PLANNING APPLICATION REF NO: CR/2015/0399/FUL

LOCATION: UNIT H3, SUSSEX MANOR BUSINESS PARK, GATWICK ROAD, NORTHGATE, CRAWLEY

PROPOSAL: CHANGE OF USE OF PART GROUND FLOOR OFFICES TO WAREHOUSE, INSTALLATION OF NEW SECTIONAL SHUTTERS/DOORS AND ACCESS RAMP (WEST ELEVATION), FORMATION OF NEW OPENING AND INSTALLATION OF SECTIONAL OVERHEAD DOOR (EAST ELEVATION), CAR PARKING RECONFIGURATION AND NEW ACCESS GATES BETWEEN H3 AND ADJOINING TRIANGULAR SITE

APPLICANTS NAME: Phoenix Life Limited

AGENTS NAME: tmd Building Consultancy Ltd

CASE OFFICER: Ms. V. Houldsworth EXPIRY DATE: 14 August 2015

PLANS & DRAWINGS CONSIDERED:

P15-7482 Site Location Plan, EX-01 Rev A Existing Ground Floor Plan, EX-02 Rev A Existing First Floor Plan, EX-03 Rev A Existing Elevations & Sections, TP-01 Rev C Proposed Ground Floor Plan, TP-02 Rev B Proposed First Floor Plan, TP-03 Rev B Proposed Elevations & Sections

CONSULTEE(S) NOTIFICATIONS & RESPONSES:-

1. WSCC – Highways: No Objection;
2. CBC - Planning Arboricultural Officer: No Objection;
3. BOC Limited: No comments received
4. CBC - Environmental Health: No Objection.

NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATIONS:-

EURO SELF DRIVE LTD
TATES PETROL STATION AND SPAR SHOP
CAR PARK
TLC ELECTRICAL WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTORS
MONIER TECHNICAL CENTRE LTD
UNIT 3
SURREY WHOLESALE
UNIT 2
UNIT 1
FISHER CLINICAL SERVICES UK LTD
UNIT XA1
NYETIMBER VINEYARD LTD
COVA SECURITY GATES LTD
UNIT E2

RESPONSES RECEIVED:-

None received.
THE APPLICATION SITE:-

The application site is located within Manor Royal and comprises a single-storey warehouse style building with an ancillary two-storey office building located along the southern (front) elevation of the building. The application site is located on the northern side of Sussex Manor Business Park with units C1 and D2 located to the west and east respectively. To the north of the site are more industrial units and the southern (front) boundary of the site is bounded by the main thoroughfare through the Business Park. On the opposite side of the road there are more industrial units. The existing warehouse is served by 3no. folding roller shutter entrances; two along the southern (front) elevation and one along the west (side) elevation of the building.

The existing parking layout comprises of car parking on both sides of the building (east and west) and along the front of the building (southern side). To the west of the warehouse building there is also a triangular plot of land that was previously occupied by Euro Self Drive Ltd but is owned by the applicant and forms part of the application site. Along the front boundary of the site there are a number of young trees. No identified site constraints.

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:-

Planning permission is sought for the following proposed works:

- Change of use of part ground floor offices to warehouse. The previous approval on the site (ref: CR/2014/0877/FUL) incorporated the removal of part of the office footprint to be used for warehouse use. The current proposal would now incorporate further loss of office space (approximately 315sqm), omitting the ground floor office areas to the right of the existing entrance hall to create additional warehouse space);
- Installation of new sectional shutters/doors and access ramp (west elevation);
- Formation of new opening and installation of sectional overhead door (east elevation);
- Car parking reconfiguration including the provision of additional parking within the triangular plot of land to the west;
- New access gates between Unit H3 and adjoining triangular site. The gates would measure 2m in height and would be steel framed palisade gates to match the existing fencing;
- Removal and infill of existing windows along the northern elevation of the building.

Planning permission was recently granted for application ref: CR/2014/0877/FUL, which comprised of the development listed below. The previously approved development has already commenced on site and in some cases has been completed:

