

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

4th April 2007

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and Sustainable Communities

S/2124/04/F - ARRINGTON

**Change of Use to Class B1 at the Former GPO Telephone Exchange
Ermine Way, Arrington for Januarys Commercial Property Consultants**

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 13th December 2004

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the officer view of approval conflicts with that of the Parish Council.

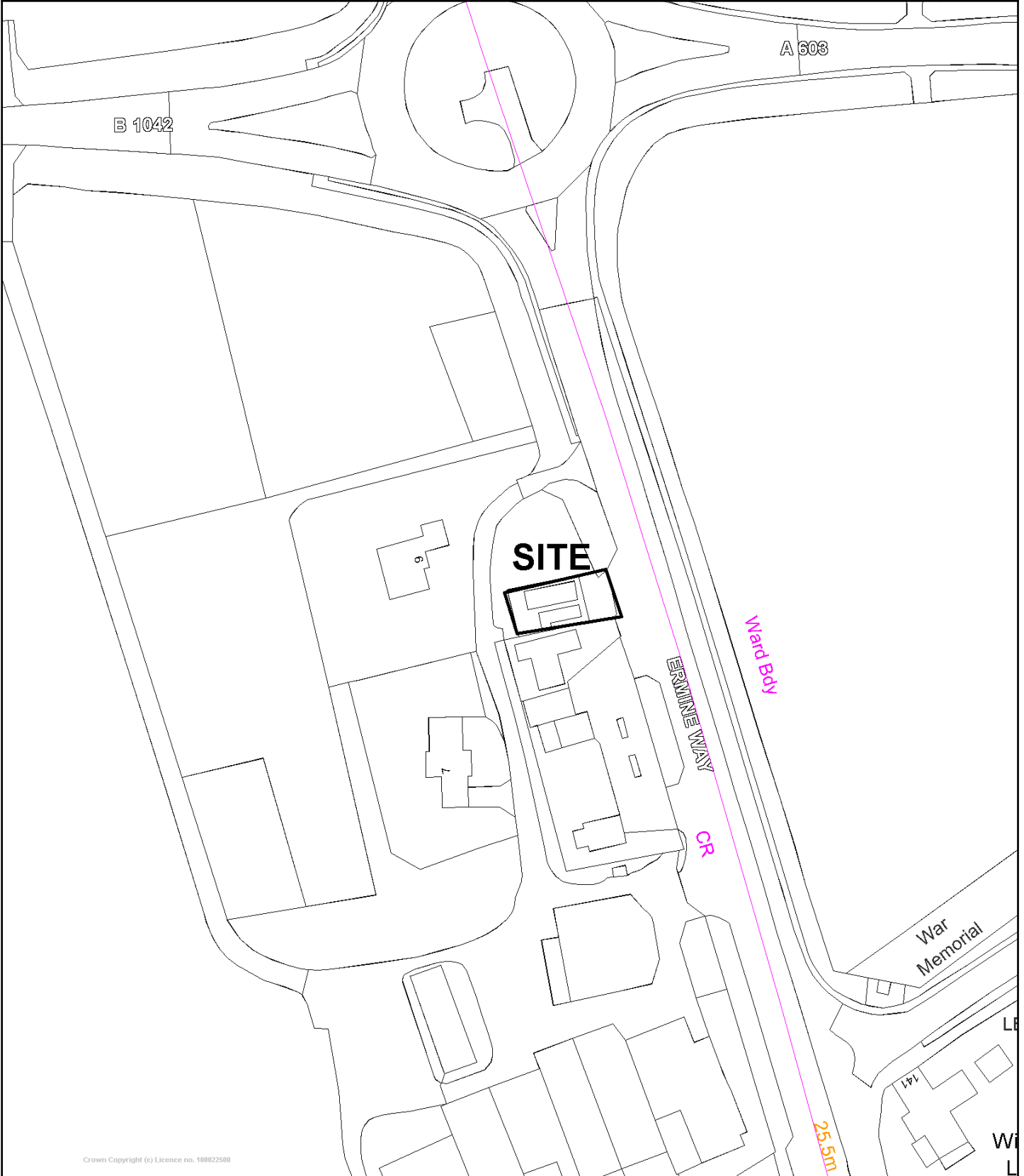
Site and Proposal

1. The application received 18 October 2004 sought the consent for a change of use from the former GPO Telephone Exchange to B1, B2 and B8 uses (Business, General Industry and Storage Uses). This application was amended on 19th May 2005 to that of just a B1 use (Office, Research and Development or Light Industrial).
2. The site is located on the A1198 in Arrington close to the roundabout that accesses the A603 for Wimpole and Croydon. The site is located close to several residential properties and a garage for the repair and selling of motor vehicles. The buildings comprise a brick built single storey building with the gable end facing Ermine Street and an adjoining timber pitched roof building. Bridge Farm is located approximately 100 metres to the south of the site. The site is located outside the village framework for Arrington and although there are several various different uses surrounding this site, the site is located in the countryside.
3. There are minimal parking facilities available for the building and currently parking is located on a hardstanding at the front of the building. To turn on the site the adjacent lay-by has to be used to be able to leave the site in forward gear.
4. The buildings comprise 84sq. metres in size and sit on a plot 263sq.metres in area.

Planning History

5. An application submitted in 2002 for a Lawful Development Certificate for the use of storage for builders materials and electrical goods was refused on account of there being insufficient information being submitted to show that it had been continuously used for a period of 10 years (**S/1368/02/LDC**).
6. A later application **S/0413/05/O** for the erection of a B1/B8 building of 75sq.m. floorspace, following the demolition of existing buildings, was refused on the following grounds (summarised):

S/2124/04/F



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Scale 1/1250 Date 22/3/2007

Centre = 533219 E 248800 N

APRIL 2007 PLANNING COMMITTEE

- (a) New build in the countryside that was not essential in the rural area would be contrary to Policy P1/2 of the Structure Plan 2003;
- (b) Close proximity to dwellings, potential noise and disturbance associated with B1/B8, particularly to No.11 and the adverse impact on neighbour amenity; and
- (c) Intensification of the use and traffic movements with adverse impact on highway safety on the A1198.

