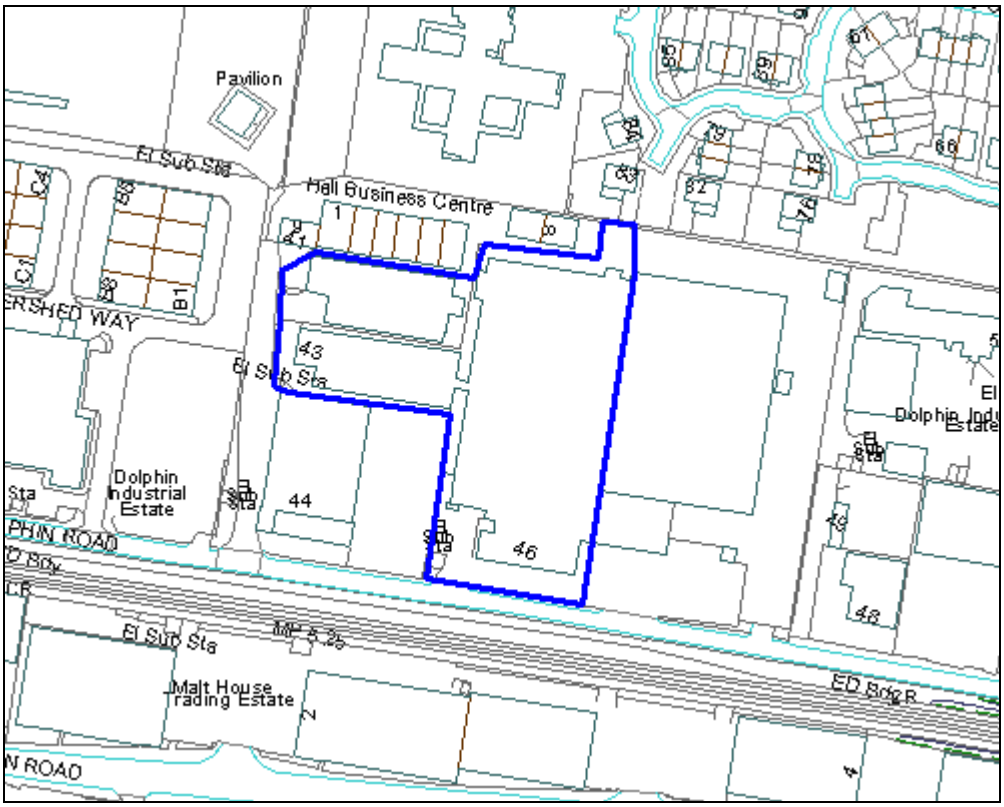
Application Number: **Recommendation – Approve**
AWDM/0585/12

Site: **46 Dolphin Road, Shoreham-by-Sea, BN43 6PB**

Proposal: **Change of use from B2 (Industrial) to B8 (warehouse and distribution) together with part demolition of front ancillary office building to provide new servicing area including alterations to existing access and provision of new vehicular exit, and 2.4m high perimeter fence and gates**



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Proposal, Site and Surroundings

The application relates to 42, 43 and 46 Dolphin Road, three large buildings which are currently occupied by BOC Edwards, within an established industrial estate. The units provide a total of 6,968 square metres of industrial floorspace within use Class B2 (general industrial).

The main building (46) is accessed directly from Dolphin Road, with the others (42 and 43) accessed via a road which runs along the west side of 44 Dolphin Road. The application is seeking a change of use of all three buildings to B8 (storage and distribution) to be used as a warehouse for Infinity Foods. The company, which currently operates from smaller premises in Portslade and has a

shop and café in Brighton, is a wholesaler of organic, fair-trade and natural products. It currently employs 50 people at their warehouse.

The proposal involves a change of use but also includes the demolition of the front, two storey, flat-roofed part of the main building (No.46) which was formerly in use as ancillary offices. The removal of this area will enable more space to be provided for a new service delivery area, including two new loading bays, a lorry turning area and alterations to form a new vehicular exit. A 2.4 metre high weld mesh security fence is also proposed around the perimeter of the site.

There is an existing warehouse building immediately to the east, also previously used by Edwards, which is newer and has a large canopy over the loading area. This building does not form part of the application.

Consultations

West Sussex County Council: An objection has been raised from a transport/highways aspect. In accordance with the WSCC Safety Audit Policy, a Road Safety Audit: Stage 1 is required for any major application that includes the formation of a new access. This should be accompanied with a 'Designer Response' and/or 'Exception Report' to address the problems raised within the audit.

