

TWC/2021/0010

Land opposite Wrap Film Systems Ltd, Hortonwood 40, Hortonwood, Telford, Shropshire

Erection of an industrial/warehouse facility (Use Class B2/B8) with servicing, ancillary office accommodation (Use Class E(g)), car parking, formation of new access, landscaping and associated works

**APPLICANT**

Greenhous Group (Holdings) Ltd

**RECEIVED**

07/01/2021

**PARISH**

Hadley and Leegomery

**WARD**

Hadley and Leegomery

**THIS APPLICATION IS SUBJECT TO A S106 AGREEMENT INCLUDING FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND IS THEREFORE REFERRED TO PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR DETERMINATION**

Online planning file: <https://secure.telford.gov.uk/planning/pa-applicationsummary.aspx?applicationnumber=TWC/2021/0010>

**1. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 It is recommended that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT FULL PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to conditions, informatives and a S106 to secure highways, ecology and trees financial contributions.

**2. APPLICATION SITE**

- 2.1 The application site is approximately rectangular in shape and is located within the North Telford Hortonwood, Donnington and Hadley Park Strategic Employment Area towards the north eastern edge of the urban area. The site comprises allocation E5 in the adopted local plan. It extends to approximately 2.73 hectares in area.
- 2.2 The site remains undeveloped being relatively flat open ground, containing several trees and hedges, primarily around the boundaries and at the centre of the site. The surrounding area is predominantly commercial, with several large-scale employment buildings to the south, west and north-east. To the north east lies Horton Lane along which are a number of dwelling houses located on its western side. Directly opposite the site lies the Cofresco cling film production facility (formerly Wrap Film Systems) and car park setback behind a landscaped boundary.
- 2.3 The site contains a line of trees/hedgerow that runs diagonally from NW-SE within the southern area. The northern and western boundaries are marked by

a chain-link fence and the southern and eastern boundaries by mature trees and hedges that act as effective natural screens. The site backs on to the Crow Brook beyond the row of trees that line its banks. Horton Lane continues in a north-south direction along the eastern boundary of the site but is a footpath/cycle way only with no vehicular traffic able to use it.

### **3. APPLICATION DETAILS**

- 3.1 The proposal comprises the erection of a single substantial rectangular shaped building set towards the front of the site facing onto Hortonwood 60 with Horton Lane beyond. The building would be fronted by two landscape bunds, with its service yard to the rear (southern side) comprising parking for 12 HGVs, three level HGV accesses and three dock accesses. This would be accessed from the western side of the site off Hortonwood 40, which would initially branch off to two areas of car parking either side of the access road, comprising a total 167 car spaces, 6 motorcycle spaces, with 20 cycle spaces then set towards the main entrance to the building at the northern edge of the site.
- 3.2 Existing hedging and treed boundaries would largely remain at the southern and eastern edges of the site, with grassed areas edged by timber knee railing sitting at the northern and western edges. An attenuation swale would also be cited at the southern edge of the site to serve surface water drainage.
- 3.3 The building would comprise a portal frame construction in a gable ended formation onto Hortonwood 40, with metal clad walls and roof, powder coated aluminium windows to the office area at the corner of Hortonwood 40 and 60. It would have a ridge height of 16.5m, and 14.3m to its eaves, a length of just under 147m and width of 77m (including external covered fire escape stairs). Whilst the final colour palette of the bulk of the building is to be confirmed, the Design & Access Statement suggests a grey and white colour scheme would apply.
- 3.4 In this case the end user of the building is known, comprising Portion Solutions. The material accompanying the application identifies that the need for this development has been driven by an existing occupier in Telford, specifically the need to replace three obsolete units within the Telford & Wrekin area and facilitate the future growth of the business. This site was identified by the occupier as ideal for their requirements and will support their long term placement in the area.
- 3.5 The building would be dominated by open storage with ancillary ground and first floor reception and office space, meeting rooms, kitchen facilities and toilets. The unit will provide 10,328sqm of ground floor warehouse space

which would be split approximately 60% production and processing areas and 40% warehouse and storage areas with 1,177sqm of ancillary office space (across two levels), totalling 11,505sqm.

- 3.6 250 staff would be employed on site, with three shift patterns in operation, a total of 200 staff would typically be on site during a 24-hour period - 80 staff working "Days" 06:00 – 14:00, 80 staff working "Afternoons" 14:00 – 22:00, and 30 staff working "Nights" 22:00 – 06:00. Typically, 30 HGVs goods in and out between 06:00 – 22:00, and two at night.