Planning Policy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

- 7. **Policy P1/2** 'Environmental Restrictions on Development' states that developments in the countryside will be restricted unless demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
- 8. **Policy P2/6** encourages small scale employment development in rural areas where it will, amongst others, enable the re-use of existing buildings.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004

- 9. **Paragraph 7.20** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan: - *"planning permission will not be granted for development with direct access onto the primary route network of motorways, trunk roads and county principal roads"*.
- 10. **Policy EM10** supports the change of use of rural buildings to employment use subject to a number of criteria, including the provision of a safe and satisfactory access, provision of adequate parking and no adverse effects on the road system.

Consultation

- 11. **Arrington Parish Council** – Recommends that the application as amended to consider the use for B1 only is refused. Their comments are as follows

"There is insufficient information to consider the proposal. Previous objections continue to apply and there was concern that any development on the site will be detrimental to neighbouring dwellings."
- 12. Previous Parish Council objections regarding the omitted use classes considered that the application was too broad and contained erroneous information with reference to the neighbouring properties, particularly with No's 7, 9 and 11 Ermine Way. Concerns also raised referred to highway safety and major objections to the use class B8 being considered.
- 13. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** – Had concerns regarding the change of use to Classes B1, B2 and B8 given the locality of nearby noise sensitive dwellings. Without confirmation of a definite use for the building in question, conditions from an Environmental Health standpoint could not be realistically added.
- 14. Following on from the amendment to that of just a B1 Class use the **CEHO** made no further comments.
- 15. **Environment Agency** – has no objections but has recommended surface and foul water drainage conditions to be included in the consent if granted.

16. **Local Highway Authority** – initially recommended refusal. However ongoing negotiation and the submission of a parking layout plan resulted in the following comments:

“As you are aware, I have concerns relating to this proposal. The frontage available is restricted, allowing as the submitted plans shows, parking and turning facilities for just three vehicles. Any additional vehicles visiting the site will have to reverse out of the site onto the lay-by adjacent the A1198. I trust your authority is satisfied with the level of parking? If so, it is now my further considered view that it would be difficult for me to sustain a refusal solely on highway grounds in respect of this particular case.

