

Agenda Item 135.

Development Management Ref No	No weeks on day of committee	Parish	Ward	Listed by:
163610	17/8	Finchampstead	Finchampstead South	Cllr Weeks

Applicant Mr P White
Location Belscot, Reading Road, Finchampstead. **Postcode** RG40 4RA
Proposal Full application for the proposed change of use of the land and buildings from Use Class B1 (Business) and B8 (Storage & Distribution) to Use Class B1 (Business), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage & Distribution).
Type Minor
PS Category 15
Officer Mark Croucher

FOR CONSIDERATION BY Planning Committee on 10th May 2017
REPORT PREPARED BY Head of Development Management and Regulatory Services

SUMMARY

The application seeks the proposed change of use of part of the site from B1 and B8 to a flexible use of B1, B2 and B8. The change of use will relate to two existing buildings and an associated external storage area. No additional built form is proposed.

The application site is within the countryside and the proposal is compliant with policy CP11 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF. A main concern expressed by neighbouring residents is noise and disturbance as a result of the B2 use. In consultation with the Environmental Health Team, it is considered that the recommended conditions would mitigate any harmful noise as a result of the B2 use. The permission would only allow a B2 use in 2 of the existing buildings.

The existing buildings have a lawful use of B1 and B8. The fall-back position of the lawful use is a material consideration. It is not considered that the impact on the character and appearance of the area or highway safety would be materially worse than the lawful use of the site. The proposed development would result in economic benefits by allowing a local business to operate on the site. It is considered that the benefits of the proposed development will outweigh any identified harm and the application is accordingly recommended for approval subject to conditions.

PLANNING STATUS

- Countryside
- Green Route

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVAL, subject to the following conditions:

Time limit

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

Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Approved plans

2. This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings numbered ref: GP/04/16, GP/06/16 Rev C and BCP/8062/01. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

Proposed use

3. The use of the buildings for the metal fabrication business known as Specialised Metal Fabrications Ltd hereby approved shall only occur inside of the units 2 and 3 on the plan GP/06/16 Rev C and at no time shall occur outside of these buildings.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the neighbouring properties and the character and appearance of the area.

4. The proposed B2 use hereby permitted shall be limited to the company known as Specialised Metal Fabrications Ltd and shall not be used for any other enterprise of company unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the use of the site is compatible with the character and appearance of the area and the amenity of neighbouring properties.

5. The use of the site hereby approved is to be restricted to between the hours of 0700 and 1900 Monday to Friday; 0900 and 1900 on a Saturday; and none on a Sunday, Bank or National Holiday.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

Noise mitigation

6. Acoustic installation and mechanical ventilation details of units 2 and 3 hereby permitted to be used for a B2 use shall be submitted to and approved in writing prior to the commencement of the B2 use of the buildings. The details thereby approved shall be fully implemented prior to the B2 use of the buildings and maintained in perpetuity unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure there is no detrimental noise and disturbance to the neighbouring residents.

7. The internal layout units 2 and 3 shall include a double door system in accordance with plan ref: GP/06/16 Rev C and maintained in perpetuity unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure there is no detrimental noise and disturbance to the neighbouring residents.

Waste and refuse

8. Prior to the commencement of development details of the waste and refuse arrangements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details hereby agreed shall be fully implemented unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual and neighbouring amenities and functional development. Relevant policy: Core Strategy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC04.

Vehicle access & highway safety

9. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no gates or barriers shall be erected at, or within 10 metres of, the vehicular access onto the highway.

Reason: To ensure that vehicles do not obstruct the highway whilst waiting for gates or barriers to be opened or closed, in the interests of road safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

10. Prior to the B2 use of the units, the vehicle access to the site shall be amended accordance with the plan ref: 11-095-001 Rev B providing visibility splays of 3 metres by 110 metres to the west and 3.5 metres to the east. No structure or erection exceeding 0.6 metres in height shall be placed within these sightlines.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

External lighting

11. Details of any external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning prior to their installation unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the character and appearance of the area and the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Contamination

12. Before development commences the applicant shall carry out an intrusive investigation and contamination risk assessment of the application site in accordance with the recommendations outlined in the Phase One Environmental Assessment Report for the site dated June 2005 by Argyll Environmental (Ref: AEL-1847-PHI-538191) and an updated walkover survey. The applicant shall then, if necessary, prepare and submit to the Local Planning Authority for written approval a remediation scheme that follows the guidelines set out in BS10175 'Code of Practice for the Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites' and CLR11 Model procedures for the management of Land Contamination.

Reason: To ensure that any contamination of the site is identified at the outset to allow remediation to protect existing/proposed occupants of property on the site and/or adjacent land.

