

Planning, Transport & Sustainability Division
Planning and Rights of Way Panel 24.6.14
Planning Application Report of the Planning and Development Manager

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| Application address: Unit C Brooklands Courtyard First Avenue SO15 0LJ | | | |
| Proposed development: Change of use of Units A, B And C (Brooklands Courtyard) from a Warehousing Use (Use Class B8) to a Training Centre Use (Use Class D1). | | | |
| Application number | 14/00692/FUL | Application type | FUL |
| Case officer | Andrew Gregory | Public speaking time | 5 minutes |
| Last date for determination: | 19.06.2014 | Ward | Redbridge |
| Reason for Panel Referral: | Departure from the Development Plan | Ward Councillors | Cllr McEwing Cllr Whitbread Cllr Pope |

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| Applicant: Carillion Plc | Agent: Gerald Eve Llp |
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| Recommendation Summary | Conditionally approve |
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| Community Infrastructure Levy Liable | The proposed use does not trigger any CIL liability. |
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Reason for granting Permission

The site is safeguarded for Industry and Warehousing use under Saved Policy RE10(ii) of the Local Plan Review. Whilst the proposed training centre (Use Class D1) does not strictly accord with the site specific designation, the Council is satisfied that the site has been marketed for a sufficient period without take up, and the proposed skills training for the construction industry is a suitable alternative use for the site. Furthermore the development would bring this vacant building back into use.

The development is acceptable taking into account all other relevant policies and proposals in the Development plan as set out below. Overall the principle of this scheme is acceptable, particularly as it would provide continued employment use for the site and the proposed use will not prejudice neighbouring commercial and industrial activities.

Other material considerations have been considered and are not judged to have sufficient weight to justify a refusal of the application, and where applicable conditions have been applied in order to satisfy these matters. The scheme is therefore judged to be in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and

thus planning permission should therefore be granted. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority offered a pre-application planning service and has sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner as required by paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

Policies - SDP1, SDP3, SDP4, SDP7 and REI10(ii) of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review (March 2006) and policies CS6 and CS7 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (January 2010).

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| Appendix attached | | | |
| 1 | Development Plan Policies | | |
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Recommendation in Full

Conditionally approve

1.0 The site and its context

- 1.1 The application site has an area of 0.2 hectares and comprises three interconnected units (A-C) authorised for warehousing use. Access is taken from First Avenue with forecourt parking located to the front of the site with additional parking within the middle of the site.
- 1.2 The surrounding area is commercial in nature and safeguarded for industry and warehousing uses. Polyclear plastics factory is located to the south-east, Formerton builders merchants are located to the north-west and SETA engineering training centre is located opposite.
- 1.3 On-street parking is restricted on one side of First Avenue with no parking Mon-Sat 8am-6pm.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 Carillion plc seek to convert the vacant warehouse and office space into a training centre to provide skills training for the construction industry. The buildings will be fitted out to provide classroom lessons, workshop training areas and supporting administration. No external changes are proposed to the existing buildings on site.
- 2.2 The submission indicates that the training centre's employees and apprentices will be mainly from the local area; with assessors and placement/monitoring officers to be local tradesman. It is anticipated that 92% of the apprentices will be from the surrounding Millbrook area. The expected staff numbers will be 10 and they aim to recruit around 90-100 apprentices each year with apprenticeships lasting from 12 months - 3 years on average. They would expect to have approximately 160 apprentices on programmes at any one time.
- 2.3 The submission indicates that 17 car parking spaces are available on site.

3.0 Relevant Planning Policy

- 3.1 The Development Plan for Southampton currently comprises the “saved” policies of the City of Southampton Local Plan Review (March 2006) and the City of Southampton Core Strategy (January 2010). The most relevant policies to these proposals are set out at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into force on 27th March 2012 and replaces the previous set of national planning policy guidance notes and statements. The Council has reviewed the Core Strategy to ensure that it is in compliance with the NPPF and are satisfied that the vast majority of policies accord with the aims of the NPPF and therefore retain their full material weight for decision making purposes, unless otherwise indicated.
- 3.3 The site is safeguarded for light industrial, general industrial and storage and distribution uses within Classes B1 (c), B2 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) under saved policy RE1 10 'Industry and Warehousing' of the Amended Local Plan Review and identified as such on the Policies Map.
- 3.4 Policy CS 7: Safeguarding Employment Uses: Policy CS 7 of the Core Strategy 'Safeguarding Employment Sites' is also relevant to consider with the proposal. This states that all existing employment sites and allocations will be safeguarded for employment use unless it satisfies the specified criteria. In this instance, the following criteria would apply;
- i. There is clear evidence that a site is not, and is not likely to become, viable for employment use; or
 - ii. There is strong justification to release a site from employment safeguarding, on the following grounds:
 - a) The redevelopment of the site, given its specific location, could deliver strong and distinctive planning / regeneration benefits.
- 3.5 In relation to the above, the applicant has provided marketing material that demonstrates that this site has been vacant for around five years. This will need to be considered in relation to satisfying criteria i above.
- 3.6 Paragraph 22 of the NPPF is also a relevant consideration whereby it is stated that planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. It is further stated that where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities. The proposed training centre would satisfy the NPPF requirements.

