

## REPORT TO THE SOUTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	04 <sup>th</sup> October 2012		
<b>Application Number:</b>	S/2012/1076/Full		
<b>Site Address:</b>	Unit 1 & 2 Sarum Business Park, Lancaster Road, Salisbury. SP4 6FB		
<b>Proposal:</b>	Partial demolition and division of Unit no. 1 (single storey building), to provide 6no. separate self contained units and the provision of a fire door in Unit 2 a two storey attached unit		
<b>Applicant / Agent:</b>	Mr A Inman, ITLI Associates Ltd		
<b>City/Town/Parish Council</b>	Laverstock		
<b>Electoral Division</b>	Laversotock, Ford & Old Sarum	<b>Unitary Member</b>	Cllr Ian McLennan
<b>Grid Reference:</b>	Easting: 415087	Northing: 133479	
<b>Type of Application:</b>	Minor		
<b>Conservation Area:</b>	Cons Area: - Old Sarum Airfield	LB Grade:- NA	
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Mr Tom Wippell	Contact Number: 01722 434554	

### Reason for the application being considered by Committee

The Local Councillor considers that the development amounts to several steps too far and also see this as an opportunity for members to judge the merits of a conservation area and its buildings.

#### 1. Purpose of report

To consider the above application and the recommendation of the Area Development Manager that planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to conditions.

#### 2. Report summary

The main issues in the consideration of this application are as follows:

1. Principle of development
2. Historical background of area
3. Impact on character of building/ wider Conservation Area

The application has generated objections from Laverstock and Ford Parish Council (and no third parties).

#### 3. Site Description

Unit 1, Sarum Business Park is situated within the Old Sarum Airfield Conservation Area, which was designated by Salisbury District Council in 2007. Unit 1 is not a listed building. There are however, listed buildings to the south east comprising three paired First World War hangars (Grade II\*) and a workshop building (Grade II).

Unit 1 is aligned east-west, parallel to the Portway on Lancaster Road. It comprises a single-storey painted brick building with a pitched roof covered in asbestos sheeting. The north elevation has a covered brick lean-to along its length, which was formally two covered yards separated by an open yard, plus additional small lean-tos. The building is largely

open-plan, with a single partitioned two-storey area at its eastern end. All but one of the original windows have been replaced.

#### **4. Relevant Planning History**

None relevant for this building

#### **5. Proposal**

The proposal is for the partial demolition and division of Unit no. 1 (single storey building), to provide 6 separate self contained business units (B1/B8 use), and the provision of a fire door in Unit 2, the two-storey attached unit.

#### **6. Planning Policy**

South Wiltshire Core Strategy – G2, CN8, CN11,  
Core Policy 5- Employment,  
Core Policy 9- Old Sarum Airfield

#### **7. Consultations**

##### **Highways**

The proposed alterations to the units will result in an overall improved and formalised parking and access arrangement. I do not wish to raise a highway objection.

##### **Conservation**

With regard to this particular application, some of the changes proposed are positive, and some negative. On balance, I consider that the proposals will not adversely affect the character or special interest of this building and in view of the wider benefit of achieving a lettable unit (thereby securing the future of the building), raise no objections to the proposals.

The owner wishes to create smaller business units. The changes proposed are:

1. Separating the technical sheds from the two-storey modern block by reinstating the dividing wall between the two buildings;
2. Subdividing the technical stores into 6 units by inserting stud partitions in line with the trussed bays;
3. Demolishing some of the brickwork between the piers on the inner north west elevation of the stores (the lean-to) and inserting a door and loading bay door per unit (ie x 6);
4. Removal of some brickwork on the outer north west elevation and the creation of 7 piers (subdividing the units and forming the car bays);
5. Demolition of the single storey lean-to structure against the north west elevation;
6. Replacement of 6 modern windows on the south elevation with windows to a design to match the original;
7. Replacement of the existing roof covering (corrugated asbestos) with a corrugated metal roof;
8. Insertion of 6 rooflights on the north slope of the new roof.

Of the above, items 1, 5 and 6 are positive enhancements and item 7, a neutral change (although given the dilapidation of the existing roof covering– possibly positive in terms of the 'health' of the building). Item 2 sees the subdivision of a space which has always been open. That said, the subdivision involves partitions that could be removed at a later stage and retains the trusses, using them to delineate the bays. Clearly items 3, 4 and 8 are more

problematic, however it is considered that the concept of an open-sided lean-to, the insertion of doors, loading bay doors and rooflights, to be in keeping with the practical character of this utilitarian building.