13. Before buildings on the application site are occupied the remediation works to make the land suitable for its intended use, as set out in the approved remediation scheme submitted to comply with condition 12 above shall be completed and a validation report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that any contamination of the site is identified at the outset to allow remediation to protect existing/proposed occupants of property on the site and/or adjacent land.

Trees protection & landscaping

14.(a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until an Arboricultural Method Statement and Scheme of Works which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent to the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No development or other operations

shall take place except in complete accordance with the details as so-approved (hereinafter referred to as the Approved Scheme).

- b) No operations shall commence on site in connection with development hereby approved (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) until the tree protection works required by the Approved Scheme are in place on site.
- c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.
- d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval in writing of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and [Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21

15. No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the approved plans shall be felled, uprooted wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed without previous written consent of the local planning authority; any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without consent or dying or being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 5 years from the completion of the development hereby permitted shall be replaced with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To protect existing trees and planting and the verdant character and appearance of the area.

16. Details of any proposed hard surfacing to be laid on the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to its installation. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance and the protection of nearby trees.

17. Prior to the commencement of the development there shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted, and any existing trees or shrubs to be retained. Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved detail in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s).

Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting (or within a period of 5 years of the occupation of the buildings in the case of retained trees and shrubs) die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species or otherwise as approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: to maintain the Green Route and the verdant character and appearance of the area.

Informatives:

1. The Council engages with all applicants in a positive and proactive way through specific pre-application enquiries and the detailed advice available on the Council's website. On this particular application, no pre-application advice was sought before the application was submitted. As the proposal was clearly contrary to the provisions of the Development Plan, it was considered that further discussions would be unnecessary and costly for all parties.
2. The applicant is reminded that this approval is granted subject to conditions which must be complied with prior to the development starting on site. Commencement of the development without complying with the pre-commencement requirements may be outside the terms of this permission and liable to enforcement action. The information required should be formally submitted to the Council for consideration with the relevant fee. Once the details have been approved in writing the development should be carried out only in accordance with those details. If this is not clear please contact the case officer to discuss.
3. Should any bats or evidence of bats be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately and an ecological consultant or the Council's ecologist contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.
4. This permission does not convey or imply any approval or consent that may be required for the display of advertisements on the site for which a separate Advertisement Consent application may be required. You should be aware that the display of advertisements without the necessary consent is a criminal offence liable to criminal prosecution proceedings through the courts.

PLANNING HISTORY

F/2001/3991: Proposed change of use of agricultural building to B1/ B8 use (office/light industrial and storage). Refused: 30/01/2002. Appeal Part allowed for B1/ B8 use: 16/01/2003.

O/2001/3989: Outline application for the proposed erection of two detached dwellings and garages with access. Refused: 03/07/2001.

F/2004/2731: Proposed refurbishment and change of use of building A to bin/cycle store and maintenance shed refurbishment and change of use of building B to B1/B8 use (office light industrial & storage use). Refused: 26/10/2014. Appeal Allowed: 26/10/2004.

F/2005/5957: Proposed change of use of buildings B & C to include B2 general industrial use. Approved: 22/12/2005.

F/2010/1056: Proposed refurbishment and change of use of Building B to B2 use and Building C to B1/B2 and B8 use. Refused: 12/08/2010.

EXT/2010/1075: Application to extend implementation date of planning consent

F/2004/2731 for a further 3 years (proposed refurbishment and change of use of building A to bin/cycle store and maintenance shed refurbishment and change of use of building B to B1/B8 use (office light industrial & storage use)). Approved: 23/07/2010.

F/2010/2633: Change of use of building C from storage (B8) to storage and/or offices (B8 and/or B1). Approved: 31/08/2011.

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Site Area	0.32 hectares
Previous land use(s) and floorspace(s)	B1 and B8.
Number of jobs created/lost	8
Existing parking spaces	12
Proposed parking spaces	12

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Finchampstead Parish Council – Objection:

27/01/2017: No objection but we note comments from local resident at no 15 and these should be taken into consideration.

08/08/2017: Since making our comments on 27th January we note that further objections have been received from residents in particular those from The Rise. In the light of this the Parish Council wishes to offer its support to those residents who consider this application inappropriate and unacceptable particularly in view of the potential noise nuisance. When determining this application we request that WBC take full account of these concerns.

