

SUDBURY – LAND AT DRURY ROAD, WOODHALL BUSINESS PARK

Erection of industrial building for of 2 no. industrial units (Unit A (Class B2) and Unit B (Class B1), including display and sales of goods from Unit A. Construction of a new vehicular access and associated works.

Applicant: Needle Point Designs

Case Officer: Deborah Board

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SITE

1. The application site is located within the existing general employment area of Woodhall, Sudbury within the built up area boundary. The site is currently vacant but to both the east and west are existing industrial units within the industrial area itself. The site is accessed from Drury Road, south of the site, which connects to the main A134 round Sudbury.

PROPOSAL

2. The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of two industrial units, Unit A for a B2 (General Industrial) use including display and sale of goods and Unit B for B1 (Light Industrial) use.

**Unit A**

- 319 square metres total floor space over two floors;
- Within this on the ground floor approximately 56 square metres is manufacturing; 45.5 square metres for sale and display; 27.09 square metres for staff facilities;
- On the first floor – 56 square metres of office space and 72 square metres of storage.

**Unit B**

- 164 square metres total floor area over one floor.
3. 13 car parking spaces are proposed for the site, including two disabled spaces, one lorry space and bicycle storage.

**Planning statement**

4. The applicant has submitted a supporting statement that makes the following points in summary:
  - Needlepoint design is currently based in Hall Street, Long Melford;
  - Unit A is proposed to replace the existing premises in Long Melford to accommodate the machinery, preparation and storage space necessary;

- The business supplies thirty schools which is 17% of turnover;
- Three schools pick up uniforms from the existing site;
- The rest is supplied to the school shop in bulk or mailed to parents;
- Small items are delivered by needlepoint;
- The company requires a small retail area to enable parents from the schools to visit and view items on display;
- There is no passing trade;
- 83% of turnover is commercial accounts and the company has 700 commercial customers;
- 25% of these customers pick the clothing up from needlepoint in bulk;
- Needlepoint try and encourage off site delivery;
- The business currently employs two full time staff and the relocated business would see a 50% increase.

## HISTORY

5. None relevant.

## POLICY

### **Suffolk Structure Plan 2001**

- CS1 (Distribution of new development and the provision of associated infrastructure).
- CS2 (Economy and employment)
- ENV3 (Design standards)
- ECON1 (Expansion of an existing employment use)
- ECON2 (Location of Employment Development)
- ECON8 and ECON9 (Town and Local Centres)

**Babergh Local Plan, Alteration No.2 (2006)** the policy references below relate to the adopted version of the Local Plan - the policy numbers in some cases differ from those in the second deposit draft. Where this is the case, the previous reference number is given in brackets.

- Policy CN01 (General Design)
- EM01 (General)
- EM02 (General Employment Areas)
- SP01 (Retail Strategy)
- SP03 (Retail Development outside of Town Centres)

### **PPG4 (Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms)**

6. The characteristics of industry and commerce are evolving continuously, and many businesses can be carried on in rural and residential areas without causing unacceptable disturbance through increased traffic, noise, pollution or other adverse effects. Individual planning decisions will of course depend on such factors as the scale of the development, the nature of the use of the site and its location.

7. It is now generally recognised that it may not be appropriate to separate industry and commerce-especially small-scale developments-from the residential communities for whom they are a source of employment and services. In areas which are primarily residential, development plan policies should not seek unreasonably to restrict commercial and industrial activities of an appropriate scale - particularly in existing buildings - which would not adversely affect residential amenity. Planning permission should normally be granted unless there are specific and significant objections, such as a relevant development plan policy, unacceptable noise, smell, safety, and health impacts or excessive traffic generation.

### **PPG13 – Transport**

8. PPG13 sets out Government planning policy and guidance in relation to transport and identifies that the planning system has a key role in delivering the Government's integrated transport strategy and that the consistent application of planning policies will help reduce some of the need for car journeys.
9. Two of the objectives of the guidance within PPG13 are to i) promote access to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling and, ii) reduce the need to travel, especially by car.

**PPG24 (Planning and Noise)** - This PPG gives guidance to local authorities in England on the use of their planning powers to minimise the adverse impact of noise and builds on the advice previously contained in DOE Circular 10/73. It:

- outlines the considerations to be taken into account in determining planning applications both for noise-sensitive developments and for those activities which will generate noise;
- introduces the concept of noise exposure categories for residential development, encourages their use and recommends appropriate levels for exposure to different sources of noise; and
- advises on the use of conditions to minimise the impact of noise.

