Application Number: ADC/0040/07 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: **23 Cecil Pashley Way, Shoreham Airport Lancing**

Proposal: **Change of use from hangar to laundry with rear extension and alterations including provision of curtain walling and new windows**

The Application

The application, by Gochers Laundry Ltd, relates to a building constructed as an aircraft hangar/workshop. It is located adjacent to the perimeter road in the row of modern hangars on the west part of the airport development area. It is adjoined by a similar modern hangar to the west but the main row of hangars are set further back from the road, adjoining the airfield itself.

On 1 August 2005, the Committee considered an application (L/125/05) by Gochers Laundry Ltd (existing premises at Alma Street, Lancing), to relocate their business to this hangar but solely as a distribution warehouse for laundry, not for the cleaning/washing processes. The Committee resolved to grant permission subject to the applicants entering a section 106 Agreement requiring cessation of use and demolition of their existing premises at Alma Street (which they indicated would form the subject of an application for redevelopment with flats) and a sustainable transport contribution. However, the applicants have never completed this Agreement, so the permission was never granted. Nevertheless, they went ahead and occupied the building for the storage of laundry awaiting washing, in breach of planning control.

The present application is for the use of the building as a laundry, not solely a warehouse for laundry, and to erect a larger extension, with a different elevational treatment. The building (existing ground floorspace 500sqm) would be converted and extended on its northern side (225sqm), with first-floor offices created within the building (on the front and east side), increasing the gross floorspace to 900sqm (as compared to 700sqm with the previous application). The hangar doors on the west side would be reduced to vehicular roller shutter loading doors and the wall infilled with matching coloured/profiled steel cladding. The front elevation would be altered to provide a glazed curtain wall on its southeast corner. Additional windows would be inserted, at first-floor level.

Parking would comprise 12 car spaces on the opposite (southern) side of the road, adjoining the railway.

The building was erected as a hangar and workshop (including for vending machines related to air travel) following permission granted in 1996 with a condition restricting use to such purposes (L/166/96). An application for

change of use to Class B1 business use and/or car repairs and MOT testing was refused in April 2004 on grounds of not requiring an airport location (L/46/04). A subsequent application for change of use to primarily aviation-related business and/or storage was approved in June 2004 (L/88/04).

Consultations & Representations

County Transport Planning Services: No objection subject to the completion of a section 106 Agreement requiring payment of £2,600 toward sustainable transport improvements in the area and conditions requiring a 'Travel Plan' and provision of a staff minibus service. Comments that the 12 car parking spaces shown are well below the maximum standard for business/industrial use but, as the applicants operate a minibus service for staff, the amount of parking is considered acceptable.

Environment Agency: No objection but advises the applicants to consider flood-proofing measures to prevent ingress of floodwater, etc

Shoreham Airport: No comments received (NB. the Manager supported the previous application).

Director of Services: The EHO points out that the application is lacking information regarding hours of operation and extraction systems associated with laundry processes (the existing Alma Street premises having boiler plant and tumble driers, for example).

Lancing Parish Council: No comments received (NB. raised no objection to the previous application).

Third Parties: 2 letters have been received, from occupiers of adjoining hangars, Apollo Aviation Advisory Ltd and Serenus Aviation.
Apollo Aviation point out that the 'core' business of any airport is the operation of aircraft (see CAA documentation) and this is being forgotten. They express concern about the increasing trend towards loss of hangars to non-aircraft uses (eg. the nearby call centre), probably making it uneconomic to ever convert them back, resulting in the reduced availability of suitable accommodation to maintain, store and manoeuvre aircraft. The type of aircraft operated at Shoreham are unlikely to ever create significant demand for laundry services and, in any case, the proposal is a type of use that could successfully be located off-airport. The accuracy of the submitted information is queried in respect of traffic generation which states that the average daily traffic flow is only 4 vehicles whereas their own observations of present usage by the applicants indicate this is at least 10 vehicle movements per hour. They consider that this application should be considered together with the application (currently awaited) from the new airport owners for major development including a new control tower and fire station which entails designating the taxiway on the west side of the application site as an exit for emergency vehicles – the applicant's use of this road already causes it to be blocked by loading/unloading vehicles.

