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Planning Services
Swansea Council
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Ref: L0001.5145CA

Date: 20th Mat 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

PROPOSED ERECTION OF B1(c)/B2/B8 UNITS TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED PARKING, DRAINAGE AND LANDSCAPING PROVISION AT LAND ADJACENT TO SWANSEA ENTERPRISE PARK, MATRIX PARK, SA6 8RE.

We are instructed by Starburst UK Limited to submit a full planning application for the erection of Class B1(c)/B2/B8 units together with associated parking, drainage and landscape provision on land adjacent to Swansea Enterprise Park, Matrix Park, SA6 8RE.

The application comprises the following:

- Application forms duly completed and signed;
- Certificate A and Agricultural Holding Certificate duly completed and signed;
- Proposed Site Wide Plan (222190.1 Rev D)
- Proposed Site Plan- Unit A, B and C (Drawing No. 222190.10, 222190.11)
- Proposed Site Plan- Unit D (Drawing No.222190.11)
- Proposed Elevations, Layout and Roof Plan - Unit A (Drawing No.222190.5 Rev A)
- Proposed Elevations, Layout and Roof Plan - Unit B (Drawing No.222190.5 Rev 6,)
- Proposed Elevations, Layout and Roof Plan - Unit C (Drawing No.222190.7,)
- Proposed Elevations, Layout and Roof Plan - Unit D (Drawing No.222190.8)
- Site Location Plan (Drawing No. No.222190.3)
- Details of Cycle and Bin Stores (Drawing No. 222190.9)
- Preliminary Ecological Impact Appraisal (PEA Version 1 Dated 4th September 2023)
- Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme (Dated May 2024)
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment (ArbTS_1787.1)
- Transport Statement (23-00860)
- Drainage Statement (HYG1241 R 231127)
- Flood Consequences Assessment (HYG1241 R 230525)
- Ground Conditions Statement – (HYG1241 M 240520)

Please note that the requisite planning application fee of £46,460 is being submitted under separate cover.

Site Context

The application site, which totals approximately 3.03ha, is a vacant, brownfield parcel of land which was a former brickwork. The site is located adjacent to the Swansea Business Park, which is located approximately 2.6 miles north of the city centre. The site is surrounded by a mixture of commercial/industrial uses, including Matrix House and Matrix One, office buildings (Class B1) located to the south of the site. A mature tree line defines the northern, eastern and western boundaries of the site, screening it from neighbouring uses. Beyond this tree line, the River Tawe bounds the site to the west and north, with further commercial uses found beyond these immediate site boundaries.

In terms of vehicular access, the proposed Units will be accessed via a private internal estate road which will be taken directly off the existing site entrance off Siemens Way/ Nantong Way to the south. No alterations to the adopted highway are proposed. From here, there is good highways connectivity across Swansea, including to key highways routes such as the A4607 and A48.

On the basis of the mix and siting of existing commercial and industrial uses together with the screening afforded by trees bordering the subject site, the proposal is considered appropriate to, and compatible with, the surrounding uses within the industrial estate.

Planning History

Relevant planning history associated with the site largely relates to the development of Matrix House and Matrix One to the south. This can be summarised as follows:

- **2002/0765** - Construction of five, three storey office buildings (Class B1), with associated carparking, infrastructure and landscaping. Approved 1st August 2002.
- **2003/0131** - Construction of three, three storey office buildings and two four storey office buildings (Class B1), with associated car parking, infrastructure and landscaping (Amendment to planning permission 2002/0765 granted on 30th July 2002). Approved 05 Mar 2003.
- **2017/1184/NMA** Non-Material Amendment to planning permission 2003/0131 granted 4th March 2003 to amend part of the car parking layout and car park construction/drainage. Approved 06 Jul 2017.

Pre-Application Engagement

The applicant engaged in pre-application discussions (reference 2023/1222/PRE), with written feedback provided by Swansea Council in July 2023. Feedback received confirmed that the principle of development was acceptable and compliant with sustainable employment strategy Policy PS 4 and Policy RC 10. It was further supported that the proposed development would facilitate less B1 office floorspace being delivered at this location outside of the Central Area than currently has planning consent. It was also outlined that the scale of the units is generally considered acceptable. Notwithstanding this, feedback received also suggested that the number of units should be significantly reduced to ensure that adequate circulation space, landscaping, SuDS and car parking can be achieved. Enhancements to the visual quality of the scheme were also outlined such as the introduction of glazing.

