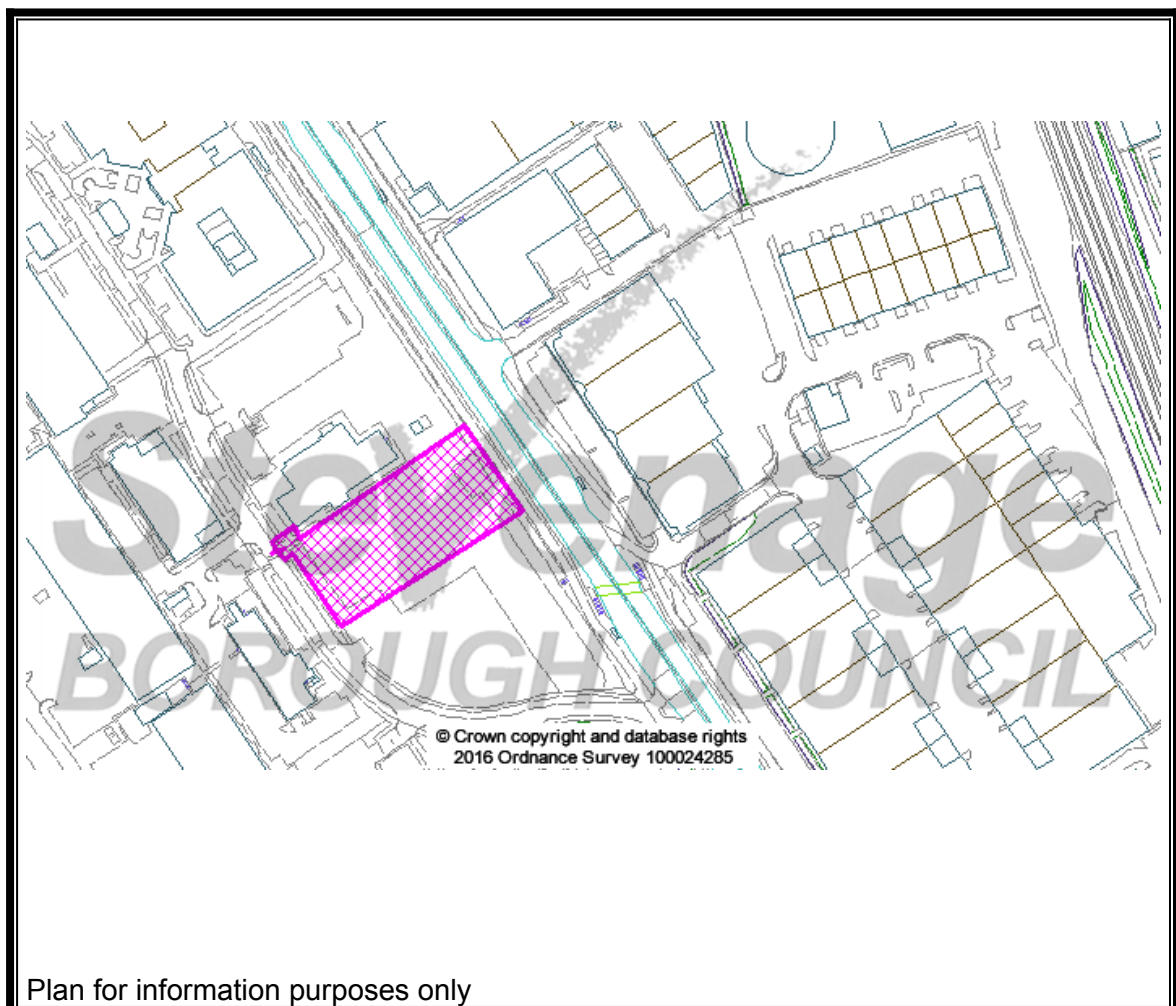


Meeting: Planning and Development Committee
Agenda Item:
Date: 14 August 2018
Author: James Chettleburgh 01438 242266
Lead Officer: Chris Berry 01438 242257
Contact Officer: James Chettleburgh 01438 242266

Application Nos:	18/00153/FPM
Location:	MBDA UK, Six Hills Way, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 2DA
Proposal:	Erection of a two storey modular office building with associated boundary treatments, hard landscaping and services.
Drawing Nos.	919 A000 B; 919 A001 B; 919 A002 K; 919 A010 B; 919 A020 B; 919 A040; 919 CM01-01; S170283-111B; S170283-112B; S170283-311A; P2484-01-01 C; P2484-04 C; P2484-08-01 C; P2484-08-02 B; P2484-09-01 A; P2484-09-02 A.
Applicant:	MBDA UK
Date Valid:	26 March 2018
Recommendation:	GRANT TEMPORARY PLANNING PERMISSION



1. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The application site is located on the western side of Gunnels Wood Road which falls within the Gunnels Wood Employment Area. The application site and its immediate surrounding area comprises the MBDA UK complex which consists of two-storey warehousing and industrial units, modern three-storey office buildings, waste storage compound, portakabins and surface car parking. The warehouse and industrial buildings are generally uniform in design, constructed from profiled sheet metal cladding and windows which run horizontally within the elevations. The buildings also have industrial roller shutters on the western elevation. The office buildings are modular in form and constructed from either brick or steel frames with large areas of glazing. The MBDA site is currently accessed from Six Hills Way and Gunnels Wood Road.
- 1.2 The surrounding area is characterised by a mixture of office, light industrial and warehouse developments. To the south of the application site is the Ford car dealership showroom. The site comprises a two-storey showroom which is constructed from profiled steel cladding with a large glazed frontage. On the rear and eastern elevations are roller shutters for the service areas. To the west of the application site is the A1(M) motorway and to the east is Gunnels Wood Road. To the north of the site is Six Hills Way beyond which is the office complex (Farnham House) which houses Hertfordshire County Council. This is a three storey brick built building with undercroft car parking. There is also Campus Six immediately adjacent to Farnham House which comprises a number of modern office buildings which are constructed from brick with large glazed areas on the facade.

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 Planning application 99/00265/FP sought permission for the installation of a satellite dish on the roof. This application was granted planning permission in August 1999.
- 2.2 Planning application 00/00041/OP was an outline application for the Construction of New Offices, Two Hotels and Industrial/Warehouse Buildings including Refurbishment of 3 Existing Buildings. This application was granted outline planning permission in July 2000.
- 2.3 Reserved matters application 00/00227/RM sought approval of details Pursuant to Outline Planning Permission involving the Erection of Gateway Office Building, Two Industrial/Warehouse Buildings, a Multistorey Car Park and New Entrance/Exhibition Space to Existing Office Buildings B1 and B2. The reserved matters application was approved in July 2000.
- 2.4 Reserved matters application 00/00272/RM sought approval of details pursuant to outline planning permission involving the erection of new office and amenity buildings. The reserved matters application was approved in October 2000.
- 2.5 Reserved matters application 00/00354/RM sought approval of details for construction of new office building, two industrial units and alterations to existing industrial unit. The reserved matters application was approved in October 2000.
- 2.6 Reserved matters application 00/00468/RM sought approval of details for construction of office building and spine road. The reserved matters application was approved in December 2000.

- 2.7 Reserved matters application 01/00330/RM sought approval for the construction new fuel cell and plant unit and 2 no. electrical substations. The reserved matters application was approved in October 2001.
- 2.8 Reserved matters application 03/00264/RM sought approval for the erection of a four storey, 115 bedroom hotel pursuant to outline permission (reference number 00/00041/OP) granted 25.07.00. The reserved matters application was granted in July 2003.
- 2.9 Reserved matters application 05/00124/RM sought approval for the erection of building for B1 use on Plot 1700 and relocation of car parking to rear of Plot 1400. The reserved matters application was granted in May 2005.
- 2.10 Planning application 05/00303/FP sought permission for the removal of condition 9 of planning permission reference number 00/00041/OP which requires that 10m wide strip alongside A1(M) be retained free of development. This application was granted planning permission in August 2005.
- 2.11 Planning permission 05/00388/FP sought permission for the re-clad of the existing building and erection of a parapet wall. This application was granted planning permission in September 2005.
- 2.12 Planning permission 05/00410/FP sought permission for the erection of a temporary building for storage use. This application was granted planning permission in October 2005.
- 2.13 Reserved matters application 06/00025/RM sought approval of details for the erection of storage (Class B8)/Office (Class B1(a)) building. The reserved matters application was approved in March 2006.
- 2.14 Planning application 07/00089/FP sought permission for the erection of building with 100 square metre floorspace to accommodate a new computer suite on Plot 5000/5050 and erection of new fence around existing waste compound on Plot 1700. This application was not proceeded with and withdrawn in March 2007.
- 2.15 Planning application 07/00183/FP sought permission for the provision of fence to waste compound; Plot 5050 - erection of new computer room. This application was granted planning permission in May 2007.
- 2.16 Planning application 07/00427/FP sought permission for the erection of temporary building for office/light workshop on part of Plot 4000 and erection of 2.5m fence along northern and western plot boundaries. This application was granted planning permission in August 2007.
- 2.17 Planning application 07/00521/FP sought permission for the enclosure of open courtyard to provide presentation, display and spill out space. This application was granted planning permission in October 2007.
- 2.18 Planning application 07/00600/FP sought permission for the erection of security control room. This application was granted planning permission in November 2007.
- 2.19 Planning application 08/00547/FP sought permission for the erection of 10no. storage containers, 10no. 4.8m high floodlights, 1no. pole mounted CCTV camera and new 2.4m high fencing around storage compound. This application was granted planning permission in January 2009.

