



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEV/SE/19/018

Development Control Committee 7 February 2019

Planning Application DC/18/2460/FUL – Menta Business Centre, 21 - 27 Hollands Road, Haverhill

Date Registered:	06.12.2018	Expiry Date:	31.01.2019 (EOT 11 th February)
Case Officer:	Savannah Cobbold	Recommendation:	Approve Application
Parish:	Haverhill Town Council (EMAIL)	Ward:	Haverhill South
Proposal:	Planning Application - Single storey side extension to provide new reception area and 2 no. additional lettable rooms. (ii) convert 2 no. existing units into 2 no. conference rooms (iii) rearrange the internal circulation to provide level access and (iv) rearrange existing car parking and provide new footpaths		
Site:	Menta Business Centre, 21 - 27 Hollands Road, Haverhill		
Applicant:	Mr Mark Walsh		

Synopsis:

Application under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Associated matters.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee determine the attached application and associated matters.

CONTACT CASE OFFICER:

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Background:

The application is referred to Development Control Committee as the applicant is an employee of St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

The application is recommended for approval, and the Town Council raise no objections to the scheme.

Proposal:

1. The application seeks planning permission for the construction of a single storey side extension in order to provide a new reception area and two additional lettable rooms. It also seeks permission to convert two of the existing units into further conference rooms and rearrange the existing car park and provide new footpaths around the extension.
2. The proposed extension will extend approximately 7.3 metres from the side elevation of the host building, measure 20.6 metres in length and 3.9 metres in overall height, incorporating a flat roof.

Application Supporting Material:

- Application form
- Ecology survey
- Flood map
- Visuals
- Proposed layout
- Location plan
- Proposed site layout plan
- Existing and proposed elevations
- Roof plan
- Existing block plan
- Existing elevations
- Planting proposal
- Planning statement
- Tree survey
- Planting schedule

Site Details:

3. The application site is located within an established industrial estate within a General and Rural Employment Area. The site currently comprises a large building and associated car parking, known as Menta Business Centre, who provide business advice and business skills training for start-up businesses with opportunities to lease small business units. Given the location of the building, neighbouring units are also industrial in appearance and generally single storey in nature.

Planning History:

Reference	Proposal	Status	Decision Date
DC/18/2460/FUL	Planning Application - Single storey side extension to provide new reception area and 2 no.	Pending Decision	

additional lettable rooms.
(ii) convert 2 no. existing units into 2 no. conference rooms (iii) rearrange the internal circulation to provide level access and (iv) rearrange existing car parking and provide new footpaths

Consultations:

Highways: No objections subject to a condition relating to retaining space for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles.

Tree Officer:

Ecology and Landscapes Officer: No objections.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue: Set out standard notes.

Representations:

Town Council: The Town Council fully support this application, however due to the loss of car parking spaces, the Town Council request that the applicant ensures employees and visitors do not park on the public highway which may cause additional obstruction and blind spots.

The Town Council note and agree with the comments made by the neighbour regarding security overnight.

Neighbours: A total of one representation was received from the owner/occupier of 9 Hollands Road.

- Gates to the car park need to be made secure. They are regularly left open overnight and people access outside water taps and even sleep overnight in the car park on a regular basis.
- If the car park is left as it is people will access it to use the electric charging points.
- The ideal solution would be to install electric gates that automatically close in the evenings and can be opened by code or key fob by residents of the units. This would eliminate the need for everyone to try and guess who has to lock the gates in the evening as no one is sure who is still in the building.

Policy: The following policies of the Joint Development Management Policies Document, the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy 2010 & Vision 2031 Documents have been taken into account in the consideration of this application:

- Policy DM1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy DM2 Creating Places, Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness
- Policy DM46 Parking Standards
- Core Strategy Policy SCS3 Design Quality and Local Distinctiveness
- Policy HV9 General Employment Areas – Haverhill

Other Planning Policy:

National Planning Policy Framework (2018)

Officer Comment:

The issues to be considered in the determination of the application are:

- Revised NPPF
- Principle of development
- Impact on residential amenity
- Impact on street scene/character of the area
- Design and form
- Highways
- Impact on trees/biodiversity
- Other matters

Revised NPPF

4. The NPPF was revised in July 2018 and is a material consideration in decision making from the day of its publication. Paragraph 213 is clear however that existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of the revised NPPF. Due weight should be given to them according to their degree of consistency with the Framework; the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater weight that may be given. The Policies set out within the Joint Development Management Policies have been assessed in detail and are considered sufficiently aligned with the provisions of the 2018 NPPF that full weight can be attached to them in the decision making process.

