
APPLICATION NO.	20/01539/FULLS
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION - SOUTH
REGISTERED	08.07.2020
APPLICANT	Mr Harry Hutchinson, Adanac Business Park Ltd
SITE	Land At Adanac Park , Nursling Street, Nursling, , NURSLING AND ROWNHAMS
PROPOSAL	Change of use of Units D1 & D2 from B1(c) Light industrial to B1(c) Light industrial and B8 Storage & Distribution
AMENDMENTS	Additional information received 21.07.20 & 07.08.20
CASE OFFICER	Mr Paul Goodman
	Background paper (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application is presented to Southern Area Planning Committee because it is contrary to the provisions of an approved or draft Development Plan or other statement of approved planning policy, adverse third party representations have been received and the recommendation is for approval.

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 Adanac Park is a 29 hectare site located to the east of the M271 and extends in a southerly direction from the Nursling Street to adjoin Brownhill Way from which vehicular access is taken. The site is separated from the M271 by mature hedgerow planting and, with the exception of the presence of the Ordnance Survey, is predominately laid for grazing. The wider site also includes land to Yew Tree Farm and Bargain Farm (both listed buildings). To the east of Adanac Park sits Home Covert (a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation) and the residential areas of Hillyfields and Nursling.
- 2.2 This application site is located to the north of the existing Ordnance Survey Building and comprises areas known in the planning history as AP 1-4. The site was historically used for gravel extraction but now comprises semi-improved grassland that modestly increases in height as the land extends east to adjoin Home Covert. There is presently no vehicular access to the site with the existing spine road ending in proximity to the Ordnance Survey.
- 2.3 Development has commenced under the extant permissions and Building D, the subject of the proposed change of use, is under construction and the building (D) is substantially complete.

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The application proposes change of use of Units D1 & D2 from B1(c) Light industrial to B1(c) Light industrial and B8 Storage & Distribution.

3.2 The proposed change of use is for a specified user (Asendia UK Ltd). The proposed business would be relocating and expanding their existing Southampton location to the Adanac location. Employees are understood to be engaged in skilled data software and office based roles, and manual handling positions. Additional information has been submitted describing the operations of the business as follows;

3.3 Asendia is a multinational ecommerce business focusing on software solutions, distribution management, fulfilment & returns management. The UK is the group's second largest subsidiary with c350 employees, of which 125 employees work across the fulfilment operations in Bedford and Southampton (Chandlers Ford). The core distribution business is based at Heathrow. Key activities: the Southampton facility will cover the following 4 activities from Adanac Park;

- >98% of all outbound dispatches will be to consumer addresses and include letters, magazines & small goods parcels;
- Mailing fulfilment - personalised (print) & collate/produce postcards, envelope & magazine packs;
- Manage returns solutions for direct mail & ecommerce;
- Manage storage & fulfilment of consumer ecommerce parcels.

3.4 The submitted information also includes a Footprint Usage Profile for the proposed facility: as follows:

- Mailing & print production machinery c25%;
- Bulk storage c30%;
- Returns collation & processing c10%;
- Shelf storage c15%;
- Handwork, manual direct finishing/enclosing & ecommerce pick/pack c20%.

4.0 **HISTORY**

4.1 19/02524/RESS - Approval of appearance, layout, scale and associated landscaping of a new light industrial building pursuant to 19/00786/VARS. Approved 16.12.2019.

