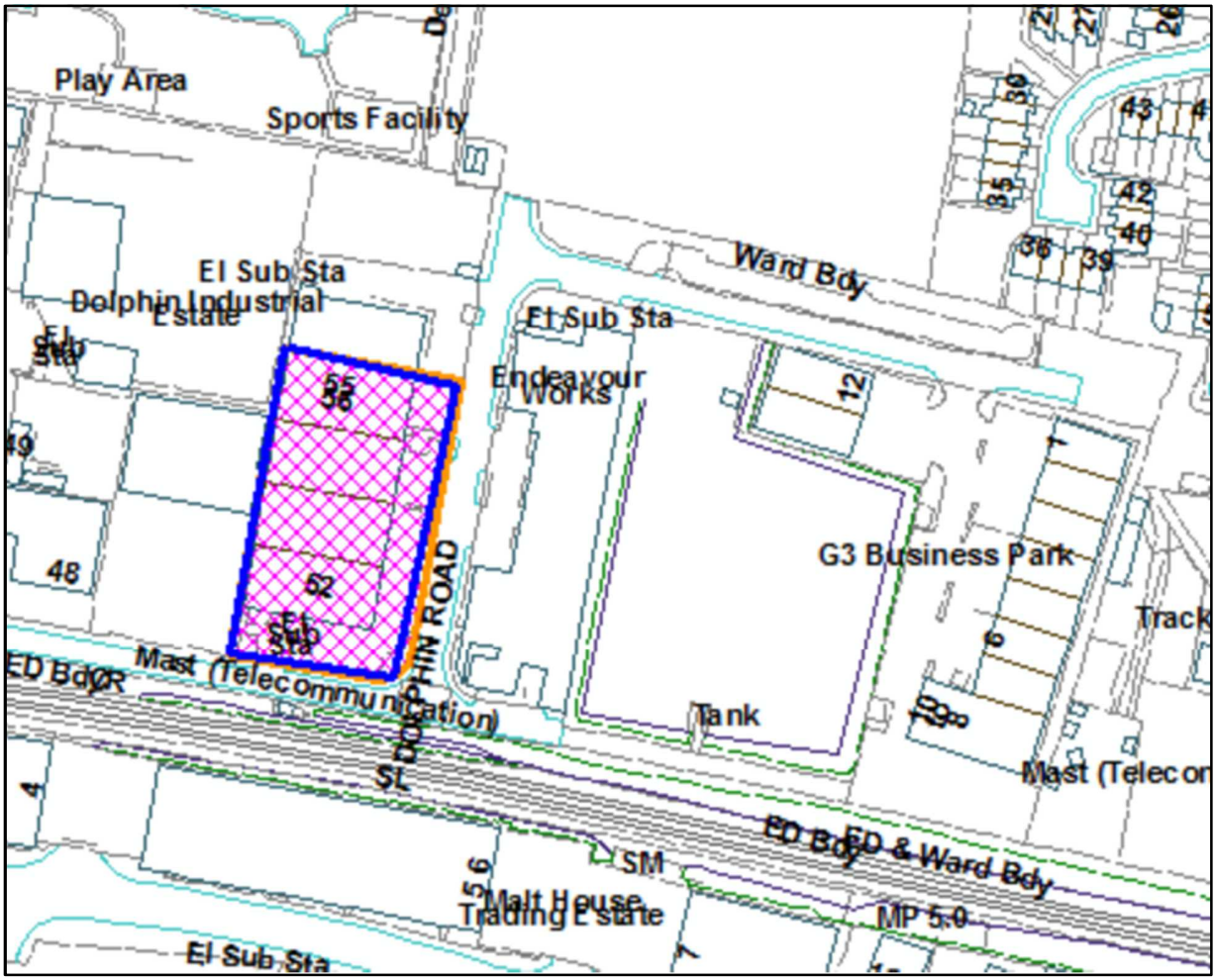
Application Number:	AWDM/0126/21	Recommendation - Approve
Site:	Unit 5, 52 Dolphin Road, Shoreham-By-Sea	
Proposal:	Change of use of Units 2-5 from Use Class B1 to food production (Use Class B2) and ancillary offices.	
Applicant:	Higgidy	Ward: St Mary's
Agent:	DowsettMayhew Planning Partnership	
Case Officer:	Peter Barnett	



Not to Scale

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Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to four commercial units in a linear run of five that are aligned north-south, with a front elevation facing east, at the eastern end of Dolphin Road.The site is bordered to the north by an existing commercial unit within the same run, that is already occupied by the applicants, the food producers Higgidy. The applicants also occupy 57-60 Dolphin Road directly opposite the site.

The application buildings comprise 3 storey B1 commercial units that are brick built with horizontal weatherboarding on the recessed upper floor.

It is proposed to change the use of the units to Class B2. No external changes are proposed. The Design and Access Statement submitted with the application explains that:

"*The buildings would be used in association with the company's production of food, with the existing offices within the buildings occupied on an ancillary basis. The scheme would enable the expansion of this successful local company to meet increasing customer demand. The units would be occupied as an integral part of Higgidy's operations. They would be used for food production, and ancillary purposes, including research and development, offices, and chilled and ambient storag*e."

This is a Major application as the total floorspace involved is 2480m2.

Relevant Planning History

AWDM/1880/15 - Demolition of 50 Dolphin Road and construction of new commercial building providing circa 2,450 sqm of B2 (general industrial) floorspace and circa 1,000 sqm of B1a (office) floorspace within a 3 storey building, with associated parking, plant room and landscaping.

