

UTT/15/0455/DFO - (SAFFRON WALDEN)

(MAJOR)

PROPOSAL: Reserved matters following outline application UTT/13/2423/OP, for replacement Ridgeons building, commercial access road, and bus turning area together with fencing, retaining walls, fuel tank, cycle parking, substations external racking and associated works.

LOCATION: Ashdon Road Commercial Centre, Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden

APPLICANT: Turnstone St Neots Ltd

AGENT: Carter Jonas Incorporating Januarys

EXPIRY DATE: 15 June 2015

CASE OFFICER: Maria Shoesmith

1. NOTATION

1.1 Development Limits, within 500m of Oil pipes, Protected Verge, adjacent to County Wildlife Site, 500m of AQMA, Airport Safeguarding, and Archaeology

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE

2.1 The application site is located north east of Saffron Walden, north of Ashdon Road also east and to the rear of the properties that are located on De Vigier Avenue. To the north and west of the site is open countryside. Ten Acre Wood lies to the north of the application site, Whitehill Wood is situated to the north east and Pounce Wood to the southeast of the site. Opposite the application to the south of Ashdon Road is a current housing and commercial scheme which is being developed (UTT/0400/09/OP) The subject application site currently comprises of 13 hectares of commercial industrial units.

2.2 The Ashdon Road Commercial Centre contains 12 warehouse and industrial units which vary in size, with a majority of the buildings being located along the eastern part of the site.

2.3 There are large areas of concrete hardstanding surrounding the built form. Many of the buildings on site date back to 1950s and 1960s and many are showing to be beyond economic repair.

2.4 The main owner and occupant of the land is Ridgeons, a retail warehouse industrial unit for construction materials. The buildings on site are large in scale and are dominating. Although boundary vegetation and topography mean that the site is well screened to the west and south and partly screened close up along the east and north. There are large grassed areas either side of the access which form terraces at the southern end of the site, which is framed a native hedgerow, with levels falling steeply to meet Ashdon Road. A drainage pond is located to the west of the site. There is a hedge which runs along the southwestern edge which bounds the rear gardens of properties along De Vigier Avenue, together with other native and coniferous planting.

- 2.5 The character of the area surrounding the application site changes from one which is of an urban nature, to countryside, to one that is commercial/industrial.
- 2.6 The site is stated to be located on the mid-slopes of the valley sides north-east of Saffron Walden between 80 and 90 AOD (above ordinance datum). Generally the site slopes from north to south, with parts being terraced to accommodate the commercial buildings. These areas of ground levels are linked by concrete ramps and access roads. There is a vegetated area of higher ground is located to the north of the site at 93.5m AOD. From this point the ground levels slopes steeply down on both sides. The northeastern part of the site has a hardstanding area at 91.5m AOD. From this point of hardstanding area the levels fall to the main development area of approximately 84m AOD. From the developed area the ground falls further away to the south with a gradient slope increasing at the southern edge of the site to meet Ashdon Road. The ground slopes up away from the buildings along the eastern boundary. A dismantled railway line runs along the eastern edge of the boundary located within a cutting and it is surrounded by dense trees and scrub
- 2.7 There are no public rights of way which run through the site.
- 2.8 The site is surrounded by various constraints in the form of having high pressure oil pipes which run through the site, being located adjacent to a County Wildlife site, part of the sites frontage is protected special verge. The site falls within the airport safeguarding zone by which no buildings can exceed 15m in height, also the application site is located within 500m of the designated Saffron Walden Air Quality Management Area. ANCO Oil storage facility is located southeast of the application site. There are two oil pipelines which cross the site and are connecting to the oil storage facility, one running north-south down the centre of the site and the other across the southwestern corner of the site.
- 2.9 There is an existing electricity substation which is located to the northwestern corner of the wider site.
- 2.10 Outline planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of the site for a mixed residential and commercial use.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This application is for reserved matters on a section of the redevelopment of the wider Ashdon Road Industrial Estate, also known as Phase 1 (a). Planning permission was granted for "*Outline application for redevelopment of the site to provide up to 1.25 hectares of land to be used as a Builders Merchant and Yard (Use Class B8), up to 0.47 hectares of land to be used as Offices (B1(a)), up to 0.4 hectares of land to be used for Offices and/or Research and Development and/or Light Industrial (Use Class B1 (a), (b) and (c)), up to 1.16ha of land for use as Business, General Industrial and Storage and Distribution uses (Use Classes B1, B2 and/or B8), a Local Centre of up to 0.86ha for uses falling within Use Class A1, including a local retail store (with the net A1 retail floor space limited to 279m²), a cafe/restaurant/public house (Use Classes A3 and A4), a hotel (Use Class C1), up to 167 dwellings including affordable housing (Use Class C3) to be provided on 4.78 ha of land, together with public open space, landscaping and the provision of supporting infrastructure including replacement substations, and the demolition of existing buildings, with all matters reserved except for access*" (UTT/13/2423/OP) in November 2014.