4.2 19/00786/VARS - Variation of Condition 29 of 18/01543/OUTS (Erection of a Business Park with both Outline and Full details comprising: Outline - Buildings G, H, J, K, L, M and N comprising uses falling within B1 of Use Class Order, associated infrastructure/enabling and landscape works, principle parking layouts, amendments to existing footpath and additional pedestrian/emergency vehicle access and; Full - Buildings A, B and C for business use (Class B1a), Buildings D, E and F for business use Class B1c) and associated infrastructure/enabling works including above and below ground services, parking and access, refuse stores, new electrical sub-station, landscape works, improvement work and minor amendments to existing footpath, landscape and planting strategy (including lighting proposals) and drainage strategy) to substitute drawings to the following; 18079-2001-PL-F Proposed Site Plan; 18079-3001-PL-A Building D Ground Floor Plan; 18079-3002-PL-A Building D Mezzanine Floor Plan; 18079-3003-PL-B Building E Ground Floor

Plan; 18079-3004-PL-B Building E Mezzanine Floor Plan; 18079-3005-PL-A Building F Floor Plan; 18079-3501-PL-A Building D Roof Plan; 18079-3502-PL-A Building E Roof Plan; 18079-3503-PL-A Building F Roof Plan; 18079-4001-PL-B Building D Elevations; 18079-4002-PL-C Building E Elevations; 18079-4003-PL-B Building F Elevations; 18079-5001-PL-A Building D Sections; 18079-5002-PL-A Building E Sections; 18079-5003-PL-A Building F Sections; DD272L01 A Planting Plan 1 of 9; DD272L02 A Planting Plan 2 of 9; DD272L03 A Planting Plan 3 of 9; DD272L04 A Planting Plan 4 of 9; DD272L05 A Planting Plan 5 of 9; DD272L06 A Planting Plan 6 of 9; DD272L07 A Planting Plan 7 of 9; DD272L08 A Planting Plan 8 of 9; DD272L09 A Planting Plan 9 of 9; DD272L11 A Landscape General Arrangement; DD272L12 A Tree Protection Plan; DD272L13 A Tree Volume & Pit Details; DD272R02 A Landscape Management Plan. Permission 25.06.2019.

5.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

5.1 **Planning Policy & Transport (Policy) – Comment;**

- If permission was to be granted, then the mixed use of Class B1c and Class B8 should be restricted to the proposed individual name occupier only, in order to avoid general open Class B8 use being established.

5.2 **Estates & Economic Development (Economic Development) – Support:**

- The Office for Budgetary Responsibility (OBR) forecasts (15 July 2020) that in 2020 GDP will fall by 11-14%, unemployment will rise from 3.9% to 10-13% and the economy will not return to its pre-pandemic level until 2021-2024.
- Between January and June 2020 Test Valley's benefits claimant rate rose by 170%; including Southampton, New Forest and Eastleigh the number of claimants rose by 13,000.
- The storage element of business (Ascendia) seeking to occupy units D1 and D2 represents less than half of the floorspace and would provide 75 jobs.
- Support these applications which reflect businesses who want to invest, provide jobs and contribute to the economic recovery on Adanac Park.

5.3 **HCC Highways – No objection, subject to conditions**

6.0 **REPRESENTATIONS** Expired 06.08.2020

6.1 **Nursling & Rownhams PC – Objection;**

- The Parish Council would like to make a general point in relation to change of use applications – when a planning application was submitted by Barker Mill back in 2014 for B8 use (14/00132/OUTS) it was refused by TVBC planning. The refusal reasons included lack of road infrastructure for the use specified, noise mitigation measures, proximity to residential development and contrary to the provision in the local plan. An Appeal was also refused by the Inspectorate. The reasons for the 2014 refusal are still very much valid today.
- As soon as one or two units get permission for B8, a precedent will be set and others will surely follow and we'll end up with what Barker Mill wanted back in 2014.

- The business that has been put forward for the B8 use produces, stores and dispatches letters, magazine and parcels. This would produce a large increase in the amount of traffic using Adanac Drive.
- The introduction of a site for B8 site & distribution is contrary to Policy LE6 of the TVBC Local Plan.
- We cannot let this happen and, therefore, strongly object to a change of use to B8.

6.2 **1 representation of Comment received from Ordnance Survey;**

- The Ordnance Survey would not support any change from B1 Business Class to B8 Storage and Distribution on Adanac Business Park. However, by exception, on the basis that the change to B8 is personal to the specified occupier, being Asendia UK Ltd, for their software solutions, distribution management and consumer delivery, we will not object to the application on this occasion.
- Ordnance Survey would object to any general of blanket change of use to include B8 Storage and Distribution.

