Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1204/13 Recommendation – APPROVE

Site: 22 Cecil Pashley Way Shoreham (Brighton City) Airport Lancing West Sussex

Proposal: Partial change of use from aircraft storage (sui-generis) to commercial laundry

Date of site visit: 14.11.2013

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: Y – Amended car park plan

Proposal, Site and Surroundings

This report relates to one of 2 current applications by Gochers Laundry, a commercial laundry which occupies a former aircraft hangar/workshop on the north side of the airport access road (No.23 Cecil Pashley Way). There is a private car park (12 spaces) opposite the building on the south side of the access road.

The site the subject of this application consists of an air-side hangar (671sqm) currently in use for the storage of light aircraft immediately to the north of the existing laundry building. It is located to the west of the main terminal buildings and adjoins modern hangar buildings to the west. To the east is a former hangar building now occupied by Direct Travel Insurance.

Permission is sought under AWDM/1204/13 for a change of use of the southern part of the hangar (263sqm) to a commercial laundry in connection with the current use of No.23.

[Permission is sought under a separate application AWDM/1206/13 for an extension to the north of No.23 to join the existing buildings together.]

The site is located within Flood Zone 3. Both applications are accompanied by an FRA in accordance with EA Standing Advice for minor non-domestic extensions and changes of use.

Relevant Planning History

- L/37/88 (No.22) Hangar. Condition 3 restricts use to the restoration, maintenance, overhaul, serving, re-building and storage of aircraft and aircraft parts only and for no other purpose.
- ADC/0040/07 (No.23) Change of use from hangar to laundry with rear extension and alterations including provision of curtain walling and new windows. Approved June 2009.
- L/125/05 (No.23) Resolution to grant permission for conversion and extension of hangar to form distribution warehouse for laundry goods

subject to a S106 legal agreement requiring cessation of use of existing premises in Alma Street and a sustainable transport contribution. S106 not completed.

- L/46/04 (No.23) Use for B1 (Offices, Research & Development of Light Industrial) and/or Vehicle Repairs/MOT Centre (Variation of Condition 2 of L/166/96) refused on the ground the proposed uses do not require an airport location and therefore do not accord with airport policies AE10-12 of the Adur Local Plan. The loss of this hangar from Airport-related use would be likely to inhibit the needs of the airport and lead to pressure for further development within the 'strategic gap' of countryside.
- L/166/96 Hangar on south part of Plot 3 (No.23) with car park on south side of road. Condition 2 restricts use to purposes of a hangar and for aircraft maintenance and the development and construction of vending machines related to air travel, with incidental offices and for no other purposes. Approved December 1996.

Consultations:

***West Sussex County Council*:** The Highway Authority raises no objection commenting:

"WSCC has been consulted on two applications for a commercial laundry business at No. 22 and 23 Cecil Pashley Way, Shoreham Airport. The first application is for a change of use from sui generis to B1 light industrial use, and the second application is to extend no 23, to increase the current square footage. They have been reviewed together in this response.

The overall B1 floor space will change from 714sqm to 1,078sqm, an increase of 364sqm, and commands an additional 19 parking spaces, based on the recommended standard of 1 space per 30sqm for B1 light industrial use. The increase in floor space will attract an additional 8 employees and it is expected that this would create a demand for more parking. However; WSCC is mindful the business has been operating with this level of parking with 52 employees. Therefore the recommended standards may not reflect this type of business use and although B1, a slightly higher ratio of parking spaces to employees may be considered appropriate. The current employee to parking space ratio is 1 space for every 3 employees. Therefore WSCC would advise the applicant considers increasing its car parking provision to reflect the increase in employees and increase in floor space. We would advise somewhere between 3 and 12 additional spaces.

The increase in vehicular traffic linked with the commercial laundry business has been described as minimal however no information has been provided regarding the number and size of any additional vehicle trips associated with this. Please can the applicant provide this information so I can assess the impact on the highway access point off Saltings Roundabout on the A259 Brighton Road. WSCC would raise no highway issues with an increase in use from this access point providing there is evidence to show the increase in vehicle trips is 'minimal'.

