



Delegated Report

Full Planning Application

Planning Application No:	20221142
Location:	WER Packing Supplies Unit J1 Lower Road Northfleet
Description:	Erection of two storey side extension to existing factory/warehouse unit with mezzanine.
Applicant:	W E Roberts Pension Fund
Site Visit Date:	2 November 2022

Submitted Documents/Plans

Application Plan
Design and Access Statement
Flood Map for Planning
Northfleet Industrial Estate: Land Quality Desk Study (ref. P22526_R1)
Drawing no. 1079A/01 (Site Location Plan)
Drawing no. 1079A/02 Rev. A (Block Plan)
Drawing no. 1079A/03 Rev. A (Existing Ground Floor Plan)
Drawing no. 1079A/04 Rev. A (Existing First Floor and Roof Plans)
Drawing no. 1079A/05 Rev. A (Existing Elevations and Section)
Drawing no. 1079A/20 Rev. C (Proposed Ground Floor Plan and Site Plan)
Drawing no. 1079A/21 Rev. B (Proposed First Floor and Roof Plans)
Drawing no. 1079A/22 Rev. A (Proposed Elevations and Section)

Following concerns from the GBC Highways Officer the proposed parking layout and arrangements were revised and the following plan was superseded:

~~Drawing no. 1079A/20 Rev. A (Proposed Ground Floor Plan)~~

Further changes were also made following concerns about the number of windows on the side elevation and the following plans were superseded:

~~Drawing no. 1079A/21 Rev. A (Proposed First Floor and Roof Plans)~~
~~Drawing no. 1079A/22 (Proposed Elevations and Section)~~

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
19770097	Erection of a lean-to extension to maintenance workshop	Permitted	13.04.1977

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale and Distribution of Development
- CS03 – Northfleet Embankment and Swanscombe Peninsula East Opportunity Area
- CS07 – Economy, Employment and Skills
- CS11 – Transport
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development and Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- T1 – Impact of Development on Highway Network
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2021) sets out that policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should then be updated as necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2021), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy
- 9 – Promoting sustainable transport
- 11 – Making effective use of land
- 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- SPG4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

External Consultees

Environment Agency

We object to this proposal, as it does not demonstrate that the risks of pollution to controlled waters are acceptable, or can be appropriately managed. We therefore recommend that planning permission is refused.

Reason(s)

The previous use of the development site as a commercial/industrial site presents a risk of contamination that could be mobilised during construction to pollute controlled waters. Controlled waters are particularly sensitive in this location because the site is located upon a principal aquifer/secondary aquifer.

As the planning application is not supported by an appropriate risk assessment, it does not meet the requirements set out in paragraphs 174 and 183 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Overcoming our objection

The applicant should submit a preliminary risk assessment which includes a desk study, conceptual model and initial risk assessment. This information must demonstrate to the local planning authority that the risk to

controlled waters has been fully understood and can be addressed through appropriate measures.

The initial appraisal should also detail how foundations and drainage can be managed to not involve any increased risks to the underlying strata.

Please note that the above comments only relate to Groundwater Protection. We have other comments to make in relation to issues within our remit, which will be provided once our above objection has been overcome.

If you are minded to grant permission contrary to our advice, it will be necessary to re-consult us to ensure that groundwater protection, flood risk and any other environmental issues are appropriately addressed by planning conditions.

Further comments

We do not have any objections subject to the following planning conditions and informative being applied to any planning permission granted.

Groundwater and Contaminated Land

Thank you for Land Quality Desk Study ref: P22526_RI dated Jan 2023. The Environment Agency agree with Section 4.2 Recommendations that a suitable site investigation be undertaken.

The previous use of the proposed development site for industrial use presents a medium risk of residual contamination that could be mobilised during construction to pollute controlled waters. Controlled waters are sensitive in this location because the proposed development site is located upon Principal aquifer overlain by a Secondary aquifer and within a Source Protection Zone 2.

The reports submitted in support of this planning application provides us with confidence that it will be possible to suitably manage the risk posed to controlled waters by this development. Further detailed information will however be required before built development is undertaken. It is our opinion that it would place an unreasonable burden on the developer to ask for more detailed information prior to the granting of planning permission but respect that this is a decision for the Local Planning Authority.

