Planning Services

Cherwell District Council

Bodicote House

Bodicote

Banbury

Oxfordshire

OX15 4AA

Dear Sir or Madam,

**RE: Construction of a new unit at Cotefield Business Park, Oxford Road, Bodicote OX15 4AQ**

On behalf of our client, William Bratt (the Applicant), we hereby submit a formal planning application for the above-mentioned development at Cotefield Business Park, Oxford Road, Bodicote OX15 4AQ.

The purpose of this letter is to describe the site and its surroundings, provide a description of the proposed development, set out the planning context and show how the proposed development has regard to planning policy and guidance.

This letter should be read in conjunction with the following drawings and supporting documents:

* 7993-0105-02 Site Location Plan (Business Unit Extension)
* UNIT H\_0000\_Layer 11 AFTER V2
* 7993-0108-01 Floor Plans and Elevations (Business Unit Extension)
* 7993-0106-02 Existing Block Plan (Business Unit Extension).pdf
* 7993-0107-02 Proposed Block Plan (Business Unit Extension)

Site and Surroundings

The site comprises of an area of 190m² of land set within the Cotefield Business Park in Bodicote. The site is adjacent to an existing building with B1/B8 usage.

South West of the site are two areas of land developed for housing, with the more recent site still under construction. The housing is shielded from the proposed building by thick hedging and a distance of approximately 40m*.* To the north east and east of the site is the existing Cotefield business park, consisting mostly of industrial units.

The site is currently an inefficiently used area of mixed hardstanding, scrap and outside storage and shipping containers.

Planning History

The table below outlines the planning history at the site and the adjacent building. The building has been under B1/B8 use since the implementation of application 00/01795/F. The subsequent permissions regarding the play centre were not implemented.

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| **Ref. Number** | **Proposal** | **Decision**  | **Decision Date**  |
| 00/01795/F | Change of use of potato storage building to use for B1 (Business) and B8 (Storage and Distribution) | Approved | 30/10/2000 |
| 01/01707/F | Change of use of B1/B8 building to play centre and installation of mezzanine | Approved  | 21/02/2002 |
| 02/01212/F | Extension to play centre building | Approved | 26/07/2002 |

Proposed Development

The Applicant is seeking permission for a new unit that will be adjoining an existing unit on site (Unit E).The new building would be constructed from a powder coated steel frame and be used for uses consistent with the existing uses nearby, namely B1/B8 as storage and/or light industrial processes. The materials will match the adjoining building as well as the other buildings in the vicinity.

The site is well screened by trees and vegetation to the south east and south west as well as being screened by the existing warehouse that the site is adjacent to.

Planning Policy Context

The adopted Local Plan is made up of saved policies from the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan (November 1996) and the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1. The most pertinent policy is Policy SLE1. (RPS emphasis).

**Policy SLE 1: Employment Development**

*“Employment development on new sites allocated in this Plan will be the type of employment development specified within each site policy in Section C ‘Policies for Cherwell's Places’. Other types of employment development (B Use class) will be considered in conjunction with the use(s) set out if it makes the site viable.*

*In cases where planning permission is required existing employment sites should be retained for employment use unless the following criteria are met:*

* *the applicant can demonstrate that an employment use should not be retained, including showing the site has been marketed and has been vacant in the long term.*
* *the applicant can demonstrate that there are valid reasons why the use of the site for the existing or another employment use is not economically viable.*
* *the applicant can demonstrate that the proposal would not have the effect of limiting the amount of land available for employment.*

*Regard will be had to whether the location and nature of the present employment activity has an unacceptable adverse impact upon adjacent residential uses. Regard will be had to whether the applicant can demonstrate that there are other planning objectives that would outweigh the value of retaining the site in an employment use.*

***Employment development will be focused on existing employment sites. On existing operational or vacant employment sites at Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and in the rural areas employment development, including intensification, will be permitted subject to compliance with other policies in the Plan and other material considerations. New dwellings will not be permitted within employment sites except where this is in accordance with specific site proposals set out in this Local Plan.***

*Employment proposals at Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington will be supported if they meet the following criteria:*

* *Are within the built-up limits of the settlement unless on an allocated site*
* *They will be outside of the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated*
* *Make efficient use of previously-developed land wherever possible*
* *Make efficient use of existing and underused sites and premises increasing the intensity of use on sites*
* *Have good access, or can be made to have good access, by public transport and other sustainable modes*
* *Meet high design standards, using sustainable construction, are of an appropriate scale and respect the character of its surroundings*
* *Do not have an adverse effect on surrounding land uses, residents and the historic and natural environment.*