- 2.20 Planning application 09/00088/FP sought permission for the erection of 9no. storage containers, 1no. modular unit, 10no. 4.8m high floodlights, 1no. pole mounted CCTV camera and new 2.4m high fencing around storage compound. This application was granted planning permission in April 2009.
- 2.21 Planning application 10/00008/FP sought permission for the erection of modular extension to temporary building on plot 4000 to house equipment associated with the site landscaping operations. This application was granted planning permission in March 2010.
- 2.22 Planning application 12/00039/FP sought permission for the erection of a single storey detached storage building. This application was granted planning permission in February 2012.
- 2.23 Planning application 16/00032/FPM for the erection of an industrial building for B1/ B2 Use Class (Business/General Industry) unit, with associated security fence, parking, and external works. This application was granted planning permission in May 2016.
- 2.24 Planning application 16/00176/FP sought permission for the relocation of existing waste storage facility including the construction of open fronted storage sheds and hardstandings for the placement of roll on, roll off skips. This application was granted planning permission in June 2016.
- 2.25 Planning application 16/00223/FP sought permission for the erection of a portable office accommodation to include welfare facilities, a new standalone hand car wash facility and parking for 65 rental spaces. This application was withdrawn in May 2016.
- 2.26 Planning application 17/00138/FP sought permission to vary condition 11 (drainage strategy) attached to planning permission 16/00032/FPM. This application was granted in April 2017.
- 2.27 Planning application 17/00501/FP sought permission for the erection of a single storey Use Class B1/B2 (Business/General Industry) unit. This application was granted planning permission in September 2017.
- 2.28 Lawful Development Certificate application 17/00632/CLPD sought to determine whether or not the construction of a mezzanine floor extension to an existing industrial unit required planning permission. This application was granted in November 2017.
- 2.29 Planning application 17/00633/FP sought permission for the installation of new windows to south western elevation. This application was granted planning permission in November 2017.
- 2.30 Discharge of condition application 18/00105/COND sought to discharge condition 13 (Landscaping) attached to planning permission number 16/00032/FPM. This application was granted in March 2018.
- 2.31 Planning application 18/00303/OP seeks outline permission for the erection of a new data centre and associated infrastructure with all matters reserved. This application is pending consideration.

3. THE CURRENT APPLICATION

- 3.1 An application has been submitted to the Council for the proposed erection of a two-storey flat roof modular office building to serve MBDA. The proposed building would measure approximately 43.82m in length and span 24.93m in width with a floor area of approximately 2,142.2 sq.m over the two floors. In terms of height, the proposed building as measured from finished ground floor level would be approximately 7.37m.

The proposal also comprises the erection of security fencing and additional secure cycle parking provision.

- 3.2 The application comes before the planning committee for consideration as it is a major application.

4. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1 As a major planning application, the proposal has been publicised by way of letters to adjoining premises, site notices and a press notice. At the time of drafting this report no responses have been received.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Hertfordshire County Council as Highways Authority

- 5.1.1 It is considered that the proposed development would not significantly increase the traffic generation or the vehicle movement to the development. Furthermore, the proposed development would not have a significant effect on the safety and operation of the adjoining highway network. However, they recommend a condition in regards to construction management and to secure agreement with the applicant to provide improved lighting to the Six Hills Way underpass.

5.2 Lead Local Flood Authority

- 5.2.1 It is considered that the proposed drainage scheme which has been submitted to the Council is acceptable subject to the imposition of a condition on any permission issued. This condition will require the drainage scheme to be constructed in accordance with the details submitted with the application prior to the occupation of the development.

5.3 Environmental Health Department

- 5.3.1 It is recommended that if planning permission was to be granted, conditions should be imposed to any permission issued. These conditions relate to contamination and hours of construction.

5.4 Thames Water

- 5.4.1 The developer will need to follow the sequential approach to the disposal of surface water. In regards to the waste water network and waste water process infrastructure capacity, there are no concerns with the proposed development.

6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

6.1 Background to the Development Plan

- 6.1.1 In the determination of planning applications development must be in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For Stevenage the statutory development plan comprises:

- Hertfordshire Waste Development Framework 2012 and Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted 2012 and 2014);
- Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 2002 – 2016 (adopted 2007); and
- The Stevenage District Plan Second Review 2004.

The Council has now reached an advanced stage in the preparation of a new Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031. The Plan has been used as a material

consideration in the determination of all planning applications registered on or after Wednesday 6 January 2016. The Plan has now been through the Examination process and the Inspector's Report was received in October 2017. This recommended approval of the Plan, subject to modifications proposed. The Plan is currently subject to a holding direction placed upon it by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), which prevents its adoption whilst MHCLG are considering whether or not to call it in.