In light of the above, the proposed development will be acceptable if planning conditions are included (contamination, watching brief). Without these conditions we would object to the proposal in line with paragraph 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework because it cannot be guaranteed that the development will cause or be put at unacceptable risk from, or be adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution.

Flood Risk

We do not object to the proposal but would like to pass on the following information and recommendations.

Reason

The application site lies within Flood Zone 3 which is defined as having a 'high probability' of river and sea flooding by the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (Table 1: flood zones). The site is within an Area Benefitting from Defences (ABD) due to the presence of the Tidal Thames flood defences.

It is a requirement for such development to produce a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). Considering the residual nature of fluvial and tidal flood risk at this site, we are not objecting to the proposal.

Informative

We recommend that the occupants sign up to the Environment Agency's Floodline Service. This can be done by calling 0345 988 1188.

We recommend that the applicant incorporates flood resistant and resilience measures into the scheme.

Information on flood resilience can be found on the following link
http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/br/flood_performance.pdf.

KCC Heritage

The application site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential at a point where geologically the Ebbsfleet valley meets the broader Thames valley and where the underlying deposits are Holocene alluvium above chalk bedrock and Head deposits. This location would have been a potentially habitable location in early prehistory before and as rising sea levels led to the deposition of alluvial deposits (with palaeoenvironmental potential) above former land surfaces. To understand the geomorphology, archaeological potential and what impact the proposals would have (and which I assume will comprise piled foundations) I recommend that an archaeological field evaluation works condition be applied to any forthcoming consent.

If a geotechnical/ground investigation survey is to be undertaken by the applicant I recommend that this is subject to a geoarchaeological watching brief.

KCC Minerals and Waste

The County Council has no minerals or waste management capacity safeguarding objections or comments to make regarding this proposal.

Internal Consultees

GBC Highways

This proposal raises some questions that need to be resolved.

1. The proposed gates for the lorry parking and car parking conflict with the parking provision. It would be impossible to secure the lorry parking area whilst lorries are parked on site. The gates for the car parking area conflict with parking spaces 1, 4 and 17 and to a lesser extent 2, 5 and 16. This matter may be resolved by having gates that open through 180°, but it would mean the gates could not be closed during operational hours. Plus, in any event gates should be set back so vehicles do not obstruct the highway whilst they are opened or closed.
2. Parking spaces adjacent to enclosed boundaries such as a fence should be 2.7 metres wide to provide additional space to open the car doors that would normally be taken from an adjacent car parking space. In addition if gates are to open through 180°, they are liable to encroach on some or all of parking spaces 1, 4 and 17 so some adjustment would be required.
3. Both Kent County Council and Gravesham Borough Council have maximum vehicle parking standards, however it is now recognised that such an approach is inappropriate. Paragraph 108 of the National Planning Policy Framework states;

Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport (in accordance with chapter 11 of this Framework). In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

It is therefore for the applicant to demonstrate that adequate parking provision will be made, at its simplest this would mean doubling the parking spaces if the workforce is to double, although if it can be demonstrated that the new cycle parking will be used some reduction may be possible. However, it should be noted that at the time of the case office's visit there were at least 13 vehicles parked on site.

This is in direct conflict with the number of spaces stated in the application form, which states only 10 spaces are available.

A Google Satellite image, although not dated, suggests there is a higher parking demand.

To investigate this matter further a site survey was carried out at approximately 9:50am Thursday 3rd November 2022. This visit confirms the satellite image is a reasonable representation of the current situation.

Note the day was wet with localised flooding in places.