The Planning Committee resolved to grant planning permission for the above application which was for new Higgidy premises on land to the north and northwest of the current application site, subject to a s106 Agreement being completed.

However, it was not possible at that time for the applicants to pursue the scheme and it was eventually withdrawn.

AWDM/1282/16 - Extension to existing hardstanding to provide 25 car parking spaces along eastern side of existing access road between 50 Dolphin Road and Middle Road to allow parking and restricted egress onto Middle Road - approved

AWDM/0318/21 - Single storey rear (east) extension to existing food manufacturing facility, including first floor roof terrace, external staircase and cage lift at southern end, new first floor door openings to serve proposed terrace, relocation and extension of vent extracts - approved (57-60 Dolphin Road)

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: No objection. Comments as follows:

Car Parking Spaces: There are currently 85 car parking spaces in 5 parking areas. Change of use of units 2-5 will result in an additional 28 car parking spaces.

Lorry Loading/Unloading: A tracking plan (Transport Note i-Transport IBT15647-001) has been provided showing the existing loading/unloading areas and HGV manoeuvres. This is not proposed to change as a result of this application. Note it is essential these areas are kept free of parked cars to continue to allow these manoeuvres.

Current and Expected number of Deliveries: At present it is estimated there will be 8 HGV's delivering to the site and 4 HGV's dispatching manufactured goods. As a result of these proposals it is estimated these numbers will increase to 12 delivering and 6 dispatching. A total of 12 additional HGV movements per day (two-way).

Staff numbers: An estimate of 24 additional production staff will occupy the new units. Office staff increase will be minimal and has reduced as a result of Covid-19. However a Staff Travel Plan should be developed.

The additional information is acceptable, no highway objection subject to conditions to secure car parking and a Travel Plan.

Adur & Worthing Councils: The ***Environmental Health*** officer has no objection

Representations

None received

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur Local Plan 2017 Policies 2, 4, 15, 25, 28, 34
WSCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments (Sept 2020).
National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

Relevant Legislation

The Committee should consider the planning application in accordance with:

Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) that provides the application may be granted either unconditionally or subject to relevant conditions, or refused. Regard shall be given to relevant development plan policies, any relevant local finance considerations, and other material considerations; and

Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that requires the decision to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning Assessment

Principle

Policy 25 recognises the Dolphin Road Industrial Estate as a protected employment site where proposed conversions to uses other than employment (B1, B2 and B8 of the Use Classes Order) will be resisted. The upgrading of existing employment sites and buildings will be supported. Furthermore, the previous permission (AWDM/1880/15) demonstrated the Council's support for the growth and expansion of Higgidy, a successful local employer.

Given the site's proximity to existing Higgidy operations and Local Plan policy support for strengthening the local economy, it is considered that this proposal for B2 use fully accords with the aims of Policy 25 and the principle of the change of use is acceptable.

Accessibility and parking

The applicant has provided supporting information in the form of the D&A Statement and a technical note from their transport consultants to explain the traffic impacts of the proposal.

It is explained that "*the increase in food production that would be facilitated by the proposal would not, necessarily, result in a pro rata increase in traffic, as a result of the enabling of a rationalisation of traffic movements, such as in respect of the delivery of raw ingredients, and despatch of finished products*."

Higgidy currently occupies units immediately to the east of the application site, the commercial business unit to the north (Unit 1, number 56), used as a despatch facility, and a unit to the west which is used for the delivery of raw ingredients. The applicants believe that the proposed occupation of these additional units will be likely to lead to an overall reduction in traffic movements as activity associated with the existing occupiers (Pyroban) will cease.

The applicant's agent explains that there will be some new employment roles created but also existing staff will be relocated from the adjoining units. At present, Higgidy food production operates on a 24-hour basis, across a four shift rotation. Each shift is 12 hours, and comprises some 50 production staff on site at any one time. In addition to this are circa 60 office based staff; resulting in a theoretical maximum number of 110 people on site at peak time, during the normal working day. In practice, Covid-19 protocols mean many of the office-based staff now work from home, thereby significantly reducing this number.

West Sussex Highways Officers have considered this, together with additional information on parking, loading/unloading, deliveries and staff numbers, as set out in their comments above, and they are satisfied that there will not be any adverse impacts on highway safety or an unacceptable increase in traffic numbers or parking demand and they have no objection to the proposal, subject to the provision of a Travel Plan.

Residential Amenity

The nearest residential properties are located some 90m to the north on Kingsland Close.

The proposed use will expand existing food manufacturing activities currently undertaken in the industrial units to the east, and to the north. There have been no complaints related to the existing activity and there is no reason to consider that the proposal will introduce activities that will lead to harm to residential amenity, especially in view of the separation distances to the nearest residential properties.

Nevertheless, in the interests of amenity, it is considered prudent to add a condition to require details of any extraction equipment should it be necessary in the future.

Recommendation

Approve

Subject to conditions:-

1. Approved Plan
2. Standard 3 year time limit
3. Car parking
4. Travel Plan
5. No extraction or other air handling plant or externally-sited machinery shall be installed until details of the plant and machinery (including details of mounting and noise attenuation measures) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and they shall only be installed in accordance with the approved details. The acoustic attenuation measures shall be completed prior to use and thereafter retained permanently and maintained in good working order.