

21st September 2018

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Dear Joe,

18/01004/FUL – Hybrid application seeking detailed planning permission for a 5,034 sq.m of commercial office space (Use Class B1), 502 sq.m day nursery (Use Class D1), 1,742 sq.m Aldi food retail unit (Use Class A1), 204 sq.m Costa Coffee retail unit and drive-thru (Use Classes A1 and A3), with associate parking, landscaping and infrastructure works. Outline planning permission sought for the erection of 8,034 sq.m of commercial office space (Use Class B1), together with associated car parking, landscaping and infrastructure works, with all matters reserved - except access (resubmission).

You will note that revised plans were supplied last week in respect of the above development. I am now in a position to provide further details.

Since original submission in May 2018, my client has had firm letters (appended to this letter) of intent from Bloor Homes Ltd and Ridge and Partners Ltd who intend to fully occupy two B1a office units on the site. This has resulted in the following changes to the scheme:

- The removal of Costa Coffee (A1/A3) at the front of the site and replacement with an office unit (B1) to provide new accommodation for Ridge and Partners LLP.
- Overall amendments to the landscape masterplan, including the introduction of additional planting islands, tree planting and reduction in hardstanding.
- Amendments to office 1 to meet new user requirements, including removal of undercroft parking, to meet new user requirements for Bloor Homes Ltd.

In light of the above changes, I would ask that the description of development is changed to include office 5 (B1) (869 sq.m (GIA)), due to the removal of the Costa Coffee and the drive-thru (A1/A3) from the scheme.

I am pleased to enclose the following documents to supplement our previous submissions. These include:

- Drawings sections.
- Hard and soft landscape plans, tree plans.
- Landscape Implementation and Management Plan.
- Design and Access Addendum.
- Updated Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy.

- Transport technical Note by Transport Planning Associates (TPA).
- Updated Economic Impact Assessment by Hardisty Jones Associates.

Previous refusal reasons

We are mindful of the previous reasons for refusal which are summarised below:

- 1. Due to the amount of the site given over to non-B1 uses, in combination with the prominent position they would occupy on the site, the development would result in a dilution of the character and function of the site as a business (sic- park) and represent an inappropriate balance between B1 and non-B1 uses.*
- 2. The development would result in an increase in traffic on the surrounding road network in the evenings and at weekends in addition to the AM and PM weekday peaks – resulting in an unacceptable impact upon the local road network which is already heavily used.*
- 3. The proposed layout of the site results in a predominance of hardstanding and retaining structures which result in a poor appearance and does not create an attractive streetscape or strong sense of place which responds to the character of this transition location. The edges of the site give the layout a cramped and contrived appearance exacerbated by exterior features such as the ‘drive thru’ lane and external yard. The proposal is therefore harmful to the surrounding area and also fails to create a high quality business environment in this edge of town location.*

Predominance of B1 uses

In responding to RR1 as summarised above and following further discussions, my client now proposes to remove ‘Costa Coffee and the drive-thru’ from the development and replace it with a new office space of 869 sq.m (GIA). This space would serve the functional requirements of Ridge and Partners Ltd, whilst also replacing what was an A1/A3 use with additional B1 floorspace to meet the requirements of what is now a named user. RR1 also raised concerns in respect of the prominent siting of ‘non-B1’ uses on site. The removal of Costa Coffee (a A1/A3, non-B1 use), would ensure a B1 use is located prominently at the main entrance to Corinthian Park.

It is also relevant that changes have been made to office unit 1 to meet the requirements of named occupier, Bloor Homes who would use the facility as a main regional HQ, generating of new jobs. Letters of intent from both named occupiers have been enclosed with this letter.

In economic impact terms, it is relevant that the change would have a direct positive impact on the economic benefits of the proposal. The introduction of an additional 869 sq.m (GIA) of B1 floorspace and would result in an increase in the employment offer on site from previously 1018 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs to 1039 (FTE jobs) and an increase in annual wage generation from £33.93m to £34.96m. The methodology and detailed analysis in this respect is set out in the enclosed updated Economic Impact Assessment conducted by Hardisty Jones Associates. Since original submission in May 2018, my client has had a firm letter of interest from Bloor Homes Ltd and Ridge and Partners Ltd who intend to occupy two of the B1a office units.