#### **4. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 TWC/2018/0163 - Erection of 1no. industrial unit (Use Class B1(c), B2 and B8) \*\*\*Amended application form and plans received\*\*\*. Full Granted 28/11/2018.

#### **5. RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS**

- 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 5.2 Telford & Wrekin Local Plan 2011-2031.

#### **6. NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS**

- 6.1 One letter of public objection has been received on highways grounds:
- gridlock on the A442 with heavy levels of traffic at peak time with the proposal increasing this;
  - further reduction of access and egress to the estate by closing Horton Lane with previously four exit routes, now only two.

#### **7. STATUTORY CONSULTEES**

- 7.1 Hadley and Leegomery Parish Council: Support subject to conditions seeking a contribution towards the cost of a permanent solution for traffic issues along Horton Lane as a point of access to and egress from the Hortonwood Strategic Employment Area.

Should Horton Lane be reopened to through traffic on the expiry of the current Experimental Traffic Regulation Order it is inevitable that traffic associated with the development site would use Horton Lane and it is therefore reasonable to require a contribution to the cost of road safety improvements from this development.

- 7.2 Highways: Support subject to conditions relating to provision of a Car Park Management Plan (CPMP), Use Class of the building, proportion B2/B8 split of the building, provision of access, parking, turning and servicing areas prior to first operation, cycle parking in place prior to first occupation, submission of Travel Plan prior to occupation.

Financial contributions will also need to be written into a S106 agreement with payment recommended prior to occupation:

Cycle Route - £23,095

Strategic Highway - £74,565

Travel Plan - £5,000.

- 7.3 Ecology: Support subject to conditions relating to provision of a Development Authorisation Certificate for Great Crested Newts, pre-commencement badger inspection, provision of Habitat Creation and Management Plan, works in accordance with Ecological Assessment, suite of artificial nesting / roosting boxes, and external lighting plan details (proposed not satisfactory).

A Tree Replacement Standard has been used to calculate a developer contribution to compensate for the loss of trees on site amounting to £20,000 to be secured through a S106 agreement.

- 7.4 Arboricultural: Support subject to conditions, guiding that the proposal is not in accordance with TWLP Policy NE2 but there is an existing consent on the site through TWC/2018/0163, the new scheme involves the loss of 2 additional Oak trees T4 & T9, with landscaping involving the planting of 39 extra heavy standards within the site. Consequently, TWC Ecology has employed the use of the tree replacement standard and a developer contribution is being sought to compensate for the loss of the trees, to the sum of £20,000 to enable mitigation planting elsewhere in the locality.

Request conditions for tree protection and removal, soil levels, landscape design (omissions from plans submitted, alternative species suggested).

- 7.5 Drainage: Support subject to a condition around implementation of drainage in accordance with approved details prior to first occupation.
- 7.6 Environmental Health: Support subject to conditions around no ventilation provision on northern façade, doors on northern façade relating to warehouse to remain closed except for emergency access and egress, updated noise assessment taking into account noise generated from final equipment and any noise mitigation required, forklift noise limiters.

- 7.7 Shropshire Fire Service – Comment that as part of the planning process, consideration should be given to the information contained within Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service’s “Fire Safety Guidance for Commercial and Domestic Planning Applications” document.
- 7.8 Cadent Gas Limited – Comment identifying that there is no record of apparatus in the immediate vicinity.

## **8. APPRAISAL**

8.1 Having regard to the development plan policy and other material considerations including comments received during the consultation process, the planning application raises the following main issues:

- Principle of Development
- Design and Visual Impact
- Highway Safety
- Impact upon Residential Amenity
- Drainage and Flood Risk
- Ecology and Trees

### Principle of Development

8.2 The majority of the site is identified as an allocated employment site – E5 in the adopted Local Plan with preferred uses of B1b, B1c, B2 and B8 supporting the Strategic Employment Area of North Telford (Donnington, Hadley Park & Hortonwood) of T&WLP Policy EC1. A modest section of the site at the eastern edge comprises whiteland. The proposed B2 and B8 uses, with ancillary offices (Use Class E(g)), therefore accords with the policy designation sitting within one of the key locations for the majority of employment and jobs in Telford, and is an important employment area. The proposals are therefore consistent with this policy position.