### **Parish Council**

Object: We note that the applicants report has been compiled by Elaine Milton, former Conservation Officer Salisbury District Council.

It is clear from her report that this is one of the WWI Technical Buildings which formed the basis for the designation of Old Sarum Airfield, its listed Hangars, Technical Buildings, Administration Buildings, Recreation Buildings and Officer and Other Ranks quarters. As the report goes on to emphasise, the airfield and its setting remains largely unaltered from the original design concept and the task of WC is to ensure, under Core Policy 58, the conservation and enhancement of conservation areas and under Core Policy 23, which is omitted from the report, limits how this may be done for Old Sarum Airfield, providing agreement is reached with local representatives.

Although not listed, it is made clear in the report that this technical building, apart from window changes and a joining to the modern adjacent unit. Remains visually intact on the exterior and retains its roof trusses on the interior. The one gain from the application would be the reinstatement of the dividing wall, to show off the interior in its original shape and size. That element of the application would be acceptable.

However, the proposals section 7 of the report list numerous structural changes inside and out which would dramatically affect the whole building permanently and turn it into just another warehouse/storage unit with modern loading bays and roller doors and a new metal roof. To consider these changes as acceptable casts doubt on the integrity of the report provided by the applicant, when the statement, "The alterations made would amount to less than substantial harm to the heritage asset" is considered.

We prefer the statement:

*10.1 Unit 1 is considered to make a positive contribution to the Old Sarum Airfield Conservation Area and as such should be regarded as a heritage asset for decision-taking as part of the planning process.*

There are numerous empty units, similar to those proposed, at Old Sarum and so the PC does not see any advantageous during these times of recession. In fact, it could easily be argued that the larger spaces or spaces (if the dividing wall is eventually reinstated) could easily be advantageous.

In Conclusion

This Parish Objects to this application and the irrevocable damage it would do to this key WWI Technical Building, which is integral to the Airfield Conservation Area.

Should, for any reason, WC officers propose to approve this application, we ask that you alert our WC Member, as we ask that the application then be judged by members of the Southern Planning Committee.

### **Third Party Representations:**

No comments received

## 8. Publicity

The application was advertised by site notice and neighbour consultation.

No objections were received from third parties

## 9. Planning Considerations

### 9.1 Principle

Core Policy 5 states that *Permission will not be granted for development of land or buildings previously or currently used for, or allocated for, activities falling within Use Classes B1, B2 or B8, unless it can be demonstrated that:*

- i) the proposed development will generate the same number or more jobs than could be expected from the existing use, or any potential employment use; or*
- ii) where the proposal concerns loss of employment land of more than 0.25ha within Salisbury city or the settlements of Amesbury, Downton, Mere, Tisbury or Wilton, it is replaced with employment land of similar size elsewhere in that settlement; or*
- iii) it can be shown that the loss of a small proportion of employment floorspace would facilitate the redevelopment and continuation of employment use on a greater part of the site, providing the same number or more jobs than on the original whole site; or*
- iv) the site is not appropriate for the continuation of its present or any employment use due to a significant detriment to the environment or amenity of the area; or*
- v) there is valid evidence that the site has no long term and strategic requirement to remain in employment use; the ability of the site to meet modern business needs must be considered, as well as its strategic value and contribution to the local and wider economy, both currently and in the long term; site appraisal criteria, as provided by the Employment Land Review, must be applied and an objective assessment made of the sites potential contribution to the economy, in line with other sites in the area; it must be shown that the site is no longer viable for its present or any other employment use and that, in addition, it has remained unsold or un-let for a substantial period of time, following genuine and sustained attempts to sell or let it on reasonable terms for employment use, taking into account prevailing market conditions.*

In principle, it is considered that the scheme would satisfy criteria i, iii, iiiii and v of Core Policy 5, as the proposed development is expected to generate the same number/ range of jobs as the existing use, the building has been unoccupied over the last 18 months despite continuous marketing, and in its current state of repair, the building does not lend itself to being let as a single unit.

By splitting the building up into 6 industrial units rather than 1 large unit, a much wider range of job opportunities could potentially be provided. The creation of 6 smaller units would offer a more versatile layout that could be leased to a number of small enterprises; whereas the current open-plan, long/narrow layout of the existing building, coupled with its low-level roof height and general state of repair is considered by Officers to be unsuitable/uncompetitive when compared to modern industrial buildings.