Cllr Weeks - Objection:

- Negative impact of the proposed B2 use (metal fabrication) on the rural character of the countryside.
- The proposed B2 use would have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential properties, primarily through noise and vibration.
- Although the metal fabrication business has previous links with Finchampstead, they are currently located in Hook. Their previous Finchampstead location was appropriately in the middle of Hogwood Industrial Estate - not in a countryside location with light residential development.
- Local bus service is referred to - this bus runs one a week. Another bus service that is referred to is in fact a school bus service for school children - not the public. Plan 1 refers to a cycleway that runs west east connecting Finchampstead with Sandhurst - this is in fact a series of rural public footpaths which can only be used by those on foot - not bicycle.

WBC Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12 and 13

WBC Highways – No objection.

WBC Drainage – Recommend approval with no conditions.

WBC Trees and Landscape – Recommend approval subject to conditions 14 and 15.

Berkshire Archaeology – No objection

Fire and Rescue – No additional hydrants are required.

REPRESENTATIONS

17 letters of objection points raised (in summary):

- The development will impact the adjacent residential and rural areas.
- There are more suitable sites for the proposed use.
- There have been previously unlawful uses occurring on the land.
- The site is currently dormant.
- The noise will affect the amenity of the neighbouring residents.
- The submitted noise report does not satisfactorily consider the noise that will occur as a result of the development.
- No details regarding waste and storage.
- The road junction is unsafe.
- Impact on highway safety.
- Extra traffic will impact highway safety.
- Smells and odours from the site will impact the neighbouring properties.
- Reading Road is very busy.
- Increased disturbance to local residents.
- There is limited public transport in the area.
- Increase in HGV vehicles will impact road safety.
- The proposed use is incompatible with the area.
- The site should have acceptable visibility splays.
- The operating hours should be restricted.
- Pollution arising from the use.
- Impact on trees and the environment.
- Impact on children walking to school.
- Development would impact the tranquil nature of the area.
- What action will be taken to address the foul sewage issue?
- The site is not connected to utilities.

1 letter in support points raised (in summary):

- We were given misleading information regarding the impact of the development.
- The noise from the existing site the business operates from isn't really that bad and therefore I can see no problem with the proposed development.

APPLICANTS POINTS

- The proposed use will ensure the future of a local business.
- There will be no harmful impact subject to conditions.
- The proposal will result in economic benefits to the area.
- Planning permission has previously been approved in 2005 for the addition of a B2 use under reference F/2005/5957.

PLANNING POLICY	
NPPF	Chapter 1: Building strong & competitive economies Chapter 3: Supporting a prosperous rural economy Chapter 4: Promoting sustainable transport Chapter 7: Requiring good design Chapter 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
Core Strategy	CP1 Sustainable Development CP3 General Principles for Development CP6 Managing travel demand CP9 Scale and location of development proposals CP11 Proposals outside Development Limits (including countryside) CP15 Employment Development
MDD Local Plan	CC01 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 Development Limits CC03 Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC06 Noise CC07 Parking CC09 Development and Flood Risk (from all sources) CC10 Sustainable Drainage TB21 Landscape Character

PLANNING ISSUES	
<u>Principle of development</u>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The current lawful use of the buildings on the site is for B1 (office; research & development and light industrial) and B8 (storage & distribution) purposes. The application seeks to retain the existing uses with the introduction of a metal fabrication business which is considered to be a B2 use. 2. A B2 use on the site was previously permitted in 2005 (ref: F/2005/5957) but was never implemented and the permission has lapsed. A further application for a B2 use was refused in 2010 (ref: F/2010/1056) due to a lack of supporting information relating to noise and impact on amenity. The current application has been submitted with a Transport Statement; Environmental Noise Survey and Noise Impact Assessment Report; Tree Survey; Ecological Appraisal and Phase One Environmental Assessment. It should also be noted that the 2010 application related to an unfettered B2 use whereas the current proposal has been conditioned to relate solely to the metal fabrication business of the Applicant. 3. The application site is outside of any defined settlement limits and is within the countryside. Policy CP11 states that in order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment, proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except where: <p style="margin-left: 40px;"><i>‘1)It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside;</i></p> 	