- 6.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that decision-takers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to their stage of preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies, and their degree of consistency with policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 6.1.3 In considering the policy implications of any development proposal, the Local Planning Authority will assess each case on its individual merits, however, bearing in mind the positive Inspector's Report, significant weight will be afforded to policies within the emerging Local Plan.

6.2 Central Government Advice

- 6.2.1 A revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2018. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Annex 1 of the NPPF provides guidance on how existing local plan policies which have been prepared prior to the publication of the NPPF should be treated. Paragraph 213 of the NPPF applies which states that due weight should be afforded to the relevant policies in the adopted local plan according to their degree of consistency with it.
- 6.2.2 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is itself a material consideration. Given that the advice that the weight to be given to relevant policies in the local plan will depend on their degree of consistency with the NPPF, it will be necessary in the determination of this application to assess the consistency of the relevant local plan policies with the NPPF. The NPPF applies a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 6.2.3 In addition to the NPPF, advice in Planning Practice Guidance must also be taken into account. It states that, where the development plan is absent, silent or the relevant policies are out of date, paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires the application to be determined in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development unless otherwise specified.

6.3 Adopted District Plan

TW1: Sustainable Development;
TW8: Environmental Safeguards;
TW9: Quality in Design;
E2: Employment Areas;
E4: Acceptable Uses in Employment Areas;
T6: Design Standards;
T12: Bus provision;
T13: Cycleways;
T14: Pedestrians;
T15: Car Parking Strategy;
EN27: Noise pollution.

6.4 Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 Publication Draft (Emerging Local Plan)

SP1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development;
SP2: Sustainable development in Stevenage;
SP3: A strong, competitive economy;
SP8: Good design;
SP11: Climate change, flooding and pollution;
EC1: Allocated sites for employment development;
EC2: Gunnels Wood Employment Area and Edge-of-Centre Zone;
EC4: Remainder of Gunnels Wood;
EC5: Active frontages and gateways;
IT5: Parking and Access;
FP1: Climate Change;
FP2: Flood risk in Flood Zone 1;
FP5: Contaminated Land;
FP7: Pollution;

6.5 Supplementary Planning Documents

Parking Provision SPD (2012)

APPRAISAL

7.1 The main issues for consideration in the determination of the application are its acceptability in land use policy terms, impact on visual amenity; Impact on residential amenities; parking provision; means of access and highway safety; impact on the environment and flood risk.

7.2 Land use policy considerations

7.2.1 The application site is designated within the Gunnels Wood Employment Area where policies E2 and E4 of the Stevenage District Plan Second Review 1991-2011 adopted 2004 apply. Policy E2 seeks to protect the Gunnels Wood area for employment uses and Policy E4 sets out acceptable uses in employment areas and specifically states “in the employment areas already designated a range of employment uses within the B1, B2 and B8 use classes will be encouraged. Policies EC1 and EC4 of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2031 Publication Draft – January 2016 generally reflects the above Policies as it sets the acceptable uses within the employment area.

7.2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (NPPF) states that significant weight should be placed on both the need to support economic growth and productivity taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The application site is located within land under the ownership of MBDA which is an established employment based operator. The proposed development seeks to erect a two-storey modular office building for staff that will be relocated from the existing office space within the MBDA campus. This is because some of the floorspace within the campus will be reconfigured for specialist activities and therefore, the proposed office building will allow MBDA to continue to operate whilst specific areas of floorspace within the campus are undergoing reconfiguration.

7.2.3 Given the above, it can be seen from this assessment that the proposal fully accords with the land use policies in the adopted Local Plan, Emerging Local Plan and is also supported by the NPPF.

