the vacation of this Charity, the units remain empty and unused. The internal configuration has been amended, there is no mezzanine floor and has been stripped of fittings, a W.C, partition walls, rooflights have been boarded over and the previous tenant has deactivated the floodlights and intercom. A Schedule of Dilapidations has been provided, produced by Vail Williams, setting out the costs of these works to the landlord. The units no longer serve as functional for any further education use and given the location, a designated employment area for B uses, combined with the location as a Priority Place, it is deemed as appropriate to revert back to its original use, a purpose-built industrial space. No alterations are proposed to the exterior.
8. Further information has been provided to show the current use is not viable for any further social or community use. The cost of re-instating the building to its former site combined with the low rents afforded by community organisations, with typically poor covenant strength would show a negative land value which would mean that this option is unviable for the 'original' community use or any other social or community use.
9. The planning statement says the applicant has been marketing the property since March 2023, via letting agents Vail Williams. As part of the marketing, the unit was widely advertised, on Rightmove, EACH, Co-Star (to name a few). A detailed list of all the organisations that expressed interest in the unit has been provided by Vail Williams, and demonstrates that there has been no interest from any social, community or education organisations; all the interest has been from industrial, logistics and light-industrial firms, which would fall under the relevant Use Classes, this application seeks to apply for.
10. Given the above it is considered the proposal complies with Policies CS5, CS15 and CS19 of the Woking Core Strategy (2012).

### Impact on Character of the Area

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11. No alterations are proposed to the exterior of the units as a result of the proposal. The proposal would not be considered to cause an impact on the character of the area.

### Impact on Residential Amenity

12. Nos.1-4 Monument Way East are the closest residential properties to the application site, located approximately 45.7m to the south east. The proposal seeks to revert back to its former use for business, storage and industry. Given the location in an industrial park surrounded by existing industry use and with no changes to the exterior or increase to footprint/ height, the proposal is not considered to cause an impact on residential amenity.
13. The application is not considered to have a detrimental impact on neighbouring properties in terms of noise and disturbance over and above the existing Use Class B2, B8 and E (g) use. Environmental Health have been consulted and had no comments to make on the proposal.

### Impact on highways and parking

14. The application site has provision of x6 parking spaces sited to the west of the application site which is located within the urban area. It is unknown who the future occupancy will be i.e. business use, general industrial or warehouse and staffing numbers. The Parking Standards SPD proposes for business use 1 car space per 30m<sup>2</sup>, for general industrial this is 1 car space per 30m<sup>2</sup> and warehouse storage 1 car space per 100m<sup>2</sup>. The submitted planning statement indicates the future occupiers would likely serve as general industrial use, the retained floor area is approximately 220m<sup>2</sup>, therefore 30m<sup>2</sup> x No.6 spaces would equate to 180m<sup>2</sup>, there would be ample provision. Furthermore the original use of this site is what the proposal seeks to revert back to with no alterations to parking.
15. The County Highway Authority has undertaken an assessment in terms of the likely net additional traffic generation, access arrangements and parking provision and are satisfied that the application would not have a material impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway. It is considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on highways and parking.

### Impact on land contamination

16. The application site has a history of land contamination, however the proposal concerns a change of use to its previous lawful use and no alterations are proposed to the buildings footprint. The Land Contamination Officer has been consulted and has no comments to make with regards to contaminated land. There would be no impact to land contamination.

### Impact on flood risk

17. The application site is located adjacent to an area of medium surface water flood risk. However, the proposal would not increase the floor area of the building and is considered to cause no impact to flood risk.

### Local Finance Considerations

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18. The Council introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on 1 April 2015. As the proposed development would not result in new build gross floor space of more than 100 sqm it is not liable for a financial contribution to CIL.

### **CONCLUSION**

19. Overall, the principle of development is considered acceptable and would have an acceptable impact on the amenities of neighbours, on the character of the area, highways, land contamination and flood risk. The proposal therefore accords with Policies CS5, CS9, CS15, CS18, CS19, CS21 and CS25 of the *Core Strategy (2012)*, Policies DM8 of the *Development Plan Document (2016)*, Policy UA27 of the *Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2021)*, Supplementary Planning Documents; *Working Design (2015)*, *Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight (2022)* and the *National Planning Policy Framework (2023)* and is recommended for approval. In considering this application the Council has given regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations. In making the recommendation to grant planning permission it is considered that application is in accordance with the development plan of the area.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Site visit photographs taken 07.12.2023

### **RECOMMENDATION**

PERMIT subject to the following conditions:

Recommendation:

01. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To accord with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

02. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed below:

DWG No: P235-21-P002 Location & Block Plan received 19 October 2023

DWG No: P235-21-P001 Existing Floor Plan and Elevations received 19 October 2023

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is completed in accordance with the approved plans.

Informatives

01. The Council confirms that in assessing this application it has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

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