

**WOOTTON BASSETT: CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING LIGHT INDUSTRY TO  
THE RECOVERY, RECYCLING AND TRANSFER OF SPECIALISED WASTE  
AT UNIT 12a WHITEHILL INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, WOOTTON BASSETT  
(Application No. N/07/07021)**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To consider the above application and to recommend that conditional planning permission be granted.

**The Site**

2. Whitehill Industrial Estate is located on the south-western periphery of Wootton Bassett and is comprised of a series of industrial units of twin portal frame construction with brick and steel sheet cladding. Access to the estate is gained via the A3102 High Street/Bath Road and Whitehill Lane running north to south along the length of the eastern boundary.
3. The application site is situated in one of the central units at the estate and is currently unoccupied. Vehicular access is gained via roller shutter doors to the front elevation of the unit and externally the premises have a service yard area and parking.
4. The estate is comprehensively enclosed with dense and mature vegetation, with open fields to the north, east and west. A residential housing area is located close to the south east of the estate.
5. A location plan is attached at **Appendix 1** and a site plan at **Appendix 2**.

**Site History**

6. The following planning history is considered relevant to the site:  
  
N/88/3324 – Planning permission granted by North Wiltshire District Council for the Change of Use of Units 7-49 at Whitehill Industrial Estate for B1, B2 and B8 purposes (Light Industrial, Industrial and Storage and Distribution) on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1989.

**The Proposal**

7. The application proposes to change the use of Unit 12a at Whitehill Industrial Estate to that of a small-scale specialised waste recovery, recycling and transfer facility. The application proposes a throughput of less than 1,000 tonnes of material per annum.
8. Waste would be brought to the site by van or heavy good vehicles (HGVs) on pallets that would be unloaded within the unit using a fork lift truck. Fluorescent tubes would be brought to the site in sealed steel containers.

The materials recovered and recycled on site for onward transfer would include:

- Paper
- Cardboard
- Plastic
- Fluorescent bulbs
- Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)

The materials not recycled but just bulked up for onward transfer would include:

- Batteries
- Wood
- Metal
- WEEE

9. Three staff would be employed to manually dismantle the WEEE and to feed the fluorescent tubes into a 'bulb crushing' machine. There would be two shredders and two balers inside the building that would be used to process or bulk the paper, cardboard and plastic. All operations would be confined to the building.
10. The proposal would not involve the use of skips and waste for onward transfer would be re-loaded onto pallets and dispatched by HGV. There would be no more than four HGV vehicle movements per week and an average of four van vehicle movements per day.
11. The hours of operation proposed are:

Monday to Friday	08.30-17.00
Saturdays	Closed
Sundays and Bank/Public Holidays	Closed

### **Planning Policy**

13. The following Development Plan policies are considered relevant to the determination of this application:
  - Policies W1, W3 and W4 of the Wiltshire and Swindon Structure Plan 2016.
  - Policies 1, 2, 6, 9 and 23 Wiltshire and Swindon Waste Local Plan 2011.
  - Policies C1 and C3 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.

All relevant policies are set out in the attached **Appendix 3**.

### **Consultation**

14. **Local Member, Mr. T.R. Sturgis** – no comment.
15. **North Wiltshire District Council** – no objection.
16. **North Wiltshire District Council (Environmental Health Officer)** – no objection.
17. **Wootton Bassett Town Council** – no objection.
18. **Environment Agency** – no objection.

19. **County Countryside Team** – no objection.

20. **Local Highways Authority** – no objection.

### **Publicity**

21. The application was advertised in the local press and by site notice. A neighbour notification exercise was also carried out. One letter of representation was received, objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:

- Potential of hazardous waste from fluorescent light bulbs to have a detrimental effect on human health.

22. Copies of all the consultation responses and representation will be available for inspection in the **Member's Room**.

### **Planning Considerations**

23. The planning application must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Having regard to the representations made and planning policy, it is considered that the issues in the determination of this application are:

- Whether the Change of Use is appropriate
- The potential impact of the new use on the surrounding environment and human health.

### **Change of Use**

24. Whitehill Industrial Estate comprises a mix of businesses that can be described as 'industry' related. Policy 23 of the Waste Local Plan states that proposals for new specialised waste recovery and recycling facilities should be located within existing B2 industrial areas. However, the policy also makes the presumption that B1 and B8 uses would be incompatible neighbours for development of this type.

25. The policy envisages that some specialised waste recovery and processing development may be incompatible with industrial enterprises already operating in the vicinity of an established industrial estate. For example, certain types of waste facilities would be incompatible with existing industrial undertakings requiring a contaminant free environment. Such cases arise where the particular processes being carried out have a tendency to cause adverse dust or odour effects on adjacent land or local environment, even when all remedial measures have been taken by the operator.

26. Unit 12a would operate in the vicinity of an electronics manufacturer, vehicle repair and service garages, removals firm, stainless steel supplier, window and cladding company, sport and fitness supplement supplier and fireplace specialist. In this instance the recovery and recycling of specialised waste would be undertaken within the confines of the industrial unit and is not considered likely to detrimentally impact adjacent businesses or the surrounding environment. In accordance with Policy 6 of the Waste Local Plan, the applicant has demonstrated that noise levels would be within acceptable limits and that there would be negligible air emissions from the waste material.

27. Having regard to the minimal environmental impact of the proposal and in accordance with Policies 1 and 2 of the Waste Local Plan, the value of a localised specialised waste recovery and recycling facility, it is considered that the development supports the principle of sustainable waste management and that the principle of Change of Use can be supported.

Impact of hazardous waste on the surrounding environment and human health

28. It is proposed that less than 200 tonnes per annum of end of life fluorescent light bulbs would be brought to the facility for recycling. Concern has been expressed that mercury contained in these bulbs could potentially pollute the environment and detrimentally affect the health of the surrounding population.
29. The end of life bulbs would be brought to the site in sealed steel containers specifically designed for this purpose. The bulbs would be unloaded from the containers inside the building and fed into a 'bulb crusher', which would crush bulbs of various lengths into 100% recyclable material. The bulb crusher would capture 99.99% of vapours released into a sealed drum, which would be transferred to a third party for additional processing. The operation is such that it would be exempt from a waste management licence.
30. It would be the responsibility of the operator to ensure the health and safety of their workers should a bulb accidentally break. However, given the small amount of mercury contained in each bulb, it is unlikely to cause any harm to anyone in the vicinity and the risk from air pollution to the surrounding environment would be negligible.

**Conclusion and Reasons for Approval**

31. The proposed Change of Use of an industrial unit to a small-scale waste recovery, recycling and transfer facility supports the principle of sustainable waste management and the facility is unlikely to create any adverse environmental impact. It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with Policies 1, 2 and 6 of the Waste Local Plan and there are no material considerations to indicate that planning permission should be refused.

**Recommendation**

32. That planning permission be granted for the above reasons, subject to the following conditions:

Commencement

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

*Reason: To comply with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.*

#### Hours of operation

2. Operations authorised by this permission shall be restricted to the following hours:

08.30 – 17.00 Monday – Friday

No operations shall take place on Saturday, Sunday or on Bank or Public Holidays.

*Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents and visitors to the area.*

#### Pollution Prevention

3. No waste recovery or transfer operations shall take place outside of the confines of the building hereby approved for this purpose and no waste materials either awaiting processing or having been processed shall be deposited or stored on the adjacent open area outside the building.

*Reason: In the interest of amenity and safety.*

#### **GEORGE BATTEN**

Director of Environmental Services

Report Author

**Charlotte Lewis**

Senior Planning Officer

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**The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:**

Consultation replies and correspondence