Proposal

The proposal comprises the erection of 7,557sqm of Class B1(c)/B2/B8 development on a 3.03 ha site at Matrix Park. This represents a 306sqm reduction in floorspace compared to the scheme presented at the pre-application stage. The application proposes the development of up to 43 new units of varying size subject to operator demand. Such flexibility will assist in the marketing and letting of the unit(s). Based on Starburst's extensive development experience throughout South Wales, the proposal is regarded as ideal in meeting the operational requirements of a wide range of Class B1(c)/B2/B8 businesses – an important benefit and material consideration.

For Unit A, roller shutter doors will be installed along the south east elevations along each of the 9 units. Each unit will have a roller shutter door to the front. Nine doors and bin stores will be provided to the rear of the unit at the western elevation. Unit B comprises 12 units that will front Unit A and will also all have roller shutter doors installed along the site's western elevation. Bin stores and rear access will be provided along the eastern elevation. Unit C forms the largest of the terraces and comprises 15 subdivided units. This unit runs parallel to Unit B and shares the rear access area, although it has its own bin facilities. Again, each of the sub-divided units will have their own roller shutter doors installed the eastern elevation. Unit D is the smallest terrace, located to the south of Unit C and comprises 7 sub-divided units, each fitted with roller shutter doors.

Traditional cladding in grey matched by blue roller-shutter, single front/rear doors, and rainwater goods are features of the proposal which complement neighbouring buildings in terms of design, scale, materials and colour. Importantly, not only will the design, materials and proportions of the proposed buildings complement the neighbouring industrial/commercial properties, but they also represent a well-trying and tested approach towards "design", which potential Class B1(c)/B2/B8 operators view positively in light of their particular modus operandi. Whereas a Class B1(a) office occupier might favour the extensive use of glazing and/or the use of stone and brick as a major building material, the same would not apply in the case of a typical industrial operator – hence the approach taken not only by Starburst in this case but also evidenced by the approach taken by other developers/operators in the immediate vicinity of the subject site.

In terms of vehicular access, the proposed Units will be accessed via a private internal estate road which will be taken directly off the existing site entrance off Siemens Way/ Nantong Way to the south. Pedestrian access to the application site is to be gained via new footways proposed as part of the creation of the new site access.

In terms of parking, 141 parking spaces will also be provided including 46 spaces for light commercial vehicle located at the front of each of the units. As part of the total parking offer, 5 disabled spaces and 10 electric vehicle charging bays which are located to the south of the site in addition to 80 standard bays. The proposal also includes 3 separate covered cycle storage facilities and motorcycle parking facilities.

Policy

The principle of a Class B1/B2/B8 development at the site is strongly supported by Local Plan Policy PS 4, which seeks to promote business growth by creating 13,600 additional jobs over the Plan period and the delivery of 19 hectares of employment land. As confirmed as part of pre-application engagement, the proposal has also been compliant with the sustainable strategy outlined in Policy RC10. Furthermore, the application proposal also accords with Section 5 of Planning Policy Wales which relates to economic development, and the aim of delivering a strong economy and enterprising places across Wales. Consequently, the application proposal is considered to be "full-square" with local and national planning policy aimed at promoting job creation and economic growth – an important material consideration.

Turning to parking-related considerations, the level and nature of provision proposed is considered acceptable in terms of the relevant guidelines. Moreover, the proposed access/egress arrangement is also considered to be compliant with relevant standards.

In terms of design/palette of proposed materials and colour it is not considered that the proposal would result in any material harm to visual amenity of the surrounding locality or residential amenity. To the extent there may be an outstanding concern over the "design" of the proposal and its relationship with its surroundings, our response is as follows – to the north and east are similar industrial/commercial buildings in terms of size, materials and colour. Consequently, there are no grounds for believing the proposal is unacceptable either in terms of its compatibility with these nearby land uses or its impact on visual amenity. As aforementioned, to the north, east and west, the proposed development is screened by existing trees, which significantly restricts the sites visibility from adjoining development. Given the screening of the development by both trees and new planting and taking into account that only short passing glimpses into the site might be possible, we consider it very unlikely that the proposed development would result in any material harm to the visual amenity of the surrounding area or residential amenity. Overall, the building design is appropriate given the context of the site's wider character and complements the surrounding industrial/commercial built form. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policy PS2 of the Development Plan.