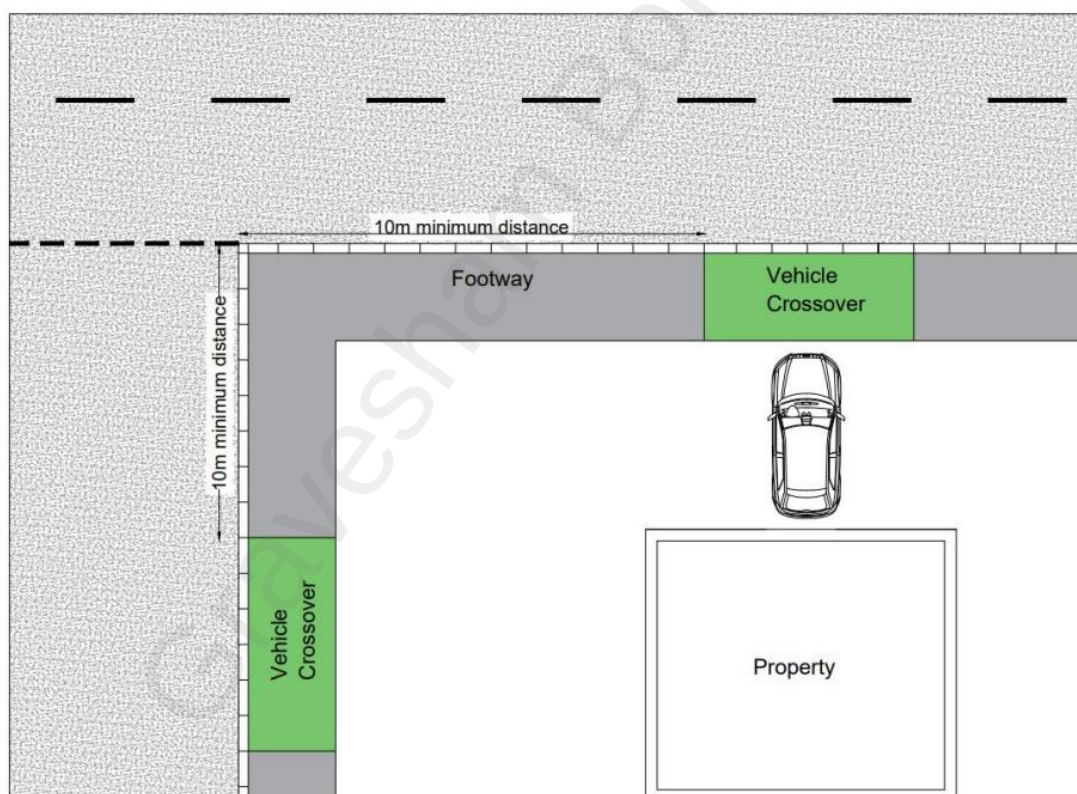
In the satellite image, there are some 28 road vehicles and a boat. The yellow VW beetle appears in both the satellite image and the images taken on the 3rd, which suggests the satellite image is relatively recent. On the 3rd not all vehicles were counted as the view from the highway was restricted by both vegetation and parked vehicles on the footway. There was however a minimum of 20 that could be easily counted and this excludes the vehicles in the corner near Lower Road junction.

1. Whilst the guidance is for domestic properties, there is no reason why it should not apply to commercial buildings. Kent County Council's Carriage crossover guidance states that no access should be within 10 metres of a junction as it can be a hazard to the traffic on the highway. (Public or Private)

KCC Dropped Kerb Application Guidance

If the location of the proposed crossing is closer than 10 metres to a road junction and creates a hazard, the application will be refused. This dimension may be increased to 15 metres on major roads or near busy junctions.

Diagram: Distance to Road Junction

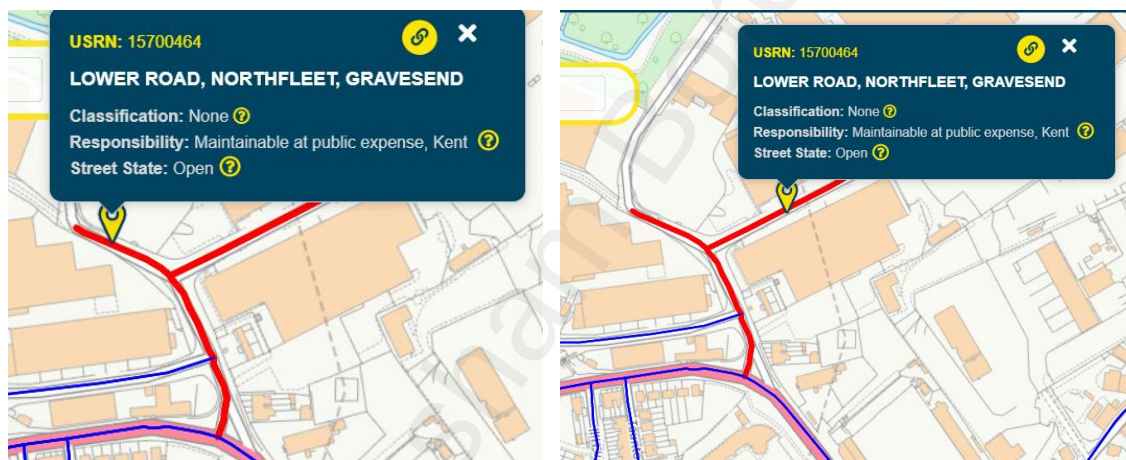


https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/139485/Dropped-Kerb-Application-Guidance.pdf