Principle of development

5. Development at an existing commercial site is acceptable as a matter of principle provided that the proposal respects the character and appearance of the immediate and surrounding area, and providing that there is not an adverse impact upon residential amenity, highway safety or important trees within the street scene. Along with CS3, DM2 requires development to conserve and, where possible, enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the area.
6. The application site is contained within the General Employment Area and Policy HV9 within the Haverhill Vision 2031 Document states that proposals for industrial and business development within the use classes B1, B2 and B8 for Haverhill Industrial Estate will be permitted providing that space requirements, parking, access, travel and general environmental considerations can be met. The building appears to be within the use class B1 and the information submitted with the application confirms that all requirements of this policy are met. Therefore it is considered acceptable within the General Employment Area.

Impact on residential amenity

7. The proposed development is considered to have no adverse impact upon the residential amenity of occupants of nearby properties given the location or the building. The nearest residential properties are towards the east of

the site and located approximately 180 metres away from the site, with other various industrial units screening Menta Business Centre. The proposed development is also located towards west of the site. Taking this into consideration, no unacceptable impact is considered to arise upon these properties located towards the east of the site. Whilst there are residential properties towards the north of the site, these are majorly screened by the industrial units towards the north of Menta Business Centre.

Impact on street scene/character of the area

8. The proposed extension is located towards the front of the business centre and therefore will be visible from Hollands Road. No significant impact is considered to arise upon the street scene given that the extension is of single storey nature, incorporating a flat roof. Industrial units in and around this area of Hollands Road are of similar appearance and hold no real architectural detail. Therefore, the proposed development is considered to be in-keeping with the immediate and surrounding area. The single storey side extension is modest in scale, compared to the host building and will sit comfortably below the ridge height of the host building.

Design and form

9. The proposed single storey side extension is considered to be of an appropriate scale, form and design as to respect the host dwelling. The extension is of single storey nature and incorporates a flat roof, meaning it sits lower than the ridge height of the existing building. The building is located within an existing industrial estate where buildings are generally of single storey nature, with flat or very shallow pitched roofs.

Highways

10. Whilst it is noted that the proposed development will decrease the number of car parking spaces on site, it is considered that there is adequate on-site parking. Additional cycle parking is made available and car parking spaces have been made larger in order to accommodate the current parking guidance. The site plan shows that there is a total of 42 spaces dedicated to Menta Business Centre and the total maximum required by County Transport Guidance is 37 parking spaces. Given that there are 42 available spaces, parking provision is considered ample of the scheme. This is also confirmed following a consultation response from Suffolk County Highways. The Highways Authority also recommend a condition relating to retaining the space shown on the proposed site plan for parking and manoeuvring of vehicles. This condition is considered reasonable to ensure that sufficient space for the on-site parking of vehicles is provided and maintained. This is therefore compliant with Policy DM46, Parking Standards.

Trees/biodiversity

11. An ecological survey has been submitted to accompany the application and makes reference to potential bat roosts within the trees to be removed. The findings come back negative and the report notes that the site is assessed

as being of negligible value. The Ecology Officer is satisfied with these findings and holds no objections to the scheme.