and

2) *It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and*

3) *It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement'.*

4. Chapter 3 of the NPPF states '*supporting a prosperous rural economy*' states '*to promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings*'.
5. The buildings would be used by a metal fabrication business that is currently located outside of the Borough near Hook in Hampshire. The enterprise is not a rural related business but the NPPF encourages supporting all sustainable businesses and enterprises within rural areas. The proposed development would result in a prosperous regional business being situated within the Borough which will bring about economic benefits to the area. It has been advised that the existing site where the business operates has been sold and the company has no other premises to move to at this stage. The proposal would not conflict with Criterion 1 of policy CP11.
6. The proposed development involves reusing the existing buildings on the site and there will be no additional built form as a result of the proposal. No details of hard surfacing have been submitted at this stage but condition 16 is recommended ensuring further details of this. Storage areas will be located outside of the buildings which will result in additional commercial paraphernalia on the site. The proposal would comply with the second criterion of policy CP11 insofar as it would not lead to additional built form on the site. The introduction of commercial paraphernalia and storage outside of the buildings is considered in further detail in the '*Design and impact on character and appearance of the area*' section of this report.
7. The current buildings are relatively weathered and have been subject to some storage of hazardous materials. The proposed development will remediate the site (conditions 12 and 13) and would comply with the third criterion of CP11.
8. It is considered that the proposed development would comply with criteria set out in policy of CP11 and the guidance set out in Chapter 3 of the NPPF '*Supporting a prosperous rural economy*'. The principle of the using part of the site for a B2 use is considered to be acceptable subject to the material considerations set out in this report.

Design and impact on character and appearance of the area

9. Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy states that planning permission will be granted for development proposals that '*maintain or enhance the high quality of the environment*'. Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states planning permission will be granted if development is '*of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or*

occupiers and their quality of life'.

10. Whilst the existing buildings on the site will be refurbished, no extensions are proposed. The development will involve internal and superficial changes to the existing structures in order to bring them up to an appropriate standard for the business to operate.
11. The proposed use would lead to more industrial paraphernalia on the site. However the existing buildings are modest in size and the size of the operation would be limited by the size of these structures. Only two of the buildings would benefit from the B2 permission and the third building is proposed to be used for storage purposes. The site is well screened by mature planting and vegetation and storage outside of the buildings would have negligible impact on the public realm and the character and appearance of the countryside.
12. As aforementioned in paragraph 2 of this report, the Council has previously raised no objection to a B2 use on the site for the application ref: F/2005/5957. The Officer at the time considered that the buildings were low level and the site was well screened.
13. The existing B1 and B8 uses were permitted at appeal in 2001 (ref: F/2001/3991); 2004 (ref: F/2004/2731) and renewed in 2010 (ref: EXT/20101075). The inspector who allowed the appeal in 2004 observed:

'The site is almost completely screened by tall established vegetation within and around its edges and views into the site are generally confined to the existing access in the south-west corner. It is scarcely noticeable from the road and because of the single-storey height of the buildings and their position at the back of the site, neither are they unduly prominent'...

'At my visit, I observed that the site has an extensive gravel surface that provides for the access and turning of vehicles within it. In my opinion, this gives the site an industrialised appearance that diminishes its contribution to the rural qualities of the surrounding countryside.'

The Inspector also made reference to a previously approved application (ref: F/2001/3991) on the site for the change of use of the buildings to B1 & B8 and noted:

'Moreover, I note that the approved details for Building C include a parking area for 12 cars and one lorry, a turning area for articulated lorries and access improvements. I consider that all of this would be likely to significantly change the appearance of the site, giving it a predominantly industrial character.'

14. The Inspector's observations closely reflect those of the case officers and it is considered that the proposed use would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the locality given the existing industrial character and appearance of the site and the significant vegetation screening.
15. The buildings on the site have a permitted use for B1 and B8 uses and these include light industrial; storage and distribution uses. The current use of the site is relatively low key and has been used intermittently for storage. Notwithstanding this, the

existing authorised use could result in a more intensive operation occurring on the land without the requirement of planning permission. The proposed B2 uses will operate solely within two of the units.

16. Taking the above points into consideration, the proposed development will have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Impact on Neighbours

17. As aforementioned, the current lawful use of the buildings on the site is for B1 and B8 purposes. Whilst the existing use of the site is relatively low key, it could be used more intensively in line with the above authorised uses without the benefit of planning permission.

18. The proposed B2 use will be contained within two of the buildings: these will be approximately 80 metres from the nearest property to the east and 70 metres to the nearest dwelling to the south. It is noted that garden areas will be closer to the site. The properties to the south are separate from the site by the A327 and a separate access road called 'The Rise'. The site is also surrounded by mature vegetation.

19. A noise report has been submitted with the application. The Environmental Health Team has considered this information along with the comments contained within neighbour objection letters and requested further information from the applicant: additional details have been received. The Environmental Health Team raises no objection to the proposed development providing the proposed metal fabrication is contained within the buildings. Further plans have been submitted by the applicant showing an internal double door 'air lock' arrangement which will ensure that noise from the operation will be contained within the buildings. The applicant's acoustic consultants have observed that the current premises of the business are in close proximity to residential dwellings and the site under consideration for this application has greater background noise due to the proximity of the road. Conditions 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12 and 13 are recommended which restrict the hours of operation, secure acoustic insulation details, ensure doors and windows remain closed and that the permission relates only to the proposed use and not for a general B2 usage.

