

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

9 May 2012

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

S/0239/12/FL – PAPWORTH EVERARD
Change of Use from B2 (General Industrial) to B1b/B1c/B2/B8 in the alternative
- Unit 1, Papworth Business Park, Stirling Way
for The Varrier-Jones Foundation

Recommendation: Approve Conditionally

Date for Determination: 29 March 2012

This application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination as the Parish Council recommendation differs from the officer recommendation.

Site and Proposal

1. The application site lies to the south of the village, within the village framework, and consists of a large industrial unit with a floor space of approximately 4,650 square metres. 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 south of the site. To the north is residential development.
2. The application, validated on 2nd February 2012, seeks to change the use of the building from B2 (General Industrial) to either B2, B8 (Storage and Distribution), B1b (Research and Development), and B1c (Light Industry) in the alternative, meaning the use can move freely between those uses without the need for any future change of use applications.

Planning History

3. Application **S/1900/98/F** granted consent for the erection of the industrial building (Class B2), together with associated vehicle parking, estate road and access and water attenuation pond. This application was accompanied by a Section 106 Agreement dated 3 March 1999 seeking a contribution towards the construction of the Papworth by-pass.

Policies

4. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (LDF DCP) 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.**
5. **Local Development Framework Site Specific Policies (LDF SSP) DPD 2010: SP/13 Allocations for Class B1, B2 and B8 Employment Uses.**

6. **National Planning Policy Framework:** Advises that planning conditions should only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other aspects.

Consultations

7. **Papworth Everard Parish Council** recommend refusal of the scheme as originally submitted. They note Papworth is a minor rural centre and needs the sustainability of employment. The village faces the loss of the hospital in the future, and a B8 use would have fewer jobs on site. If approved, the Parish Council recommends a personal condition to an individual company, with the use referring back to B2 when vacant.
8. The application has since been amended to include change of use to Class B1b and B1c uses. Members will updated on any further comments regarding the addition of these uses as part of the application.
9. The **Local Highways Authority** notes no significant adverse effect upon the public highway should result from the proposal.

Representations

10. None were received.

Planning Comments

11. The key issues regarding the application relate to the principle of the development, and parking provision at the site.

The Principle of Development

12. Papworth Business Park was originally a designated employment site, with now superseded Policy EM/2 of the 2004 Local Plan allowing B1 and B2 use on the Business Park. The application seeks to increase the flexibility of the use of the building by allowing other potential uses. The site is no longer within a designation within the Local Development Framework. However, the unoccupied land on the Business Park further east is now allocated for B1, B2 and B8 use in the Site Specific Policies DPD 2010.
13. The application was discussed at the Council's Economic Development Panel, where the conclusion was the application should be supported. It was also at this meeting where the addition of the B1b and B1c was suggested, and subsequently agreed by the applicant. The panel also noted that the size of the building is in excess of the maximum sizes noted within policy ET/4 of the LDF DCP, and the size of the unit cannot be described as "small-scale".
14. By their very nature, B8 uses tend to have lower employment figures. The actual figure depends on the individual company who would locate to the site. A good guide to employment is the Council's parking guide, which is based on demand for such uses. A B8 use may have 50% less jobs than the lawful B2 use. Members should balance the desire for an occupied building against occupation with potentially fewer employment opportunities. In this instance, the increased

flexibility is considered acceptable and is not considered to harm the long term aims of Papworth Business Park. The comments from the Parish Council are noted, especially given the house building in the village and the likely future relocation of the Hospital.

15. The Parish Council has not commented upon whether they consider a B1b or B1c use acceptable. These uses are more specialised in their nature, and the layout of the building may not be practical for such uses. However, they are uses encouraged in the area, especially for companies with links to Cambridge University. The National Planning Policy Framework focuses on the need to support a prosperous rural economy. This includes the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas and to avoid the long-term protection of sites allocated for a particular use where there is market demand and need for alternative uses.
16. As a matter of principle, there are no objections to a change of use to any of the classes applied for.

Parking Provision

17. The site has an existing parking area to the front, which has space for 48 vehicles. There is also a large area of hardstanding to the rear of the building that has the potential for parking should the frontage spaces all be in use. The Council's maximum parking standards seeks 1 space per 50 square metres of floor space. B1b and B1c uses are considered to create more parking demand with the maximum standards seeking 1 space per 30 square metres. No further parking is proposed as part of the application. There is already a large shortfall of designated spaces in line with the Council's maximum standards. However, given the large hardstanding to the rear, the site appears capable of catering for parking demand. A B8 use would seek a reduced parking figure of 1 space per 100 square metres, and therefore the existing layout would be acceptable for such a use.

Other Matters

18. Members may recall three applications at Atria Court (S/0400/09/F, S/0401/09/F and S/0402/09/F) for which a change of use from B2 to B8 were approved at Planning Committee in June 2009. There were concerns during the determination of these applications regarding impact upon the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties. As a result, a condition preventing the timings for deliveries or collections was added to the approvals. In the name of consistency, it is recommended the same condition be added to this consent to prevent noise from vehicles outside of sociable hours should a B8 use be implemented on site.

Recommendation

19. Approval, (as amended by e-mail dated 22nd March 2012) subject to the following 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. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Plan date stamped 2nd February 2012 and e-mail dated 22nd March 2012.
(Reason - To facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)
3. Following the implementation of any B8 use in the building, 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 anytime 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.)

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

- **Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007.**
- **Local Development Framework Site Specific Policies DPD 2010.**
- **National Planning Policy Framework.**
- **Planning File ref: S/0239/12/FL, and S/1900/98/F.**

Contact Officer: Paul Derry – Senior Planning Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713159