



Change of Use From Offices and Associated Storage to a Sui-Generis Use Comprising Tool and Plant Hire With Associated Servicing/ Repairs and Storage with Wash Down Facilities. Alterations to Elevations and Car Parking

Unit 1 Max House, Sandy Lane, Martlesham, IP12 4DS

## PLANNING STATEMENT

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Ref: 1002-24

Date: 22/01/2024

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**January 2024**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 East Coast planning Services is instructed by Toddy Tool Hire Ltd to submit a planning application for change of use of offices with associated storage to a sui-generis use comprising tool and plant hire with associated storage at Unit 1 Max House, Martlesham.
- 1.2 The Company has operated for a period in excess of 3 years from part of Spencer's Garage, which lies to the west and fronts The Street. The business has outgrown that site and needs to relocate to larger premises.

## **2 THE APPLICATION SITE**

- 2.1 The site lies on the south side of Sandy Lane close to its junction with The Street. It encompasses an area of approximately 0.2ha and supports a single-storey building having an internal floor area of approximately 590sqm that was last used as offices with associated storage.
- 2.2 The site forms part of an established employment area fronting the south side of Sandy Lane that supports a number of established businesses. Immediately to the rear of the application site are dog boarding kennels (Suffolk Canine Creche). Spencer's Garage (fronting The Street) lies to the west, together with a detached dwelling ('Willowdene').
- 2.3 The site lies within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and within Flood Zone 3, as defined on the Environment Agency Flood Maps. There are a number of trees along the east boundary. Those outside the site but adjacent to the west boundary are protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

## **3 THE APPLICATION PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The application seeks planning permission for change of use from offices with associated storage to a sui-generis use comprising tool and plant hire with associated storage and workshop facilities. A small washdown area is proposed at the rear of the building. Some modest changes are proposed to the external appearance of the building. A compound area is proposed in front of the building adjacent to the site's west boundary. The existing informal parking area in front of the building is to be formalised. Two non-protected trees on the west boundary (*Cupressus leylandii*) are proposed to be removed.

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3.2 The application comprises the following:

- Drawing No. 0658-0001 Site Location Plan;
- Drawing No. 0658-0002 Floor Plan as Existing;
- Drawing No. 0658-0003B Floor Plan as Proposed;
- Drawing No. 0658-0004 Elevations as Existing;
- Drawing No. 0658-0005A Elevations as Proposed;
- Drawing No. 0658-0006 Site Plan as Existing;
- Drawing No. 0658-0007C Site Plan as Proposed;
- Planning Statement;
- Flood Risk Assessment.

## 4 PLANNING POLICY

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration that must be taken into account in all planning decisions.

4.2 The local development plan relevant to the consideration of this application comprises the following:

- Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2020; and
- Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan 2018.

### **Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2020**

4.3 the following Local Plan policies are relevant to the consideration of this application:

- SCLP3.2: Settlement Hierarchy;
- SCLP3.3: Settlement Boundaries;
- SCLP4.2: New Employment Development;
- SCLP4.5: Economic development in Rural Areas;
- SCLP4.6: Conversion and replacement of rural Buildings for Employment Use;

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- SCLP4.7: Farm Diversification;
- SCLP7.1: Sustainable Transport;
- SCLP7.2: Parking Proposals and standards;
- SCLP9.5: Flood Risk;
- SCLP10.3: Environmental Quality;
- SCLP10.4: Landscape Character; and
- SCLP11.2: Residential Amenity.

## **Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan 2018**

4.4 Neighbourhood Plan Policy MAR19: Sandy Lane, Martlesham is particularly relevant to the consideration of this application. It states:

### **POLICY MAR19: SANDY LANE, MARTLESHAM**

**Planning permission will be granted for employment development, including redevelopment or refurbishment of existing buildings on land at Sandy Lane, Martlesham, as identified on the Policies Map, provided that:**

- 1. The use is restricted to activities falling within Use Classes B1 and B2 or extensions and alterations to established premises and businesses on the site for the continuation of existing activities;**
- 2. It does not harm the AONB setting and any designated heritage assets. New buildings, conversions and external works (including re-cladding) shall be of a high standard and should not detract from the character of the AONB;**
- 3. It does not increase the number of access routes in and out onto Sandy Lane;**
- 4. A transport assessment can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority that the scale and type of traffic generated is acceptable in terms of impact on the local road network;**
- 5. Where possible, it improves pedestrian and cycling conditions on Sandy Lane; and**
- 6. It supports the provision of suitable premises for small businesses.**

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## Nation Planning Policy Framework

4.5 The promotion of sustainable development is the golden thread running through this policy document and the instruction to Local Planning Authorities is one of a premise of approving the development as the default starting point in development management decisions.

4.6 Paragraph 8 is clear on this and states: -

“Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) **an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

4.7 The presumption in favour of all sustainable development is set out at paragraph 11 and for decision taking this means:

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*approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*

*where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

- i the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.*

4.7 Building a strong and competitive economy is one of the principles behind the delivery of sustainable development and the NPPF states that planning should do everything it can to support sustainable economic growth – *“Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth”*.

4.8 Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states:

*“Planning policies and decisions should enable:*

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship”*.