### Design and Visual Impact

- 8.3 Policy BE1 of the adopted Local Plan is concerned with securing high quality design in new development. It is criteria based and expects new development to be influenced by and respond positively to its context, demonstrating an integrated approach to design and layout, respecting landscape and creating a sense of place.
- 8.4 The building has been designed to reflect similar development within the Hortonwood Employment Park. It is a substantial structure and its form follows the proposed function as an industrial/warehouse facility. The building is

appreciably larger than the previous consent, being designed around the specific site occupier with an element of future proofing built in.

- 8.5 The building has nonetheless been orientated and positioned in order to address this increase. It is aligned parallel to Hortonwood 60 creating a frontage along the road, with the eaves as the lowest part of the building being the closest element to the residences of Horton Lane. The building would also be fronted by landscape bunds to provide an element of softening and compensatory landscaping. Materials are in keeping with the proposed used and location of the site, with the final colour scheme controlled through condition.
- 8.6 Of particular importance to this layout is the context of the building acting as an acoustic barrier between the service yard to the rear and the residences along Horton Lane. The office element has then been cited on the north-west corner to create an element of active elevation on both Hortonwood 40 and 60 with window and varied cladding detailing, and clear legibility to the car parking.
- 8.7 The layout of the site enables the building to be set behind an area of landscaping with service vehicle parking tucked behind, with landscaping edges largely retained at the southern and eastern edges of the site, including an attenuation swale that will also assist with sustainable drainage for the site. The proposal is considered compliant with Policy BE1.

#### Highway Safety

- 8.8 The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement which assesses the trip generation based upon the staffing level and shift patterns entailed with the known end user, to assess the required level of parking. HGV tracking of the access arrangement is also provided.
- 8.9 In terms of parking, consideration of the proposed mix of uses on the site to potential alternatives has been necessary by the LHA; and related to staffing levels. Were development to entail a purely B2 use, which through existing permitted development rights for commercial uses this building could become, then the parking requirement for a unit of this size in an edge of town Strategic Employment Area would be 230 spaces, or 164 spaces for a B8 use. Potentially representing a shortfall of 63 spaces, or just over the guided level sought, for each use respectively.
- 8.10 Accounting for the split of the building at 60% B2 and 40% B8 (discounting the ancillary office element) proposed through the current application, this would equate to parking levels being sought of 204 spaces (B2 – 138, B8 – 66). The

proposed level of 167 spaces is duly considered sufficient when factoring in the proposed staffing numbers on site at any given time based around the three shift patterns operated by the end user, such that whilst the proposed business employs 250 people, only a proportion of them will be on site at any given moment during the day. To safeguard against any change in this split and to ensure compliance with the Car Park Management Plan a sum of £5,000 can be called upon should any parking issues arise on the adjoining highway.

- 8.11 As has already been stated, this proposal is appreciably larger than was previously approved with a much greater take up of the site by built development. The remainder of the site taken up by attenuation and landscaping, as elements necessary to make the proposal satisfactory. Without compromising the future retention of such elements, it is considered essential to control the operational workings of the site to avoid detriment to the wider highway network. In turn, a Car Park Management Plan would be necessitated of a permission through condition; this approach has been adopted elsewhere on Hortonwood where parking sits below the guided level and were the specifics of the operator not factored in. Control measures would include a barrier monitoring system suggested on the entrance to each car park.
- 8.12 Whilst the application is accompanied by a Travel Plan this is not based upon the present travel modes of the existing staff and how this relocation may change this from the 3 existing facilities. For the most part the vast majority of the workforce will be appreciably further away from their new place of work, with a propensity of trips to work by car on Hortonwood Business Park. The applicant has guided that travel to work would be further addressed through staff surveying subsequent to formalisation of a relocation. An updated Travel Plan, encouraged to be developed with the involvement of TWC Travel Plan Co-Ordinator, would be a condition of an approval to ensure compliance with TWLP Policy C1.
- 8.13 The requirement for cycle spaces at this site, given its location, is likely to be less than the standards set out in the Local Plan. The proposed provision is considered adequate and there is no objection to the proposals from a Highways perspective. The car park layout is considered adequate subject to controls around number of staff vehicles present on site. The site also meets the level required for HGV parking. The scheme is considered compliant with TWLP Policy C5.
- 8.14 The original application contributed to the footway cycleway alongside Hortonwood 60, the strategic highway infrastructure in accordance with TWLP

Policy C3, and Travel Plan monitoring. The same would apply for this proposal to satisfactorily mitigate the impact of the development.