- 3.2 The outline planning permission involved the demolition of the various industrial units on site and sites redevelopment comprising of the following;
- Up to 167 residential dwellings, including affordable housing covering an area of 4.78ha;
 - Replacement Builders Merchants and Yard for Ridgeons on 1.25ha;
 - Up to 0.47 ha of land to be used for offices and/or Research Development and/or Light Industrial (Use Class B1 (a), (b) and (C));
 - Up to 1.16 ha of land for use as Business, General Industrial and Storage and Distribution uses (Use Class B1, B2 and /or B8);
 - A Local Centre of up to 0.86 ha for uses falling within Use Class A1, including a local retail store (with the net A1 retail floor space limited to 279m²), and a up to a 40 bed hotel (Use Class C1) with a café/ family restaurant/ public house (Use Class A3 and A4)
 - The proposed scheme also includes the provision of public open space, landscaping and the provision of supporting infrastructure including replacement substations with all matters reserved except for access.
- 3.3 This application for reserved matters would involve the demolition of Units 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 on site located to the eastern half of the site, and the erection of a new Ridgeon's store encompassing a new building which would have the dimensions of 42.2m (w) x 98.2m (d) x 10.4m (h). There would be 2 separate accesses into the Ridgeon's building one catering for customers and the other for delivery vehicles and staff. This would also access two separate car parks. There would be external racking and storage proposed along the western side of the proposed building which would be between 4-5m in height.
- 3.4 Due to the change in ground levels within the site retaining walls are proposed along the eastern boundary and also outside of the phase redline to secure earth works. The levels and gradients will remain generally unchanged from the existing road, except with some minor changes to suit the proposed overlay of the existing road with new surfacing. The height of the proposed retaining walls would be approximately 1.2m in height.
- 3.5 65 car parking spaces including 6 disabled are allocated for customers to the south of the building. 36 car parking spaces are proposed along the western elevation of the building adjacent to the external storage areas to allow for easy loading. Within the staff car parking area there are 7 motorbike parking spaces, and 22 car parking spaces. Bicycle parking provision will be made for 20 covered cycle bays to the north and 6 uncovered to the south.
- 3.6 The delivery vehicles have been provided with a separate entrance and will be able to service the site in a clockwise one way system. The vehicles have been arranged in that there would not be any conflict with customers from the site. There is a 40m deep service yard which is proposed to the north of the site.
- 3.7 The scheme will be DDA compliant.
- 3.8 A 3m high weld mesh paneled fence is proposed to secure the site with electric strands over the top. Secure access gates to the site and the building are proposed as well as CCTV and operational/security lighting which is proposed both mounted on the building

and on the ground. No details of the CCTV and the lighting have been submitted as part of this application.

- 3.9 As part of the proposals a sub-station, fuel tanks, refueling and refuse areas are proposed but no details have been provided.
- 3.10 The details of the access road servicing this phase of the site, the bus turning facility to allow a bus stop at a later date and landscaping also forms part of this reserved matters application. The bus turning facility would be a one way system for buses and other vehicles. Spaces have been allowed for traffic on the one way loop to pass a stationary bus.
- 3.11 The proposed scheme would involve the demolition of buildings and the erection of a replacement Builders Merchants and Yard (use Class B8) consisting of a total site area of 1.81ha and the combined proposed newly created floorspace of the Ridgeons building would be 6,443m² (GEA). It should be noted that the outline consent allowed for 1.25 ha of land to be used for this purpose however the consent also allowed up to an additional 1.16 ha of land for use as Business, general Industrial and Storage and Distribution uses (Use Class B1, B2 and /or B8), thereby this scheme now utilizes an additional 0.56ha from the 'flexible' development leaving a balance of 0.6ha for future development from the consent.

4. APPLICANT'S CASE

- 4.1 A statement has been submitted by Ridgeons as part of the original outline application which stated the following;
- 4.2 "Ridgeons is one of the UK's largest independent Timber and Builders Merchants, supplying all the materials and services required to construct residential and commercial properties to the trade, professional DIY'ers and retail customers. Ridgeons supply over 18,000 products including showrooms displaying kitchens and bathrooms, heating and plumbing, sustainable products, hire equipment, landscape, timber and building materials.
- 4.3 Ridgeons has strong link with Saffron Walden since 1958, have been located at the former Acrow site since 1987 and this Branch together with that provided in Cambridge, and are the busiest and most active in the business portfolio. These two branches form the hub of the business. The retention of the Saffron Walden Branch is therefore of up most importance to the business.
- 4.4 The Saffron Walden Branch employs 85 staff and generates 20% of the Group's sales. There are over 5,500 account held by customers based in and around Saffron Walden with between 500 and 600 customers visiting the site each day to collect and order products.
- 4.5 Ridgeons also has strong community links in the form of the Ridgeon Community Fund providing grants to Saffron Walden Explorer Scouts, the Thaxted Centre for the Disabled and Support4sight. Annual staff fund raising for Help the Heroes in Carver Barracks is also undertaken while support is given to local events such as St Mary's Church Saffron Walden Festival of Flowers, Ashdon Primary School PTA and Saffron Walden Carnival.
- 4.6 The existing branch was created in 1980s by a refurbishment. Overtime this has been this has been further altered and refurbished, but has now pasted its economic life. The

