

<b>APPLICATION NO:</b>	18/00018/FUL
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Manor Park Industrial Estate, Stuart Road, Runcorn
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Proposed demolition of existing buildings and erection of a new warehouse/ manufacturing facility (use class B1/ B2/ B8) with associated car parking and service road
<b>WARD:</b>	Daresbury
<b>PARISH:</b>	Sandymoor
<b>AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S):</b>	Sandon Global Engraving Technology Ltd
<b>DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALLOCATION:</b> National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005) Halton Core Strategy Local Plan (2013)	Primarily Employment Area
<b>DEPARTURE REPRESENTATIONS:</b>	No 1 letter received
<b>KEY ISSUES:</b>	Principle of development; Loss of undesignated green space, Tree/ habitat and ecology issues, Design, Flooding and Drainage, Highways, Employment Retention and Creation
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	Approve Subject to Conditions

**SITE MAP**



## **THE APPLICATION SITE**

### **The Site**

Site of approximately 0.87 hectares within a Primarily Employment Area as defined by the Halton Unitary Development Plan. Site of former Betabyte Hydraulics facility the site is now vacant. An existing commercial building lies to the south west with shared access. The site fronts Stuart Road and is bounded by Longbenton Way to the rear/ south east. A public footpath link connecting Longbenton Way and Stuart Road runs along the north east boundary of the site with woodland beyond. The site includes a linear planted strip of land along this boundary between the original site and the adjoining footpath which is currently in the ownership of Halton Borough Council.

### **Planning History**

None directly of relevance.

## **THE APPLICATION**

### **The proposal**

The proposed development comprises the demolition of the existing buildings and erection of a new warehouse/ manufacturing facility (use class B1/ B2/ B8) with associated car parking and service road. The proposals will provide for approximately 2963m<sup>2</sup> of manufacturing and warehousing floor space and 1054m<sup>2</sup> of office space over two floors. The new building will accessed via the existing shared access road from Stuart Road for staff and visitors. HGV deliveries and servicing are proposed from a new one way service road accessing from Stuart Road and exiting onto Longbenton Way to the rear of the site.

### **Documentation**

The applicant has submitted a planning application, drawings and the following reports:

- Tree Survey
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Bat Survey Report
- Transport Statement
- Phase 1 Desk Study and Phase 2 Geoenvironmental Report
- Drainage Strategy and Soakaway Report
- Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 to set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

Paragraph 196 states that the planning system is plan led. Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per the requirements of legislation, but that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 197 states that in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 14 states that this presumption in favour of sustainable development means that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF; or specific policies within the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

The government has published its finalised Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) to compliment the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

### **Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005)**

The following Unitary Development Plan policies and policy documents are relevant to this application: -

- BE1 General Requirements for Development
- BE2 Quality of Design
- GE11 Protection of Incidental Greenspaces
- PR6 Development and Flood Risk
- TP12 Car Parking
- TP16 Green Travel Plans
- E3 Primarily Employment Area
- E5 New Industrial and Commercial Development

### Halton Core Strategy Local Plan (2013)

The following policies, contained within the Core Strategy are of relevance:

- CS1 Halton's Spatial Strategy
- CS2 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CS4 Employment Land Supply and Locational Priorities
- CS18 High Quality Design
- CS23 Managing Pollution and Risk

### Joint Waste Local Plan 2013

- WM8 Waste Prevention and Resource Management
- WM9 Sustainable Waste Management Design and Layout for New Development

### Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Design of New Industrial and Commercial Development SPD

### CONSULTATIONS

The application has been advertised via the following methods: site notices posted near to the site, press notice, and Council website. Surrounding residents and businesses have been notified by letter.

The following organisations have been consulted and any comments received have been summarised below in the assessment section of the report:

United Utilities – No Objection in Principle

SABIC UK – Confirmed No Observations

#### Council Services:

HBC Highways – No Objection in Principle

HBC Drainage – No Objection in Principle

HBC Open Spaces – No Objection in Principle

HBC Contaminated Land - No Objection in Principle

## REPRESENTATIONS

1 letter of representation has been received from an adjoining business. This raises the following issues/ queries around how the following will be managed:

*“1.Segregation of work vehicles and associated disruption.*

*2.Noise levels and how they will be controlled.*

*3.Contaminates to air, dust, hazardous substances etc.*

*4.Asbestos - could we see a copy of the asbestos register, if the building does contain asbestos then obviously we need assurance about its safe removal before demolition starts.*

*5.Fencing off of the area*

*6.Detail around how the building will be demolished.*

*7.Any anticipated disruption to building services i.e. power*

*8.Anticipated time scale for the work*

*9.Any other measures that will be taken to ensure minimal disruption”*

A response has been provided that it is common for any planning permission for development of this scale to be subject to a condition requiring submission and agreement of a Construction Environmental Management Plan. Whilst this would cover a number of the issues raised to demonstrate how consideration can be given by the developer to minimising associated impacts, the Council's powers in this regard are considered limited. Many of the issues raised are covered by alternative legislation including for example Construction Design Management Regulations, Control of Asbestos Regulations and Health and Safety legislation. No further comment or response has been received.