20. Residents have raised concerns regarding noise and disturbance from deliveries to and from the site. It has been advised that there will be approximately 2 deliveries per day and these will range from mail to raw materials and equipment. The site currently has a lawful use for B1 and B8 and there is no current restriction on the total number of deliveries and vehicle movements to and from the site. The Environmental Health Team have considered the application and raised no objection with regard to deliveries to and from the site. Given the points raised above, in particular noting the fall-back position of the lawful use of the land, no objection is raised regarding noise and disturbance from deliveries subject to condition 11 which restricts the hours of use on the site.

21. The business occasionally conducts a dry test of metal fabricated parts. The business mainly makes items such as balustrades, railings, water fountains, ornamental bridges and small steel buildings that are constructed and sent off site in sections. These sections would only be lightly bolted together to check that the parts fit and run through level. Whilst this activity would occur outside of the buildings it is not considered that this would give rise to significant levels of noise as the industrial process will occur inside of the buildings.

22. Residents have raised concerns regarding odours and smells occurring as a result of the proposed use of the site. The B2 aspects of the enterprise will be contained within two of the buildings and condition 5 is recommended to ensure that the buildings will be appropriately fitted with mechanical ventilation.

23. Subject to conditions 3 – 7, there is no objection on the grounds of impact on neighbour amenity.

Highways and parking

24. The site can currently be used for a B1 and B8 purposes which included warehouse & distribution and office uses. The authorised use classes on the site typically generate higher volumes of traffic than the proposed B2 use.

25. A Transport Statement has been submitted with the application which includes details of the sustainable transport links to the site. Some residents have raised concerns regarding the sustainable location of the site but as there is a lawful business use on the land, it is not considered that the proposed introduction of a B2 use class raises any additional harmful impacts over and above than the authorised fall-back position.

26. The development proposes improvement to the visibility splays at the access onto Reading Road. Condition 10 is recommended ensuring these improvements are carried out.

27. The Highway Engineer has considered the application and raises no objection to the proposed development. The existing use of the site is for B1 and B8 and it is not considered that the introduction of the B2 use would have a negative impact on highway safety over and above the existing fall-back position of the lawful use.

Trees and Landscaping

28. The highway proposal drawing 11-095/001 B shows the removal of 8 non-native conifer trees near the access of the site. Reading Road is a designated Green Route. The Tree and Landscape Team has considered the application and advised that no objection is raised providing condition 17 is recommended ensuring that appropriate replacement trees are incorporated.

29. No additional built form to the existing buildings is proposed as part of this application. There are mature trees surrounding the site but none are proposed to be felled as part of the application, other than those at access. It is not considered that the introduction of a B2 use would result in more conflict with the surrounding vegetation.

Drainage and Flooding

30. The application site is in Flood Zone 1 where there is a low risk of fluvial flooding. There is no increase to footprint of built form on the site and the Drainage Engineer has raised no objection. The proposed development will have an acceptable impact with regard to flooding and drainage.

Ecology

31. An Ecological Appraisal has been submitted with the application. The site has been previously cleared of vegetation and planting & trees are only found on the periphery

of the site. No evidence of bats has been found inside of the existing buildings. The site has limited ecological value and it is not considered that the development would have a harmful impact with regard to the ecology or biodiversity.

Other Matters

32. The property to the east of the application site (20 Reading Road) is a Grade II Listed Building. The closest building on the site is approximately 80 metres from this dwelling. As aforementioned, no additional built form is proposed. It is considered that the proposed B2 use of the 2 of the buildings would have a neutral impact on the setting of the Grade II Listed Building.
33. Disposal of foul sewage and connection to utilities is controlled under Building Regulations and the respective service providers.
34. There are no archaeological implications regarding the application and Berkshire Archeology raises no objection.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed Introduction of a B2 use will allow a local business to move onto the site which will benefit the local economy. No increase to the size of the existing buildings is proposed and there will be no detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area. The proposed B2 use will be confined within two of the existing buildings only and it is considered that noise will be contained. The Highway Engineer has considered the proposal and raises no objection subject to improved visibility splays to the access onto Reading Road. There are no objection with regard to flooding & drainage, trees & landscaping and ecology subject to conditions. Overall it is considered that the proposed B2 use can be appropriately controlled by the recommended conditions and it does not represent a more harmful impact than the fall-back position of the established B1 and B8 use of the site. The application is accordingly recommended for approval subject to conditions.

CONTACT DETAILS

Service	Telephone	Email
Development Management and Regulatory Services	0118 974 6428 / 6429	development.control@wokingham.gov.uk

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