

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

10th June 2009

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

S/0400/09/F – PAPWORTH EVERARD

Change of Use from B2 (General Industry) to B8 (Storage and Distribution) at Unit C1/2 Atria Court, Papworth Business Park, Stirling Way for Wrenbridge (CTP) Ltd

S/0401/09/F – PAPWORTH EVERARD

Change of Use from B2 (General Industry) to B8 (Storage and Distribution) at Unit C5 Atria Court, Papworth Business Park, Stirling Way for Wrenbridge (CTP) Ltd

S/0402/09/F – PAPWORTH EVERARD

Change of Use from B2 (General Industry) to B8 (Storage and Distribution) at Unit C6 Atria Court, Papworth Business Park, Stirling Way for Wrenbridge (CTP) Ltd

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 19th May 2009

Notes:

These applications have been reported to the Planning Committee for determination by Chairman's Delegation meeting on 5th May 2009.

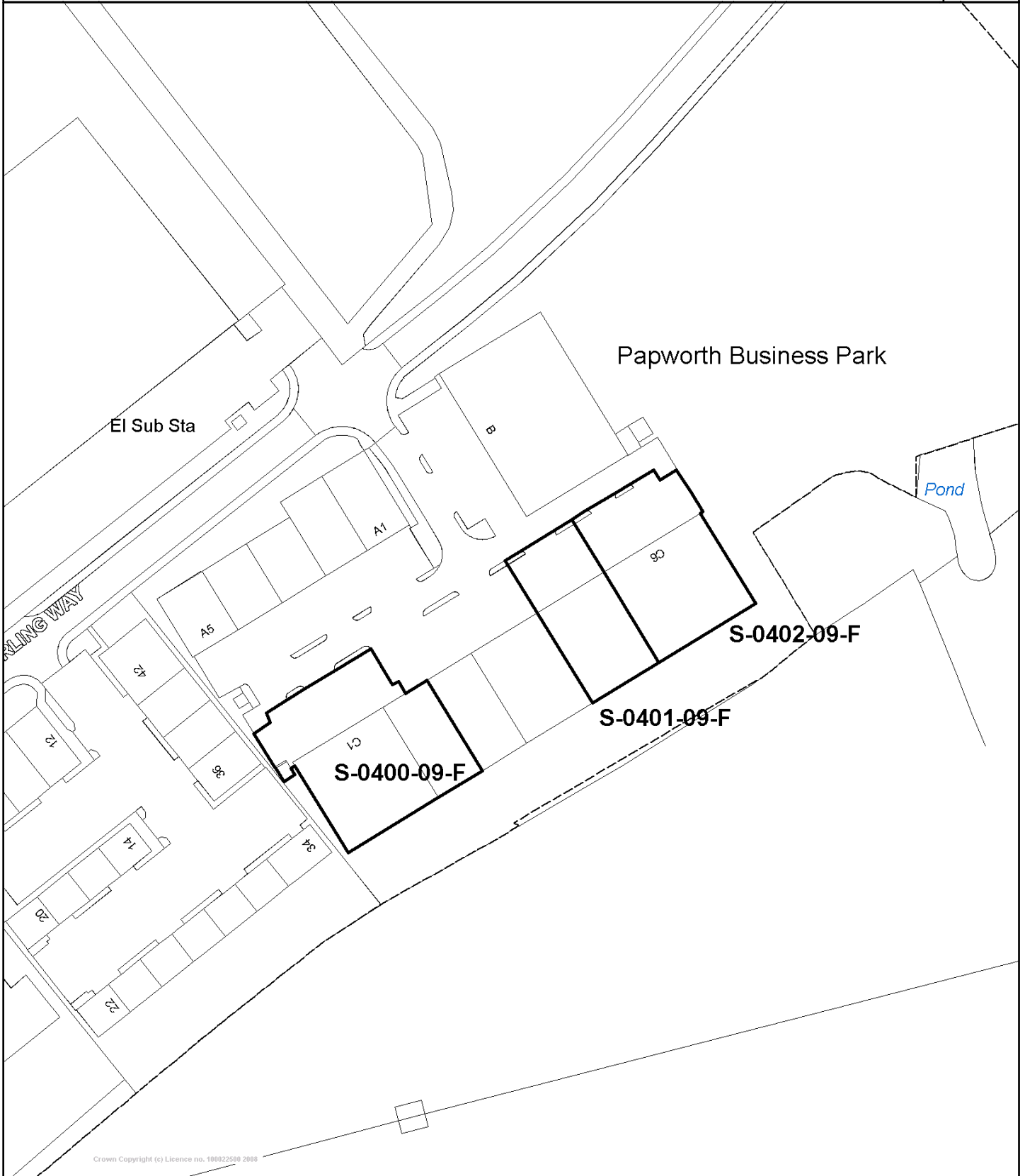
Site and Proposal

1. The full applications, received on 24th March 2009, relate to three units of Atria Court on Papworth Business Park. The site lies to the south of the village, within the village framework. The site is accessed from Stirling Way, which serves the whole Business Park. A new junction has been completed between Stirling Way and Ermine Street South, and the Papworth by-pass is also now open. There are business units to the east and west of the site. To the north is an open area that has an extant permission for business use, and to the south is open countryside.
2. The original planning consent for the site (S/0297/06/F) gave consent for B2 use. The applications seek a change of use for the units to B8 use. The site is set out in a courtyard, and the three units are along the southern boundary of the site.

Planning History

3. Planning application **S/0297/06/F** was approved dated 12th May 2006 for the erection of 12 industrial units in Class B2 and associated parking and landscaping. Condition 7 of this consent prevented permitted change of use to B1a, due to insufficient car parking on site.
4. Outline planning application **S/1475/99/O** was approved dated 25th January 2002 for the laying out and use of land for employment purposes (Use Classes B1 and B2). This was the north-eastern part of the site and includes Atria Court. This consent was

S-0400-09-F, S-0401-09-F AND S-0402-09-F



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JUNE 2009 PLANNING COMMITTEE

followed by application **S/2292/04/F**, approved dated 24th February 2005, for the variation of condition 1 to allow further time for the submission of reserved matters.