## ASSESSMENT

### Background

Sandon Global was founded in 2004 and is currently based a Boleyn Court in Manor Park, Runcorn. They are manufacturers of new and refurbished specialist rolls, sleeves and cylinders for the print industry. This includes an isolated Engineering Department and Laser Engraving facility, with state of the art high definition Thermal Optic Lasers. These lasers are housed in a clean room condition environment which is climate controlled, plus includes anti-vibratory foundation flooring to ensure quality and consistent engravings are produced.

Sandon Global have seen significant growth year on year since launch and is now successfully developing its worldwide export markets. The current premises are no

longer sufficient to meet the needs of the company and they have identified this site and are now proposing a purpose built facility.

### Principle of Development

The site is designated as a Primarily Employment Area in the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP). UDP policy E3 provides that development falling within uses B1, B2 and B8 will be permitted in such areas. The proposals are therefore considered acceptable in principle.

### Design and Character

The proposal is for a modern industrial building for B1, B2 and B8 uses with gross external area of 4,017 square metres including 1,054square metres of offices to the first and second floors. The building measures 77m by 38.5m with a height to the ridge of 12.7 metres.

The building will be of classic portal frame construction and the external materials will comprise a mix of cladding not dissimilar to a number of other units in existence in the area and across the Borough. The front elevation is shown to be a significant proportion of glazing giving a modern character to the building. The glazing is shown to be full height to the ground floor to allow the company to showpiece the high quality laser machines to be seen from outside. Detailed materials are to be agreed by condition.

The Site Layout Plan shows two separate entrances. Staff and visitors will utilise the existing access from Stuart Road with car parking shown for 44 spaces. There will be a number of spaces allocated for electric vehicles. A new and separate HGV and servicing access road is proposed from Stuart road, along the north east side of the building. This will exit onto Longbenton Way providing a left out only arrangement. No hours of use have been proposed but it is not considered that any significant issues should arise if the unit would operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is not therefore proposed to restrict hours of use.

The proposals as originally submitted proposed the loss of all trees and planting from the rear of the site fronting Longbenton Way. This was to allow for regrading of the embankment and replacement planting was proposed. Given the character of this road with substantial planting along almost its entire length it was considered that, given the harm resulting from the loss of this planting and the length of time required for replacement planting to mature, such loss could not be accepted. The applicant has therefore amended the proposals to reduce the need for regarding in this area by incorporating a retaining wall structure. This should minimise the need for loss of trees and planting and allow a degree of retention along the land directly adjoining Longbenton Way thereby lessening the immediate harm. The proposals as amended are considered an acceptable compromise.

The building and wider development is considered to be of a quality appropriate to the site and wider area and, notwithstanding the loss of green space and planting, will represent a significant improvement on the existing development at the site. Issues relating to loss of greenspace, planting etc are addressed elsewhere within this report.

### Highways

The Site Layout Plan shows two separate entrances. Staff and visitors will utilise the existing access from Stuart Road with car parking shown for 44 spaces. There will be a number of spaces allocated for electric vehicles. A new and separate HGV and servicing access road is proposed from Stuart Road, along the north east side of the building. This will exit onto Longbenton Way providing a left out only arrangement. The new service road is argued by the applicant as being integral to the delivery and servicing needs of the business. The land required to deliver the access road is currently under the ownership of Halton Borough Council. Agreement to transfer ownership of that land is to be dealt with parallel to the planning process. The new service road is proposed to remain private and will not form part of the adopted highway. It has been designed to be one way and controlled at either end by gates or barriers.

The application is supported by a Transport Statement. The site is argued to be in a sustainable location with suitable walking and cycling links and links to public transport. The proposals as amended also include provision to improve footpath links from the building to the existing network on Stuart Road which can be required by Grampian style planning condition. The proposals are considered likely to have a negligible impact on the wider highway network. Whilst numerous amendments have been required, it is considered that the scheme demonstrates appropriate provision can be made for access, servicing and parking. On that basis Councils Highways Engineer has confirmed that they raise no objections in principle.

### Drainage and Flooding

The application site is identified as lying within Flood Risk Zone 1. It is also below 1 Ha in area and, as such, no detailed Flood Risk Assessment is required. In accordance with national and local policy the proposed development is considered to be located within an area of low flood risk. The application is supported by a drainage strategy/ surface water drainage plan. A soakaway report has also been supplied demonstrating that this would not provide a suitable means of drainage. The application states that it is intended that the site will be drained to existing foul and surface water systems.

