Development Management - Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: **AWDM/058915** **Recommendation – Approve**

Site: 20 Cecil Pashley Way Shoreham (Brighton City) Airport

Proposal: Change of use from office-storage to B2 manufacturing and assembly with re-instatement of loading door.

Date of site visit: 16 June 2015

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N

Proposal, Site and Surroundings
The site relates to a hangar building bordering the south side of the airfield at Shoreham Airport. The site is located towards the western end of Cecil Pashley Road accessed from a tarmac access road and with parking spaces immediately in front of the building.

The application proposes a change of use to B2 manufacturing and assembly and external alterations to create loading doors on the south elevation.

The applicant has provided the following information in a supporting statement:

'The building in the past has been used predominantly as office space. A mezzanine level has been introduced since the building was originally constructed. This provides some 540 sqm of additional floorspace at this level. The building is fitted out as office space with a central atrium. The ground floor footprint is 1145 sqm.

The building was constructed in 1989 for CJ Fox and Sons. In 2001, CJ Fox & Sons Ltd changed its name to Satair Hardware Limited. The main operational requirement of the company during this period was for offices and warehousing. The company operated from the premises until 2010 when Satair Hardware Group Limited (an aviation parts distribution company) sold to B/E Aerospace, a large US corporation.

Although the building is constructed in close proximity to the airport, there are no openings (other than windows) facing the north (airside elevation). This makes the building operationally different to some of the hangars which have principal openings and loading doors on the runway side, reinforcing the linkages to the airfield and runway. Because of this the building has been mainly used for office and distribution activities that were not strictly reliant locationally on the airfield in contravention of the original planning condition.'

The prospective occupier would be a company called Vibratechniques Ltd (Vibtec) who, on their company website, provide the following overview of their business:

'Vibratechniques Ltd, manufacturer of pneumatic vibrators are also agents for ITALVIBRAS rotary electric external vibrators and FINDEVA pneumatic external vibrators.

Established in 1962, Vibratechniques Ltd has been involved in the design, manufacture and supply of vibration products to both the construction and industrial sectors for over 50 years.'

The Economic Develoment Officer provided the applicant with a list of alternative available sites and dismissed the sites for the following reasons:

There were only 3 larger units within the schedule;

- *Nynex House is too large 25,000 sq ft plus*
- *Unit C 1 Dolphin Way is too big 20,700 sq ft*
- *Hangar 17-19 Cecil Pashley way is also too big 23,530 sq ft*

Another unit was investigated for relocation known as the Old Forfars Bakery Moulscomb but this was ruled out partly because of its size and also because it required sharing floorspace with another company which was unacceptable to the owners of Vibtec.

The applicant is an existing business operating at Portslade and requires larger premises of between 12,000 and 14000 sq feet to support a 10% projected increase in annual turnover this year. The limited floorspace at the current premises at Portslade does not allow efficient production and is holding back the growth of the company. The proposed move to 20 Cecil Pashley Way will allow a much more efficient production which will assist with the expansion plans. The proposed increase in floorspace is 30% above that which the company enjoys at present from Portslade. Most of the existing workforce are from Shoreham and Brighton. There are 17 jobs that would be transferred and additional jobs will be created by the proposed move although this is difficult for the company to quantify at this point as existing staff will be given the opportunity to work longer shifts.

When reviewing the options to relocate, the business looked at the opportunities in both Brighton and Adur/Shoreham. The application site is the first choice for Vibtec for relocation and will result in a number of additional jobs being created as outlined in the supporting statement. Vibtec must relocate to expand. If they are unable to expand by moving to Adur it is likely they will be forced to move elsewhere within the region.

The existing unit is vacant. A thriving business at Portslade is looking to relocate and the available options for the company requirements are limited. The business needs to expand and additional floorspace will allow a more efficient production process which in turn will stimulate more investment in machinery and job creation including apprenticeships and allowing over time links to be established with local educational establishments as the company

specialise in the manufacturing, assembly and distribution of specialist vibration products.