building has become very expensive to maintain for both heating and lighting and it no longer complies with current environmental standards. The way products are handled, stored and displayed has also improved over the past 25 years and there is no longer a need for such a large building and outside storage areas. Customers are looking for more efficient way to buy and collect materials. While improvements have been delivered in other locations, the Saffron Walden Branch is now in need of urgent improvement.

- 4.7 The new Branch will be modelled on other new Ridgeons sites that have been provided across the region over the last few years. This is a proven model that has successful in offering the same range of products and services as currently offered, but on a more efficient site.
- 4.8 The Saffron Walden Branch will continue to provide the full range of products to our customer base in and around the town while supporting smaller Branches in the County. While the building and site are will be reduced, the overall scale of the operation will remain.
- 4.9 Their vision for the development is *“to create a sustainable, mixed-use development that provides a purpose built site for Ridgeon’s established Saffron Walden business, intensifies employment land uses to meet market need and provides market and affordable housing within a landscape structure and public open space.”*
- 4.10 The Design and Access Statement has been submitted in support of the application. It highlights that the main focus of the application is to upgrade and intensify the site’s employment land uses by providing accommodation that meets the current and future needs of businesses within the area. It has been stated that up to 400 jobs could be generated by the proposed development. The delivery of new houses will enable the redevelopment of the commercial and employment premises. The homes will also help meet the market and affordable housing requirements. The mixed use development will lead to greater opportunities to live close to locations of employment. The indicative master plan highlights areas of open space which would be within walking distance of the site. The application is located approximately 2km (1.24miles) from the town centre which provides various services and facilities, with the nearest school being within 20 minute walk from the site”.
- 4.11 Within the Design and Access Statement it is stated that the scale and mass of the building would comfortably sit within the site and what is envisaged for the future redevelopment of the site. It is also stated that the scale of the building has been design to incorporate service doors which would cater for the loading and unloading of HGV vehicles.

5. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

- 5.1 There have been numerous individual applications for various developments and changes of use on site however none that are considered to be of relevance to this application. There are other applications within Saffron Walden which are considered appropriate to take into consideration in terms of a wider strategic level in the form of the following;
- 5.2 UTT/13/0268/OP - Granite Site - Demolition of the existing buildings and redevelopment to comprise retail warehouse units and associated garden centre (Class A1), a discount foodstore (Class A1), and a cafe (Class A3), including associated landscaping, car park,

access, internal roads and cycle/footway, including the provision of access to adjoining land. Granted 10th May 2013; this is in the process of being implemented.

- 5.3 UTT/13/1937/OP - Land Behind The Old Cement Works, Thaxted Road - Outline application for up to 52 dwellings with all matters reserved except access – Granted September 2013;
- 5.4 UTT/0400/09/OP - Land At Ashdon Road - Mixed use development comprising the construction of 130 residential units (37 units of affordable housing) and approximately 3800 square metres of Class B1 employment land with associated access points, play areas, open space, landscaping and associated ancillary works – Granted July 2012; This is in the process of being implemented.
- 5.5 UTT/13/2060/OP - Land South And North Of Thaxted Road - Outline application with all matters reserved except access for residential development of up to 300 dwellings, pavilion building, extension to skate park and provision of land for open space/recreation use, including an option for a new primary school on a 2.4 ha site – Refused at appeal June 2015
- 5.6 UTT/13/3467/OP - Land South Of Radwinter Road - Outline planning application for either a residential development of up to 230 dwellings; Class B1 Business floorspace, extra care housing within Class C2, provision of public open space or for development of up to 200 dwellings, Class B1 Business floorspace, extra care housing within Class C2, provision of public open space, provision of land for a one form entry primary school; together with associated infrastructure including roads, drainage, access details from Radwinter Road and Shire Hill, with all matters reserved except access. Granted planning permission May 2015
- 5.7 UTT/13/2423/OP - Outline application for redevelopment of the site to provide up to 1.25 hectares of land to be used as a Builders Merchant and Yard (Use Class B8), up to 0.47 hectares of land to be used as Offices (B1(a)), up to 0.4 hectares of land to be used for Offices and/or Research and Development and/or Light Industrial (Use Class B1 (a), (b) and (c)), up to 1.16ha of land for use as Business, General Industrial and Storage and Distribution uses (Use Classes B1, B2 and/or B8), a Local Centre of up to 0.86ha for uses falling within Use Class A1, including a local retail store (with the net A1 retail floor space limited to 279m²), a cafe/restaurant/public house (Use Classes A3 and A4), a hotel (Use Class C1), up to 167 dwellings including affordable housing (Use Class C3) to be provided on 4.78 ha of land, together with public open space, landscaping and the provision of supporting infrastructure including replacement substations, and the demolition of existing buildings, with all matters reserved except for access – Granted November 2014
- 5.8 A Screening Opinion has been undertaken regarding the proposed development in the form of the following;
 - UTT/13/1044/SCO - proposed development of circa 170 residential dwelling and Circa 12,000m² commercial floor space. The Screening Opinion concluded that an EIA would not be required (dated 14th May 2013). The submitted application has not altered the scope of the scheme therefore the Screening Opinion issued is considered to still be relevant in receipt of this application.