It would seem that the business of cleaning aircraft industry items is ideally located within Shoreham Airport, and offers good links within easy reach of

bus transport and Shoreham-by -sea railway station 2.5km away. This is outside the 2km CIHT guidance for acceptable walking distances for commuters however; cycling is also a realistic opportunity to the site. A signed on-road cycle route links the Airport and the South Coast Cycle route providing a direct cycling link to the West Sussex coastline. The applicant should consider providing cycle storage for employees."

Following the submission of an amended plan showing additional car parking provision the following additional comments have been received:-

"*I have reviewed the parking plans and am satisfied that this area of land will serve as an additional car parking area for staff. Parking spaces, if marked out, should be out in line with current guidance of 2.4m x 4.8m. It would also be advisable to include at least 1 space which is accessible for a disabled person."*

Adur and Worthing Councils: The Planning Policy Manager comments in relation this application (and the accompanying application AWDM/1206/13) as follows:

"The application sites are located within Shoreham Airport which is subject to saved policies AE10 to AE14 of the Adur Local Plan 1996. The most relevant policy is AE10 which states that 'Priority will be given to uses which require an airport location because of the nature of the individual business concerned.' The supporting text for this policy expands on this issue stating: 'In view of the need to preserve the open character of the strategic gap, the location of sites for new business should 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.'

Although it is accepted that the Revised Draft Plan doesn't have a significant amount of weight at this stage, it should be noted that Policy 7: Shoreham Airport seeks to provide a new allocation for development in the north east corner of the airport to provide a mix of uses including B8 uses (i.e. hangars). Albemarle, the current leaseholders of Shoreham Airport, have stated that there is a need for new hangars at the airport and this allocation, in part, aims to meet this need.

Given the supposed demand for hangars at the airport and the general aim of the Council to keep the airport operating as an airport in the long-term, I do have some concerns with the proposal at 22 Cecil Pashley Way and the cumulative impact of such proposals on the character and viability of Shoreham Airport. It is important that the reduction in the size of the hangar doesn't compromise its ability to store aircrafts. It is my view that although Policy AE10 is not strongly worded, it aims to prioritize aviation-related development at the Airport and in this case, where there appears to be a demand for hangars, the partial change of use should be resisted if it compromises the ability of the remainder of the hangar to be used effectively."

The Economic Development Officer comments in relation this application (and the accompanying application AWDM/1206/13) as follows:-

"This operating airport provides important air links with the rest of the UK and Europe, is a key visitor attraction in Adur and provides accommodation for a number of successful commercial operations. Gocher's Laundry has been based on the airport since 2007 and provides laundry services for the aviation industry. Economic Development welcomes these applications which will:

- *Safeguard retention of airside hangarage;*
- *Enable growth of an aviation related business;*
- *Create new employment opportunities;*
- *Enable the removal of unsightly temporary buildings;*
- *Enable the removal of obstructions from emergency airfield access.*

Economic Development supports these applications as they will enable employment growth whilst still providing viable airside hangarage. Economic Development also welcomes the applicants desire to upgrade the airside hanger door and the pilot rest facilities, as this will help support airside operations."

The EHO has no adverse comments.

Lancing Parish Council: No objection (the Committee hopes this is an expansion of the business).

Representations: The occupier of No.24 (adjoining to the west) comments that the operation of a commercial laundry is totally inappropriate on this site and does not attract skilled employment. The access is permanently restricted and is untidy with equipment and rubbish blowing around in a strong wind. This creates a noise and is a hazard to aircraft operations producing potential for foreign object ingestion by aircraft. There is insufficient parking for their many vehicles.