7.3 Impact on visual amenity

- 7.3.1 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF 2018 stipulates that planning decisions should ensure developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just in short term but over the lifetime of the development. It also sets out that development should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping is sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. In addition, the NPPF sets out that developments should establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using arrangements of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit. It also stipulates that development should optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate mix of development and finally, create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.
- 7.3.2 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states that “permission should be refused for development of poor design that fail to make available opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions”.
- 7.3.3 Policy TW9 of the District Plan (2004) requires all forms of development to meet a high standard of design which includes form of built development, elevational treatment and materials along with how the development would integrate with the urban fabric, its relationship between buildings, landscape design and relevant aspects of sustainable design as well. Policy GD1 of the emerging Local Plan (2016) generally reflects the above policy. Turning to Gunnels Wood Road specifically, emerging Policy EC5: Active frontages and gateways states that planning permission for the (re-) development of sites with a frontage along, in this case Gunnels Wood Road, will be granted where:-
- a. Proposals face directly onto the identified road and provide active frontages and natural surveillance;
 - b. Buildings are not set back significantly from the identified road;
 - c. Car parking and service areas are located away from the street frontage of the identified road;
 - d. On corner plots, where the roads intersect, schemes incorporate landmark architecture and gateway features wherever this would be compatible with the proposed use(s).
- 7.3.4 The application site is located on land which is owned and operated by MBDA. The application site which consists of grass land and hardsurfacing is bordered by a modern three-storey office building and mature landscaping which runs parallel with Gunnels Wood Road and an internal road. The site itself is partially enclosed by a 2.4m high security fence painted black. To the west and south-west of the application site are three-storey office buildings, business and industrial units and surface car parking.
- 7.3.5 The existing warehouse and industrial buildings are generally uniform in design, constructed from profiled sheet metal cladding and windows which run horizontally within the elevations. The buildings also have roller shutters on the western elevation. The existing offices within the MBDA campus are generally modern in design and articulated in built form, constructed from either brick or steel cladding, with large areas of glazing and full height glazed entrance features.
- 7.3.6 The proposed development is located in close proximity to the modern three-storey office building, approximately 41m from the cycle track which runs along the edge of Gunnels Wood Road. The proposed development seeks the erection of a detached two-storey modular office building with associated plant and equipment (dimensions

specified under paragraph 3.1 of this report). The building would be constructed from powder coated steel with metal ribbed cladding with the roof finished in a single-ply membrane. The rainwater good and guttering would be PVC finished in black and white PVCu windows and steel doors.

- 7.3.7 The development would appear to be of a very simplistic design which lacks any visually attractive architectural features due to the lack of articulated or recessed features, a lack of a defined top, middle and bottom and would appear overly horizontal with no real vertical emphasis. In addition, the proposed development does not have a properly defined entrance feature which is a key element of good design. Furthermore, due to the proposed development being set back from Gunnels Wood Road, it does not create an active frontage or help to form any kind of natural surveillance. Moreover, the development does not really reflect the modern, high quality design of the existing offices within the MBDA campus. In addition, as the building would be visible in part from the public realm, it would harm the visual amenities of Gunnels Wood Road. Consequently, the proposed development fails to meet the key objective of the NPPF which is to deliver development which is of high quality design. In addition, it fails to meet the Council's objectives in the Emerging Local Plan which is to encourage high quality development which fronts onto Gunnels Wood Road forming a key gateway feature.
- 7.3.8 Turning to the proposed security fencing, this would be 2.4m high galvanised steel wire finished in green. The fence would enclose the new office development and it would be tied into the existing security fencing on site and would reflect its design. Therefore, the proposed fence would not be out of character with the existing security fencing on the site.
- 7.3.9 Notwithstanding the above, MBDA has emphasised the importance of delivering this development in order to meet their business and commercial needs. In addition, they have advised that they need to deliver a development within a short period of time in order to meet their business requirements. Consequently, MBDA are utilising these modular offices as they are generally constructed in a factory and delivered on-site reducing construction timeframes from that of a traditional build. However, MBDA has confirmed that they will be working closely with the Council in order to deliver a high quality, comprehensive form of development on this site which is also allocated in the Emerging Local Plan (2016) under Policy EC1 for 4,000 sq.m of B1(b) (research and development) and B1(c) (light industry).
- 7.3.10 Having regard to the aforementioned, whilst the proposed development is not considered to be of high quality design and it fails to meet the objectives of both the Emerging Local Plan (2016) and the NPPF (2018), the operational needs of MBDA are noted. Consequently, if planning permission were to be granted, it is recommended that it should only be for a temporary period. This is in order to minimise the impact of the character and appearance of the site and the visual amenities of Gunnels Wood Road that may arise from a more prolonged siting and occupation of the modular office building. In addition, it would allow MBDA to continue to operate and meet their commercial business needs whilst a more comprehensive form of development is brought forward for this site. Following discussions with MBDA it has been agreed that a period of 2 years would give them the flexibility to create the required floor space whilst being able to look at a more permanent design solution to cater for the employment needs moving forward.

7.4 Impact on residential amenity

- 7.4.1 The application site is located within the established employment area of Gunnels Wood Road. Given this, combined with the fact that the nearest residential properties in Norton Green are located 430m away and positioned the other side of the A1(M),

the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of the nearest residential properties.