- 8.15 Representation of the Parish Council seeks a further contribution relating to monies towards a permanent solution to traffic issues along Horton Lane, the context of extra traffic along the lane is also raised in the neighbour representation.
- 8.16 Here the LHA recognise that this has been a long standing issue locally, latterly culminating in an experimental Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which prevents access (other than pedestrians / cycles) through on to Horton Lane. This seeks to address rat run traffic, but does prevent the movement of local trips. This is out for consultation for the next 6-9 months and could be made permanent or reversed if necessary. Beyond this unfortunately there is a lack of solution that satisfies both competing demands; with a contribution not previously sought off this or any other site in Hortonwood. It would therefore be difficult to justify a request now, particularly when there is a solution being tested to deal with the rat run traffic problem. A contribution is not considered to meet the necessary tests and is therefore not to be pursued.

#### Impact upon Residential Amenity

- 8.17 Policy BE1 expects new development to respect and respond to its context and, amongst other things, demonstrate that there will be no significant adverse impact on nearby properties by noise, dust, odour or light pollution.
- 8.18 The overall site is an allocated strategic employment site (E5) and the discourse that led to its allocation considered a range of issues, including the potential impact on local residential amenity.
- 8.19 The site lies to the south of the nearest residential development along the western side of Horton Lane. The northern edge of Hortonwood 60 is marked by a row of mature trees which provides a very effective screen between the nearest dwelling house (No. 54) and the development site. This particular dwelling is set back from the Hortonwood 60 boundary with a garden sitting to the side of the property that was granted in the knowledge of the site being committed for employment under the previous Wrekin Local Plan (2015 permission). The band of trees runs the full length of the roadside boundary and the dwelling.
- 8.20 The application is accompanied by a noise report assessing the impact of a 24/7 operation of the site as use class B2/B8, with pre-application guidance particularly noting the context of the control of delivery hours through the previous consent where the end user was unknown. The assessment has

been duly updated following initial Environmental Health commentary around a number of issues that needed to be reconciled.

- 8.21 Environmental Health confirm that through the update all comments previously highlighted for further consideration have been taken on board, with particular note of the newer properties at the southern end of Horton Lane taken into consideration with the model revised as required.
- 8.22 Additional HGV movements have been modelled including at night where previously there was no assessment. The purpose of this is to consider if a condition restricting times of HGV movements was necessary. The assessment has found that HGV movements at night would not be likely to significantly impact on the nearest residential receptor. As such previous comments are revised and no condition is considered necessary on this aspect.
- 8.23 Discussion around a condition to be applied to internal noise making equipment has been provided by the applicant. It is agreed that a condition is necessary and it is suggested that providing a condition which sets a noise level target at the nearest receptors is most appropriate. Building façade materials have also been considered, including the roof, and the noise model set to take this into consideration.
- 8.24 Furthermore, it is agreed that no ventilation will be provided on the northern façade of the building and that this can be conditioned as appropriate, it is also agreed that a condition is applied to doors on the northern façade remaining closed except for emergency access and egress. The applicant suggests this applies to doors opening into the warehouse only. This is considered reasonable as doors into office areas would not be expected to have high noise levels which would otherwise impact on the office use.
- 8.25 The form of external lighting is provided through the application, this indicates provision of bollard lighting only along the northern edge towards Horton Lane and is considered appropriate subject to conditioning around further amendment elsewhere on the site, and this remaining the case to ensure the protection of residential amenity.
- 8.26 On the basis of the above, with conditions proposed the impact of the proposed development on noise and lighting is considered to be low and of a level unlikely to generate complaint, the Local Planning Authority is therefore of the view that the proposed development is consistent with Policy BE1(xi) of the Local Plan.

#### Drainage and Flood Risk

- 8.27 The application has been accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) duly updated during the course of the application further to initial comment from TWC Drainage, this also contains a detailed drainage scheme. Accompanying modelling has further been submitted.
- 8.28 This information has been assessed and is subject to a support representation from TWC Drainage, recommending the implementation of the proposed scheme for foul and surface water drainage be controlled through condition. Subject to this there is no objection from a drainage and flood risk point of view and the development accords with Policies ER11 and ER12 of the adopted Local Plan.