***Unless exceptional circumstances are demonstrated, employment development in the rural areas should be located within or on the edge of those villages in Category A (see Policy Villages 1).***

*New employment proposals within rural areas on non-allocated sites will be supported if they meet the following criteria:*

* *They will be outside of the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.*
* *Sufficient justification is provided to demonstrate why the development should be located in the rural area on a non-allocated site.*
* *They will be designed to very high standards using sustainable construction and be of an appropriate scale and respect the character of villages and the surroundings.*
* *They will be small scale unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the character of a village or surrounding environment.*
* *The proposal and any associated employment activities can be carried out without undue detriment to residential amenity, the highway network, village character and its setting, the appearance and character of the landscape and the environment generally including on any designated buildings or features (or on any non-designated buildings or features of local importance).*
* *The proposal will not give rise to excessive or inappropriate traffic and will wherever possible contribute to the general aim of reducing the need to travel by private car.*
* *There are no suitable available plots or premises within existing nearby employment sites in the rural areas.*

*The Local Plan has an urban focus. With the potential for increased travel by private car by workers and other environmental impacts, justification for employment development on new sites in the rural areas will need to be provided. This should include an applicant demonstrating a need for and benefits of employment in the particular location proposed and explaining why the proposed development should not be located at the towns, close to the proposed labour supply.”*

The first part of Policy SLE1 focuses on the retention of employment sites. The second part is focused on new employment premises such as the on proposed in this application. Employment sites in rural areas are assessed against 7 criteria in the policy. We have considered how this proposal performs against the following criteria below. Use of the word ‘They’ refers to proposed employment sites such as the subject of this application.

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| **Policy SLE1 relevant criteria**  | **Compliance with Criteria** |
| They will be outside of the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.  | The site is not within the Green Belt. |
| Sufficient justification is provided to demonstrate why the development should be located in the rural area on a non-allocated site.  | The new building will likely be used by the current occupier of the site and is required to be in close proximity. The building is within an existing employment site and will result in an increase in efficient use of the space available. There would be no other viable use for the location.  |
| They will be designed to very high standards using sustainable construction and be of an appropriate scale and respect the character of villages and the surroundings.  | The building has a simple design suited to its function. The new building will be finished in a similar material to the adjoining/surrounding larger buildings, as shown in drawing 7993-0108-01 Floor Plans and Elevations (Business Unit Extension). Its construction will improve the appearance and quality of the immediate location. |
| They will be small scale unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the character of a village or surrounding environment.  | The new building will be small scale and subservient to the adjoining building in both height and floor space, as shown in drawing 7993-0108-01 Floor Plans and Elevations (Business Unit Extension). |
| The proposal and any associated employment activities can be carried out without undue detriment to residential amenity, the highway network, village character and its setting, the appearance and character of the landscape and the environment generally including on any designated buildings or features (or on any non-designated buildings or features of local importance).  | The proposed building is well screened from the nearest residential receptors by existing vegetation at the site boundary.The operation of the new building will have no perceivable effect on trip generation or impact on the local area due to its small size, location and use type being consistent with the existing site. The appearance of the new building will be in keeping with the character of the other buildings at Cotefield Business Park. |
| The proposal will not give rise to excessive or inappropriate traffic and will wherever possible contribute to the general aim of reducing the need to travel by private car.  | The new building will have no perceivable effect on traffic flows to and from the site due to its small size and use type being consistent with existing site uses. |
| There are no suitable available plots or premises within existing nearby employment sites in the rural areas. | The development is proposed in this location due to an emergent demand on an established employment site.It is designed to make better and more efficient use of the existing space available and facilitate a general improvement in the quality of the site. |

Policy SLE1 highlights a preference for employment development to be placed within or at the edges of villages in Category A, as allocated by the Local Plans Policy Villages: Village Categorisation policy. Bodicote is deemed a Category A village, therefore this proposed development at the edge of Bodicote on an established employment site can be deemed appropriate when measured against this policy.

For the reasons stated above, the proposed development adheres with planning policy and should be granted approval.

Thank you for your consideration of this application, I look forward to hearing from you upon its validation.

Yours sincerely,

for RPS Consulting Services Ltd

**Edward Nabbs**

Consultant

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