- The office entrance to the building would be refitted to provide improved DDA access along with 6no. DDA car parking spaces adjacent to the main building entrance;
- New entrance screen and access door to reception area;
- Refurbishment of toilets including new showers (one of which would be fully DDA compliant);
- New 8 person lift to replace existing to meet DDA standards;
- The reconfigured office space would be served by 2no. condenser units and the reception area by 1no. unit manufactured by Daikin. The condensers are to be contained within a new steel framed and wire mesh compound along the west side of the building;
- The existing high level perimeter cladding would be repaired and re-sprayed in a new colour (RAL 7012) or similar. The windows to the ground and first floors along the west (side) and south (front) elevations would also be re-sprayed in RAL 7012;
- New entrance screen and doors would be installed to replace the existing in colour RAL 7012, to match the re-sprayed office windows;
- 1no. loading bay along the west (side) elevation, which had been infilled by the previous tenant would be re-opened; the folding shutter door would be reinstated and the external metal gates installed all to match the adjacent loading bay;
- Removal of the existing trees to the south (front) side car park;
- Relaying tarmacadam and ‘white lining’ to all car park bays to the site;
• There is an existing enclosure located to the rear of the west side car park, which houses previous
tenant storage tanks. The tanks would be removed as part of the current works and this would
become both bin and cycle storage. The adjacent Electrical substation would remain.

PLANNING HISTORY:-

The most relevant planning history is as follows:

CR/2014/0877/FUL: Alterations including installation of compound on west side of building to house 3no.
ew air-conditioning condensers, change of colour of high level metal cladding and office windows to
ground and first floors on west and south elevations to RAL 7012 or similar, change of window/door
location from existing to new fire escape location with adjustment of sill line brickwork, replacement of
existing entrance screen and doors, steps, ramp and planter with new layout. Planning permission was
granted. The development is currently being implemented.


CR/046/90: First floor car parking, additional ground floor car parking and extended first floor offices.
Permit.

CR/621/88: Erection of an industrial and warehouse development (use classes B1 and B2) with ancillary
offices and associated servicing and car parking. Permit.

CR/150/83: Redevelopment of existing premises to warehouse and office purposes together with service
areas, landscaping, car parking and access thereto. Permit.

CR/380/82: Redevelopment of existing industrial site for industrial warehouse and office purposes together
with service areas, landscaping, car parking and access thereto. Permit.

CR/020/82: Redevelopment of existing industrial site including retention and refurbishment of buildings for
industrial, warehouse and office purposes. Permit.

PLANNING POLICY:-


The NPPF seeks to ensure a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF states that
there are three dimensions to sustainable development and the planning system performs an economic,
social and environmental role. These roles are mutually dependent. The Framework requires applications
to be determined in accordance with the development plan.

The most relevant sections are:

• Paragraph 14: Presumption in favour of sustainable development;
• Section 1: Building a strong, competitive economy;
• Section 7: Requiring good design


• Policy E2 states that new employment development or redevelopment and intensification of existing
employment sites should be in sustainable locations, which are accessible by public transport and
should be of a form and type which helps Crawley to fulfil its role as a strategic employment location
in the sub-region and helps the town diversify its economy;

• Policy EN5 requires all new development to be based on a thorough understanding of the context,
significance and distinctiveness of its site and surroundings and be of high quality in terms of its
urban landscape and architectural design and materials;
• Policy MC1 states that the Council will seek to ensure that proposals for the redevelopment and intensification of sites within Manor Royal and County Oak provide high quality accommodation aimed at attracting high quality, diverse and complementary employment, contribute to improving environmental quality, make the most of efficient use of land and incorporate high quality design and demonstrate appropriate methods of access;

• Policy T3 states that the Council will work with the County Council and other key stakeholders to develop a parking strategy for the town. This will include the level of provision to be made for new development which will normally take into account a) the Council’s agreed maximum parking standards; and b) the need to maximise the potential for public transport use.

Saved Crawley Borough Local Plan (2000):

• Policy GD1 seeks to ensure that the scale, height and form of the development is appropriate, and that the development does not cause unreasonable harm to the amenities and environment of its surroundings;

• Policy GD2 states that planning permission will not be granted for a development if it does not relate sympathetically to its surroundings;

• Policy GD3 requires all development to meet the requirements necessary for the safe and proper use of a site or building;

• Policies GD5 and GD6 require development to incorporate as part of its overall design and layout, appropriate landscaping.

• Policy GD10 states that in all development, the Borough Council will seek to secure it to be designed and laid out with the needs and limited abilities of people with disabilities in mind and to avoid creating hazards for them;

• Policy GD16 stipulates that the Borough Council will not permit proposals that lead to a significant increase in the level of pollution or hazards. Where necessary for the proper consideration of a proposal, the Council will require details of the environmental implications of a development. If a proposal will have a detrimental impact upon pollution levels and hazards which cannot be controlled or eliminated by other means, it will not be permitted;

The Council’s Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations and S106 Agreements (2008) would also be relevant, as would the Manor Royal Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document and the Manor Royal Public Realm Strategy, both of which were adopted in 2013.

The Crawley Borough Local Plan (2015-2030): Modifications Consultation Draft:

The plan has now been subject of an Examination in Public and a further consultation on modifications took place between 1st July – 12th August 2015 with changes proposed to a limited number of policies. It is considered that the document now has substantial weight as it moves towards adoption (expected around December 2015).