Here the access for the lorry parking will be considerably closer, compare the satellite image with the submitted drawing whilst taking note of the manhole position and lamp column



Note the online data base FindMyStreet identifies both arms of Lower Road to be adopted highway and so Kent County Council will have to agree to any carriage crossover construction.



<https://www.findmystreet.co.uk/map>

So, in conclusion the following matters need to be resolved:

- How much parking is required by the development and what will happen to any displaced parking. The figures presented in the application and visible on site do not agree and an explanation is required.
- The layout of the parking needs to be improved to ensure all spaces are readily accessible.
- The parking spaces should have the correct width, 2.7 metres adjacent to an enclosed boundary and 2.5 metres elsewhere to comply with the requirements of SPG4.
<https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/downloads/file/246/vehicle-parking-standards-july-2006-spg4>
- The lorry parking needs to be relocated or reconfigured to ensure there is no access within 10 metres of the Lower Road junction.
- It is noted that there are gates at the existing access and their retention is outside the scope of this application. However, the installation of new gates to serve a lorry parking area should be resisted, as they should be inset sufficient distance to ensure a lorry does not wait on street whilst the gates are

opened or closed, particularly when it may be close to a junction and there can be a high demand for on street parking.

Further comments:

I refer to the revised drawing 1079A/20 revision c which has resolved the issues previously raised. There are concerns about the practicality of parking spaces 16 and 17 given the gates, but this is an existing situation and so outside our control.

No objections.

GBC Environmental Protection

No objection to this application but would recommend a watching brief condition and code of practice on construction and demolition informative regarding potentially contaminated land due to the historic commercial/industrial use of this area.

Neighbouring properties

The application has been advertised by individual neighbour letters to 5 properties, and on site. The consultation periods expired on 16 and 25 November 2022 respectively.

No letters of representation have been received.

Local Ward Councillors were also consulted, and no responses were received.