The changes to the scheme would result in 86% of the total floorspace of the scheme now falling within a B1 use. Furthermore, 4 of the 5 buildings forming part of the detailed scheme would now be linked to named occupiers and 72% of floorspace associated with the detailed component of the hybrid application would be for B1 uses.

This would ensure that the application site at Grovefield Way would represent an important source of supply of office space. To date, there has been no physical progress on the delivery of the original outline B1 office scheme on the site first granted (by appeal) in 2007. My client has worked directly with future occupiers to ensure that both an attractive and functional business park environment, with complimentary uses, can be provided to ensure the real delivery of a B1 led development.

It is clear that the economic benefits of the proposals are significant and that substantial weight should therefore be applied to these benefits when determining the amended proposal, particularly in the context of the NPPF's drive for the planning system to contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. It is our firm view that this would continue to meet the aims of policies SD2 and SD3 of the JCS.

Highway safety

RR2 raises concerns in relation to the impact of the development on the local highway network as a result of perceived increased traffic generation from the site. However, during recent discussions with the Council in respect of the pending appeal to that scheme, the Council have decided not to contest this reason for refusal, particularly in light of the fact that the Local Highway Authority raises no objection to the proposals.

The amendments referred to in this letter are supported by a Transport Technical Note produced by TPA. Overall, however, it is demonstrated that the current revised scheme would continue to offer appropriate levels of car and cycle parking and the revised development schedule would result in a reduction in vehicle trip attraction during the weekday and Saturday peak hours in comparison to the previous development schedule. In summary, the proposed changes would not give rise to an adverse impact on highway safety and the residual cumulative impact on the road network would not be severe.

Design and layout

RR3 raised concerns in relation to the layout design of the proposal and appearance. The removal of the Costa Coffee and its drive-thru lane from the front of the site and replacement with a new office 5, has resulted in a significant reduction in the amount of hardstanding at the main entrance, with much of the former drive-thru lane turned over to soft landscaping, as depicted in the revised drawings. This reduces the perceived cramped nature of this part of the site, allowing for an office building to be located prominently at the entrance to the site, hard landscaping to be reduced and a greater sense of openness to be created around the building and along the frontage of the site.

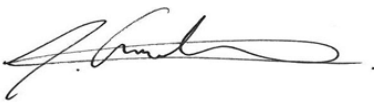
Importantly and in addition to specific changes relating to the newly introduced office 5 for Ridge and Partners Ltd, hardstanding has been extensively reduced across the existing car parking areas and along the frontage of the site allow for additional soften landscaping to be introduced in response to the concerns raised. Landscape walkways and outside seating areas remain to ensure an attractive environmental for workers. These changes are summarised in detail within the accompanying Design and Access Statement Addendum produced by DDP.

Office units 3 and 4 remain in outline form, with all matters accept access reserved for future consideration. This allows the detailed part of the development, which contains the largest quantum of development and named occupiers to be developed swiftly, with office units 3 and 4 to follow with their respective design being tailored to user requirements.

Overall, it is considered the latest changes to the proposed development address the concerns raised by the Council in respect of the layout of the development. The changes have enabled hardstanding to be reduced and landscaping to be increased, in addition to B1 uses now being positioned more prominently on site. As illustrated on the landscape masterplan, the development would appear less cramped along its fringes and the presence of hardsurfacing would be less dominant in visual terms. This is particularly evident through the removal of the 'drive-thru' lane at the entrance to the site and landscape enhancements around the vicinity of Aldi to the South.

We look forward to your response once you have reviewed our submission.

Yours sincerely,



James Griffin
Associate Planner
For Hunter Page Planning/Ridge and Partners LLP

Enclosed.