

Our Ref: HP20057- B026283

Planning Portal Ref: PP-09370789

Planning Department
Arun District Council
1 Maltravers Rd
Littlehampton
BN17 5LF

12th January 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

Town and County Planning Act (As Amended) 1990

Planning application for minor external alterations to existing industrial warehouse building. Works to include 2no. fire security doors to replace existing access doors on front and rear elevations. High level vents to the rear and 6no. air conditioning units on the side elevation, proposed mirror film and protection bars on existing windows. These works are required in association with the permitted change of use from Use Class B2 (precision engineering workshop) to Use Class B8 (datacentre).

Site address: Unit 6A Lineside Industrial Estate, Arndale Road, Littlehampton, BN17 7HD

Cover letter incorporating Planning Statement and Design & Access considerations and Flood Risk Assessment

Tetra Tech Planning is instructed by CityFibre Holdings Limited and we have pleasure in submitting a planning application for minor modifications to the external appearance of the warehouse building, in association with the permitted change of use from B2 to B8 (Permitted development under Part 3 Class I GPDO).

The application documentation, which has been submitted to Arun District Council via The Planning Portal (ref: PP-09370789) comprises the following:

- This covering letter (including FRA)
- Completed IAPP Application Form;
- Site Location Plans;
- Existing Site Plan;
- Existing Site Elevations;
- Proposed Site Plan;
- Proposed Site Elevations; and
- Air conditioner manufacturer's specification sheet
- Statutory application fee: £462

Background

CityFibre is a builder of gigabit cities. Through the design and deployment of future-proof, full fibre infrastructure, this helps bring the benefits of unlimited bandwidth and Gigabit speed connectivity to entire communities.

As part of this expansion, data centres hosting high speed servers are being established, which will transform the entire town's digital landscape, bringing full-fibre connectivity within reach of nearly every building in the area. This will not only deliver extensive fibre but provide a steep change in internet speed and quality, and a future proof platform for economic growth in the digital age. As part of this expansion, fibre exchanges, hosting high-speed servers are being established including within Unit 6A Lineside Lane (the application site).

Current Site

The Application Site comprises an existing industrial warehouse located in the well-established Lineside Industrial Estate. Unit 6A has most recently been used as a precision engineering workshop by ADM Precision Engineers Limited, the unit can be identified on the accompanying site location plan. The building fronts a small road which serves the adjoining units, to the rear of the unit is a small area of green space which separates the industrial estate from the residential area beyond. There is no publicly available planning history.

Proposed Development (including design & access considerations)

The proposal is simply for minor external alterations in relation to the permitted change of use. The minor works principally relate to the need to improve ventilation and heat control associated with the operation of the datacentre (including new vents to the building and the installation of air conditioning units) and security measures.

The existing use is B2 and the proposed data centre use is B8. The operation itself constitutes a centralised repository for the storage, management, and dissemination of data and information connected with the CityFibre network operation. The change of use from B2 to B8 is permitted development under Part 3 Class I of the GPDO. Therefore, the only works that require planning permission are the minor external alterations.

Due to the operation of a large number of computer systems, which are typically required to operate at low temperatures, a number of air conditioning units will be required for the proposed development. Overall, there will be a total of 6no. air conditioning units, 4no. 25kW units and 2no. 8kW units. The technical specifications of the air conditioning units are submitted as part of this application. There are a small number of vents to the rear elevation, comprising 2 fresh air vents and 1 generator vent.

The design changes to the building are a functional requirement for ventilation and security reasons. These are minor changes, which are reversible and not out of keeping with industrial warehouse buildings. In terms of the operation of the datacentre, the unit will operate 24/7 and 365 days a year however the only external impacts will be associated with the operation of air conditioning units (when required). The manufacturers specification sheet for the air conditioning units proposed to be installed outside of the building to the side elevation and is included with the application pack.

Traffic movements will be very limited and associated with the operations and maintenance of the datacentre. The building can be accessed via the fire security door and roller shutter door, both at ground level. There is no provision for public access and the only visitors to the site will be authorised operatives.

In terms of external impact from noise, disturbance and general activity, this would typically be negligible following initial installation and fit-out. An air conditioning unit produces limited noise and therefore is not expected to cause any impacts upon the amenity of the neighbouring area in this regard. The emergency generator is only to be used in the unlikely event of a power cut. The technical specifications for each of the air conditioning units are appended to this application. Due to the nature of the proposed development as a data storage facility, the cabins will not contain any personnel. Movements to and from the site would be minimal and primarily be engineers conducting maintenance and inspections which only occur a few times a year.

Flood Risk Assessment

The application site is located just within Flood Zone 3. Due to the minor external alterations such as replacement doors and AC units, the proposals do not increase flood risk elsewhere and will not increase its vulnerability. The warehouse exists already and there is no new 'development' proposed. Additionally, the data centre use can be classified as 'essential infrastructure'.

There is an important operational reason behind the proposed location for this infrastructure development. In order to distribute CityFibre's full-fibre, gigabit network and deliver essential, future-proofed digital connectivity, this site was brought forwards as its location was able to meet all the location and site requirements in order to provide the optimum levels of connectivity and network coverage. Notwithstanding this, the proposals will provide significant benefit to the area by providing access to high speed full-fibre broadband. This has seen recent support from the Government through the support of digital infrastructure, specifically during these times of lockdown where connection and working from home is particularly important for the foreseeable future.

Overall, the replacement of doors and installation of a small number of AC units on the side elevation of an existing building do not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Conclusion

CityFibre's presence in the area would provide numerous benefits, increasing the capacity of extremely fast high-speed broadband fibre connections for the residents and businesses within the area. The scheme would offer substantial wider benefits by allowing Littlehampton to increase its capacity of extremely fast high-speed broadband fibre connections for existing and future residents and business.

I trust this is sufficient for you to validate the planning application and we look forward to receiving a favourable decision. If you do require any additional information or advice, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,



Ed Allsop MRTPI

Senior Planner

Tetra Tech Europe- Planning