7.0 **POLICY**

7.1 **National Planning Policy Framework 2019** National Planning Policy Framework.

7.2 **Test Valley Borough Local Plan 2016** COM2 (Settlement Hierarchy), E1 (High Quality Development in the Borough), E2 (Protect, Conserve and Enhance the Landscape Character of the Borough), E5 (Biodiversity), E9 (Heritage), LHW4 (Amenity), T1 (Managing Movement), T2 (Parking Standard), LE6 (Land at Adanac), LE11 (Main Town Centre Uses).

8.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The application seeks to widen the use of the previously approved buildings. No external alteration to the scheme is proposed and as a result the main planning considerations are the principle of the change of use and the impact of the changes on highways.

8.1 **Principle of Development**

The application site is situated within the settlement boundary of Nursling and Rownhams and is allocated under Policy LE6 (Adanac Park) for development of for office/research/manufacturing (Class B1) and exceptionally support facilities. Policy LE6 also requires development to be designed to a high standard to respect the characteristics of the site, including its existing development and neighbouring land uses; and provide appropriate improvements to the transport network. Policy LE10 requires the retention of employment land and strategic employment Sites. The sites is identified for employment use and defined as a Strategic Employment Site (Annex E of the TVBRLP).

- 8.2 The principle of development was established under previous planning permissions (para 4.1 & 4.2), which provided for a variety of employment (Class B) uses across the site. The building the subject of the application was restricted to B1c (light industrial) uses. The current planning permission which has been implemented with construction nearing completion on buildings E-G on site. The proposed change of use relates to part of building D.
- 8.3 The application is limited to the change of use only, which would expand the permitted uses for this part of building D from Class B1c only, to additionally include Classes B8 (Storage & Distribution) for the use of a specific named occupier of Ascendia UK Ltd.
- 8.4 The current applicant (Oceanic Estates) recently took ownership of the majority of the wider Adanac Park and has brought forward the land to the north of the Ordnance Survey with works having recently commenced on the mixed office and light industrial development. In addition other areas of the wider site have been subject to recent permissions which sought to expand permitted uses to provide greater flexibility in the mix of permitted uses in order to increase the attractiveness of the site to a wider range of potential occupiers. Specifically application 19/01117/FULLS at Yew Tree Farm, Adanac proposed expansion of permitted B1(a) and B1(b) uses to include medical D1 (Non-residential institutions) uses. Southern Area Planning Committee (SAPC) resolved to grant permission in August 2019 and the application will be issued on completion of a legal agreement. On the adjacent Bargain Farm site application 19/00374/OUTS permitted a park and ride facility and health campus with wider uses than the B classes in the allocation policy.

8.5 Test Valley Borough Council Revised Local Plan 2016

The site lies within the settlement boundary for Nursling. Policy LE10 (Retention of Employment Land and Strategic Employment Sites) states that:

On existing employment sites, allocated employment sites, or sites with planning permission for employment use, which have not yet been fully implemented, development for an alternative use will be permitted provided that:

- a) the land is no longer required to meet economic development needs of the area; or
- b) the current activity is causing, or could cause significant harm to the character of the area or the amenities of residents; and
- c) it would not have a significant detrimental impact on the operation of the remaining occupiers of the site.

On strategic employment sites identified in Annex E development for an alternative use will be permitted provided that:

- d) it would not have a significant detrimental impact upon the continued primary use of the site for employment; and
- e) criteria a), b) and c) have been satisfied.

8.6 Loss of industrial/employment land to an alternative use

The application site lies within an existing employment area and has an emerging and permitted industrial use, which constitutes an employment activity for the purposes of Local Plan Policy LE10. Given the location of the site within a purpose built and landscaped industrial estate, the use of the unit for wider industrial purposes is unlikely to cause significant harm to the amenities of the area or remaining occupiers. Neither does the use adversely affect the character of the area. In this respect criteria b) and c) of LE10 does not apply to the current use.

