

Arun District Council
Planning Services
Civic Centre
Littlehampton
West Sussex
BN17 5LF

11 March 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Planning Portal Ref. PP-09587200

Units 2 and 3, Shripney Trade Park, Shripney Road, Bognor Regis, PO22 9GH

Insertion of six high-level vents on the north-east, south-west and south-east elevations of existing Units 2 and 3, provision of obscure film and security bars to existing windows, and two collapsible security bollards to the front of the building in relation to Class B8 Use (Storage and Distribution).

On behalf of our client, CityFibre Holdings Limited, please find enclosed a planning application for minor external alterations to Units 2 and 3 at Shripney Trade Park, Bognor Regis in relation to its use as a data storage centre (Class B8).

The application documentation, which has been submitted to Arun District Council as the Local Planning Authority via The Planning Portal (Ref: PP-09587200) comprises the following:

- Covering Report/Letter;
- Completed 1APP Application Form;
- Site Location Plan P1808-172-PL-001;
- Existing Site Plan P1808-172-PL-002;
- Existing Site Elevation P1808-172-PL-003 / 004;
- Proposed Site Plan P1808-172-PL-005; and
- Proposed Site Elevation P1808-172-PL-006 / 007.

The statutory application fee of **£234.00** has been paid via the Planning Portal.

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Cluttons LLP is a limited liability partnership in England and Wales under the number OC344742.
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Background

CityFibre is a leading digital infrastructure provider in the UK. It will be instrumental in helping to deliver the Government's target of 15 million users with full fibre broadband by 2025 and comprehensive coverage across the UK by 2033. The improved service will provide faster internet speed, together with better connectivity and reliability. This, in turn, will help boost the country's economy by enhancing business productivity and provide the UK's fastest broadband services to households, schools and hospitals, to name but a few. The need for an enhanced service has been made all the more vital due to Covid-19 where reliable, high speed broadband is fundamental to enable effective homeworking, which has become standard practice for many for the foreseeable future.

In order to achieve this, the existing network must be expanded and upgraded. This application seeks permission for minor external alterations to existing Units 2 and 3 at Shripney Trade Park to allow the building to accommodate high-speed servers. This in turn will enable an improved broadband service to be delivered to this part of Bognor Regis and the surrounding area.

Existing Site

The application site relates to an area of land which was previously used as a "Bathstore" (Use Class B8) within a wider business park. The area is predominately commercial, with the site located along Shripney Road which has various business parks including restaurants and superstores.

The building is approximately two and half storeys in height and fronts an existing car park and IMO Car Wash (north-east). Further north are additional distribution and storage facilities abutting a large Sainsburys Supermarket store, with car park (north-west). The site is predominately hard landscaped, with minimal soft landscaping acting as a boundary to neighbouring business parks.

There is an access point on Shripney Road (southern boundary), with pedestrian and vehicular access to the site.

Planning History

There is no planning history at the site.

The site falls within a Built-Up Boundary Area, with no other allocations.

The site is located in flood zone 3, but the existing buildings and uses at the site and surrounding areas demonstrates industrial/employment uses are allowed in this area.

Proposed Development

The proposed development is for the insertion of six high-level vents on the north-east, south-west and south-east elevations of existing Units 2 and 3, provision of obscure film and security bars to existing windows, and two collapsible security bollards to the front of the building in relation to Class B8 Use (Storage and Distribution).

Planning Considerations

In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Local Planning Authorities must determine applications for planning permission in accordance with the Development Plan for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) requires Local Planning Authorities, in dealing with an application for planning permission, to have regard to:

- the provisions of the Development Plan, so far as material to the application; and
- any other material considerations.

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

National planning guidance, which is a material planning consideration, is largely detailed within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). For decision making, the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should look to approve sustainable development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

Arun Development Plan

The adopted Local Plan comprises the following:

- Local Plan (2018); and
- Policies Map (2018).

The planning policies that are relevant to the consideration of the application are:

- Policy SD SP1 – Sustainable Development
- Policy SD SP2 – Built-Up Area Boundary
- Policy EMP SP1 – Strategic Economic Growth
- Policy EMP DM1 – Employment Land: Development Management
- Policy INF SP1 – Infrastructure Provision and Implementation

Principle of Development

The six new A/C vents are proposed to allow sufficient ventilation of a high-speed server exchange as referenced above. Although both the Local Plan and the NPPF offer specific guidance on telecommunications development this relates to the need for justification of

specialist mast and base station equipment and are therefore not seen as applicable in relation to this application.

The site falls within the Built-Up Area Boundary and as such it is considered that the site is an appropriate location for development of this type to be sited (in accordance with Policy SD SP2).

Policies EMP SP1 and DM1 refers to the enhancement of employment premises and sites. The Council will seek to protect and enhance existing premises to meet the needs of business. The proposal to operate the existing unit as a server exchange and to insert vents into the building utilises the existing use and enables its continued operation in accordance with policy EMP DM1.

Policy INF SP1 refers to infrastructure provision and implementation. The Council will support proposals that provide or contribute towards the infrastructure and services needed to support development to meet the needs of occupiers and users of the development. The proposed upgrades to the existing building will improve the broadband performance of the exchange for the needs of its users i.e. Bognor Regis area, who require high-speed broadband.

Design and Appearance

The application building is finished externally in Kingspan coated metal cladding panels. The modestly sized vents, each of which will be approximately 4 metres from ground level, will have a similar appearance to the existing building and have been sited at the north-east, south-west and south-east elevations.

The collapsible steel security bollards (0.9m in height), designed to withstand vehicle impact, are of a standard design and will be located directly in front of the existing roller shutter doors. The existing roller shutter and hard landscaping will be retained, as will existing parking and highway arrangements.

The vents, bollards, replacement fire door (with keypad), obscure film and security bars are considered extremely modest interventions and will allow the building to continue to support a commercial use that will have significantly wider benefits. The development integrates sympathetically into its surroundings in physical and visual terms and there will be no demonstrable harm caused by the proposals to the existing visual amenity of the wider business park. In this regard the scheme can be said to accord with extant Local Plan Policy SD SP1 referenced above.

Conclusion

The works will facilitate the use of the building as a Broadband Server Exchange that will provide a significantly improved internet service to Bognor Regis and the surrounding area, with enhanced connectivity and reliability. The need for an improved service has been made all the more vital due to Covid-19 and the provision of improved services is at the heart of National

Planning Policy. The host building and the interventions are discrete and there will be no material impact on the amenity of the area. On this basis, I respectfully request that the Council supports this application.

I look forward to receiving confirmation that the application has been validated. In the meantime, if you have any queries, please contact Silas Willoughby at Silas.Willoughby@cluttons.com or on (020) 7647 7059.

Yours faithfully

Silas Willoughby

Senior Planner – Senior Planner

Encl.