- This application has also been re-screened of which it was concluded that an EIA would not be required.

5.9 The application site has been promoted through the draft local plan process.

6. POLICIES

6.1 National Policies

- National Planning Policy Framework

6.2 Uttlesford District Local Plan 2005

- S1 Development Limits for the Main Urban Areas
- SW6 Safeguarding Existing Employment Areas
- S7 Countryside
- GEN1 Access
- GEN2 Design
- GEN3 Flood Risk
- GEN4 Good Neighbourliness
- GEN5 Light Pollution
- GEN6 Infrastructure Provision to Support Development
- GEN7 Nature Conservation
- GEN8 Vehicle Parking Standards
- ENV4 Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Importance
- ENV12 Protection of Water Resources
- ENV13 Exposure to Poor Air Quality
- ENV14 Contaminated Land
- ENV15 Renewable Energy

7. SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

The Committee objected to the design of the bus turning circle and the junction with the spine road for the housing development. The turning circle should be one-way only, clockwise, and the junction of the Ridgeons access road, the turning circle exit, and the spine road should be in the form of a mini-roundabout. The crossing point for pedestrians from the spine road to the turning circle should be to the west of the junction and in the form of a full light controlled crossing.

8. CONSULTATIONS

Network Rail

8.1 No objections or further observations to make

National Grid

8.2 There are apparatus in the vicinity relating to gas, but no electricity apparatus.

NATS

- 8.3 The proposed development has been examined from a technical safeguarding aspect and does not conflict with our safeguarding criteria. Accordingly, NATS (En Route) Public Limited Company ("NERL") has no safeguarding objection to the proposal.

Affinity Water

- 8.4 Located in Ground water protection zone.

HSE

- 8.5 HSE does not advice, on safety grounds, against the granting of planning permission in this case.

Airside OPS Ltd

- 8.6 No objection.

Highways Agency

- 8.7 No objection.

Environment Agency

- 8.8 At present only the Surface Water Drainage Layout has been provided. In our previous correspondence (response to the outline planning permission) we recommended the following condition and identified specific issues which would need to be dressed as part of the detailed submission. The condition remains pertinent until full details of the surface The proposed development will only meet the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) policy to ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere if the following planning condition is included.

Condition The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on the agreed Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) Ridgeons Ltd Land at Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 2NH Reference: SJC/614633/JRC, 07 August 2013 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The drainage strategy shall include a restriction in run-off and surface water storage on site as outlined in the FRA giving priority to infiltration should ground conditions permit. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed.

N.B: It should be noted that this condition was imposed on the outline application and therefore would still need to be formally discharged and complied with.

ECC SUDs

- 8.9 Drainage Strategy report has not been submitted. The drainage condition should not be discharged until we have viewed the proposals.

N.B: It should be noted that this condition was imposed on the outline application and therefore would still need to be formally discharged and complied with.

Natural England

- 8.10 No further comments to make on these reserved matters. The proposed amendments to the original application relate largely to landscaping, and are unlikely to have significantly different impacts on the natural environment than the original proposal.

ECC Ecology

- 8.11 The proposed landscape masterplan appears to be similar to that proposed in the outline application, but not exactly the same. The advice and views of the applicant's ecologist must be in the context of the development. Therefore, the ecologist should advise as to whether the ecological impacts for the recently proposed reserved matters are the same as for the outline proposals, or how they will differ.

N.B: The masterplan was illustrative with all matters reserved apart from access. The access has been approved and conditions relating to ecology imposed on the outline would still need to be discharged separately.