United Utilities has confirmed that they raise no objections in principle. They have however also recommended conditions relating to submission and agreement of a plan for drainage management and maintenance. They have stated that they are not in a position to comment on any future submission in this regard. It is not considered

that such a recommended condition relating to drainage maintenance and management plan can be justified with respect to the application of the 6 tests contained within the NPPF.

The LLFA, whilst raising no objection in principle, has queried the level and means of attenuation. This has been queried with the applicant and members will be updated should any issues arise or this cannot be satisfactorily addressed.

### Loss of Trees, Incidental Open Space and Ecology

The proposals will result in the loss of a number of trees and other vegetation from the site. In order to facilitate the construction of the new service road a linear hedgerow and area of incidental green space will be lost from the north east boundary of the site. Issues relating to the loss of trees and planting to the embankment adjoining Longbenton Way have been addressed above.

The Council's Open Spaces Officer has confirmed that there are no trees afforded Statutory Protection at this location and the site is not situated within a Conservation Area. It is acknowledged that the proposal appears to require the removal of a significant number of trees and hedgerow to facilitate the build, however the affected trees/hedgerow do not appear to be worthy of statutory protection. They do however provide an element of ecological connectivity for species at Manor Park.

Of primary concern is the loss of the hedgerow and green space along the north east boundary of the site and the resultant loss of screening currently provided by the vegetation to be lost in this area. This will mean that the proposed new service road and servicing areas will be particularly visible from the footpath which will be retained running through the retained open space. The site will not contain enough remaining space to mitigate the loss of trees, hedgerow and habitat replacement and there is no suitable public open space nearby to accommodate such a replanting programme. Some scope for replacement planting has been identified adjoining the exit of the new service road to Longbenton Way which will provide limited mitigation and screening at this point. Whilst such loss of screening and visibility of service areas is normally resisted, it is considered that the impact on the wider area will be limited with harm largely limited to views from the adjoining footpath as a belt of woodland, trees to be retained fronting Longbenton Way and the proposed development will largely screen such areas from any wider public vantage point. The retention of trees/ planting to the boundary with Longbenton Way, the woodland to the north east and limited scope for replanting are also considered to retain a degree of ecological connectivity. Such harm must also be balanced against the wider economic and employment benefits of the scheme.

The Council's Open Spaces Officer has confirmed that there are no formal ecological constraints associated with the proposal. Whilst recommended that all works comply with current bird nesting legislation, it is confirmed that the appropriate surveys have been carried out for bats. The Council's retained adviser has acknowledged that the



submitted bat report sets out proposals to avoid and mitigate impacts on the local bat population. Mitigation with respect to bird nesting boxes and further mitigation with respect to transplanting orchids and treatment of invasive species (*Rhododendron ponticum* and *Cotoneaster horizontalis*) are also recommended. It is considered that such details and measures can be secured by appropriately worded planning condition.

### Employment Benefits

The proposal reports to result in a number of employment benefits to the Borough. The applicant has stated that:

*“Sandon was established in Halton in 2004. Beginning with 3 employees the company has grown to a position where it currently has 56 full time employees including 5 apprentices. Over the next 5 years they anticipate increasing staff levels to 75 full time employees. Therefore the proposals will create approximately 20 new jobs in the next 5 years. The proposed new build headquarters is being deigned to accommodate this number of staff on day one but with allowance for significantly more staff in the future as it is anticipated that this will be Sandon’s headquarters for decades to come.*

*Sandon manufacture highly technical and sophisticated engineering products. The purpose of our new site is to become their new global headquarters containing Research and Development, Manufacturing, Engineering, UK & European Sales and Administration functions. The jobs being retained and created are therefore good quality engineering, sales and administrative roles including apprenticeships. This development will help to secure and retain highly skilled jobs in Halton, and as mentioned earlier help the highly specialised metal powder processing industry in Halton to grow even more jobs.*

*It should be noted that Sandon spent 12 months looking for suitable HQ premises within the borough and surrounding areas and were unable to find any suitable properties. The Betabite site on Stuart Road is the only viable option in the borough and it is only viable if they can secure the adjacent strip of land. It is therefore clear that this development represents the only realistic prospect for the expansion of Sandon Global within Halton.”*

The company also currently has 6 apprentices and this is reportedly expected to rise to 8 by April. Job creation, retention and the wider economic benefits of the scheme are a material consideration and can be afforded not insignificant weight in this case.