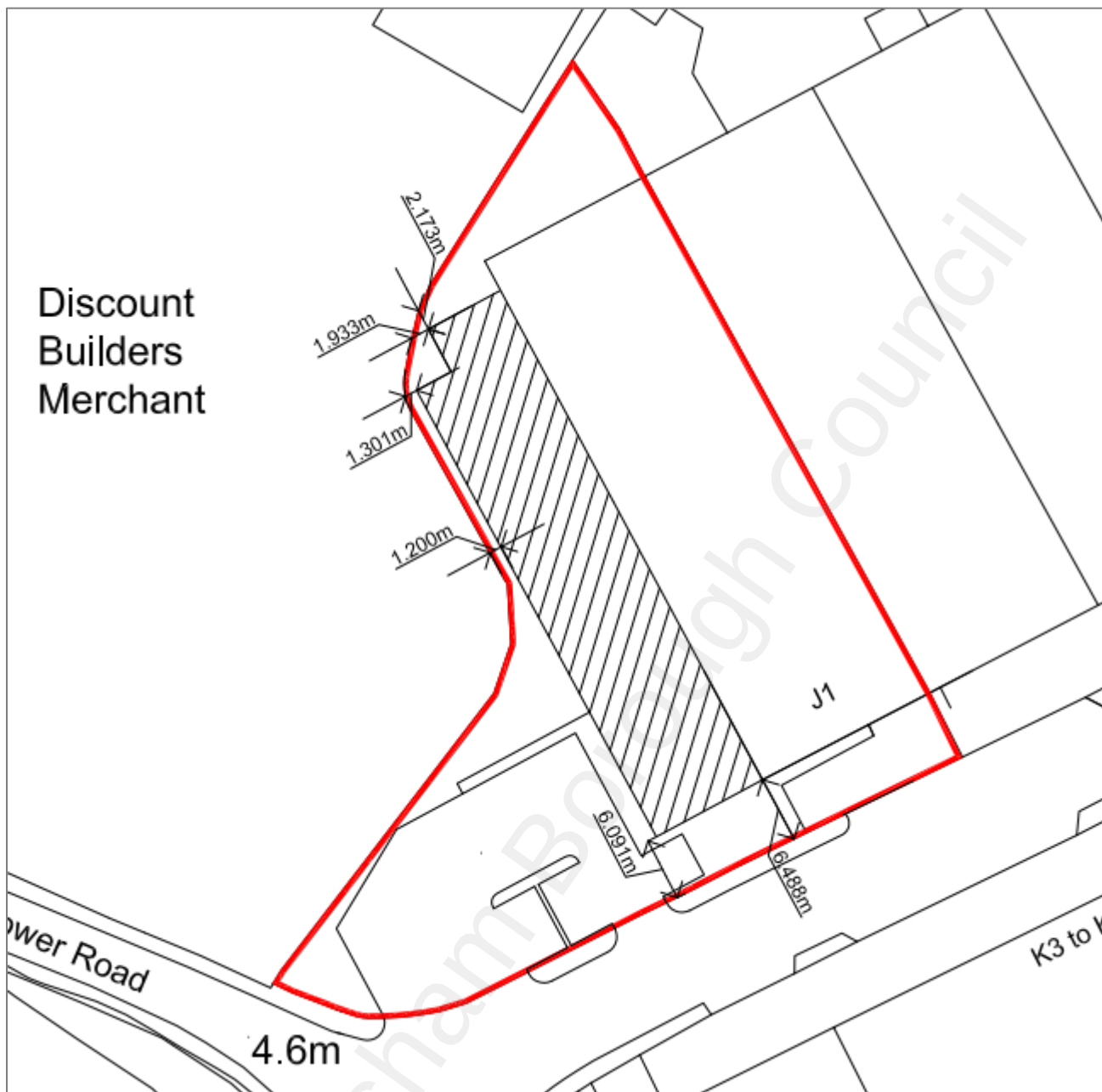
Officer's Analysis

Proposal

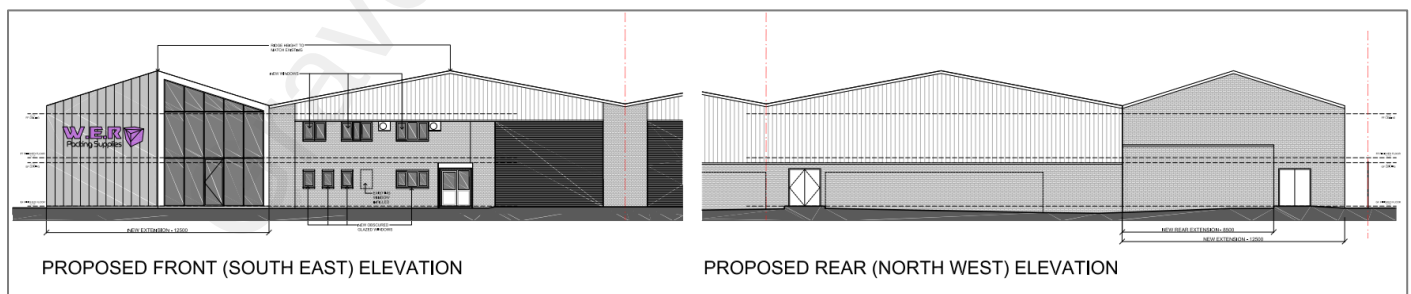
This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a two storey side extension to the existing factory/warehouse unit with mezzanine.

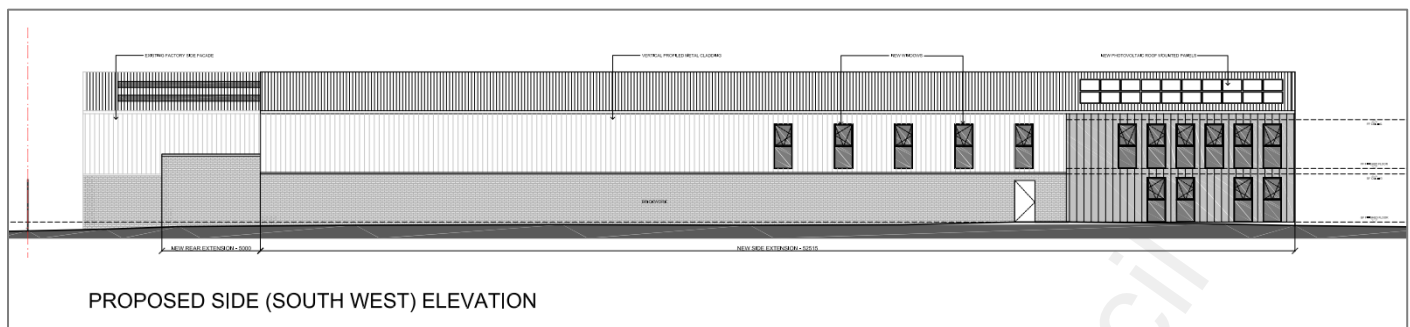
The extension will be located to the south-western side of the existing building and will be 12.5m wide and 52.5m long, with an 8.5 x 5m single storey rear extension on the north-western rear end of the new side extension.