UDC Environmental Health

- 8.12 The revised B8 land area proposed to be occupied by the Ridgeons facility has reduced the land area available for the proposed Business Park, which would have generated its own vehicular trips. The revision would lead to an overall reduction in vehicle movements accessing the local road network compared to the predictions submitted at outline stage. The findings of the Air Quality Assessment to satisfy condition 31 of the outline consent in its application to the Ridgeons facility are acceptable, in that an overall reduction in traffic will not be detrimental to the emission modelling outcomes provided at outline stage.
- 8.13 Also included in the assessment is reference to a slight increase in traffic using Elizabeth Way and Ashdon Road compared to the outline predictions due to traffic accessing the on-site convenience store, which had previously assumed no traffic from outside the site. The impact on emissions will be negligible, and mitigation to reduce the impact to a minimum will be reliant on sustainable transport conditions applied at outline stage relating to cycle provision, bus access facilities and EV charging points. Details have been submitted for residential and workplace travel plans and a further condition would be welcomed to require the provision and continued monitoring of travel plans for each phase of development at the reserved matters stage.
- 8.14 No comment can be made on the impact of the new substation facility on the proposed Ridgeons area, as no details have been included, however details will be required in due course to fulfil condition 30 applied at outline stage.

German Fisher

- 8.15 Confirm that our client's apparatus, the Government Pipelines and Storage System (GPSS), may be affected by the proposals. Therefore contact should be made with OPA Central Services before work commences on site.

Uttlesford Special Road Verges

- 8.16 Object on partial destruction of Special Roadside Verge and Calcareous Grassland. Mitigation measures were mentioned under the outline application but are not mentioned as part of this application. Therefore conditions would need to be applied to ensure that

the mitigation work is still carried out.

- 8.17 Site layout changes between the outline and the reserved matters application show more areas of Calcareous Grassland.

Highways

- 8.18 A transport assessment (TA) has been submitted in with this application to assess the impact of the increase in floor space at the builders' merchant (from 3741 – 5939m²) and decrease in office B1, B2 floor space (from 5067 – 3272m²) when compared to the outline application UTT/13/2423. The TA shows that there is a decrease in number of vehicles generated by the development but assumes that the increase in the builders' merchant will generate no extra traffic due to the re-organisation of operational structure of the stores and the use of the additional floor space for storage only. In order to ensure a robust assessment the Highway Authority has carried out a sensitivity test assuming that the traffic generation by the store does not have a discount applied due to operational changes. In this case more vehicles are generated by the increased store size, but this is more than offset by the decrease in the B1/B2 element and so therefore there is a minor decrease in the impact of the reserved matters application in relation to the outline application. Therefore the proposal is acceptable in highways terms, subject to the conditions outlined in application UTT/13/2423.
- 8.19 The internal layout proposed has been examined in terms of safety, accessibility, parking standards and deliverability. The layout has been subject to swept path analysis (to show its suitability for HGVs) and stage 1 road safety audit has been carried out. Following this work the highway authority finds the layout acceptable subject to the conditions below.
- 8.20 From a highway and transportation perspective the impact of the proposal is acceptable to the Highway Authority subject to (the following) mitigation and conditions.

Landscape Officer

- 8.21 No objections.

9. REPRESENTATIONS

- 9.1 The application has been advertised on site and within the local press. Neighbouring residential occupiers have also been consulted of the application. As a result 8 letters have been received raising the following points:
- Objection on Traffic and congestion
 - Highway safety
 - No objection in principle
 - Conditions under outline still need to be addressed
 - Proposal is a good idea
 - Happy that there is no residential, this forms part of this application.
 - Suggest a relief road be implemented to address the traffic and congestion on the east side of the town linking to M11
 - Retention of Ridgeons and its employment opportunities

- Sewage and drainage
- No information on impact upon biodiversity, species or habitat
- Special Roadside Verge adjacent to the entrance damaged or removed
- No details are provided of how it is to be protected from vehicle over-running during development, no details are provided of mitigation for any areas removed. At the very least any removed topsoil should be distributed thinly over an area of the larger Outline Approval site where it will remain undisturbed by any future phases and where the seed bank in the soil can potentially regenerate native grassland species.

10. APPRAISAL

The issues to consider in the determination of the application are:

- A Whether the design of the development is acceptable & impact upon amenity
- B Highways & Parking Standards
- C Air Pollution
- D Landscape
- E Other material considerations

A Whether the design of the development is acceptable & impact upon amenity

- 10.1 It should be noted that the principle of the scheme, for clarity as outlined in Section 3.2 of this report, has already been previously accepted as part of the outline application subject to conditions, therefore the matters for consideration are that purely reserved by the consent for this phase (1a) in the form of layout, appearance, scale and landscaping.
- 10.2 With regards to the proposed design of the scheme the NPPF and Local Plan Policy GEN2 seeks for quality design, ensuring that development is compatible in scale, form, layout, appearance and materials. The policies aim to protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas as a whole seeking high quality design.
- 10.3 The proposed design and appearance of the Ridgeons building is considered functional and appropriate in its context of location. The layouts of the building and the roads have been design around the high pressure pipes which are on site to prevent any harm. The proposed materials of metallic silvers and gun metal grey steel profile would provide a neutral colour code which would blend in with the rest of the industrial buildings once implemented. The proposed building would be 10.8m in height; this would be 1.8m higher than what was stipulated as a parameter within the outline. However, under the circumstances the building it would replace currently stands at 15m and the increase of 1.8m is considered to be acceptable. There are no neighbouring residential properties within close proximity that would be adversely affected. This is considered particularly the case in the context of the outline application and further commercial phases which are planned. This is in accordance with Policy GEN2 of the adopted Local Plan in this respect.
- 10.4 The building is designed to be DDA compliant both internally and externally, in accordance with Local Policy GEN1 and GEN2.