### Contamination

The application is supported by both Phase 1 (desk study and preliminary assessment) and Phase 2 (intrusive investigation and risk assessment) reports. These have been reviewed by the Council’s Contaminated Land Officer who has confirmed that there has been provided limited information regarding the previous

site uses and potential areas, sources of contamination or the rationale for the distribution of sampling locations. Notwithstanding that, the sampling has identified an impact across the site by hydrocarbon contamination, possibly as a result of failure of the bunding around an oil storage area. The report concludes that the identified contamination will require remediation, and it acknowledges that further site investigation will be required to fully characterise the area of impact before a detailed remedial strategy can be developed. The Contaminated Land Officer has confirmed broad agreement with the recommendations for further investigation and a remediation strategy (with associated verification reporting). On that basis no objection is raised in principle. Given that it would be appropriate to undertake the further site investigation after the clearance of the current buildings on site, it is advised that further phases of investigation, an appropriate remediation strategy and subsequent validation can be adequately secured by appropriately worded planning condition if permission is to be granted.

### Waste

The proposal involves construction activities and policy WM8 of the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (WLP) applies. This policy requires the minimisation of waste production and implementation of measures to achieve efficient use of resources, including designing out waste. In accordance with policy WM8, evidence through a waste audit or a similar mechanism (e.g. site waste management plan) demonstrating how this will be achieved must be submitted and can be secured by a suitably worded planning condition.

The applicant has not provided information with respect to provision of on-site waste storage and management to demonstrate compliance with policy WM9 of the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan. It is considered that this can be secured by a suitably worded condition.

### Summary and Conclusions

The proposed development comprises the demolition of the existing buildings and erection of a new warehouse/ manufacturing facility (use class B1/ B2/ B8) with associated car parking and service road. The proposals will provide for approximately 2963m<sup>2</sup> of manufacturing and warehousing floor space and 1054m<sup>2</sup> of office space over two floors. The new building will be accessed via the existing shared access road from Stuart Road for staff and visitors. HGV deliveries and servicing are proposed from a new one way service road accessing from Stuart Road and exiting onto Longbenton Way to the rear of the site.

This element of the scheme raises particular issues with respect to the loss of incidental open space, tree and hedgerow planting and associated character and ecological impacts. The loss of screening to servicing areas means such elements will undoubtedly become more visible and prominent. The applicant has argued that the new service road is integral to the delivery and servicing needs of the business.

Given the justification as outlined above it is considered that the economic and employment benefits for the Borough can be argued to outweigh any harm resulting

It is considered that the development will for a good quality building offering potential employment opportunities and should therefore be welcomed. The proposals are considered to be of a quality suited to the site in keeping with the area and adjoining developments. It is considered that issues raised as a result of the original submission have been adequately addressed and that any outstanding issues in can be resolved by way of oral update and/ or appropriately worded planning conditions.

### RECOMMENDATION

The application be approved subject to Conditions relating to the following:

1. Standard 3 year timescale for commencement of development
2. Specifying approved and amended plans
3. Requiring submission and agreement of a Construction Environmental Management Plan including wheel wash
4. Materials condition(s), requiring the submission and approval of the materials to be used (BE2)
5. Landscaping condition, requiring submission and approval both hard and soft landscaping. (BE1/2)
6. Submission and agreement of boundary treatment including gates/ barriers (BE2)
7. Submission and agreement of scheme of biodiversity features including bat and bird boxes.
8. Condition requiring development be carried out in accordance with the approved Ecological Appraisal and bat survey reports and recommendations, mitigation and avoidance measures contained therein(GE21)
9. Condition restricting construction and delivery hours audible at site boundary. (BE1)
10. Submission and agreement of detailed lighting scheme including measures to minimise impacts on foraging and commuting bats (PR4/GE1)
11. Detailed site investigation, including mitigation to be submitted and approved in writing. (PR14)
12. Submission and agreement of detailed retaining wall design and special working methods to minimise bank excavation/ loss of trees/ vegetation
13. Conditions relating to tree protection during construction (BE1)
14. Vehicle access, parking, servicing etc to be constructed prior to occupation of properties/ commencement of use. (BE1)
15. Requiring submission and agreement of cycle parking details (TP6)
16. Requiring submission and agreement of electric vehicle parking and charging point(s) details (NPPF)
17. Condition relating to discovery of unidentified contamination (PR14)

18. Condition requiring surface water/ highway drainage be carried out as approved (BE1/ PR5)
19. Requiring development be carried out in accordance with the approved site and finished floor levels. (BE1)
20. Submission and agreement of Site Waste Management Plan (WM8)
21. Submission and agreement of a sustainable waste management plan (WM9)
22. Requiring submission and agreement of onsite waste storage (WM9)
23. Conditions restricting external storage and working (E5)

## SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

As required by:

Paragraph 186 – 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework;

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order

This statement confirms that the local planning authority has worked proactively with the applicant to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of Halton.