4.0 Relevant Planning History

- 4.1 Planning permission was granted for the existing warehouse and construction of hardstanding and loading facilities on 26.11.1985 under application ref W19/1670.

5.0 Consultation Responses and Notification Representations

- 5.1 Following the receipt of the planning application a publicity exercise in line with department procedures was undertaken which included notifying adjoining and nearby landowners, placing a press advertisement (06.05.2014) and erecting a site notice (16.05.2014). The application was advertised as a departure on 16.5.14. At the time of writing the report **no** representations have been received. The following is a summary of the points raised:

Consultation Responses

- 5.2 **SCC Highways** - No objection subject to a condition to secure 17 parking space and scooter and cycle parking facilities.

The Carillion Training company already occupies premises accessed from Third Avenue, a short distance from this site. There is also another training company, Seta, located near this site. Due to the nature of the training provided and the age and circumstances of the apprentices, vehicle traffic generation at the site is low, but the applicant states that there is provision of 17 parking spaces on site. Using our current parking standards, this would comply with our low accessibility area providing parking for up to 20 staff and 135 students. In addition to this the Highway Team require provision of cycle parking at the rate of 1 space per 4 students (expected on a daily basis), and 1 space per 10 staff, in a covered, secure and overlooked space. Some students ride scooters, and a suitable parking area should be provided for these.

- 5.3 **SCC Environmental Health (Pollution & Safety)** - No objection

6.0 Planning Consideration Key Issues

- 6.1 The key issues for consideration in the determination of this planning application are:

- Principle of development;
- Visual Impact;
- Impact on residential amenities;
- Highways and parking.

6.2 Principle of Development

Whilst the proposal strictly represents a departure from policy REI 10 of the Local Plan Review, which safeguards the area for industry and warehousing use, the proposed training centre is considered to be a 'good fit' for the site and would be compatible with neighbouring commercial use within First Avenue. Skills training for the construction industry is a suitable use within a safeguarded employment area and it should be noted that Carillion currently occupy units 1 and 2 within Brazier Industrial Estate, Third Avenue.

- 6.3 The existing warehousing has been vacant for 5 years and sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate the site has been marketed for industry and warehousing use.

- 6.4 It is noted from the supporting letter that the training centre will provide a source of valuable local employment. It is not known in this instance how many jobs the

training centre would create. However, it is accepted that the site (although not providing traditional employment uses (B1-8 uses)) would be compatible with neighbouring employment uses and would provide a valuable contribution to the local economy through the provision of skills to locally unemployed residents. This could therefore serve as a catalyst for providing additional jobs locally.

6.6 It is recommended that a condition is attached to the permission which would prevent the premises being used for any other purpose other than as a training centre (including any other purpose within Class D1). This would help to control any future potential use of the site.

6.7 Impact on the appearance of the area

No external changes are proposed to the building and therefore the development will have no visual impact.

6.8 Impact on nearby residential amenities

The nearest residential properties are a considerable distance away on the north side of Millbrook Road. The development will have no adverse impact on those residents having regard to the nature of the use and separation distance from those properties. There is existing background noise for surrounding commercial uses and traffic noise on Millbrook Road. The Council's Environmental Health team has raised no objection to the proposal.

6.9 Highways

The provision of 17 parking spaces accords with the Council's maximum car parking standards. It is anticipated that many of the staff and apprentices will be from the local area and therefore the site can be reached sustainably. Cycle and scooter parking should be secured by condition.

7.0 Summary

7.1 Whilst the proposed training centre (Use Class D1) does not strictly accord with the site specific designation, officers are satisfied that the site has been marketed for a sufficient period without take up, and the proposed skills training for the construction industry is a suitable alternative use for the site. The Council is satisfied that the site has been marketed for a sufficient period without take up, and the proposed alternative use is acceptable on the basis that it brings this vacant site back into use and supports the local job market.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Documents used in the preparation of this report Background Papers

1(a), 1(b), 1(c), 1(d), 2(b), 2(d), 4(f), 4(g), 4(vv), 6(a), 6(c), 7(a), 8(a), 9(a), 9(b).

AG for 24/06/14 PROW Panel

PLANNING CONDITIONS

01. APPROVAL CONDITION - Full Permission Timing Condition - Change of use

The use hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date on which this planning permission was granted.

Reason:

To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990(as amended).

02. APPROVAL CONDITION - Only be used for the D1 use specified in the Description of Development

The premises shall only be used for the use specified in the Description of Development above and for no other purpose whatsoever, including any other purpose in the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Amendment Order 1991, (or in any equivalent provision in any statutory instrument revoking or re-enacting that Order), Class D1.

REASON: To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain control over the development to ensure that suitable employment use is retained on the site.