- 10.5 Through the incorporation of design techniques and principles the proposal will be able to discourage and minimise the risk of crime and anti-social behavior through natural and informal surveillance. It is proposed that there would be glass curtain corner that would form the main entrance. This would provide an element of perception of overlooking the customer car park area. The separation of customer and staff car parking areas, secured entrances, fencing, CCTV and security light would all facilitate to provide a secure and safe development. This is in accordance with Local Plan Policy GEN2 and the NPPF.
- 10.6 A Noise Assessment has been submitted as part of the outline application, whereby a condition has been imposed on details of all plant and machinery would need to be submitted for approval before the commencement of each phase, this would include details of the substation which is indicated on the submitted plans. The proposed lighting on the site may cause loss of amenity from glare to current and future residents of site and in close proximity to the site, however, no details have been provided as part of this application but a condition is imposed on the outline application whereby the details of lighting would need to be submitted before it is installed. The scheme is therefore in accordance with Local Plan Policy GEN4 and GEN2.

B Highways & Parking Standards

- 10.7 Local plan policy GEN1 states “*development will only be permitted if it meets all of the following criteria;*
- a) Access to the main road network must be capable of carrying the traffic generated by the development safely.*
 - b) The traffic generated by the development must be capable of being accommodated on the surrounding transport network.*
 - c) The design of the site must not compromise road safety and must take account of the needs of cyclists, pedestrians, public transport users, horse riders and people whose mobility is impaired.*
 - d) It must be designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities if it is development to which the general public expects to have access.*
 - e) The development encourages movement by means other than driving a car.”*
- 10.8 Local Plan Policy GEN1 seeks sustainable modes of transport which is reflected within National Planning Policy Framework
- 10.9 The proposal would provide a total of 123 car parking spaces which would comply with the maximum standards of 129 car parking spaces in accordance with the Essex Parking Standards (2009). However, the proposed car parking space sizes fall below the size standards of 2.9m x 5.5m at 2.5m x 5m, which are the old standards. There are no special circumstances which have been outlined to justify warranting smaller spaces. Nonetheless, whilst the scheme does not accord with parking standards in this respect the site would be within a contained industrial estate. The scheme would meet the number of car parking spaces required and the back to back distances to allow for maneuvering. If the scheme was designed to allow for the increase in parking spaces sizes this would inevitably result in lesser car parking spaces and reduced maneuverability around the site. It is there considered to be acceptable in this instance and generally in accordance with Local Plan Policies GEN1, GEN2, and GEN8, also the Essex Parking Standards (2009).
- 10.10A Stage One Safety Audit has been submitted as part of the application which has made a number of recommendations. A number of which affect other phases of the outline

consent which would be dealt with at that time, others are off site recommendations which would be dealt with via Section 278 Highway Agreement. As part of the Safety Audit it is proposed that the access will be marginally modified to provide visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m as opposed to 90m, which was originally proposed. By providing this visibility splay it would only slightly affect the special verge which is located to the front of the site as reduced amount of grass verge would be affected. In terms of highway safety no objection was raised regarding the proposed access, therefore the scheme is considered to accord with Local Plan Policy GEN1.

- 10.11 The bus turning facility has been amended to allow for one way vehicle movement, and the capability of passing stationary buses.
- 10.12A Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan has been submitted as part of the outline application. An updated Transport Statement has been submitted as part of the reserved matters. This has highlighted that the consumption of speculative B8 floorspace by Ridgeons amending their floorspace coverage from 3,741sqm (GIA) to 5,939sqm, whilst the scheme would still be in accordance with the approved outline consent, there would be a slight betterment in vehicle trip rates. There would be an increase in storage space area which would not generate vehicle movements in itself. Nonetheless, a number of off-site mitigation measures would still need to be undertaken as part of the agreed Section 106 Obligation.
- 10.13 In considering the above the proposed development still remains acceptable in highway terms subject to conditions. It is therefore in accordance with Policies GEN1, GEN2, and GEN8 of the adopted Local Plan (2005).