In terms of transport-related matters, a Transport Assessment undertaken by Corun demonstrates how the proposed site access and internal layout has been designed to ensure that all vehicles requiring access will be able enter and exit the site in a forward gear, and safely manoeuvre within the site. In terms of parking-related considerations, the level and nature of provision proposed is considered acceptable in terms of the relevant guidelines. Overall, the report identifies that there are no reasons, in highway and transportation terms, which would restrict the development, with the proposal being regarded as compliant in terms of both national and local planning policy.

Regarding the impact on trees, there are two Category B tree groups located around the perimeter of the site. No trees are required to be felled to facilitate the proposed development. An Arboricultural Methods Statement has been provided which details the sequence of events that will be followed to ensure trees are protected during the construction process. As such, by complying with the tree protection scheme as detailed within the tree report, the development proposal will not generate any significant long-term adverse Arboricultural impact on any retained trees on or adjacent to this site or the long-term amenity of the area.

Turning to ecology, I&G Ecological Consulting Ltd have prepared a preliminary ecological appraisal which has determined that the site is of high local ecological value, with the dominant habitat on site being marshy grassland which possesses good species diversity. It has also been identified that the mature woodland which largely surrounds the perimeter of the site may provide habitat for various protected species. These woodland areas are also recognised to form part of two Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC's), referred to as Fendrod Lake/Nant-y-Fendrod and the Tawe corridor and railway line. Notwithstanding this, it is important to note that these SINC's situated outside the area proposed to be developed and will, therefore, not be adversely affected by the proposal.

Further to this, various recommendations to enhance biodiversity on site have been made by I&G Ecological Consulting Ltd. The inclusion of native planting will benefit birds, invertebrates and small mammals, providing food, and shelter. Recommendations in relation to various species such as birds, bats, hedgehogs, invertebrates, reptiles and amphibians have also been made to enhance biodiversity on site. Further to this, a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) and Construction Environment Management Plan have also both been recommended, details of which can be conditioned. In following these measures, biodiversity enhancements will be achieved on site, as further detailed within the Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme statement.

The Drainage Statement prepared by Hydrogeo provides details of the method that will be used to discharge the surface water runoff at the site. The SUDS proposal will see surface water runoff collected from all newly developed surfaces at the Site and conveyed to perimeter detention basins and swales. This approach will provide attenuation, interception, treatment, biodiversity and amenity benefits. Sub-surface geocellular crates will also be located at suitable areas of the Site. This approach will provide sufficient attenuation for the 1 in 100 year 6-hour duration rainfall event. Water will eventually be discharged to the existing outfall to the River Tawe to the south of the site. No significant adverse effect is expected on the culverted stream following treatment through these SUDS features.

Turning to flood related matters, the River Tawe runs alongside the western and northern boundary of the site. Consequently, most of the site is located within flood zone C1, which is served by significant infrastructure, including flood defences. Whilst part of the site is also within flood zone B, given the scale and nature of the proposed development and the size and location of the fluvial flooding sources it has been concluded that fluvial flooding poses a low actual and residual flood risk to the site. Therefore, the risk of fluvial flooding is considered to be of low significance. It should also be acknowledged that TAN15 recognises that the uses proposed represent a low vulnerability to flooding – an important material consideration alongside the site's potential to generate growth and jobs. Further to this, various risk management strategies have also been recommended by HydroGeo which will be followed by the applicant, including the provision of a flood evacuation management plan and ensuring the finished floor levels of the units are delivered on site at a minimum of 0.5m above the ground level. As such, in following these recommendations, it has been concluded that the consequences of flooding are acceptable, and the development would be in accordance with the requirements of TAN15 with development not precluded on flood related grounds.

Conclusions

As indicated above, the development proposal relates to the erection of Class B1(c)/B2/B8 uses together with associated parking, drainage and landscape provision on land adjacent to Swansea Enterprise Park, Matrix Park, SA6 8RE. Importantly, the proposal has the potential to make a major contribution towards job creation and economic growth in line with national and local planning policy, whilst not causing any material harm to other interests of acknowledged importance. Moreover, the proposal is smaller than the scheme presented at the pre-application stage. Consequently, and considering the proposed new planting/landscaping will reinforce the screening of the proposed development, we conclude that the planning balance is even more firmly in favour of the proposed development than was previously the case.

Considering the foregoing, we do not envisage any legitimate reason why planning permission for this proposed investment and development at the site should not be forthcoming. As such we look forward to discussing and progressing matters to a positive outcome. Meanwhile, should you have any queries or require any further information/clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in brown ink, appearing to read 'T. Quille', enclosed within a simple, hand-drawn oval border.

Thomas Quille
Senior Planner

DPP

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