4.9 Paragraph 89 of the NPPF is particularly relevant in this case. It states:

*“Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing*

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*settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist”.*

## 5 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### Principle of Development

- 5.1 The application site is a brownfield site whose lawful use is offices. It forms part of a larger area on the south side of Sandy Lane which is identified in the Neighbourhood Plan as having a general employment use. Neighbourhood Plan Policy MAR19 specifically relates to this area, which is identified on the Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map. The Neighbourhood Plan contains a specific policy relating to this area (Policy MAR19: Sandy Lane, Martlesham) and is reproduced in full at paragraph 4.4 above.
- 5.2 Essentially Policy MAR19 supports employment development or refurbishment of existing buildings provided that
- the use is restricted to activities falling within Use Classes B1 and B2;
  - It does not harm the AONB and any designated heritage assets;
  - Refurbishment is to a high standard;
  - Does not increase the number of access routes in and out onto Sandy Lane;
  - The scale and type of traffic generated is acceptable in terms of impact on the local road network;
  - Where possible it improves pedestrian and cycling conditions on Sandy lane; and
  - Supports the provision of suitable premises for small businesses.
- 5.3 It is concluded that the intended use accords with the overall aims and objectives of the Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.4 The proposed use currently operates close by from part of Spencer’s Garage. It has done so for a period in excess of 3 years without causing any harm to the local environment. The



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Business has outgrown its current site and needs relocation.

## **Flood Risk**

5.5 The site lies within Flood Zone 3 and national planning guidance indicates that all development within Flood Zones 2 and 3 must be accompanied by a site specific flood risk assessment. The lawful and proposed uses both fall within the 'less vulnerable' category of development and are considered appropriate uses in Flood Zone 3. A site specific flood risk assessment accompanies the application and concludes:

*15.1. It has been demonstrated that the site is located within Flood Zone 3.*

*15.2. Table 15.1 summarises the probability of the site flooding from the five key sources as listed in PPS25.*

*15.3. The development comprises a change of use from 'Office and associated storage' to 'sui-generis use' comprising tool and plant hire with associated storage, repairs and parking. The existing and proposed site use have a classification of Less Vulnerable development. The development does not include for an extension to the existing building.*

*15.4. Environment Agency coastal modelling shows that the site is at risk of flooding to a level of **4.68m AOD** in the Undefended 0.5% AEP plus climate change event (to a depth of up to 2.14m). The flood risk to the development is the same as exists for the current site use. It is recommended that the site owner signs up to receive 24 hour Flood Warnings to enable preparation and safe evacuation before a flood event occurs (Floodline- 0345 988 1188) and that an emergency flood evacuation plan is prepared that includes receiving flood warnings and evacuating the site prior to the flood event.*

*15.5. In accordance with government policy, SuDS should be used on site where possible, and surface water drainage of the site carried out in a sustainable way.*

*15.6. As long as maintenance of the new drainage systems are correctly carried out, the risk of flooding and the subsequent risks from infrastructure failure or pluvial means, is very Low.*

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*15.7. The Environment Agency accepts that extreme floods will occur and it will never be possible to eliminate flood risk altogether.*

*15.8. It is considered that the risk of flooding to the site has been adequately considered and that development of the site including for implementing the flood warning and flood evacuation plan recommendations outlined in this report, does not pose an unacceptable flood risk either to occupants of the site or to others off site.*

- 5.6 The proposals will not result in an increased risk of on/off-site flooding and therefore accord with national planning policy relating to flood risk and to Local Plan Policy SCLP9.5.

## **Highway Issues**

- 5.7 The proposed use is to hire plant and tools to the construction and landscaping industries, as well as domestic customers. In the majority of cases, plant and tools hired to the construction and landscaping industries are delivered to site direct. However, small tools and plant may be collected from the site by customers, particularly domestic customers. The proposed use will not, therefore generate significant numbers of additional vehicles on Sandy Lane.

- 5.8 The business provides full time employment for four staff. Movement into and out of the site by staff and customers will not be significant when seen against what would be generated by the last lawful office use.

- 5.9 The application makes provision for 20 vehicle parking spaces, which is considered more than adequate to cater for staff and visitors.

## **Landscape Issues**

- 5.10 Although the site lies within the AONB, it is part of the built environment. No extensions are proposed and the proposed use will operate using the existing building. It will be refurbished to facilitate the proposed use but there will be no material impact on the wider landscape.

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The application proposal accords with the aims and objectives of Local Plan Policies SCLP10.3 and SCLP10.4. It also satisfies the requirements of Neighbourhood Plan Policy MAR19 which requires, amongst other things, that proposals should not detract from the character of the AONB.

### **Amenity Issues**

- 5.11 The proposed hours of operation are to be confined to the normal working day with operations ceasing at 12.00 noon on Saturdays. The business will not operate on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- 5.12 The nearest dwelling to the application site is “Willowdene”. Its physical relationship to the application site is very similar to that currently operating from Spencer’s Garage. The occupier of “Willowdene” has been consulted in respect of the current proposal and has no objections to it.
- 5.13 The internal layout of the building has been designed to ensure that there are no potentially noisy operations close to “Willowdene”. A small washdown area is proposed within a recess at the rear of the building, which will protect the occupiers of “Willowdene” from noise and overspray. The washdown water will be discharged to the public sewer through appropriate interceptors. The proposal accords with Local Plan Policy SCLP11.2 which seeks to protect residential Amenity.

### **Trees**

- 5.14 The occupier of “Willowdene” has requested that the applicant removes two conifer trees that are located close to the common boundary with “Willowdene”. These trees are not protected in any way. They do not make a significant contribution to the natural amenity of the area and their removal will improve the living conditions for the occupiers of “Willowdene”.

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## 6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The application seeks permission to relocate an existing local business to an existing brownfield site within an area that is identified in the Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan as a General Employment Area. No extensions are proposed.
- 6.2 Although the site lies within Flood Zone 3, the proposal will not lead to an increased risk of flooding on or off site.
- 6.3 There will be no demonstrable harm caused to the character of the AONB, or to the amenities that the occupiers of nearby dwellings could reasonably expect to enjoy. The proposal will not generate significant vehicle movements.
- 6.4 The proposal accords with national and local planning policy and the presumption in favour of all sustainable development should, therefore, prevail