

28 SEPTEMBER 2021 PLANNING COMMITTEE

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PLAN/2021/0927

WARD: Canalside

LOCATION: 15A Monument Way East, Woking

PROPOSAL: Change of use of part of building from Class E (formerly Class B1 light industrial/offices) to Class B2 (industrial) for the proposed refurbishment of existing vacant offices and redundant joinery shop for conversion to a "Meals on Wheels" kitchen with ancillary offices with associated external alterations, including external flue and provision of 2no. condensing units.

APPLICANT: Woking Borough Council

OFFICER: Joanne Hollingdale

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:

The application has been submitted by Woking Borough Council and therefore falls outside the Scheme of Delegation.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application seeks planning permission for a change of use of part of the building from Class E (formerly Class B1 light industrial/offices) to Class B2 (industrial) for the proposed refurbishment of existing vacant offices and redundant joinery shop for conversion to a "Meals on Wheels" kitchen with ancillary offices with associated external alterations, including external flue and provision of 2no. condensing units.

PLANNING STATUS

- Urban Area
- Employment Area
- Surface Water flood risk areas (parts of car park only)
- Priority Places

RECOMMENDATION

Permit subject to conditions.

SITE DESCRIPTION

This application relates to the Council Depot. The building itself is two storey and consists of two parts connected via a glazed walkway at high level. The smaller building operates as a DIY decorating store (Brewers) and the larger building houses the Council's refuse and landscaping operations through its contractors. The site is also occupied by a number of charities who occupy the office spaces above the industrial units below. Access into the site/car park is off Monument Way East.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

The most relevant planning history is:

PLAN/1992/0602 – Change of use of part of first floor of main depot building to B1 office use. Permitted 04.11.92

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PLAN/1990/0040 – Change of use of ground floor to B8 storage use and use of first floor for B1 business use. Permitted 16.03.90

PLAN/1989/1260 - Change of use from ancillary offices to business use. Permitted 22.01.90

PLAN/1987/1187 – Details pursuant to Planning Consent 87/951 (landscaping and material samples) Permitted 20.01.88

PLAN/1987/0951 - Change of use of part of Council Depot to builders yard including extension to existing building by 304sq.ft. together with refurbishment of existing building (revised scheme). Permitted 18.09.87

PLAN/1987/0356 – Redevelopment of the site to provide new two storey building for central stores, workshops, welfare facilities and administration offices together with new Council vehicle parking arrangements and car park. Permitted 07.07.87

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application seeks planning permission for a change of use of part of the building from Class E (formerly Class B1 light industrial/offices) to Class B2 (industrial) for the proposed refurbishment of existing vacant offices and redundant joinery shop for conversion to a "Meals on Wheels" kitchen with ancillary offices with associated external alterations, including external flue and provision of 2no. condensing units.

The application seeks permission for the use of part of the building as a permanent home for the "Meals on Wheels" operation with capacity for future expansion required to serve the community including a commercial kitchen area with nine ovens and a large walk-in freezer and ancillary offices for both office based staff and delivery drivers. There would be no increase in floorspace for the building.

The proposed number of staff on site will be 15. The application details also show that the existing bin store in the car park would be extended and 9no. electric vehicle charging points would be provided.

The only external alterations to the building would be as follows:

- A louvre/vent, an external steel flue (for extraction) and 2no. condensing units on the southern elevation;
- 2no. vents to the western elevation; and
- 2no. vents to the northern elevation between the ground and first floor.

CONSULTATIONS

SCC County Highway Authority: Has undertaken an assessment in terms of the likely net additional traffic generation, access arrangements and parking provision and are satisfied that the application would not have a material impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway. There are no highway requirements.

WBC Environmental Health Officer: No objection subject to conditions relating to fume extraction and plant/equipment details.

REPRESENTATIONS

None received.

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RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

Woking Core Strategy (2012):

- CS5 – Priority Places
- CS15 – Sustainable economic development
- CS19 – Social and community infrastructure
- CS21- Design
- CS25 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Development Management Policies DPD (2016):

- DM5 – Environmental Pollution
- DM7 – Noise and light pollution

Supplementary Planning Documents:

- Parking Standards SPD 2018

PLANNING ISSUES

1. The main planning issues to consider in the determination of this application is whether the proposal is acceptable in principle, the impact on visual amenity, neighbour impact and highway and parking matters.