Relevant site history
L/41/88 – Permission granted for Clear span building to provide aircraft maintenance workshops, aircraft component distribution and ancillary office accommodation in 1988. Condition 3 states that: *The building hereby permitted shall only be used for the maintenance, overhaul, and servicing of aircraft-related parts only and for no other purposes unless the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority has been obtained on an application in that behalf.*

A subsequent amendment was approved under L/5/89 with condition 4 stating that: *The building hereby permitted shall be used as aircraft maintenance workshops and for aircraft component distribution with ancillary offices and shall be used for no other purposes whatsoever unless the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority has been obtained*.

Consultations

The **Highway Authority** has raised no objection and made the following comments:

The proposal to change the use of the existing B1 office space to B2 manufacturing, and the re-instatement of a loading door, has been considered by WSCC as the Local Highway Authority. No objection is raised subject to any conditions attached.

The change of use will see a slight reduction in floor space (a loss of 420sqm), and will revert to the buildings original planning use when it was first built. Car parking is provided to the front of the building, although the applicant does not state how many spaces will be provided. WSCC parking standards for B2 use are set at 1 space per 40sqm, which would equate to 32 spaces and 3 lorry spaces. Please can the applicant provide details of the number of car parking spaces.

However given that the most recent use has been for an office which commands a higher number of parking spaces per sqm it is most likely that the number of parking spaces provided will be sufficient.

Other than parking for the use, WSCC do not consider there to be any outstanding Highways issues in relation to this change of use application and raise no objection.

Environment Agency: No comments

Adur and Worthing Councils:
No adverse comments confirmed from the Environmental Protection team.

The Planning Policy Officer comments:
Relevant Policies:

Adur Local Plan 1996
The application site is located within Shoreham Airport which is subject to 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.'

Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan 2014
Policy 7: Shoreham Airport states the following:
'Within the existing developed area located at the southern end of the Airport, new development for aviation related B1, B2 and B8 uses, as well as other appropriate ancillary employment generating uses, will continue to be supported. Existing B1, B2 and B8 uses will be protected. Non-aviation relates uses will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated there are significant regeneration benefits. Appropriate aviation-related training uses will also be supported in this location.'
The emerging Local Plan is now at Publication stage and should therefore have some degree of weight in decisions on planning applications.

Officer Comments:
The purpose of Policy AE10 is clearly to prioritise aviation development at the airport but the policy is not worded so strongly as to prevent non-aviation uses where there is no obvious interest from an aviation use for a unit. Policy 7 of the Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan 2014 is less flexible and only allows non-aviation uses in exceptional circumstances.

It is clearly important however that successful companies in the area have the opportunity to expand and although the proposed use is not aviation related, the applicant has demonstrated (via their email of 25 June) that they have now considered alternative premises and that currently available premises elsewhere in the district do not meet their size requirements. Additionally, it appears that the site has been marketed for just over 6 months in a number of different aviation publications and by 2 different agents and so, on this basis, I have no objection to this application.

Lancing Parish Council: No objections

Representations: None received

Relevant Planning Policies
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AE10, AE12, AE14, AG1, AP7
Proposed Submission Adur Local Plan (ADC 2014): 7, 26
National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2012)

Planning Assessment
The site is located outside the 'built up' area within an area of countryside which separates Lancing and Shoreham. Development at Shoreham Airport is currently restricted by a legal agreement to the southern part of the site, on either side of the terminal building. The adopted Local Plan recognises the need for Shoreham Airport to be economically viable and supports limited development primarily for airport-related businesses consistent with environmental protection policies.

Policy 7 within the Submission Local Plan allocates the north-eastern part of the Airport for 15,000sqm of new employment-generating floor space (aviation and non-aviation related) subject to (amongst other things) improvements to the A27 Sussex Pad junction, completion of the Adur Tidal Walls, and mitigation of impacts on landscape, ecology etc. Policy 26 seeks to resist changes of use from Class B1, B2 and B8 on employment sites including Shoreham Airport. The emerging policies allow a degree of flexibility to allow non-aviation uses in exceptional circumstances and the adopted policy does not prevent non-aviation uses where there is no obvious interest from an aviation use for a unit although the clear intention is to prioritise aviation related business.