Relevant Planning Policies

Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AT9, AE10-14
National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2012)

Planning Assessment

Principle

Shoreham Airport is located outside the built-up area and is subject to saved policies AT9 and AE10-14 which allowed for the limited development of sites within an identified development area for Enterprise Workshops in accordance with the objectives of a Business Development Plan for Shoreham Airport to help overturn an operating deficit. Policy AE10 and the supporting text (paragraph 10.67) make it clear 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 restrict usage to the specific purposes applied for and AE14 relates to noise from industrial processes.]

Policy 7 of the Revised Draft Local Plan seeks to provide a new allocation for development in the north east corner of the Airport to provide a mix of uses including B8 uses (i.e. hangars). Although this policy has little (or no) weight in the determination of the current application it is indicative of a need for additional hangar storage identified by Albemarle, the current leaseholders of Shoreham Airport.

The use of No.23 as laundry – a use not related to Shoreham Airport - and which involved the loss of a building designed as a hangar - was approved under ADC/0044/07 notwithstanding concerns at the time that airport businesses having a genuine need to locate at the Airport would be unable to find a site (since the identified 'development area' had by then been almost fully developed). The development was justified on the basis that policies only refer to "priority" being given to businesses needing to be located at the airport – the location of other businesses not necessarily being precluded. Limited weight was attached to the argument that the Gochers provide laundry services including wrapping and folding of cutlery and napkins to major airline companies but it was accepted that the laundry does not *require* an airport location.

The business has been successful and is seeking to expand. Nevertheless, the same arguments (and same Local Plan policies) concerning the justification for allowing the expansion of a business which it not related to Shoreham Airport and does not require does not require an airport location apply as before.

The current application relates solely to the southern-most 40% of the existing hangar which is currently used to store light aircraft. The applicant has stated that the remaining 60% (airside) would continue to be used to store aircraft. Nonetheless, the proposal would result in the loss of existing air-side hangarage.

Since the relocation of Gochers laundry to the Airport was accepted under ADC/0040/07, the NPPF has been published which places significant weight on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. This includes support for existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting. It states that policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances (paragraph 21).

The applicant has commented in support of the application as follows:-

1. *Gocher's Laundry has agreed to purchase the northern hangar (subject to planning approval) on the basis of its continued growth within the aviation sector of its industry. In addition to the purpose of the hangar [Gocher's] is purchasing a sole (100%) interest in Serenus Aviation Ltd, the company that currently owns and manages the leasing of aircraft space in the hangar (No.22).*
2. *The proposed change of use subject of AWDM/1204/13 relates to 40% of the hangar gross internal floor area and Serenus Aviation Ltd (the*

applicant) will continue to rent out the remaining 60% for the storage of aircraft. The applicant is currently looking at a contract to lease the aircraft storage space to a company for two multi-million pound luxury jet aircraft.

3. *The applicant intends to make significant changes to the remaining aircraft storage area/part of the northern hangar which has seen no financial investment of any sort in the past decade and seriously lacks even basic facilities that aircraft owners would expect whilst paying for storage. Planning changes include new pilot's rest area with refreshment making facilities, CCTV in all aircraft areas, up-graded toilet facilities for men and women, cosmetic refurbishment such as floor painting, interior and exterior signs, part wall and roof insulation replacement and upgrade the (impossible to open) old main hangar doors to become electronically operated.*
4. *There are a number of empty/under-used hangars at the Airport, including the 11,000sqft former British Aerospace building which fronts the airfield and has stood empty for some time.*
5. *Gocher's Laundry meets the planning policy requirement for businesses at the Airport to be aviation-related and supplies over 1,000,000 items of laundry and airline cutlery per week to aviation customers. In excess of 90% of annual turnover is related to aviation customers.*
6. *The proposals are supported by the landlord, Egan Asset Management, who also licence the airport management company/airline operator.*

The proposals are supported by the Economic Development Officer on the basis that the development will create additional employment opportunities, will enable the growth of a local aircraft-related business and enable the removal of unsightly outbuildings attached to the side of the existing building (No.23). There are currently 52 employees at the site and the proposals (the subject of both applications) will facilitate the creation of 8 additional full-time jobs. The Economic Development is satisfied the proposals will safeguard the viable retention of airside hangarage (although the applicant's intentions concerning up-grading the existing facilities are outside the remit of either current application).