7.5 Parking Provision

- 7.5.1 The Council's Parking Standards SPD (2012) sets out the maximum level of parking requirements for Class B1a (office) developments. The car parking standards which are required for such development is 1 space per 30m² of gross floor area. In this regard, a maximum of 72 spaces would be required to serve the proposed development. However, given the application site is located within a non-residential accessibility zone, the requirement can be reduced to between 75% and 100% of the maximum giving a requirement of between 54 spaces to 72 spaces.
- 7.5.2 The proposed development as set out in the applicants Travel Plan does not seek to create any additional employment. This is because the proposed development, as set out in paragraph 7.2.2, will provide office space for existing staff who are being relocated from within the existing MBDA campus. This is due to some existing office space being reconfigured for specialist activities which are to be conducted on the site and which would be occupied by existing staff. Notwithstanding this, there is a significant amount of off-street parking (including disabled parking) available within the MBDA campus which would be accessible to persons who will be working within the new office building. In terms of the siting of the building itself, this is on an area of unused brownfield scrub land and therefore, it does not result in the loss of any existing parking within the site.
- 7.5.3 In terms of cycle parking, the Parking Standards SPD requires 1 short-term space per 500m² of gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 full time staff. Taking this into consideration, there would be a requirement of 4 cycle spaces. The proposed development seeks to provide 48 additional secure cycle parking spaces to the north of the existing office building as detailed on the submitted drawings. In addition, the applicant will also be providing shower facilities within the new offices. Given this, whilst the applicant is not providing any additional off-street parking, they are seeking to encourage staff to cycle to the offices in order to encourage a modal shift from the private car in order to become more sustainable. However, to ensure that this cycle parking is made available prior to the first use of the development; it is recommended that a condition be imposed to require the secure cycle parking to be constructed out in accordance with the submitted details.

7.6 Means of access and highway safety

- 7.6.1 The application site would be served by the existing access road off the A1072 Gunnels Wood Road which is a designated distributor Road. The existing access and egress arrangement off Gunnels Wood Road is of an industrial standard so it is currently of sufficient width to accommodate the traffic generated from the site. The proposed development does not seek to amend or alter this existing arrangement.
- 7.6.2 Turning to highway safety, the existing access currently has sufficient vehicle-to-vehicle visibility due to the road's industrial design. The access road also comprises the combined verge and cycleway/footway which runs parallel with Gunnels Wood Road. Again, due to the design of this road, there is currently a wide envelope that provides an acceptable level of pedestrian visibility. Taking this into consideration, the existing arrangement as considered by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) as the Highways Authority accords with the standards set out in the Manual for Streets.
- 7.6.3 Turning to the traffic generation from the development, the applicant has confirmed in writing that the proposed development will not generate any additional employment.

The proposed development is only to support the existing operations of the MBDA site. Taking this into consideration, the proposed development would not change the level of traffic which is currently generated from the application site. In terms of access for emergency vehicles, it is considered that all parts of the building are within 45 metres from the principal road or internal access road. In addition, the geometrical layout of the internal roads would be able to accommodate the safe manoeuvrability of emergency vehicles within the site without prejudicing highway safety.

- 7.6.4 In relation to pedestrian access, the proposed development seeks to retain the existing access point from Gunnels Wood Road. Therefore, persons cycling to work would still be able to access the site from Gunnels Wood Road. However, in order to improve the environment to encourage for pedestrians and cyclists (which is being encouraged by the applicant as part of their Green Travel Plan) into the site as well as encourage a modal shift, HCC as the Highways Authority recommend an upgrade to lighting to the existing underpasses on Six Hills Way. This can be secured via a condition if planning permission were to be granted.
- 7.6.5 Taking into consideration of the above, the proposed development as confirmed by HCC as the Highways Authority would not have a detrimental impact on the safety and operation of the highway network. However, they recommend a condition requiring the submission of a detailed Construction Management/Method Statement for the construction phase of the development. This is to ensure that construction traffic and associated constructed works are managed in way to not prejudice the safety and operation of the highway network.

7.7 Impact on the environment

- 7.7.1 The application site is located on previously developed land so there is the potential presence of contamination. Taking this into consideration, the Council's Environmental Health Officer has recommended that a condition be imposed stipulating that during the construction phase of the development, if any contamination is identified they will be required to undertake an investigation and to provide any relevant remediation measures which has to be agreed in writing by the Council. This will ensure that in the event any potential contaminants are identified, they are mitigated against and that the health of person(s) working on-site (both construction contractors and office works) the wider environment and buildings are protected.
- 7.7.2 Separate to the above, it is recommended that a condition be imposed restricting the hours of construction on-site. This is to ensure that the amenities and operation of nearby businesses are protected during the construction phase of the development.