Extract from Proposed Block Plan



Proposed Elevations





The eaves and ridge height over the extension will match that of the existing building. The single storey element will have a flat roof.

The extension will have a double height entrance/reception area and offices on the ground floor. The first floor mezzanine will have a staff space and dining facilities, a meeting room, a showroom for the company's products and further offices.

Half of the front elevation of the proposed extension will be fully glazed and will contain the public entrance. The other half will be clad with flat metal panels, which will continue around to the front section of the side elevation, with windows at ground and first floor level. The number of windows originally proposed on the side elevation have been reduced following a concern about the 'busyness' of this elevation and the upper wall has also been altered to vertical profiled metal cladding. The agent has confirmed that the applicant wishes to retain flexibility to the first floor office area, particularly as this area will contain the design office. The design office in the existing building is very dark with too few windows and the staff and management are keen that new office area does not suffer the same problems, as daylight is better for design work than artificial light.

The ground floor of the side elevation will be brick. The rear extension will also be in brickwork. Additional windows will also be added to the front elevation of the existing building. The roof will be clad with profiled metal panels.

Car parking spaces (17) will be located to the front and side of the proposed extension, including disabled provision, cycle spaces (10) and EV points.

The proposed extension is to increase the manufacturing capacity and capability at the unit.

Principle of Development

Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 2014 seeks to retain and improve suitable employment land and to make provisions for at least 186,490sqm gross employment floor space during the plan period. Such development will be distributed throughout the Borough within opportunity areas. Development is prioritised in these areas.

The application site is within the Swanscombe Peninsular East Riverside Industrial Area which is a subsection of the Northfleet Embankment and Swanscombe Peninsula East Opportunity Area and therefore Policy CS03 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy 2014 applies. The policy states that the area will be retained in employment use and the Council will support proposals which expand and support the operation.

Policy CS07 seeks to deliver new employment floor space on Key Sites as identified in Policy CS03 and supports schemes incorporating small and flexible industrial and/or office workspaces. Development related to employment within this area is therefore acceptable in principle subject to meeting all the other policy requirements in the Local Plan.

Design, Character and Appearance

The application site is located within the Northfleet Industrial Estate in the urban area of Northfleet and forms the end unit in a terrace of industrial units (Units J1-5). It has an industrial manufacturing and storage B2 use and is owned by W. E. Roberts Limited (WER), who design and manufacture cardboard packaging. Unit J1 takes the raw corrugated cardboard manufactured at WER's Thames Works site and produces bespoke presentation boxes and packaging.

The site lies on the northern side of Lower Road, at the entrance to the industrial estate. The south-western part of the site, which is the proposed location for the extension, is currently open used for car and trailer parking. The site is bounded to the north and west by Discount Builders Merchants.

Current Google Earth Image



Development Plan policy places considerable emphasis on the importance of achieving high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2021 seeks to ensure that development will add to the quality of an area, be visually attractive, and sympathetic to local character and history. Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 reflects these aims and requires that new development is well designed and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The proposed extension takes reference from the existing industrial terraced units adjoining and surrounding the site.



It will have a pitched roof with a matching eaves and ridge height to the adjoining building. The proposed materials (brick and metal cladding) will match with the existing. The reduction in the number of windows originally proposed on the side elevation and the change in materials to the upper wall to vertical profiled metal cladding improves the appearance of this façade.

Overall, the proportions and appearance of the proposed extension will complement the neighbouring units and will therefore be acceptable in terms of the impact on the street scene. The proposal would comply with the requirements of Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2021.