12. The Tree Officer visited the site on 16th January and raised concern regarding the proposed tree removal as part of this application, and noting that the submitted report did not reflect the amenity afforded to the locality by trees T2, T3 and T4. The three Whitebeam are large, mature street trees and are prominent within the vicinity. These provide considerable amenity value through their verdant character in an otherwise visually stark and utilitarian area which generally has few other trees. The trees subject to removal are in good condition and display no significant defects that would lead the Tree Officer to believe that their remaining longevity would be less than 40+ years. It is therefore believed that it is more appropriate to categorise them as A2, in accordance with BS 5837:2012 – trees of high quality with an estimated remaining life expectancy of at least 40 years.
13. The principle of the development is considered acceptable, however in its original form, an objection was held by the Tree Officer due to the proposed tree removal and the subsequent adverse impact on local amenity. The removal of the Whitebeam would be highly undesirable, but the retention of the most prominent specimen T4 closer to the frontage would adequately lessen the impact to an acceptable level. It is understood that the excavations within the root protection areas of T2-T4 are the principal reason for tree removal. However there are a number of arboriculturally sensitive methodologies for works within RPAs that allow tree retention where there is an overriding justification for planning permission being granted. It is considered that relatively minor amendments to the scheme would allow for the retention of this tree. The numerous benefits afforded by trees increases as they mature, therefore mature trees of significant amenity should be retained where possible and compensation through replanting should only be considered where retention is not possible. Taking the above into consideration, amended plans were requested to enable the retention of T4 and it was reiterated to the agent that the scheme would only be supportable, subject to the retention of this tree.
14. In response the applicant has confirmed that they agree to the principle of these changes, and further amended plans are expected that would address the concerns set out above. At the time of writing these are outstanding but this matter will be updated, either in the late papers or verbally at the meeting, as appropriate.

Other matters

15. A total of one representation was received from 9 Hollands Road. The representation states that the car park gates are regularly left open overnight and people access outside water taps and sleep overnight in the car park on a regular basis. If the car parking is left open as it is, people will access it to use the electric charging points. They recommend that the ideal solution would be to install electric gates that automatically close in the evenings and can be opened by code or key fob by residents of the units. This would eliminate the need for everyone to try and guess who has to lock the gates in the evening as no one is sure who is still in the building. The Town Council also note and agree with these comments. The issue of car parking gates is not a planning matter and does not hold weight in the

determination of this application. Instead, this would be a matter that should be addressed by the applicant and neighbouring unit.

16. The Town Council support this application, however due to the loss of car parking spaces, they request that the applicant ensures employees and visitors do not park on the public highway which may cause additional obstruction and blind spots. Whilst it is noted that parking is being reduced on site as a result of the extension, the site plan submitted confirms that there is more than satisfactory car parking spaces made available within the car park.

Conclusion:

17. In conclusion, the principle and detail of the development is considered to be acceptable and in compliance with relevant development plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework.

18. The scheme is recommended for approval on the basis that amended plans are received, showing the retention of T4 and the provision of a revised replacement soft landscaping scheme. This matter will be updated through the late papers process or verbally at DCC, as appropriate.

Recommendation:

19. It is recommended that planning permission be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

1. **Time limit** - The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.
2. **Compliance with plans** - The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the following approved plans and documents:
3. **Materials as detailed** - The development hereby permitted shall be constructed entirely of the materials detailed on the submitted plan – application form
4. **Parking/manoeuvring to be provided** - Prior to first use of the development hereby permitted, the area(s) within the site shown on drawing No. 10894 11 for the purpose of loading, unloading, manoeuvring and parking of vehicles has been provided. Thereafter the area(s) shall be retained and used for no other purpose.
5. **Submission of arboricultural method statement** - Prior to commencement of development an Arboricultural Method Statement (including any demolition, groundworks and site clearance) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Statement should include details of the following:
 - i) Measures for the protection of those trees and hedges on the application site that are to be retained,
 - ii) Details of all construction measures within the 'Root Protection Area' (defined by a radius of $dbh \times 12$ where dbh is the diameter of the trunk measured at a height of 1.5m above ground level) of those trees on the

- application site which are to be retained specifying the position, depth, and method of construction/installation/excavation of service trenches, building foundations, hardstandings, roads and footpaths,
- iii) A schedule of proposed surgery works to be undertaken to those trees and hedges on the application site which are to be retained.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Method Statement unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

6. **Provision of replacement soft landscaping in accordance with the submitted details** - All planting comprised in the approved details shown on **drawing no. XXX** of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting season following the commencement of the development (or within such extended period as may first be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority). Any planting removed, dying or becoming seriously damaged or diseased within five years of planting shall be replaced within the first available planting season thereafter with planting of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent for any variation.

Documents:

All background documents including application forms, drawings and other supporting documentation relating to this application can be viewed online.

<https://planning.westsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PJBEF4PD02M00>