7.8 Development and flood risk

- 7.8.1 The application site is located in Flood Zone 1 within the Environment Agency's flood risk map. Flood Zone 1 is defined as land having less than 1 in 100 annual probability of flooding. Therefore, all developments are generally directed to Flood Zone 1. Notwithstanding this, the application which has been submitted to the Council is classified as a Major, therefore, in line with the Town and Country Planning (General Development) (Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the applicant has provided a Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy.
- 7.8.2 The Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy (SuDS) would comprise of an underground attenuation tank with a controlled discharge system in place. The system has been designed to ensure that surface water run off generated on site can be managed within the boundary without causing flooding on and off site for rainfall events up to 1 in 100

years plus 30% for climate change, with greenfield discharge rates to the surface water sewer of 1.9 l/s for the site.

7.8.3 Following consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), they have advised that the applicant has provided an appropriate sustainable drainage scheme. Furthermore, the LLFA has also recommended that a condition be imposed to require the development to be carried out in accordance with the drainage strategy.

7.9 Trees and Landscaping

7.9.1 There are currently no trees or areas of substantial soft landscaping within the development site which would be affected by the development. However, there is a mature hedgerow which runs along the western boundary of the MBDA site which forms a natural screen. This hedgerow will be retained as part of the development to ensure that it is generally screened from the public realm.

7.10 Other matters

Sustainable construction and climate change

7.10.1 Policy EN36 of the District Plan states that development proposals will be encouraged to reduce water consumption and run-off by using suitable water conservation and storage measures such as the use of rainwater, water efficient devices and by recycling water. Policy EN38 of the same document states that development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that methods of maximising energy efficiency and supplying of energy in the development need to be considered. Policy FP1 of the Emerging Local Plan (2016) stipulates that development that planning permission will be granted for development that can incorporate measures to address adaptation to climate change. New developments will be encouraged to include measures such as:

- Ways to ensure development is resilient to likely variations in temperature;
- Reducing water consumption to no more than 110 litres per person per day, including external water use;
- Improving energy performance of buildings;
- Reducing energy consumption through efficiency measures;
- Using or producing renewable or low carbon energy from a local source; and
- Contributing towards reducing flood risk through the use of SuDS or other appropriate measures.

7.10.2 The applicant has confirmed that due to the modular construction of the building and its design, it would achieve high levels of air tightness and thermal insulation. The development would have a suitable sustainable drainage system in order to reduce the risks of surface water flooding. In addition, the building would utilise energy efficient lighting and water efficient systems with the toilets and shower rooms. Given the aforementioned measures, the proposed development would be considered to be adaptable to climate change and would be a sustainable form of development.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 In principle, it is considered that the proposed development would be acceptable within the established employment area of Gunnels Wood Road. However, it is considered that the proposed development is of a substandard design in this visually important gateway site on Gunnels Wood Road with a lack of active frontage and articulation. Notwithstanding this, due to commercial and business requirements of the applicant, it

is considered that as a compromise a temporary permission be granted. This will ensure that there is not a permanent impact on the visual amenities on the area whilst allowing the applicant in conjunction with the Council will look to secure a comprehensive, high quality form of development on the application site in the longer term.

8.2 In terms of impact on residential amenity, due to the development's siting and position and separation distance to the nearest residents in Norton Green, the proposal would not harm the amenities of residential properties. In addition, the proposed development, subject to conditions, would not prejudice the safety and operation of the highway network. Further to this, the proposed development, subject to appropriate conditions, would ensure that land contamination, if found, can be adequately controlled by the Council. Finally, in relation to SuDS, the proposed development would have adequate SuDS scheme which would ensure that surface water run-off is managed on the site and does not overload the existing mains sewer or cause flooding related issues.

8.2 Given the above, the proposed development accords with the Policies contained within the adopted Local Plan (2004), the Council's Draft Local Plan (2016), the Council's Supplementary Planning Documents, the NPPF (2018) and PPG (2014).

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That planning application be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

919 A000 B; 919 A001 B; 919 A002 K; 919 A010 B; 919 A020 B; 919 A040; 919 CM01-01; S170283-111B; S170283-112B; S170283-311A; P2484-01-01 C; P2484-04 C; P2484-08-01 C; P2484-08-02 B; P2484-09-01 A; P2484-09-02 A.

REASON:- For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

2. Following a period 2 years from the completion of the development, in which confirmation of completion of the development shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority in writing, the building hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition in accordance with a scheme of works to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON:- The development is of a temporary nature required in association with the delivery of new office accommodation within the MBDA site. The approved time period shall allow sufficient time for a comprehensive office development to come forward, whilst minimising any detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the site and the visual amenities of Gunnels Wood Road that may arise from a more prolonged siting and occupation of the modular office building.

3. The proposed development hereby permitted shall be constructed in accordance with the details as specified in the application submission unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON:- To ensure the temporary developments visual impact on the street scene of Gunnels Wood Road is minimalised.

4. Prior to the first use of the modular offices hereby permitted, the proposed secure cycle parking area as detailed on drawing numbers 919L A 010 B and

919 L 002 J shall be erected and thereafter retained during the lifetime of the development and shall not be used for any other purpose.