8.7 Criterion a) of policy LE10 provides for the change of use continues by indicating that on existing employment sites, alternative uses may be considered if it can be demonstrated that the land is no longer required to meet economic development needs. Whilst the proposed change of use would continue to provide employment it would be based on mixed B1/B8 use rather than the permitted B1 uses. However the applicants have indicated that they are agreeable for the occupation of the mixed to use unit to be solely for the identified occupant. A condition can be applied to limit the mixed use to the occupant and specifically provide for the continued B1 use. As a result, should the stated occupier cease to operate, the previously permitted B1 employment use identified in the allocation policy could be reinstated without further permission.

8.8 Paragraph 6.51 of the TVBLP 2016 states that;

“The Council will permit other forms of development on these sites, if it can be demonstrated that they are no longer required to meet economic development needs through for example, evidence of market signals. The Council will expect evidence to show that positive marketing of the site has been undertaken. Proposals for the loss of sites will need to demonstrate the benefits of the proposed use and that the local economy will not be harmed.”

8.9 This is echoed by para.120 of the NPPF which states that

“Planning policies and decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land. They should be informed by regular reviews of both the land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability. Where the local planning authority considers there to be no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the use allocated in a plan:

a) they should, as part of plan updates, reallocate the land for a more deliverable use that can help to address identified needs (or, if appropriate, deallocate a site which is undeveloped); and

b) in the interim, prior to updating the plan, applications for alternative uses on the land should be supported, where the proposed use would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area.”

8.10 Marketing

The application is supported by evidence of marketing. Construction of the building commenced speculatively in July 2019 and is substantially complete at the time of reporting, marketing has continued throughout this period. The submitted marketing information is comprised of an overview and detailed records of advertisements and enquiries from June 2017 to July 2020. The submitted overview highlights positive attributes of the development including its location, building quality and specification but has identified that potential occupiers have been deterred by the restrictive uses and the unpredictability of the market resulting from Brexit. The Economic Development Officer has advised that this wouldn't be helped by Covid and the predicted slowdown in economic growth. The report also highlights that development of the Adanac site has been sporadic with development by single occupiers limited and spread over a number of years. The units, now nearing completion, are the first speculative development of the site and were constructed with the aim of generating momentum for the remainder of the site. The submitted details of marketing and enquiries substantiate a pattern of interest beyond the scope of the original permission.

8.11 Whilst a 6 month post construction period, as referenced in the Policy Officers comments, is considered to be reasonable in most cases it is not specifically provided for in the policy or supporting text. In this case it is considered that there are other material considerations in relation to the site and wider estate and the benefit of the proposed use that leads to the conclusion that the local economy would not be harmed by the proposed change of use.

8.12 The submitted information confirms that limited negotiations with any other prospective occupiers have taken place. In addition, there are numerous other units within the same development which are currently being marketed for lease including units of comparable size to the application site. The additional evidence submitted with the application, and reviewed in relation to the recent applications which permitted a wider variety of uses in the units in the wider estate; demonstrate a level of vacancy.

8.13 The submitted information has also been reviewed by the Economic Development Officer who has advised that given the evidence of how the development has been marketed generally over the years and specifically since the current business park started in July 2019. The Economic Development Officer has commented that The Office for Budgetary Responsibility (OBR) forecasts (15 July 2020) that in 2020 GDP will fall by 11-14%, unemployment will rise from 3.9% to 10-13% and the economy will not return to its pre-pandemic level until 2021-2024. Between January and June 2020 Test Valley's benefits claimant rate rose by 170%; including Southampton, New Forest and Eastleigh the number of claimants rose by 13,000. The storage element of business (Ascendia) seeking to occupy units D1 and D2 represents less than half of the floorspace of the whole building and would provide 75 jobs. The proposed change of use would maintain the development momentum of this important site which has struggled to achieve a continuation of business activity over many years. The Economic Development Officer has expressed support the applications which reflect

businesses who want to invest, provide jobs and contribute to the economic recovery on Adanac Park.