Planning Policy

5. South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (LDFDCP) 2007: **DP/1** – Sustainable Development, **DP/2** – Design of New Development, **DP/3** – Development Criteria, **DP/7** – Development Frameworks, **ET/4** – New Development in Villages, **NE/15** - Noise Pollution & **TR/2** – Car and Cycling Parking Standards.
6. Policy **EM2** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 has been saved, and allocates the site for Class B1 and B2 employment use. It specifically adds that the Papworth site would allow for the relocation of existing B2 uses in the centre of the village to the allocated site.
7. **Circular 11/95 – The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions:** Advises that conditions should be necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

Consultation

8. **Papworth Everard Parish Council** recommends refusal to all three applications on two main policy grounds. Firstly, the reduction in number of people that will potentially be employed at the site to the detriment of Papworth Everard's social economy and sustainability, and the disturbance caused to nearby residential areas by heavy vehicles delivering and collecting goods, as necessitated by storage and distribution manoeuvres. Reference is made to the relocation of Papworth Hospital in approximately 2013, and the likely shortfall of jobs caused as a result. Concerns are raised that B8 use would just create a "lock-up" store generating little employment, and would set a precedent for further B8 use on the site. With regard to noise, the new site for 365 dwellings is adjacent the access and close to the by-pass.
9. The **Local Highways Authority** states that no significant adverse effect upon the Public Highway should result from the proposals.
10. The **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** recommends a condition for all applications regarding deliveries or collections, which should not take place outside the hours of 08.00 – 8.00 on weekdays and 08.00 – 13.00 on Saturdays (nor at anytime on Sundays and Bank Holidays) unless otherwise agreed. A condition regarding lighting could be added as an informative.

Representations

11. **Councillor Wright** was present at Chairman's Delegation, and requested the application be deferred to Planning Committee due to the potential impact for the village.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

12. The key issues regarding the application relate to the principle of the development, the impact upon the amenity of the occupiers of adjacent dwellings, and parking at the site.