REASON:- To ensure that there sufficient cycle parking to serve the development in accordance with the Council's Parking Standards.

5. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of this condition which are as follows:-

- (i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;
- (ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
 - human health,
 - property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
 - adjoining land,
 - groundwaters and surface waters,
 - ecological systems.

Where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition 6, which is subject to the approval of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with condition 7.

REASON:- To prevent harm to human health and pollution of the water environment in accordance with Government policy set out in The National Planning Policy Framework.

6. A detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historic environment must be prepared, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

REASON:- To prevent harm to human health and pollution of the water environment in accordance with Government policy set out in The National Planning Policy Framework.

7. The approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON:- To prevent harm to human health and pollution of the water environment in accordance with Government policy set out in The National Planning Policy Framework.

8. No demolition or construction works relating to this permission shall be carried out on any Sunday or Bank Holiday, nor before 07.30 hours or after 18.00 hours on any weekdays, nor on any Saturday before 09.00 hours or after 13.00 hours. The hours specified relate to works which are audible at the site boundary.

REASON:- To protect the amenities of adjoining land users.

9. The development permitted by this planing permission shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Rev. A dated 20/04/2018, produced by AVIE Consulting Ltd, and in accordance with the Drawing No. P2484-01-01 Rev C – Proposed drainage layout, date 20.04.2018, and the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA:

1. Limiting the surface water run off generated by the critical storm events so that it will not exceed the greenfield run off rate during the 1 in 100 year event plus 30% climate change event.
2. Providing storage to ensure no increase in surface water run off volumes for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 100 year + climate change event of total storage volume in underground cellular attenuation tank.
3. Discharge of surface water from the private drain at greenfield run off rate into the Thames Water sewer network.

The mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority.

REASON:- To prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory disposal of surface water from the site and to reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants.

10. The surface water drainage strategy hereby permitted shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the “Attenuation Management Plan for Building 1400 MBDA Systems” prepared by Elliott dated 18 May 2018 (document reference: S170283 Rev A – 18/05/18).

REASON:- To ensure that the attenuation system is properly maintained and remain efficient in order to prevent flooding and to satisfactorily dispose of surface water runoff.

11. The security fencing which will enclose the modular office building shall be constructed in accordance with approved drawing 919L A 040 and retained for the duration of the building being in place.

REASON:- In order to protect the visual amenities of the site and the overall street scene of Gunnels Wood Road.

12. Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted, details shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority of the lighting improvements to be proposed to the underpass to Six Hills Way which

adjoins the application site. The lighting details and any maintenance shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

REASON: In order to enhance the appearance and lighting of the underpass for current and future users.

13. All hard surfacing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out within three months of the first occupation of the building(s) or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner.

REASON:- To ensure the proper completion of the hard landscaping in the interests of visual amenity.

14. Prior to the commencement of the development, a Construction Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the highway authority. Thereafter, the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved statement. The Construction Management Plan/Method Statement shall address the following matters:-

(i) Details of a construction phasing programme (including any pre-construction, demolition or enabling works);

(ii) Hours of construction operations including times of deliveries and removal of waste;

(iii) Site set up and general arrangements for storing plan including cranes, materials, machinery and equipment, temporary offices and other facilities, construction vehicle parking and loading/unloading and vehicle turning areas;

(iv) Access and protection arrangements around the site for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users;

(v) Details of provisions for temporary car parking during construction;

(vi) The location of construction traffic routes to and from the site, details of their signing, monitoring and enforcement measures;

(vii) Screening and hoarding details;

(viii) End of day tidying procedures;

(ix) Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking);

(x) Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;

(xi) Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway, and

(xii) Disposal of surplus materials.

REASON:- To minimise the impact of construction vehicles and to maintain the amenity of the local area.

INFORMATIVE

Prior to commencement of the development the applicant shall contact <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and->

[developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx](https://www.herts.gov.uk/developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx) or call on 0300 1234 047 to obtain the requirements to arrange a site visit to agree a condition survey of the approach of the highway leading to the development likely to be used for delivery vehicles to the development. Under the provisions of Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980 the developer may be liable for any damage caused to the public highway as a result of traffic associated with the development. Herts County Council may require an Officer presence during movements of larger loads.

Pro-active statement

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. The Council acted pro-actively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

10 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

1. The application file, forms, plans and supporting documents having the reference number relating to this item.
2. Stevenage District Plan Second Review 1991-2011.
3. Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 – 2031 Publication Draft 2016
4. Central Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework July 2018 and National Planning Policy Guidance 2014.
5. Responses to consultations with statutory undertakers and other interested parties referred to in this report.