C Air Pollution

- 10.14 An Air Quality Assessment (AQA) has been submitted as part of the outline application. This stated that various assessments have been undertaken in order to establish whether the proposed development would have an adverse detrimental effect upon sensitive junctions within the Air Quality Management Area. A revised Air Quality note has been submitted as part of the reserved matters to take into account of the change in floorspace intake by Ridgeons and to satisfy the discharge of the outline consent which seeks an updated highway assessment and air quality assessment with each phase.
- 10.15 The UDC Environmental Health has been consulted as part of the application, whilst the EHO has confused the land take situation, as stated above in Section 10.12 the intake of a greater floorspace by Ridgeons would result in a slight improvement of vehicle movements and in turn would result in an improvement in Air Quality. The additional floorspace is required by Ridgeons for operational reasons to accommodate storage of bulky lightweight goods and would not as a result lead to additional traffic movements. No objection has been raised by UDC Environmental Health and the scheme therefore still complies with Local Plan Policies GEN4 and GEN2.

D Landscape

- 10.16 The proposed landscaping whilst limited it is considered appropriate due to the nature of the scheme, incorporating and retaining existing trees and hedges. Landscaping is proposed along the western boundary of the site which would screen the external storage and soften the appearance of the site from the main spine road. The proposed

development would enhance the level of biodiversity of the site from what currently exists on this part of the site. No objection has been raised by the Landscaping Officer. The landscaping details for this phase are in accordance with Policy GEN7 of the Local Plan.

E Other material considerations

10.17 Concerns have been raised by a number of consultees, namely Environment Agency, ECC SUDs, ECC Ecology, UDC Special Road Verges and third parties, regarding that the conditions have not been discharged or submitted relating to drainage and ecology. Whilst this phase of the reserved matters has been submitted before the submission of conditions, the conditions do not fall away the developer will still need to submit the details for approval and any approved reserved matters would need to accord with those details or would need to be amended so that they do. It should be noted that 20 conditions relating to this phase has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority which are under consideration.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 The proposed size, scale, design and layout of the store and associated parking, external storage, landscaping, roads and bus turning facility are considered to be acceptable. No additional harm is considered upon the amenity of the locality in accordance with Local Plan Policies GEN1, GEN2 and GEN4.

11.2 Whilst the proposed car parking spaces are below standards in size this is considered acceptable in consideration of the site's location in this instance and in order to be able to achieve the number of required car parking spaces and turning tables.

11.3 The increase in floorspace intake for Ridgeons for the purposes of operational storage would decrease the number of vehicle movements that that floorspace would have generated as part of the other phases which form part of the outline application. In considering the above the proposed development is acceptable in terms of highways subject to recommended conditions; it is also therefore in accordance with Policies GEN1, GEN2, and GEN8 of the adopted Local Plan (2005)

11.4 The intake of a greater floorspace by Ridgeons would result in a slight improvement of vehicle movements and in turn would result in an improvement in Air Quality. No objection has been raised by UDC Environmental Health and the scheme therefore still complies with Local Plan Policies GEN4 and GEN2.

11.5 The landscape details submitted are considered to be acceptable and would soften the boundaries of this industrial location. No objection has been raised by the Landscaping Officer, therefore the landscaping details for this phase are in accordance with Policy GEN7 of the Local Plan.

11.6 The concerns raised by a number of consultees regarding the lack of information on conditions at this reserved matters stage is not an issue as the conditions which have been imposed at the outline application stage would still need to be submitted for approval prior to the commencement of the works, unless the condition trigger states otherwise, and the approval of this reserved matters does not fetter this from happening. If the design of the reserved matters needs to be amended due to problems at a later date then this would need to be amended at that time.

RECOMMENDATION – CONDITIONAL APPROVAL

Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this decision.

REASON: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The proposed development shall not be occupied until such time as the vehicle parking area indicated on the approved plans, including any parking spaces for the mobility impaired, has been hard surfaced, sealed and marked out in parking bays. The vehicle parking area shall be retained in this form at all times. The vehicle parking shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles that are related to the use of the development unless otherwise agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that on street parking of vehicles in the adjoining streets does not occur in the interests of highway safety and that appropriate parking is provided, in accordance with GEN1, and GEN8 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (2005), also Uttlesford Local Parking Standards (2013) and Essex Parking Standards (2009).

3. The internal road junctions with the internal spine road (as shown in principle on plans 582090/610 P3, 582090/611 P3 and 582090/612 P2) at their centre lines shall be provided with a clear to ground visibility splay with dimensions of 2.4 metres by 43 metres in each direction or the direction of approaching traffic where one way working is proposed, as measured from and along the nearside edge of the carriageway. Such vehicular visibility splays shall be provided before the road junction is first used by vehicular traffic and retained free of any obstruction at all times.

REASON: To provide adequate inter-visibility between vehicles using the road junctions in the interest of highway safety in accordance with policy DM1 of the Development Management Policies as adopted as County Council Supplementary Guidance in February 2011.