### Ecology and Trees

- 8.29 The application has been accompanied by an Ecological Assessment, an external lighting plan, and latterly by a Habitat Creation and Management Plan further to commentary by TWC Ecology. Through this evidence, two trees are identified as having bat roost potential, with tree climbing survey for evidence of bats undertaken with one having low suitability to support roosting bats. Recommendations are duly made around tree felling.
- 8.30 The grassland present to the south of the site and the hedgerows offer suitable foraging habitat for badgers. No evidence of badgers was recorded, but given the nature of the site it is possible that badgers may utilise the site occasionally. The landscaping has been designed to retain boundary vegetation and provide continued connectivity. A pre commencement survey should be undertaken to confirm likely absence of badger setts within 30m of the proposed works.
- 8.31 With Great Crested Newt ponds within 250m of the proposal the site has opted to enter into the Telford and Wrekin District Licencing Scheme, with controls around Reasonable Avoidance Measures secured through condition. No bats or reptiles were observed during the survey work; the site has suitable habitat for hedgehogs and nesting birds, with the need for vegetation clearance to be undertaken in a timely / controlled manor in this regard.
- 8.32 The site comprises mainly pasture which is routinely grazed by horses, there will nonetheless be a loss of hedgerow and mature trees, this loss will be compensated for offsite by a financial contribution (costed using a tree replacement standard amounting to £20,000 secured through a S106 agreement).

- 8.33 Subject to this compensation, the Ecology representation requests a series of conditions mitigating the development of the undeveloped site to ensure compliance with Policy NE1 relating to Biodiversity and geodiversity.
- 8.34 The development would necessitate the loss of a stretch of mature hedgerow running across the site, with a series of mature and middle aged Oaks dotted around the western half of the site. Amendment has been made from initial pre-application proposals to secure the retention of T1 (a mature oak); with retention of the southern boundary and the majority of the eastern boundary are further retained, with additional planting dotted around the site. TWC Arboriculture have suggested alternative species to the landscaping proposals, but subject to the tree replacement compensation, and provision of suitable replacements being controlled through condition, therefore complying with Policy NE2 relating to Trees, hedgerows and woodlands.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The proposed development will deliver a contemporary form of development within the Hortonwood Business Park, interspersed with new planting and a sustainable drainage water feature, together with retention of mature T1 at the frontage of Hortonwood 60. The unit is substantial in scale but has been positioned within the site to act as an effective acoustic barrier to protect the amenity of residents of Horton Lane subject to conditioning of specific details. Highways, drainage, ecology and tree mitigation will be controlled through condition and offsite financial contributions, including enhancement to the pedestrian/cycle network together with improvements to the A442, and offsite replacement tree planting to ensure highway safety is protected and no net loss of landscaping entailed.
- 9.2 The proposed use and development is consistent with the character and function of this strategic employment area, will provide a purpose built facility for a local operator, and will sustain job opportunities for the local population on a designated employment site as set out in the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan and the NPPF.

## 10. RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 Based on the conclusions above, it is recommended that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT FULL PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to:
- A.) The applicants/landowner entering into a Section 106 agreement with the Local Planning Authority (terms to be agreed by the Development Management Service Delivery Manager) relating to the following:

- i. Highways contributions of:
  - £23,095 towards the creation of a new footway/cycleway along Hortonwood 60
  - £74,565 towards Strategic Highway works
  - £5,000 for provision of support and monitoring of the required Travel Plan
  - a trigger to request £5,000 towards a traffic management scheme along the section of Hortonwood 40 / 60 that fronts the proposed development should it be required.
  
- ii. Trees and Ecology (combined) contribution of:
  - £20,000 for off-site tree replacement.

B.) The following Conditions (with authority to finalise Conditions to be delegated to Development Management Service Delivery Manager):

1. Time limit Full
2. Pre-commencement inspection – Badger
3. Development Authorisation Certificate (Great Crested Newts)
4. Colours of materials - where identified as TBC
5. Car Park Management Plan
6. Travel Plan
7. Noise Assessment - assessing total noise from the simultaneous operation of all plant and equipment serving the proposed development with restricted rating levels
8. Landscaping Design - featuring root barriers / deflectors for all trees planted in or adjacent to hard standing, alternative species
9. Tree Protection and Removal Plan
10. Erection of artificial nesting/roosting boxes
11. Lighting Plan – alternative southern and eastern edge arrangements
12. Parking, Loading, Unloading and Turning
13. Cycle parking / storage
14. Forklift usage – provision of white noise / broadband noise reversing alarms
15. Implementation of Habitat Creation and Management Plan
16. Implementation of drainage scheme
17. Working in accordance with protected species survey
18. Trees – soil levels
19. Work in accordance with deposited plans
20. Landscaping not approved
21. Hours of construction
22. No ventilation on northern façade
23. Doors northern façade relating to warehouse remain closed except for emergency access and egress
24. Use Class of building.