Principle of the proposed development

2. The wider site is the Council's Monument Way East depot and houses a number of functions including, the Council's refuse and landscaping operations through its contractors. A number of charities occupy the office spaces above the ground floor industrial units. The site is designated as an employment site and also falls within the Priority Place designation.
3. Policy CS15 seeks to safeguard land within the employment areas for Class B uses (although some Class B uses now fall within Class E). Policy CS5 also seeks to safeguard land within Maybury and Sheerwater for Class B uses and seeks to encourage proposals that create new opportunities for local employment within them. The information submitted with the application states that this part of the building has been vacant for several years.
4. Food preparation squarely falls within a Class B2 (industrial use) and therefore the proposed change of use of part of the existing building would comply with Policies CS15 and CS5 of the Core Strategy 2012. In addition, the proposal is to create a permanent home for the Council's Meals on Wheels operation, which currently operates out of the Vyne Community Centre and it is stated that this new location will have capacity for future expansion as required. On this basis the proposal would therefore also comply with Policy CS19 which seeks to support the provision of social and community infrastructure.
5. In principle the proposed change of use is therefore considered acceptable and would comply with local planning policies. Moreover the proposed operation is considered to be consistent with uses which would operate out of a Council Depot building/site. However given the wide ranging nature of Class B2 (industrial use), which includes all other industrial uses which do not fall within Class E (previously Class B1 – which are uses capable of operating in a residential area without harm) it is considered reasonable and necessary to restrict the use of this part of the building to food preparation for the purpose

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of the Council's "Meals on Wheels" operation and for no other use within Class B2 (industrial).

Impact on visual amenity

6. The only external alterations to the building are the provision of vents/louvres, the provision of a steel flue (for kitchen extraction) and the provision of 2no. condensing units. Given the positioning of the vents/louvres and the 2no. condensing units these are considered to be suitably located on the building, reflecting similar existing features and these would not be viewed from outside the site. The steel flue would be located on the southern elevation and given its height would be viewed from outside the site and along Albert Drive and the neighbouring dwellings further to the south of Albert Drive (fronting Eve Road). However the flue would be viewed in context of the existing large building which is faced with textured steel coloured panels and the wider character of the area as an employment area. The proposed flue is not therefore considered to adversely affect the character and appearance of the street scene. The proposed development is therefore considered to comply with Policy CS21 of the Core Strategy and the NPPF.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

7. The closest residential units to the application building are those located to the south of Albert Drive, fronting Eve Road. These dwellings mostly have their garages and rear garden boundaries fronting Albert Drive directly across from the depot building. The proposed use would utilise the existing car park to the depot site which is located to the north of the buildings. The proposed hours of use are stated on the application form as 9am-5pm, 7 days a week but given the position of the site is it not considered that any harm would result to nearby neighbouring occupiers if the hours of use were 8am-6pm 7 days per week which would provide additional flexibility. Given the proposed restriction on the use i.e. for the Council's Meals on Wheels service it is not considered that the activity associated with the proposed use, given the use of the depot site as a whole would be detrimental to the amenities of these nearby neighbouring occupiers.
8. With regard to the proposed extract flue and the 2no. condensing units, the Council's Environmental Health Officer has raised no objection subject to conditions requiring further details of these installations to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority to ensure no adverse impact in terms of noise and odour to nearby residential occupiers. Subject to these conditions the proposal is considered to comply with Policy CS21 of the Core Strategy, Policies DM5 and DM7 of the DM Policies DPD and the NPPF.

Highways and parking

9. As there is no increase in floorspace of the building, there is no requirement for any additional parking associated with the proposed change of use. The existing car parking area would be available for the occupiers of the Meals on Wheels operation. The Parking Standards for Class B1 (now Class E) and Class B2 uses are the same in this location. Furthermore the County Highway Authority has not raised any issues with regard to highways or parking matters.
10. The applicant has advised that it is proposed to install 9no. electric vehicle charging points for electric vehicles delivering meals into to the community, but as the spaces are existing it is not necessary to condition that these are provided prior to the first use of the operation. They shall only be conditioned to ensure that the installations are in accordance with the overall technical requirements. An additional bin store area is shown in the car park

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adjacent to an existing bin store area and it would not result in the loss of any parking spaces.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