Insufficient information has been submitted to review the proposed access arrangements. An access drawing detailing dimensions and the maximum achievable visibility splay from a set back of 2.4m should be submitted in support of the application.

It would appear that the electronic sliding gates are positioned such that any large vehicles entering the site would be required to stand in the Highway while the gates open to allow access, which could lead to rear shunt accidents, the need for overtaking manoeuvres where forward visibility is restricted by an articulated vehicle or obstruction of the carriageway. The Highway Authority has recommended that the gates are set back a sufficient distance from the edge carriageway to enable to largest vehicle to enter the site to stand clear of the Highway whilst waiting for access.

Adur District Council: The Environmental Health Officer has recommended that a full contaminated land condition is imposed on any planning permission.

UK Power Networks: No objection

Representations

None received

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adur District Local Plan (saved policies): AG1, AE2, AE4
The National Planning Policy Framework

Planning Assessment

Principle

The site lies within an area identified for industrial use in the Adur District Local Plan. Saved policy AE4 supports the development of sites within this area for mixed development within Use Classes B1, B2 and B8, subject to there being acceptable impacts on the highway and local environment.

The change of use of these premises for B8 warehouse use is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle. The demolition of the ancillary offices (862sqm) will result in the loss of a large amount of floorspace, but it is not considered to adversely affect the viability of the industrial area. It will result in improved circulation space for larger vehicles and will enhance the use of the building for warehouse and distribution purposes.

The number of staff to be employed is stated as being 50, which is the same as at the existing Infinity Foods warehouse in Portslade. While this is a relatively small number for the amount of floorspace involved, it is also the same total as previously employed at BOC Edwards. The applicants have also stated that this total is expected to rise to 100 employees over five years.

Visual amenity

The main change is to the front of the site where the existing flat-roofed two storey office building is to be demolished, exposing the triple-bay warehouse building behind. It is not considered that the demolition will adversely affect the visual amenities of the locality, being sited within an established industrial estate.

The site currently has a low wall with planting behind and is open in character. The proposed fence will be a new form of enclosure across the front of the site, including sliding gates across both accesses. However, the site to the west has similar fencing to that proposed and there is chain-link fencing opposite adjacent to the railway line. It is not considered therefore that the proposed fence will be unduly out of character.

Residential amenity

While there are residential properties to the north, it is not considered that the proposed change of use will adversely affect their amenity. The change from B2 to B8 is likely to result in less noise or smell, with loading/unloading limited to the south (front) of the building, furthest from residential properties. The applicants are seeking consent for a 24 hour operation (with deliveries restricted to between 8.30am and 5pm) but the hours of use of the premises have not previously been restricted and there is no reason to consider that the proposed use will result in harm.

Accessibility and parking

The proposal involves the formation of a second access to facilitate a separate entrance and exit, enabling vehicles to enter and leave in forward gear. 21 parking spaces are to be provided (9 at the front and 12 in front of the units accessed to the west, plus 2 lorry parking/loading spaces at the front. An existing cycle store for 8 bicycles is to be retained, with a new store for 12 bicycles also proposed.

Sliding gates are proposed at each access and an objection has been raised by WSCC on highway safety grounds, due to the possibility of lorries waiting in the road while the gates open and obstructing the highway. The applicants have responded by stating that they intend leaving the gates open during the day (8.30am -5pm) when deliveries take place to avoid the need for lorries waiting on the highway. This can be secured by condition.

A plan showing detailed visibility at the accesses and a safety audit are expected to be submitted and WSCC will be re-consulted. Their comments will be reported at the meeting.

Recommendation

Subject to the receipt of comments from WSCC approving the access arrangements, **APPROVE** for the reason:-

The proposed development is within the built-up area and would help meet the need for additional employment provision and economic and environmental regeneration without detracting from the local environment. It can take place without resulting in unacceptable detriment to the amenities of neighbouring properties and without detraction from highway safety. It would consequently not conflict with the relevant policies of the Adur District Local Plan (AG1, AE2, AE4).

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Standard time limit
2. Parking and access to be provided
3. Secure cycle parking to be provided prior to occupation
4. Sliding gates at both accesses to be kept open during the hours of 8.30am and 5pm with no deliveries permitted outside of those hours
5. Contaminated land
6. Approved Plans received 11 May 2012

and such other conditions as may be considered necessary following receipt of final comments from WSCC.