

REPORT SUMMARY

REFERENCE NO - 15/505333/FULL		
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Variation of condition 6 of 14/0145 (Application for full planning permission for the erection of 7 units for a mixture of B1, B2 and B8 uses, including the renovation of the existing building, with appropriate provision for access and car parking - to permit the retention of the installed mezzanines in Units F1 and F2.		
ADDRESS Fairfax Units F1 And F2 Parkwood Industrial Estate Bircholt Road Maidstone Kent ME15 9GQ		
RECOMMENDATION Grant planning permission		
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION The proposal will provide sufficient on site car parking and will not erode the free flow of traffic or highway safety in the locality.		
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE The Council owns the freehold of the application site.		
WARD Park Wood Ward	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Boughton Monchelsea	APPLICANT Grafton Merchating GB Ltd AGENT Armstrong Rigg Planning
DECISION DUE DATE 09/11/15	PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 09/11/15	OFFICER SITE VISIT DATE

MAIN REPORT

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 The application site forms part of a development of 7 commercial units located with a large industrial area known as Parkwood Industrial Estate. The application site is located on the east side of Bircholt Road, just opposite the road junctions with Heronden Road and Coldred Road. The 7 commercial units have planning permission for a mixture of B1 (business), B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution) uses.
- 1.02 The current proposal relates to two of the seven commercial units that are known as units F1 and F2. Unit F1 is occupied by National Drywall Insulation (NDi) and unit F2 is occupied by Plumbase Industrial with both businesses providing retail trade wholesale uses.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.01 The approval under reference MA/14/0145 granted planning permission for the erection of 7 units for a mixture of B1, B2 and B8 uses, including the renovation of the existing building, with appropriate provision for access and car parking. The current proposal seeks to vary condition 6 that is attached to this planning permission. These conditions are worded as follows:

Condition 6:

No additional floor space shall be created inside the buildings hereby permitted without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

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

- 2.02 The applicant advised the occupiers of business units F1 and F2 that planning permission is required for the mezzanine floor areas that were installed as part of the fitting out of these buildings. The additional floorspace provided by the mezzanine is required to meet the operational needs of the existing occupiers with units F1 and F2 by providing storage space. The mezzanine floors are only used for the storage of stock and will not be used as additional retail or office space. The occupier of unit F3 has recently been granted planning permission at committee for the installation of a mezzanine floor and also additional storage in the open area at the front of the site (under reference number 15/505354).
- 2.03 The internal mezzanine floor for unit F1 provides a floorspace of 390 square metres. The mezzanine floor for unit F2 provides a floorspace of 195 square metres. This provides a total of 585 square metres of floorspace for both units. No external changes to the buildings were required for the installation of the mezzanine floors. Each mezzanine can be accessed via two staircases from within the building.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY :

- 3.01 MA/15/505354: Variation of conditions 2 and 6 attached to the full planning permission reference 14/0145, for the erection of 7 units for a mixture of B1, B2 and B8 uses, including the renovation of the existing building, with appropriate provision for access and car parking, in order to permit open storage of building materials in identified locations outside units F2 and F3, and to permit the installation of a mezzanine floor within unit F3 with a floorspace of 210 square metres. This was approved at committee on 22nd October, 2015.

4.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2000: retained policies R18 and T13,

5.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.01 One objection was received that is summarised as follows:
- Application form contained incorrect ownership information.
 - The site is owned by Maidstone Council and determination of the application must fall to the Planning Committee.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.01 **Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council:** No comment
- 6.02 **Kent Highways:** No objection as an additional 8 spaces have been provided to accommodate the additional floorspace and this meets the standards outlined in KMSP SPG4.

6.03 **Environmental Health:** No comments.

6.04 **Environment Agency:** No objection

7.0 APPRAISAL

Visual Amenity

7.01 The installation of the mezzanine floors has resulted in a modest increase in operational storage floor space over both units of 585 square metres. As there are no external changes proposed, the mezzanine floor is considered acceptable in terms of appearance and visual amenity.

Highway and parking considerations:

7.02 The key issues in this case are considered to be the assessment of potential highway and car parking impact. Condition 6 sought to control the installation of mezzanine floors to ensure that on site car parking provision would be sufficient to avoid harm to local highway safety. Planning permission is also required generally for mezzanines providing over 200 square metres of new floorspace for retail uses.

7.03 The proposed mezzanine provides an additional 390 square metres of floorspace in unit F1 and 195 square metres of floorspace in unit F2. The applicant has stated that the mezzanines for each unit are used for storage purposes only. It is considered that any additional traffic and parking demand generated by the increase in storage floorspace will be minimal and can easily be accommodated on the site and local highway. It is highlighted that the reconfigured car parking area also provides for additional car parking spaces.

7.04 The approved development included 47 car parking spaces for Unit F (including 4 spaces for those with disabilities). The existing car parking layout would be reconfigured as part of the application proposal, with the new layout allowing provision of an additional 8 parking spaces, plus 4 disabled spaces. As such and in the absence of objection to the proposal from Kent Highways the proposal is considered acceptable on highway and parking grounds. A planning condition is recommended that will prevent the mezzanine floor from being used as additional retail trading floorspace.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The proposal will provide sufficient on site car parking and will not harm highway safety and a similar proposal for unit F3 has already been granted consent by the Council. In the absence of objection on highways or parking grounds it is recommended that planning permission is granted for the proposal subject to planning conditions.

RECOMMENDATION – GRANT Subject to the following conditions:

- (1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 13-700-011B and 13-700-001.
Reason: To ensure the quality of development is maintained and to prevent harm to amenity.
- (2) The parking, turning, loading, unloading and cycle parking areas as shown on drawing no: 13-700-001 shall be retained and remain available for such use. No

development whether permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order, with or without modification) or not, shall be carried out on the areas indicated or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to them.

Reason: Development without adequate parking/turning provision is likely to lead to parking inconvenient to other road users and in the interests of highway safety.

- (3) Notwithstanding the mezzanine floor hereby permitted no additional floor space shall be created inside the buildings without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

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

- (4) The mezzanine floor hereby approved shall only be used for storage purposes and the floorspace should not provide any additional retail trading area that is accessible by customers.

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

- (5) The permission hereby granted shall only apply to units F1 and F2.

Reason: To accord with the applicants intentions and to retain control over the use in the interests of amenity

NOTE TO APPLICANT: The applicant is advised that in accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Maidstone District Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. Maidstone District Council works with applicants and agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service; where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome and as appropriate, updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application. In this instance the applicant was given the opportunity to submit amended plans in order to make the proposal acceptable and the application was approved without delay.

Case Officer: Diane Chaplin

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.