03. APPROVAL CONDITION - Parking

Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, the development to which this consent relates shall not be brought into use in full or in part until a minimum of 17 car parking spaces, secure covered space for 40 bicycles and provision for scooter parking are laid out within the site for the benefit of staff/apprentices, in accordance with plans to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The car parking, cycle storage and scooter parking shall thereafter be retained on site for that purpose.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety, to secure a satisfactory form of development and to encourage cycling as a sustainable form of transport.

04. APPROVAL CONDITION - Approved Plans

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed in the schedule attached below, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON:

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

POLICY CONTEXT

Core Strategy - (January 2010)

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| CS6 | Economic Growth |
| CS7 | Safeguarding Employment Sites |
| CS13 | Fundamentals of Design |
| CS18 | Transport: Reduce-Manage-Invest |
| CS19 | Car & Cycle Parking |
| CS24 | Access to Jobs |

City of Southampton Local Plan Review – (March 2006)

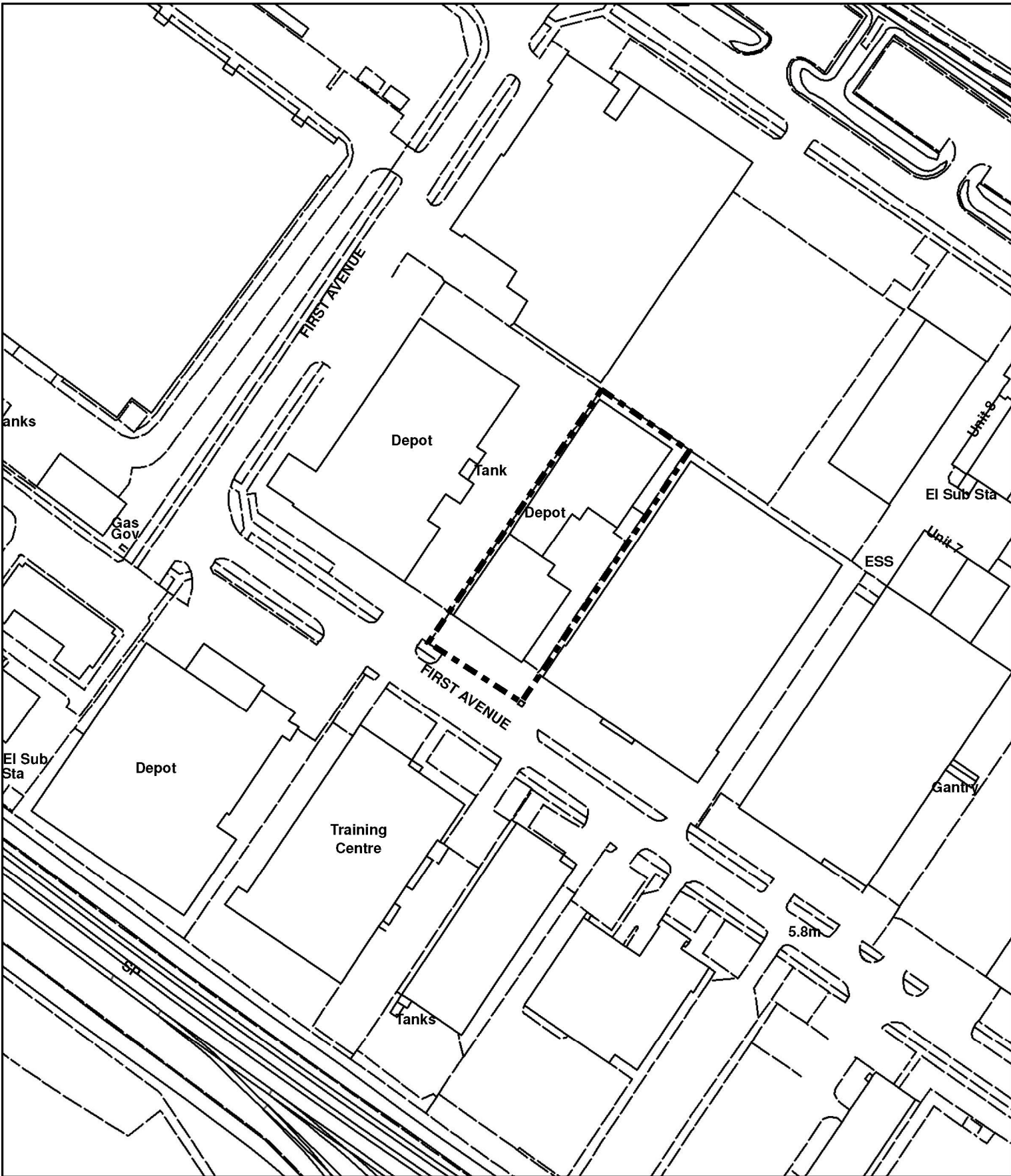
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|-------|--------------------------|
| SDP1 | Quality of Development |
| SDP4 | Development Access |
| SDP5 | Parking |
| SDP16 | Noise |
| REI10 | Industry and Warehousing |

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Parking Standards SPD (September 2011)

Other Relevant Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012



Scale: 1:1,250