11. As there is no increase in floorspace and the development relates to a non-residential and non-retail use the CIL rate is £0

CONCLUSION

12. Subject to the conditions set out it is considered that the proposed development would be acceptable in principle and would not result in any harm to visual amenity, neighbouring amenity and highways and parking matters. The proposal therefore accords with Policies CS5, CS15, CS21 and CS25 of the Woking Core Strategy 2012, Policies DM5 and DM7 of the DM Policies DPD 2016, SPD Parking Standards 2018 and the NPPF and is recommended for approval. In considering this application the Council has given regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Planning file – PLAN/2021/0927

RECOMMENDATION

PERMIT subject to the following conditions:

1. The development for which permission is hereby granted must be commenced not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: To accord with the provisions of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed below:

Site Location Plan received on 13.08.21;
Site Layout with proposed parking and bin storage layout (drawing no. 20269-235P-002 rec A) received on 02.09.21;
Parking and bin storage (drawing no. 20269-235P-0012 rev A) received on 02.09.21;
Proposed layout (floor plan) (drawing no. 20269-235P-004) received on 13.08.21;
Proposed north elevation (drawing no. 20269-235P-008) received on 13.08.21;
Proposed south elevation (drawing no. 20269-235P-006) received on 13.08.21; and
Proposed west elevation (drawing no. 20269-235P-0010) received on 13.08.21.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is completed in accordance with the approved plans.

3. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) and the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) the premises (the part of the

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building the subject of the change of use as shown on the proposed layout plan (floor plan) – approved drawing no. 20269-235P-004) shall only be used for food preparation for the Council's Meals on Wheels operation and for no other Class B2 (industrial) use whatsoever unless the prior written permission for that use is first given by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Given the location of the site within the employment area and Priority Place designations and in order to protect the residential amenities of the neighbouring properties and to comply with Policies CS5, CS15 and CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy and the NPPF.

4. Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted equipment to control the emission of fumes and smell from the premises shall have been installed in accordance with a scheme/details which shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme/details shall be fully implemented. All equipment shall thereafter be operated and maintained in accordance with the approved scheme/details and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To protect the environment and amenities of the occupants of neighbouring properties and prevent nuisance arising from fumes and smell.

5. No fixed plant and equipment associated with air moving equipment, compressors, generators or plant or similar equipment shall be installed until details, including acoustic specifications have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such plant and equipment shall not be installed otherwise than in strict accordance with the approved specifications.

Reason: To protect the environment and amenities of the occupants of neighbouring properties.

6. The premises hereby approved shall not be used and no deliveries shall be taken into or dispatched from the site outside the hours of 08:00 to 18:00, 7 days a week.

Reason: In order to protect the residential amenities of the neighbouring properties and to comply with Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy and the NPPF.

7. The 9no. electric vehicle charging points hereby permitted shall be provided to the specification of 7 kw Mode 3 with Type 2 connector - 230v AC 32 Amp single phase dedicated supply. Once installed shall be retained in accordance with the requirements of this condition unless the Local Planning Authority subsequently agrees in writing to their replacement with more advanced technology serving the same objective.

Reason: In the interests of achieving a high standard of sustainability with regards to electric vehicle charging infrastructure requirements.

8. Prior to the first use of the development hereby approved, the existing bin store within the car park shall be extended in accordance with the details shown on the approved Parking and bin storage plan drawing no. 20269-235P-0012 rev A as received on 02.09.2021, unless otherwise first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure sufficient bin storage to serve the proposed development in the interest of visual and neighbouring amenities and to comply with Policy CS21 of the Woking Core Strategy and the NPPF.

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9. This permission shall relate to the part of the building as shown on the proposed layout plan (floor plan) – approved drawing no. 20269-235P-004 as submitted with the application only.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to what is approved.

Informatives

1. The Council confirms that in assessing this planning application it has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. All new food premises are required by the Food Safety Act 1990 to register with the Local Authority at least 28 days before the food business opens. Please contact the Environmental Health Department on Woking (01483 755855) for the appropriate registration form.
3. The premises will be required to comply with the Food Safety Act 1990 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. In this context details of the kitchen/food preparation areas including the number and position of sinks, wash hand basins and other fittings, water closet and urinal accommodation for staff and public, including facilities for disabled persons, should be submitted to the Chief Environmental Health Officer prior to the commencement of any work.