



## Woolf Bond Planning

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18<sup>th</sup> March 2021

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By Email: [local.plan@hertsmere.gov.uk](mailto:local.plan@hertsmere.gov.uk)

Dear Mr Whear,

### **Hertsmere Local Plan Review - Call for Employment Sites 2021**

#### **Land at Charleston Paddocks, South Mimms**

#### **Information Submitted on behalf of Gilston Investments Ltd owners of the Wrotham Park Estate**

#### **Context**

Our client, Gilston Investments Ltd owners of the Wrotham Park Estate, is promoting **land at Charleston Paddocks** as a sustainable location to accommodate an **employment allocation** for a range of E(g) use classes.

Submission of this information is intended to assist the Council in its assessment of the Site having regard to its suitability as a sustainable location to accommodate employment uses.

Our client is the landowner and welcomes the opportunity to work with the Council on a collaborative basis in seeking to realise the development potential of this sustainably located site.

The accompanying technical work confirms there are no known constraints to the early delivery of the site, such that the Council can have confidence in relying upon it for the purpose of meeting identified employment needs and creating job opportunities during the early part of the plan period.

## **Plans and Particulars**

The plans and particulars submitted in support of the proposed allocation of the site for employment generating purposes comprise as follows:

1. Concept Masterplan Layout No. 5448/100/A
2. Letter from Highways England (16<sup>th</sup> November 2020)
3. Landscape and Visual Green Belt Overview (CSA Environmental) (March 2021)
4. Preliminary Hydrological Appraisal (RPS) (March 2021)
5. Completed Questionnaire

## **Development Opportunity**

The Site forms part of the SADM25 South Mimms Special Policy Area which safeguards the land for activities relating to the management, operation and maintenance of the strategic road network.

However, the accompanying letter from Highways England confirms the Site is no longer required to be safeguarded in association with the management, operation and maintenance of the strategic road network. This is of particular importance in that it allows the Site to be considered for an alternative use(s).

The supporting Concept Masterplan shows how the site could accommodate a large warehouse style building along with supporting office accommodation, car parking and associated service yard.

The Masterplan also allows for necessary drainage/attenuation, with development to be provided within flood zone 1. In addition, the Concept Masterplan also enables the provision of a landscaped buffer which creates a transition to the wider countryside beyond.

The Site reads as part of the South Mimms commercial area and development in this location would be well suited to the provision of an employment generating use in helping to address the economic aspirations of the Council during the plan period.

## **Landscape and Green Belt Visual Overview**

The Landscape and Green Belt Visual Overview prepared by CSA concludes in relation to the acceptability of the allocation of the site for employment generating uses in Green Belt and landscape terms as follows:

- i. The Site comprises a rectangular field and a bungalow and outbuildings, which are indented into the south eastern corner of South Mimms Service Area. To the immediate north and west of the Site are the services and associated parking areas, and Hertfordshire County Council's South Mimms Depot. Mimmshall Brook and Wash Lane lie in proximity to the eastern edge of the Site, and the M25 road corridor follows the southern boundary.
- ii. The Site's character is influenced by its proximity to built development and infrastructure within the South Mimms Service Area, and by the M25 road corridor which has an audible and visual presence to the south. A large lattice pylon is also a detracting element within the Site, as are the existing bungalows and out buildings. It is assessed as being of medium – low sensitivity to potential employment development, and has a good ability to accommodate development of this type.

- iii. The visual appraisal found that the Site is contained by existing built development and the M25 road corridor, and the majority of views are limited to filtered, partial views from the immediate vicinity and from a limited number of vantage points to the east and south. This shows employment development located in the western and central part of the Site, with scope to provide a number of landscape and environmental enhancements within the eastern part of the Site, adjacent to Mimms Brook and Wash Lane Common LNR.
- iv. **The Hertsmere Green Belt Assessment Stage 2** considers the Site as part of a wider sub-area (Sub-area SA-18), which includes the buildings and service areas associated with South Mimms Service Area. This assessment **concludes that this sub-area makes no contribution to purposes 1 - 4 of the Green Belt**. Furthermore, the Council's assessment concludes that, if the land at South Mimms Service Area (including the Site) were to be released from the Green Belt, the revised Green Belt boundary would follow readily recognisable features which are likely to be permanent. CSA's assessment of the Site against the Green Belt purposes would wholly support these findings.

As set out above, the Council's evidence confirms the suitability of the Site to be removed from the Green Belt. Given this conclusion and the confirmation from Highways England that the Site is no longer required to be safeguarded in association with the management, operation and maintenance of the strategic road network, the evidence supports the allocation of the site for employment generating uses.

### **Summary**

The accompanying technical work confirms there are no known constraints to the early delivery of the site, such that the Council can have confidence in relying upon it for the purpose of securing employment opportunities in the early part of the plan period.

Allocating the site to meet employment needs is justified, including having regard to the character of the area, which already includes a number of commercial uses, and the findings of the Council's Stage 2 Green Belt Study.

On the basis of the foregoing, **land at Charleston Paddocks** represents a suitable location to accommodate an **employment allocation** for a range of E(g) use classes.

We trust the above is of assistance and look forward to hearing from you with a view to progressing site specific policy wording to inform the allocation of the site for employment uses through preparation of the emerging Local Plan.

Yours sincerely,

*Woolf Bond Planning LLP*

Steven Brown BSc DipTP MRTPI  
For and on behalf of Woolf Bond Planning LLP

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