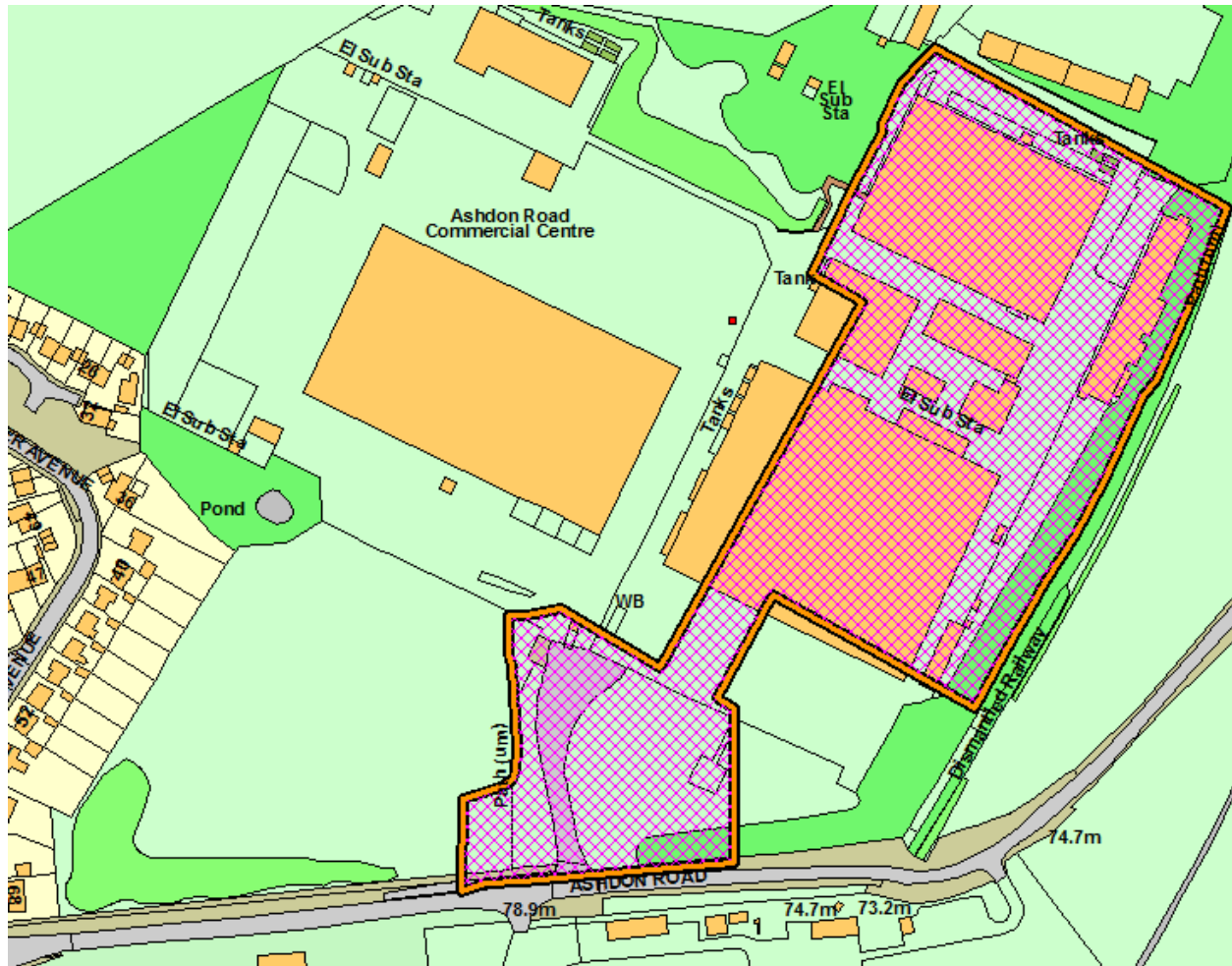
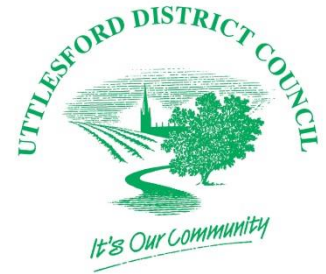
4. Before development commences cross-sections of the site and adjoining land, including details of existing levels around the building(s) hereby permitted and any changes in level proposed, together with the proposed floor levels within the building(s), shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: In order to minimise the visual impact of the development in the street scene and the wider development of the site in accordance with Policy GEN2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005).

Justification: The details of the heights of the buildings would need to be submitted for approval prior to the commencement of the development to ensure that the resulting appearance of the development is safeguarded and the amenity of the surrounding locality is protected.

Application no.: UTT/15/0455/DFO

Address: Ashdon Road Commercial Centre, Saffron Walden



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Organisation: Uttlesford District Council

Department: Planning

Date: 18 June 2015

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