Serenus do not object but point out that only half the parking area on the south side of the road belongs to the application premises; that the stated traffic flow of 4 vehicles must be an error (40 seems more likely); that there are no public buses serving the airport; and that, if the airport use the access way on the west side as an emergency route, the applicants would no longer be able to use it for parking and loading/unloading their vans.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (WSCC 2004): LOC2, NE1, NE5-6, NE20, ERA4, DEV1, DEV4-5
Approved Adur District Local Plan (ADC 1996) : AG1, AP3, AE10-14, AT9, AT12
Adur Development Plan – Submission Core Strategy 2006-26 (ADC 2007): R1, R4, E1-2, T3-4, ENV3
West Sussex Revised Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology (WSCC 2003 & ADC 2004)
PPS1 "Delivering Sustainable Development" (ODPM 2005)
PPG4 "Ind. and Commercial Development and Small Firms" (DoE 1992)
Planning Policy Guidance PPG13 "Transport" (DTLR 2001)
PPS25 "Planning and Flood Risk" (ODPM 2006)
Circular 05/2005 "Planning Obligations" (ODPM 2005)

Planning Assessment

Policies

Shoreham Airport lies within the strategic gap of countryside separating Lancing from Shoreham where the aim is to prevent development in order to prevent the coalescence of the built-up areas. However, provision is made for development to meet Airport needs and maintain its viability and a specific development area is defined in the Local Plan within which the hangar forming the subject of this application is situated.

Policy NE6 (Coastal regeneration) of the Structure Plan states:-

> "Development proposals within the boundary of Shoreham Airport relating to its operation including both aviation-related and commercial development (subject to policy NE20) and for the interchange of transport modes, should be permitted provided that a balance can be achieved between economic, social and environmental objectives and that no one element is compromised".

[NB. policy NE20 (General aviation) states that development necessary for the safe and efficient operation of general aviation should be permitted subject to environmental safeguards and Local Plans should include policies to ensure such development is located within defined areas].

The Airport is subject to Local Plan policy AT9 which relates to facilities necessary for the safe and efficient operation of the airport for general

aviation and is similar to NE20 above. It is also subject to Local Plan policies AE10-14. AE10 states that:-

> "priority will be given to uses which require an airport location because of the nature of the individual business concerned" and subject to "local access and environmental considerations".

AE12 states that conditions will be imposed restricting usage to the specific purposes applied for and AE14 relates to noise from industrial processes. The explanatory text to these policies refers to the now superseded Structure Plan policy which provided for business, industrial or warehousing development at Shoreham Airport to an extent and in locations compatible with the countryside policies. The Local Plan text (para 10.67) states that the Council "recognises the need for Shoreham Airport to be economically viable and supports further development consistent with environmental protection policies. To this end, it recognises that some businesses require to be located at the airport and therefore wishes to make limited provision for the expansion of existing businesses and location of new businesses. However, in view of the need to preserve the open character of the strategic gap, the location of sites for new businesses must be carefully controlled. Because of this land constraint, the development of businesses which require an airport location should be given priority over those which do not."

The Submission Core Strategy states that sustainable economic growth and regeneration will be promoted (R1), and Shoreham Airport will be a key location for regeneration and new employment with additional land for mainly high quality airport-related businesses, and small-scale ancillary uses (R4) with conversion of existing premises to non-employment use resisted (E1).

Relationship of proposed use to Shoreham Airport

The laundry use results in the loss of a building designed for use as a hangar, albeit with only indirect airside access between the buildings to the north. A factor to be borne in mind is that it was vacant for several years prior to being occupied by the present applicants (without planning permission) and there was no evidence of any demand for use of this particular building as a hangar when their application was considered in 2005, although it is understood that there is now an unsatisfied demand for hangar space generally at the airport.

The proposed laundry is not a use related to Shoreham Airport. Given that the development area at the airport is almost fully developed, there is significant concern that future airport-related businesses which do have a genuine need to locate at the airport would be unable to find a site resulting in a need to extend the development area which would be contrary to Strategic Gap objectives (NB. although the Submission Core Strategy refers to additional land for employment provision at the airport, it has not yet been approved and the related Site Allocations Document is only in its earliest stages of preparation). However, given that the current planning policies for the airport only refer to "priority" being given to businesses needing to be

located at the airport, the location of other businesses is not necessarily precluded.