The applicant has looked at alternative sites and explained the rationale behind those sites being unsuitable and has said the following specifically in comparing Unit C1 Dolphin Way with the application site:

'20 Cecil Pashley Way has a large mezzanine are which was installed by former occupiers. This has not proved suitable for a new occupier and the building will revert to a more standard higher bay configuration. Vibratechniques are looking for a ground floor footprint of approx.. 12,000spqft, together with approx..2000 sqft of ancillary office. 20 Cecil Pashley Way will provide this accommodation, whereas unit C1 Dolphin Way is a much larger building, with a rental cost in excess of 50% higher than 20 Cecil Pashley Way.'

The applicant has also provided details of the marketing of the premises which commenced in October 2014 in a range of local, regional, national and aviation specific publications.

On the basis of the extended period of vacancy and marketing of the premises, the unsuitability of alternative sites and that adopted policy does not prohibit non-aviation uses, the Planning Policy Officer has not raised an objection and so it is considered that the proposed use would not represent a conflict with policy and is so can be supported in principle in these specific circumstances.

However, other non-aviation B2 uses where the requirements are not specific or where alternative suitable sites are available may be considered contrary to policy. Therefore a restrictive condition is recommended to limiting the use of the premises to the application description and personal to Vibratechniques Ltd.

Flooding

The Environment Agency were consulted on the application as the site lies within flood zone 3 but no comments have been received. However, the development is not classed as vulnerable, is not within 20 metres of a main river and is considered 'minor' in relation to flood risk. The alterations to the building have no implications for raising flood risk in terms of the efficacy of existing drainage measures or operation of the wider floodplain.

Visual Amenity

In the context of this airport location surrounded by other industrial/commercial premises the proposed alterations to install a loading door are considered acceptable in terms of their impact on visual amenity.

Access and parking

There are currently 21 car parking spaces including one accessible space which would be reduced to 20 spaces as a result of these proposals to allow clear access to the loading door. The Highway Authority has commented that the proposed use represents a reduction in parking demand compared with the former office use and with a reduction in floorspace also, by the removal of part of the mezzanine level, the parking demand would further reduce. Pay and display parking is available elsewhere in the airport. Cycle parking could be provided to encourage alternative modes of transport and if approved a condition is recommended provide cycle storage. On this basis and in the absence of any objection from the Highway Authority parking and access is considered acceptable.

Amenity of neighbouring occupiers

The Environmental Health Officer has raised no objection to the proposed use and application proposals are considered acceptable in terms of impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

Recommendation

Approve
Subject to Conditions:-

1. Standard time limit
2. Restrict use as per description and personal to Vibtec
3. All manufacture, and assembly and any associated activities shall, as far as practicable be carried out within the enclosed building at 20 Cecil Pashley Way.
4. Details of cycle store to be submitted and agreed
5. Door to match colour of existing building
6. Drawing numbers:
   Unnumbered Site Location Plan deposited 28 April 2015
   Drawing number EX01 entitled ‘Existing Floor Plans’ deposited 28 April 2015
   Drawing number SK02 entitled ‘Proposed Elevations and Section’ deposited 28 April 2015
   Drawing number SK03 entitled ‘Proposed Floor Plans Landside Proposal’ deposited 28 April 2015
   Drawing number SK04 entitled ‘Proposed Elevations and Section’ Landside Proposal deposited 28 April 2015
   Drawing number SK05 entitled ‘Existing & Proposed Block Plan’ deposited 15 June 2015

Informative:
The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning

permission 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? N

Case Officer: Rebekah Smith Date: 20 August 2015

Authorised by: PD Date: 21.8.15