Residential Amenity

The NPPF 2021 states that planning decisions should aim to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future users (paragraph 130f). The impact on amenity is also considered with regard to the criteria within Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014, which states that new development should be located, designed and constructed to safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight and sunlight, of its occupants, and those of neighbouring properties and land, and avoid adverse environmental impacts from pollution, including noise, air and odour pollution.

Neighbouring Properties

Due to the industrial estate location and the lack of residential properties in close proximity to the site, the proposal would not be considered to cause any significant adverse impacts on neighbouring properties.

Overall, it is considered the proposal would have no impact on neighbouring properties in terms of outlook and privacy, and daylight and sunlight, and environmental impacts. As such, the proposal complies with Policy CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraphs 130 and 185 of the NPPF 2021.

Parking and Highways

The proposal includes formalising the area to the south-west of the site for parking, with 17 car parking spaces, including one disabled space and electric vehicle charging points, and 10 cycle spaces.

Initial highways queries were raised relating to the proposed parking layout and numbers, and access. There was also a concern about how many existing vehicles appeared to be on the site and that the proposed parking provision would not be sufficient, but this was confirmed to be the result of a temporary arrangement with adjoining businesses using the space available on the site. This arrangement would not continue were planning permission to be granted. The queries were fully addressed by revising the car

parking layout and removing lorry parking and additional new gates. There remains a query about the practicality of parking spaces 16 and 17 given the presence of the gates, but this is an existing situation and therefore not within the control of this application.

On the basis of the revised site plan, there would be no adverse impact on parking or highway safety from the proposals, nor conflict with the requirements of Saved Policies T1, T5 and P3 of the Local Plan 1994 and Policies CS11 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

Environmental Protection

The previous use of the development site as a commercial/industrial site presents a risk of contamination that could be mobilised during construction to pollute controlled waters. Controlled waters are particularly sensitive in this location because the site is located upon a principal aquifer/secondary aquifer.

The Environment Agency initially objected to the proposal as it did not demonstrate the risks of pollution to controlled waters are acceptable or can be appropriately managed. The applicant therefore submitted a Land Quality Desk Study. The Environment Agency agree with the recommendations in the report, and recommend that a condition be imposed requiring more detailed information about the contamination risks. A 'contamination not previously identified' condition should also be imposed.

The application site lies within Flood Zone 3, which is defined as having a 'high probability' of river and sea flooding by the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (Table 1: flood zones). The site is within an Area Benefitting from Defences (ABD) due to the presence of the Tidal Thames flood defences.

It is a requirement for such development to produce a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). Considering the residual nature of fluvial and tidal flood risk at this site, there is however no objection to the proposal from the Environment Agency, but an informative is recommended about flood resistant and resilience measures.

GBC's Environmental Protection Officer has also recommended an informative relating to the code of practice on construction and demolition.

On the basis of the above conditions/informatives, the proposal would therefore comply with Policy CS18 and CS19 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraphs 167 and 185 of the NPPF 2021.

Archaeology

The application site lies within an area of multi-period archaeological potential at a point where geologically the Ebbsfleet valley meets the broader Thames valley and where the underlying deposits are Holocene alluvium above chalk bedrock and Head deposits. This location would have been a potentially habitable location in early prehistory before and as rising sea levels led to the deposition of alluvial deposits (with palaeoenvironmental potential) above former land surfaces. To understand the geomorphology, archaeological potential and what impact the proposals would have, a condition requiring archaeological field evaluation works should be applied to any forthcoming consent. On this basis, the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014 and paragraph 197 of the NPPF 2021.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle and in terms of the design and impact on the application site and on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and with

regards to residential amenity, highway, environmental and archaeology matters. The proposal would therefore comply with the requirements of Policies CS02, CS03, CS07, CS11, CS19, CS19 and CS20 of the Core Strategy 2014, saved Policies T1, T5 and P3 of the Local Plan 1994, and paragraphs 109, 130, 167, 185 and 197 of the NPPF 2021. Accordingly, the application is recommended for permission subject to conditions.

(For detailed conditions and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Mrs Katherine Parkin	Team Leader:	Miss Faye Hobbs
Signed:	<i>K. Parkin</i>	Signed:	
Dated:	23 February 2023	Dated:	28 February 2023