In support of their case, the applicants state that they now specialise in providing a laundry service for major airlines at the London airports. A letter from Alpha Flight Services confirms that Gochers provide laundry services to them for United Airlines and American Airlines, involving 140,000 pieces of laundry and cutlery preparation per week. Their agent states that the new premises would mostly consist of storage and rooms for staff to wrap and fold cutlery, napkins, etc for the airliners. They have previously stated that they are rationalising their business and have been unable to find an alternative site meeting their requirements. The proposed location would allow them to operate from one self-contained building with good access to the trunk road network. In addition, the business provides employment for local persons which might otherwise be lost and is of benefit to the local economy.

The case for locating the laundry business at the airport is not strong. However, this was also the case with the travel insurance call centre permitted in the adjacent hangar to the east (although that business provides a higher level of employment and a very small element of supporting aviation-related businesses at Shoreham). Further explanation of the business and its justification for this location has been sought.

Relocation from existing premises

This was an additional factor previously taken into account when the Committee resolved to permit the previous application L/125/05. It was considered to tip the balance in favour of granting permission for a use unrelated to Shoreham Airport. It was considered a worthwhile environmental improvement for the District to secure the removal of the laundry from its long-established location at Alma Street where it causes significant environmental problems for nearby residents. These existing premises which are juxtaposed to houses, have very little space for parking and loading/unloading and have given rise to environmental harm and conflict with residents sharing the narrow access road.

The applicants were previously agreeable to enter a section 106 Agreement requiring cessation of use and demolition of these existing premises but this is no longer the case. No planning application has yet been submitted for the redevelopment of those premises with flats and there is the possibility that, without a section 106 Agreement, the existing premises would be let or sold to another business for purposes falling within Use Class B2 'General Industry' which would be outside planning control. This could perpetuate or even worsen the problems for neighbouring residents at those premises. However, in the absence of the applicants voluntarily entering into a section 106 agreement it is not, of itself, a reason for refusing the present application and the Council cannot insist upon it as it does not meet the tests set out in Circular 05/2005.

Access and Parking

A laundry falls into Use Class B2 for which the maximum parking standard applicable is one parking space per 30sqm. This would result in a maximum requirement for the site at Shoreham Airport of 30 car parking spaces (plus 2 lorry spaces). The actual provision of 12 car and van spaces is significantly below this standard. However, the applicants use is largely for storage type purposes, rather than industrial or offices. 12 spaces appear likely to be appropriate for the applicant's actual needs as they operate a minibus for their staff. However, more information has been sought and a Travel Plan giving further encouragement to more sustainable forms of transport will be needed. The advice of WSCC includes a requirement for a section 106 Obligation requiring a payment of £2,600 towards sustainable transport improvements in the area (under the TAD Transport Contributions Methodology).

Visual amenity

The design of the proposed extension and alterations to the building would improve its appearance and not adversely affect other premises.

Recommendation

Subject to satisfactory additional information being received from the applicant and completion of a section 106 Obligation requiring a financial contribution of £2,600 towards sustainable transport improvements in the area, APPROVE for the reason:-

The proposed development is located within the Airport development area and would assist economic regeneration without detracting from the existing local environment and without causing highway safety problems. It would consequently not conflict with the relevant policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AB16, AE10-14, AT9, AT12), the adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (LOC1-2, NE5-6, NE18, DEV1, DEV4-5) and the Adur Development Plan – Submission Core Strategy (R1, R4, E1-2, T3-4, ENV3)

Subject to:-

1. C1Ci (Standard time limit)
2. C8Bi (Parking facilities to be provided in accordance with construction details to be submitted and approved and thereafter retained) (amended)
3. C12Ai (External materials to be approved (amended)
4. C16Ai (Use limited to laundry with incidental offices) (amended)
5. Upon commencement of occupation, a 'Travel Plan' shall be implemented in accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA which shall include the provision of a minibus service for staff.
6. C17B (Details of any extraction plant, etc)

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