Relevant policies include:-
Policy SD1 : Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
Policy CH2: Principles of Good Urban Design;
Policy CH3: Normal Requirements of all New Development;
Policy EC2: Economic Growth in Main Employment Areas;
Policy EC3: Manor Royal;
IN4: Car and Cycle Parking Standards.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:-

The main considerations to be assessed as part of this application are:
The principle of the use:
The proposal seeks to reconfigure existing floorspace and obtain a part change of use from B1a (office) to B1c (light industrial). The previous approval on the site (ref: CR/2014/0877/FUL) resulted in the loss of some office floorspace, and this proposal would result in the loss of further office space at ground floor level to create additional warehouse space.

The application site is situated within the Manor Royal Main Employment Area, and Submission Local Plan (Modifications Draft) Policies EC2 and EC3 are therefore relevant.

Policy EC2 seeks to protect the economic function of the Main Employment Areas, and requires proposals that would involve a net loss of employment floorspace to demonstrate that each of the policy criteria are met. These are:

i) The site is no longer suitable, viable or appropriate for employment purposes; and
ii) The loss of any floorspace will result in wider social, environmental or economic benefits to the town; and
iii) There is no adverse impact on the economic role or function of the Main Employment Area and wider economic function of Crawley.

The supporting Design & Access Statement outlines that the proposed works are based on enquiries made to the letting agent from perspective tenants and their current requirements. In this regard it is evident that the relatively minor proportion of B1a (office) floorspace to be lost would facilitate the improvement of the overall unit, helping to improve its marketability as a business location. In this regard, the Policy EC2 criteria are met.

In promoting business-led economic growth at Manor Royal, the proposal is consistent with the approach of Policy EC3, and reflects the wider economic objectives of the NPPF.

Having regard to the above, the proposal is positive in promoting sustainable economic growth at Manor Royal.

Design:
The proposed external alterations listed under the heading titled ‘Proposed Development’ are considered to be minor in nature, particularly when viewed in conjunction with the alterations already approved under approved application ref: CR/2014/0877/FUL.

Overall, given the site context, the site being located within a Main Employment Area and the small-scale nature of the proposed alterations it is considered that the proposed development would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the application property, the streetscene and the surrounding area in general and would be designed to meet the needs and limited abilities of people with disabilities in accordance with policy EN5 of the Core Strategy (2008) and saved policies GD1, GD2 and GD10 of the Local Plan (2000).

Residential amenity:
There are no residential properties located within the immediate vicinity and therefore no residential amenity impacts would result.

Highways and parking:
The application site currently has 118 existing off-street car parking spaces, 111 of which are usable spaces. Changes to the existing car parking layout would result in the provision of approximately 105
usable parking spaces, 6 of which are DDA compliant and an additional 45 parking spaces on the adjoining site. As such, there would be a total of approximately 150 usable car parking spaces. Cycle parking is also included.

No new floor area would be created as part of the proposed development. However, as part of the proposal approximately 315sqm of office floorspace would be lost to be used as warehouse use. Based on the adopted SPD on ‘Planning Obligations and S106 Agreements’ the maximum parking standard for this use is 1 space per 31sqm. As such, the maximum number of parking spaces required would be 128 and the number of spaces provided would exceed this in accordance with the SPD. It is considered that the proposed development would not result in an unacceptable increase in vehicle movements within this Main Employment Area and WSCC have raised no objection from a Highways perspective.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the vehicular access points from the Business Park into the existing car park areas would not be altered.

Overall, it is considered that the site can meet its operational requirements in terms of car parking and cycle provision and accords with saved Local Plan policies GD1 and GD3 and the Supplementary Planning Document on ‘Planning Obligations and S106 Agreements’.

Trees:
As per the previous approval (ref: CR/2014/0877/FUL) the plans show that a number of trees to the front of the site would be removed as part of the refurbishment works. The agent has confirmed that this work has already been undertaken. Although their loss is regrettable the trees were not mature specimens and did not offer a great deal of amenity value.

S106 Contributions:
No additional floorspace would be created by the proposed development and therefore, contributions towards the improvement of Manor Royal Infrastructure would not be applicable.

CONCLUSIONS:-

For the reasons outlined in the report the proposed development would accord with the relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework, the Local Development Framework (LDF): Core Strategy (2008) and the Saved Local Plan (2000). The proposed development is therefore considered acceptable subject to the attachment of relevant conditions.

RECOMMENDATION RE: CR/2015/0399/FUL

Permit subject to conditions.