The Principle of Development

13. The site was originally allocated for business use, and Policy EM2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 specifically related the site as a whole to B1 and B2 use. The consent for Atria Court was only for B2 general industrial use. There are permitted development rights for a change between B2 and B8, but only where the floor area is limited to 235 sq m. All units have floor areas above this figure (Units C1/2 – 840 sq m, Unit C5 – 408 sq m and Unit C6 – 624 sq m).
14. By their very nature, B8 uses tend to have lower employment figures. This depends on the individual company who would locate at the site. A good guide to employment is the Council's parking guide, which is based on demand for such uses. Parking demand for the three sites as a whole would reduce by 18 spaces. It is likely the development would lead to fewer employment opportunities at these units.
15. Atria Court was constructed in June 2007, and since that date, less than half of the floor space has been occupied. All the application units are currently empty. The applicant has been unable to attract B2 occupiers, despite pre-completion marketing, a reduction in rents, deferred rents and other flexible arrangements. B8 companies are expressing an interest in the units, and the letting agent notes this has included a chilled food distributor, a logistics company and a small-scale import/export company. The applicant states there is an intent to rent Units C1/2 by Gofers Logistics Management, who have operated from Cambridge and Bourn. They provide storage, distribution and management for the circulation of publications. They would employ approximately nine people at the site, with a further ten part-time staff. Such a company would not cause such a significant reduction in employment.
16. The applicant has provided details of the availability of B2 uses in the local area. There is approximately 171,288 sq ft (15,912 sq m) of floor space for B2 use available in Papworth Everard, with a further 77,045 sq ft currently available at Buckingham Business Park, Swavesey, and 6,135 sq ft available in Bar Hill. The removal of the units for B2 use would not prevent any further B2 uses in the area.
17. Whilst the site was not allocated for B8 use, I believe there must be a trade-off between retaining units for a B2 use and them remaining empty, or allowing some B8 use and associated employment opportunity. Given the site as a whole, I do not consider that the use of these units for B8 would seriously harm the aims of Papworth Business Park and its allocation. If further applications are made, there may be a point in the future where such schemes cannot be supported.
18. I note the comments by Papworth Everard Parish Council regarding the relocation of Papworth Hospital in the near future. Whilst this must be considered as part of the proposed applications, I believe it should be given little weight. The exact future of the site has yet to be determined, and whilst employment is likely to fall, it may remain in an employment use following the Hospital's departure.

Impact upon the Amenity of the Occupiers of Adjacent Properties

19. The site is located to the southern side of the business park. The nearest dwelling is Ermine House set approximately 200m from the site. Beyond that, further dwellings are situated to the north along South Park Drive and Musker Place at a distance of approximately 225m from the site. There is a tree belt between the industrial estate and these dwellings. The nearest dwelling to the entrance to the Business Park is approximately 90m to the north of this junction. There are no time consents for operation or any other restrictive conditions for the units at Atria Court. Given the

distance and the presence of other units in between, I do not consider there would be any serious harm caused to the occupiers of these dwellings. I note the comments from the Environmental Health Officer regarding the need for a condition relating to hours of deliveries or collections. Given the likely increase in larger vehicle trips to sites given a B8 use, I consider such a condition necessary to prevent deliveries at unsocial hours to the detriment of the neighbouring properties. There is also no restriction on external lighting in the original consent. Given the distance to nearby dwellings, I do not consider such a condition or informative necessary in this instance.

20. I note the comments from the Parish Council regarding the increase in vehicles to the Business Park. The junction onto the Business Park is opposite to the location of the Summersfield development at 365 houses, where construction has yet to begin. Whilst vehicles would be in close proximity to the frontage dwellings, I do not consider any serious harm would be caused to the occupiers of these dwellings, especially if a restrictive condition regarding times is added. The increase in vehicles on the by-pass is also not considered to cause a serious increase in harm to occupiers of adjacent properties.

Parking on the Site

21. The Atria Court consent S/0297/06/F, restricted permitted development rights to B1a (offices) to ensure significant parking is available on site. Units C1/2 have 19 designated parking spaces, Unit C5 has 10 and C6 has 14. Requirements under a B8 use are 9, 5 and 7 spaces respectively for these units. There is adequate parking provision for the units. Each unit has roller shutter doors to allow deliveries to the site without compromising this parking provision.

Other Matters

22. The previous consent for Atria Court had a condition restricting the insertion of mezzanine floors to the units, in order to limit parking on site. A B8 use would on average reduce parking demands to the site. However, mezzanines have the potential to increase the demand. It is considered necessary to add this condition.

Recommendations

23. Approve all three applications subject to the same conditions.
1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission. (Reason - To ensure that consideration of any future application for development in the area will not be prejudiced by permissions for development which have not been acted upon.)
 2. Deliveries or collections shall not take place outside the hours of 08.00-18.00 on weekdays and 08.00-13.00 on Saturdays (nor at any time on Sundays and Bank Holidays) unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. (Reason - To protect residents from noise disturbance in accordance with Policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
 3. No further mezzanine floors, other than those approved by virtue of application S/0297/06/F shall be inserted in any of the units hereby approved, unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf. (Reason – In order to limit the demand for additional vehicular parking provision within Atria Court in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (adopted July 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Circular 11/95 – The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions
- Planning Files Ref: S/0400/09/F, S/0401/09/F, S/0402/09/F, S/0297/06/F, S/2292/04/F and S/1475/99/O

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