- 8.14 It is also noted the premises (Units D1 and D2) constitute a small proportion of the overall development and should not prejudice the remainder continuing in Class B1 use. In this context, it is considered that the wider site should remain for the Class B1 use for which it is identified (Policy LE6) and has planning permission, and for which there is an identified planning requirement. Representations have raised concern that that application would set a precedent for B8 development on the wider site. However the application is limited to the specific users of this site for a mixed use. There is no proposal to widen the B8 use to the site as a whole. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) generally advises against the use of personal permissions but identifies that there may be exceptional occasions where development that would not normally be permitted may be justified on planning grounds. In this instance it is considered that an exceptional circumstance has been created by the current economic situation which has coincided with the completion of the speculative development at this key employment site in the borough. In accordance with the advice of the Economic Development Officer it is considered essential to support the use of the employment site. In addition the storage and distribution element forms only part of the proposed uses business and the permission would not allow use of the wider site for more traditional pure storage and distribution uses. As a result it is considered appropriate and necessary in this instance to limit the occupation of the building to the named business.
- 8.15 Subject to the restrictive use condition above the development to allow a mixed use of the units is considered to be a suitable departure from Policy LE6. In addition the marketing information indicates that there is currently limited demand for the permitted use and that therefore the units are not currently required to meet the specific B1 economic development needs and would therefore comply with Policy LE10.
- 8.16 NPPF
In addition to the national policy on alternative uses in par.120 referenced above Part 6 (Building a strong, competitive economy) at para 80 states that;

“Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development”
- 8.17 Furthermore para 81(d) states that planning policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to enable a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.

8.18 Conclusion on the Principle of Development

Given the limited proportion of the site to change use, and the retention of the permitted B1c use as a fall back the proposed change of use would not have a significant detrimental impact upon the continued allocated use of the site for Class B1 type employment in accordance with Policies LE6 and LE10. In addition the proposed development is supported by the relevant economic policies within the NPPF. In this instance the proposed development is therefore considered a suitable departure from the restricted use classes specified in Policy LE6 and acceptable in principle.

8.19 **Impact on the character and appearance of the area**

The proposed change of use will not result in external alterations to the physical structure of the building. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not result in any adverse harm to the character or appearance of the area.

8.20 **Impact on highway safety**

Following the submission of a transport assessment the Highways Officer has raised no objection to the proposed change of use. The assessment provides information regarding the existing highway network surrounding the site, connectivity with respect to walking, cycling and public transport, an assessment of personal injury accidents and an assessment of the forecast impacts on transport resulting from the proposed development. In summary, the earlier comments made by the highway authority on Application 18/01543/OUTS remain relevant which respect to the description of the existing highway network, connectivity and personal injury accidents. The Highways Officer has identified no issue with these items with respect to this application. The assessment explains that the site access and delivery/servicing arrangements will remain as previously permitted.

8.21 The assessment provides a forecast of the likely impact on traffic generation resulting from the proposed change of use. It is forecast that there will be a slight reduction in overall traffic generated by these particular units following the change of use however it is also likely that the units will generate more frequent large vehicle trips based on the proposed B8 storage and distribution uses. Overall, it is considered that fewer trips in total, although potentially more larger vehicle trips, will not result in a significant impact on the highway network and the Highways Officer has raised no objection. A condition has been applied to ensure the parking relevant to this particular unit is in place prior to occupation and the wider transport conditions on the application for the whole estate will remain. No concerns are raised in regard to site layout due to its existing position and consents. As a result the proposed change of use is considered to have no significant adverse impact on highways or pedestrian safety and complies with the relevant T policies of the TVBRLP.