It should be noted that no 'change of use' application is proposed, and any move away from the industrial use of the building (ie- into retail) will be assessed on its own merits at a subsequent date.

## **9.2. Historical background to the Old Sarum Conservation Area**

The application site is situated within the Old Sarum Airfield Conservation Area, which was designated by Salisbury District Council in 2007.

Old Sarum Airfield was first established in 1917. A sense of historic continuity is provided by its proximity to the Iron Age earthworks of Old Sarum and the Roman roads that form its northern and southern boundaries, and by the openness of the flying field area itself, which preserves the medieval open field landscape. This historic open character of the flying field remains almost unaltered from its WW1 form.

From its origins as a training station for the Royal Flying Corps in 1917 and as the School of Army Cooperation from 1921, Old Sarum was developed as a permanent station as part of the RAF Expansion Scheme in the 1930's, and continued to evolve and serve the Royal Air Force and Army as a key training base (and battle headquarters during WW2) until the 1970's. Today, the site is home to the civilian Old Sarum Flying Club, the TA, and a number of residential and industrial sites.

The area has sustained considerable change prior to Conservation Area designation in 2007, including the construction of new business units opposite the building in question and the loss of buildings (such as the gatehouse).

## **9.3. Impact on character of building/ wider Conservation Area**

The building to be converted is sited on the edge of the Old Sarum conservation area, and is intimately linked to the development of the historic airfield site. The building is not listed, but due to its location and historic use, is considered to be an undesignated heritage asset.

In view of the conservation area designation, it is important to preserve the character of the area, and in view of the very particular features of this conservation area, it is important to retain evidence of the former purpose of this building.

In general terms, it is considered that the concept of an open-sided lean-to, the insertion of doors, loading bay doors and rooflights would be in keeping with the practical character of this utilitarian building. When viewed from the industrial units opposite the building, the visual impact is not considered to be significantly prominent/ harmful to the wider Conservation Area, and when viewed from the road at the rear (south elevation), the character/ special interest of this building will be largely retained.

Overall it is considered that in view of the wider benefit of achieving lettable units (thereby securing the future of the building), the visual impact on the building will be an acceptable form of development. The long-term suitability of the building will be maintained, and the building will continue to provide employment opportunities in the long term, whilst preserving the character of the Old Sarum Conservation Area.

## **9.4. Other Issues**

The proposed alterations to the building will not result in any net increase in vehicular movements, and overall it is considered that the proposed scheme will result in improved

formalised parking/ access arrangement. The Highways Team have viewed the plans and raise no objections in highway safety terms.

There will be no change of use at the building and no intensification of use in terms of additional floorspace created. No observations have been raised from Environmental Health.

## **10. Conclusion**

The proposal for the formation of six new industrial units to replace a single unit which has been marketed without success for an individual use will allow smaller 'start up' companies to occupy the spaces created and thereby creating useable employment units. The building the subject of this application is situated in an historic environment designated as a conservation area and close to listed buildings. It is not considered that the alterations to be made to the building as shown would have such a detrimental effect on the character of the conservation area or other listed buildings as to warrant refusal of this application

## **11. Recommendation**

### **Planning Permission be GRANTED for the following reasons;-**

The development would be acceptable in principle, would have no significant impact on the setting of the nearby listed buildings, would not detract from the character wider Conservation Area, and would not result in any significant impact on highway safety or neighbouring properties. The development would therefore accord with the aims and objectives of the development plan, having regard in particular to Local Plan policies G2, CN8, CN11 and Core Policy 5 which are 'saved' policies of the adopted South Wiltshire Core Strategy.

### **And subject to the following conditions:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. As amended by section 51 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (0004 AMENDED)

2. This development shall be in accordance with the submitted drawings

- 4391.1, dated May 2012
- 4391/2, dated May 2012
- 4391.3, dated May 2012
- 4391/4 rev 1, dated May 2012

and registered with the Local Planning Authority on 26/07/12, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

3. No development shall commence on site until details and samples of the materials to be used for the external roofs have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

4. No works shall commence on site until details of the proposed rooflights (including size, manufacturer and model number) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The new rooflights shall be of a design which, when installed, do not project forward of the general roof surface. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the character and appearance of the building and its setting.

5. No works shall commence on site until details of all new external window joinery have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall include horizontal/vertical frame sections (including sections through glazing bars) at not less than 1:5. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of preserving the character and appearance of the building and its setting.