Visual amenity

The existing laundry building (No.23) is 2 full storeys in height on the south side with first-floor offices facing onto Cecil Pashley Way; the roof at the rear (north) sloping down lower. The exterior consists of light grey profiled-metal cladding above a brick plinth. A narrow grassed area enclosed by post and rail fencing currently separates the buildings (No.22 and 23). The proposed extension would continue the form of No.23 rearwards, attaching to the gabled south side of No.23 at a height of 4.4m. The external walls would match the existing building.

Two new roller shutter door openings (3m wide x 2.8m high) would be provided in the east and west sides of No.22 – similar to the existing door openings in the side of No.23 – opening onto the airside access roads on either side. [These are gated at the northern end to prevent direct access onto the apron.]

A couple of timber-slatted outbuildings have been attached to the west side of No.23. [One houses a storage tank used to store rainwater harvested from the roof of the existing building which is used in the laundry process and the other used to store laundry 'cages'.] Both appear to be unauthorised in planning terms. Neither outbuilding is particularly large and they are not poorly constructed; but they have a temporary appearance and add visual 'clutter'. The proposed extension and enlargement into No.22 will facilitate the removal of these buildings.

Access and Parking

No details of the additional vehicular traffic likely to be generated by the proposal have been provided and although this has been queried by the Highway Authority, no objection has been raised. There are currently 12 spaces in the existing car park. However, the application has been amended to include the additional parking area immediately to the west of the existing car park, providing a further 17 spaces.

The applicant has no objection to a condition requiring covered cycle parking to be provided and comments that he encourages staff to use bicycles and a number already do so, storing their bikes in the building.

Other Issues

The site lies within flood zone 3. However, the proposal involves a 'less vulnerable use' and the submitted FRA is considered adequate with the applicant's agent having identified that flood proofing/resilience measures can be incorporated into the development where appropriate.

The removal of the existing timber outbuildings attached to No.23 will free-up the existing hard standing on the west side of this building, and together with the additional parking provision should address the concerns raised by the third party. A condition could be added to ensure that all storage is contained within the building envelope.

Recommendation

AWDM/1206/13

APPROVE for the reason:-

The proposed development will result in the loss of existing airside hangar space for a use which does not require an airport location and is therefore not a priority for development under saved policy AE10. However, the proposal would facilitate the expansion of an existing aviation-related business already based at the Airport and on balance can be supported in accordance with the NPPF which attaches significant weight to assisting local economic growth and on the basis that the majority of the existing hangar will remain in a use which requires an airport location in accordance with the planning permission granted under L/37/88. The proposed development can take place without detracting from the existing local environment and without causing highway safety problems or worsening flood risk. It does not therefore conflict with

saved policies AG1, AE10-14, AT9 of the Adur District Local Plan or the NPPF.

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Standard time limit
2. Approved plans
3. No consent is conferred by this permission on the northern sixty percent of the hangar building which shall remain in use for the restoration, maintenance, overhaul, serving, re-building and storage of aircraft and aircraft parts only in accordance with condition 3 of the planning permission granted under L/37/88.
4. New openings (and making good) in matching materials
5. Details of hard-surfaces to facilitate new loading doors and alterations to means of enclosure to be agreed.
6. Agree and provide cycle storage prior to first occupation
7. Existing timber stores on west side of No.23 to be removed prior to first occupation
8. Use limited to laundry with incidental offices
9. No external plant without permission
10. No open storage of cages etc.

Informatives

1. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by identifying matters of concern within the application (as originally submitted) and negotiating, with the Applicant, acceptable amendments to the proposal to address those concerns. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? Y

Case Officer: Jo Morin Date: 23 Jan 2014

Authorised by: Gary Peck Date: 24 January 2014