*I **strongly** recommend that prior to any B1 use commencing the three parking spaces, as shown on the plan submitted in support of the application, be clearly marked out on the ground, as should the manoeuvring space by suitable hatched markings.”*

Representations

17. Ongoing correspondence has been received from the agent regarding the various changes that have occurred. One letter, received 8th July 2005, refers to the potential for the LPA to impose restrictive conditions by limiting the number of people who could be employed on this site.
18. In response to the change of use to B1, one letter of objection was received from the occupier of Bridge Farm. Concerns raised are:
- (a) Refers to previously refused application for B1/B8 use in 2005
 - (b) Promotes nothing to address the problems of vehicular access or parking
 - (c) General unsuitability for development
 - (d) Ability of a site so small to meet building control regulations, particularly for sewerage disposal
 - (e) Over development
 - (f) Environmental problems for neighbouring residents
19. A letter of objection from neighbours at No. 7 Ermine Way considers the proposal too close to residents, will affect the enjoyment of the local area and has poor access and parking arrangements which will add to dangers on a busy road and nearby junction.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

20. The key issues to consider whilst determining this application are the impact on the neighbouring properties and highway safety, given the principle of a re-use of this rural building is acceptable.

Neighbour amenity

21. The proposed use for B1 refers, briefly, to offices, light industrial and research and development, studios, laboratories and high tech uses. B1 uses are permitted to change to B8 without the need for specific planning consent and this would need to be controlled via condition, particularly given the earlier refusal on this site for B1/B8, in order to ensure that goods vehicles, which could not access the site, are not generated by the use. The proposed use of these existing buildings located in the countryside being used for the aforementioned purposes should involve very little

noise and disturbance to the neighbouring properties, particularly in comparison to the neighbouring garage and farm uses.

Highway safety

22. Given that the A1198 is subject only to the national speed limit of 60mph, it is understandable that the Local Highways Authority has had major reservations. It is important to achieve vehicle manoeuvrability on this site and to provide an adequate level of parking for this use.
23. The maximum parking standards in the Local Plan 2004 for B1 uses of buildings under 2,500sq. metres is 1 space per 25sq. metres. The 84sq. metres of floor space equates to the proposed 3 spaces, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Plan 2004. However additional vehicles visiting this site would have to manoeuvre using the lay-by. It would therefore be acceptable in my opinion to restrict the number of employees and the number of vehicles on the site at any one time to ensure highway safety is not compromised.
24. In conclusion, I consider that this proposal does overcome the reasons for refusal of application S/0413/05/O by virtue of it no longer involving the erection of new buildings or use for B8 storage purposes.

Recommendation

25. Approval subject to conditions.

Conditions

1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A).
2. Sc5(b) - Surface water drainage details - (Rc5(b)).
3. Sc5(c) - Foul water drainage details - (Rc5(c)).
4. Restriction of hours of use 08.00 to 18.00 hours Mondays to Fridays and 08.00 to 13.00 hours Saturdays - (Reason to protect the amenity of neighbouring properties).
5. Neither building shall be occupied until space has been laid out within the site in accordance with the 1:100 plan franked 7th March 2005 showing parking arrangements for 3 cars to be parked and for vehicles to turn so they may enter and leave the site in forward gear; these areas shall not thereafter be used for any other purpose other than parking of cars and the hatched area on the plan solely for the turning of vehicles.
(Reason – To ensure adequate space is provided and thereafter maintained on site for the parking and turning of vehicles in the interests of highway safety.)
6. No more than 3 members of staff shall be employed on the application site at any time. (Reason – To ensure that the scale of employment at the premises is appropriate bearing in mind the car parking capacity on the site and the potential impact on surrounding residential properties and the countryside).
7. Sc21. Withdrawal of PD - Part 3 Class B(b) change of use. (Reason - In the interests of highway safety.)

+ any informative required by the Environment Agency
+any conditions required by the Chief Environmental Health Officer

Informatives

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**
P1/2 (Environmental Restrictions in the Countryside)
P2/6 (Rural Economy)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
Appendix 7/1 Parking Standards
EM10 (Employment in the Countryside)
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations, which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Residential amenity including noise disturbance
 - Highway safety

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning Files Ref: S2124/05/F, S/0413/05/O and S/1368/02/LDC

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