**PPS6 (Planning for Town Centres)** gives guidance on town centre uses and development. The Government's key objective for town centres is to promote their vitality and viability by:

- Planning for the growth and development of existing centres; and
- Promoting and enhancing existing centres, by focusing development in such centres and
- encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all.

*\* please note that details or extracts of policies are no longer included in reports - see page 4 of these papers.*

### OBSERVATIONS

10. TC – recommend approval
11. CHA – to be reported

12. AW – to be reported
13. EA – The application as submitted does not satisfactorily address pollution control. Therefore a condition is recommend to secure an appropriate pollution control scheme.

## ASSESSMENT

14. The main issues in consideration of the proposal are:

- Principle of the Development
- Design and Layout
- Highway and Access Issues

### **Principle of the Development**

15. In consideration of the principle of the development the policies that require consideration are primarily those that relate to employment proposals, EM01 and EM02 but also the SP policies that provide guidance on retail proposals outside of the town centre, in particular SP03.
16. EM02 sets out sites identified as employment areas and that employment related development would in principle be acceptable in these locations. Woodhall is identified within this and as such the provision of the buildings for B1 and B2 purposes is acceptable.
17. Unit A provides a substantial amount (30%) of the ground floor for the purpose of display and sale of goods, this area is similar in size to that proposed for manufacturing. As such the proposal also requires assessment against policies SP01 and SP03 which to locate retail proposals to town centre locations. This reflects the guidance of PPS6 and ECON8 and ECON9 of the Structure Plan.
18. The aim and purpose of these policies is to locate retail proposals within town and local centres to reduce the need to travel by car. Further the issue of precedent requires consideration in that to allow a proposal with a significant amount of retail within an industrial area undermines these aims and purposes and make further proposals difficult to resist. The proposal before members contains a ground floor (Unit A) where the facts of the case indicate an almost equal amount of both manufacturing and sale and display floor area within this unit. Indeed the retail element represents c. 30% of the total ground floor area.
19. When assessed against SP03 this form of proposal fails for the following reasons:
  - There is no overriding requirement for retail development in this location, in fact the business already operates from Long Melford;
  - No assessment has been made of the availability of sites in Sudbury, or others in Long Melford to demonstrate this is the only option for the business;
  - Accessibility by non car modes in this location is poor and thus sustainability objectives are not met;
  - Car parking provision is low;
  - The site is an existing employment area and identified as such in the local plan, thereby preference should be to these uses.

## **Design and Layout**

20. The key policies pertinent to the consideration of the design elements of the proposals are ENV3 of the Structure Plan and CN01 of the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No. 2 (Second Deposit Draft). These policies seek proposals that provide an appropriate scale, density and form.
21. The design of the proposal is basic and utilitarian in approach as is typical of an industrial unit. The overall height of the building would be 9 metres, to the ridge, and the materials proposed are coated steel cladding to the wall and roof. The unit would be set back from the road by 6 metres to allow parking and landscaping to the front. Overall it is considered that the scale and form of the building are acceptable in this location and would be in keeping with the surround development on the estate. The material colour could be secured through condition as could the proposed landscaping to give relief and setting to the building in the street scene.
22. Neighbouring uses are all of a similar ilk and as such there would be no adverse impacts in terms of noise, nuisance or loss of amenity resulting from the proposed uses in this location.

## **Highway and Access Issues**

23. The key policies to consider are ENV3, T13 and T14 of the Structure Plan. These policies seek development that is well laid out in terms of site access and highway safety, traffic flow and the environment.
24. Access is proposed through the existing industrial area from the A134 by pass. The applicant has advised that the anticipated vehicular movements for Unit A would be:
  - 6 cars per day;
  - Light goods 2/3 per day;
  - No heavy goods, buses or coaches.
25. Without knowing the occupant of Unit B figures cannot be given.
26. Parking requirements (maximum) within the Suffolk advisory standards are one space per 30 square metres for B1 and B2 uses and adequate turning and load for one lorry to be provided and 1 space per 16 square metres floor area for retail proposals. This would equate to, Unit A – 12 spaces and Unit B – 5 spaces. The proposal includes 13 spaces overall and a lorry space to the rear of the building.
27. The comments of the CHA are awaited regarding the access and parking arrangements. Notwithstanding this it is clear that proposal makes provision for a lorry to park but parking and turning is not detailed and that the parking requirement would be 17 spaces and the proposal provides 13 and not all of these are within the applicants ownership.

## RECOMMENDATION

Refuse planning permission for the following reason:

- Retail element unacceptable in terms of scale, size, location contrary to ECON2 ECON8 and ECON9 of the Structure Plan; SP01, SP03, EM02 of the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No. 2 (2006) and PPS6;
- As may be recommended by CHA.

## DECISION

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