

APPLICATION: MA/14/0555 Date: 4 April 2014 Received: 15 May 2014

APPLICANT: Mr Robert Knight, Ecoegg Ltd.

LOCATION: INTEGRA, BIRCHOLT ROAD, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME15 9GQ

PARISH: Boughton Monchelsea

PROPOSAL: Installation of mezzanine floor for additional office space as shown on site location plan and drawing nos. 2006/109/07 Rev C & 2006/109/12 received 14/04/14 and drawing no. 3588-01 received 04/04/14.

AGENDA DATE: Kathryn Altieri

CASE OFFICER:

The recommendation for this application is being reported to Committee for decision because:

- Maidstone Borough Council owns the land.

#### **1.0 POLICIES**

- Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000: R18(iii), ED2(iv), T13
- Government Policy: National Planning Policy Framework
- Planning for Growth Ministerial Statement (March 2011)
- National Planning Practice Guidance
- Draft Local Plan Policy: SP2, DM17

#### **1.0 RELEVANT HISTORY**

- MA/09/1869 - Variation to condition 6 of MA/07/1094 – Approved with conditions
- MA/09/1292 - Provision of mezzanine floor to provide storage and office space, tea station, and service cupboard – Approved with conditions
- MA/09/0072 - Provision of mezzanine floor to create two offices, a store room and goods store area – Approved with conditions
- 07/1094 - Erection of 40 Commercial units for a mixture of B1, B2 and B8 use and renovation of existing building – Approved with conditions

- MA/06/1211 - Erection of 41 Industrial Units comprising a mixture of B1, B2 and B8 use and renovation of existing building – Approved with conditions

## **2.0 CONSULTATIONS**

3.1 **Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council:** Gave no response.

3.2 **KCC Highways Officer:** Raises no objection.

3.3 **Environmental Health Officer:** Raises no objections.

## **3.0 REPRESENTATIONS**

4.1 No representations received.

## **4.0 CONSIDERATIONS**

### **5.1 Background information**

5.1.1 Under planning application MA/07/1094, permission was given for the erection of 40 Commercial units with a mixture of B1, B2 and B8 use. Condition 6 of this permission states that no additional floor space shall be created inside the buildings hereby permitted without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

5.1.2 Subsequently, planning permission MA/09/1869 allowed Units 6-44 (inclusive) to have a mezzanine floor space to the maximum of 25% of the unit floor area. Unit 21 therefore could have its floor space extended by up to 25% of its existing floor area without requiring planning permission. At the time of my site visit, it was evident that work had started on installing a mezzanine floor. This said, work had ceased and only an area covering 25% of the unit's existing floor area appeared to be useable.

### **5.2 Site description**

5.2.1 The application site relates to Unit 21 at Integra Business Park, Bircholt Road which is occupied by Ecoegg Ltd, and currently being used as office and storage space. This company already occupies two other units (15 & 16) at Integra where they manufacture and store their products. To the front of the unit is allocated parking, the company has allocated parking for the other 2 units behind, and there is ample visitor parking along the eastern flanks of the blocks of units at Integra.

5.2.2 The application site is within the defined urban area and is a designated employment/car showroom area as shown by the Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000 (MBWLP).

### **5.3 Proposal**

- 5.3.1 The proposal is for the installation of a mezzanine floor for additional office space to be used ancillary to the unit's current use. The total floor space created would measure some 70m<sup>2</sup> in area, increasing the total floor space within the unit to approximately 230m<sup>2</sup>. This gives an increase of approximately 43% in the floor space. The applicant has also confirmed that approximately 80m<sup>2</sup> of floor space would be used as ancillary office space. There are no external alterations being considered under this application.
- 5.3.2 The unit has access to 6 allocated parking spaces; and there is an overflow car park for all of the units. The applicant also has use of 2 other units (15 & 16) at Integra, with 6 allocated car parking spaces per unit.

### **5.4 Principle of development**

- 5.4.1 The proposal site does fall within a designated employment site under policy ED2 of the MBWLP, as well as within an area where vehicle showrooms are permitted under policy R18 of the MBWLP. Given the existing use of the site and the ancillary nature and use of the proposal, I am satisfied that the development under consideration here would be in accordance with these policies.
- 5.4.2 The proposal is also in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which seeks to promote sustainable economic growth. Indeed, a key reason for the proposal here is to maximise the site's economic potential.
- 5.4.3 The principle use of the unit 21 has been established as being a mix of B1, B2 and B8 under MA/07/1094. The issue to consider here is the impact of the proposed mezzanine floor, and whether there is sufficient parking for the floorspace proposed.

### **5.5 Highway safety implications**

- 5.5.1 The reason for restricting the level of floor space to each unit is to ensure that the car parking provided continues to meet the needs of the building approved in the interests of highway safety.
- 5.5.2 The proposed mezzanine floor would create an overall floor area for the unit of 230m<sup>2</sup>. The applicant has also confirmed that Unit 21 would have the benefit of 6 parking spaces. There are currently no locally adopted parking standards, but as guidance only the Kent County Council Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG 4) – 'Kent Vehicle Parking Standards' is of use. 6 parking spaces are provided and the Kent & Medway Vehicle Parking Standards recommend a

maximum of 1 space per 35m<sup>2</sup> for B1 light industrial use. This would equate to a maximum requirement of 6.5 spaces. With this considered, I am satisfied that the parking provision available is acceptable and therefore raise no objection on highway safety grounds. The KCC Highways Officer raises no objection.

- 5.5.3 The proposal site lies within an established business area and it does make use of the existing access; and I would not expect the proposal to lead to a significant increase in traffic movements to and from the site.

## **5.6 Design, siting and appearance**

- 5.6.1 The proposed mezzanine floor is an internal alteration and no external alterations are for consideration under this application. I am therefore of the view that the proposal would not appear visually harmful to the character of the building and the surrounding area.

## **5.7 Residential amenity**

- 5.7.1 There are no residential properties within a significant distance of this proposal which is for internal alterations only. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed works would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of any residential occupant.

## **5.8 Other considerations**

- 5.8.1 There is no ecological, drainage or arboricultural issues to consider as part of this planning application.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council gave no response and so it is therefore assumed that they raise no objection.
- 6.2 I therefore consider that this proposal is acceptable with regard to the relevant provisions of the Development Plan, the NPPF and all other material considerations such as are relevant and recommend conditional approval of the application on this basis.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to the following conditions:

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

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:  
3588-01 received 04/04/14;

Reason: To ensure that the car parking provided continues to meet the needs of the building approved in the interests of highway safety.

#### Note to Applicant

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF, Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. MBC works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

Offering a pre-application advice and duty desk service.

Where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome.

As appropriate, updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

In this instance:

The applicant/agent was provided with formal pre-application advice.

The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the committee and promote the application.

The proposed development, subject to the conditions stated, is considered to comply with the policies of the Development Plan (Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000) and there are no overriding material considerations to indicate a refusal of planning consent.