8.22 **Neighbouring amenities**

The application site benefits from a relatively isolated location in relation to neighbouring residential properties which are situated to the east on the other side of the woodland. The layout and design of the building remains as previously permitted and it is not considered that the proposed use, restricted

to the proposed occupier, is inherently noisier than the permitted B1c use. As a result it not apparent that the proposed change of use would result in any adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties and complies with policies LHW4 and E8 of the TVBRLP.

8.23 **Economic Benefits**

Adanac is one of the most exceptional employment site in Hampshire. At two thirds of a million square feet of Class B1 floor space its scale is significant at a sub-regional level but, also, it was first identified as a reserve employment site five decades ago. For many reasons, development of this important site has been slow and sporadic.

8.24 The Holiday Inn Express was the first development followed by consent for the Ordnance Survey HQ. After a further 10 years Marine Guard took a speculative unit on the 140,000 sqft Adanac business park, being developed by Oceanic Estates. Oceanic's collaborative ethos is delivering a high quality, speculative business park for the long-term.

8.25 In the years since Adanac was first identified for development demand for offices and factories has changed markedly through global and online competition for commercial activity. The commercial property market is challenging and following a positive spell in 2019 confidence fell again. This is compounded by the current health crisis.

8.26 As stated above the Economic Development Officer's advice is that permission should be granted for the proposed mixed use in order to maintain the development momentum of this important site which has struggled to achieve a continuation of business activity over many years. Finally, given the anticipated economic consequences of Corona virus, this letting should help to promote the profile and availability of Adanac for the future.

8.27 In addition the supporting information indicates an expanding employment level to 75 equivalent full time staff which compares favourably to a B1c use. Furthermore the outfitting of the unit to provide for the use represents a significant investment. Overall the economic benefits of the proposed use are considered to be a significant material consideration in favour of permission.

8.28 **Planning Balance**

The proposed development would result in part of the site being occupied for a use class outside of its original allocation, albeit still in a mixed use including the allocated B1 use. However as identified above the proposed change of use is not considered to have a significant detrimental impact upon the continued primary use of the site for employment. In addition the proposed use is considered to confer significant economic and social benefit to the area. As a result, on balance, the proposed development is considered acceptable.

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1 It is considered that proposed use represents an appropriate departure from Policy LE6 and complies with policy LE10 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan and is therefore acceptable in principle. In addition the application proposes significant economic benefits and it is further considered that the proposed development would cause no adverse harm to the character and appearance of the area, public highway network or amenities of neighbouring properties.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

PERMISSION subject to conditions and notes:

1. **The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years from the date of this permission.
Reason: To comply with the provision 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. **Prior to the first occupation of any part of the change of use floor space hereby permitted parking spaces identified within the development to serve that floor space, including disabled parking, permitted under application 19/00786/VARS shall be constructed, surfaced and laid out in accordance with the approved plans. A minimum of 42 spaces shall be allocated to the units and shall be maintained at all times for this purpose.
Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy T2.**
3. **The development hereby permitted shall be limited to B1c (Light Industrial) or a mixed B1/B8 use, in accordance with Condition 4 below, and for no other use falling within Class B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).
Reason: To ensure the retention of allocated B1 employment uses on site and to ensure that vehicle movements and parking do not exceed the mitigated levels in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan Policies LE6, LE10, T1 and T2.**
4. **This permission shall be personal to Asendia UK Ltd and shall not enure for the benefit of the land nor any other person or persons for the time being having an interest therein.
Reason: To ensure the retention of allocated B1 employment uses on site and to ensure that vehicle movements and parking do not exceed the mitigated levels in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan Policies LE6, LE10, T1 and T2.**

Notes to applicant:

1. **The development hereby permitted shall be carried out and completed strictly in accordance with the submitted plans, specifications and written particulars for which permission is hereby granted or which are subsequently submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority and in compliance with any conditions imposed by the Local Planning Authority.**

- 2. In reaching this decision Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) has had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. TVBC work with applicants and their agents in a positive and proactive manner offering a pre-application advice service and updating applicants/agents of issues that may arise in dealing with the application and where possible suggesting solutions.**