

NEIGHBOUR LETTERS SENT:-

The Occupier: Viking House.

REPLIES RECEIVED:-

No objection.

THE APPLICATION SITE:-

1. The application site comprises 1.56 hectares of land adjacent to the Southern Perimeter Road at Gatwick, between the perimeter road and the airport boundary to the south. The site lies approximately 150 metres south of the runway.
2. The site lies between a large area of staff car parking and a site occupied by an airline catering firm.
3. The site is largely flat and rectangular in shape. A drainage channel runs through the site to connect to Crawters Brook to the north. The central area of the site contains a number of hard standings and derelict structures and contains an area of trees and bushes.
4. To the south the boundary of the site and the Charlwood Road is marked by a significant line of trees and bushes which creates a hedge restricting views into the site from the public highway.

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:-

5. The proposed development involves the construction of a Home Office Immigration Removal Centre. The building would have a gross floorspace of 12,685m² and would be up to 3 storeys in height.
6. The proposed development would consist of a series of buildings comprising a visitors' centre, a gatehouse and the accommodation building. Provision will also be made for staff (111 spaces) and visitor car parking (11) spaces, with access provided from the Perimeter Road South.
7. The facility will provide 426 spaces for detainees in single and double units of accommodation. The visitors' centre and gatehouse are proposed for the northern part of the site adjacent to the access. These buildings will be one and two storeys in height. The accommodation for the detainees is proposed for the southern portion of the site and would be three storeys in height.
8. The proposed building would be largely of brick construction with rendered panels and cladding panels under the eaves to provide interest and to lower the apparent height of the building. The buildings would have roofs with a very low slope.
9. It is proposed to enclose the site with a 5.2 metre high weldmesh fence.
10. The building would operate on a 24 hour, 7 day week basis with staff working a shift system. The centre will employ upwards of 400 staff, including 210 core detention/custody officers and 120 support staff. There would also be 20

contract staff and 10-12 IND staff. It is anticipated that there would be 120 staff on-site at any one time.

PLANNING HISTORY:-

11. There is no relevant planning history for this site. However, in 1994 this council was consulted in 1994 regarding an immigration detention centre south of the Southern Maintenance Area at Gatwick – now called Tinsley House. At that time Crown development was exempt from planning control.

PLANNING POLICY:-

12. The site lies within the boundary of Gatwick Airport, which in policy terms is regarded as a built-up area.
13. The site lies within an area allocated for airport ancillary development on the approved Local plan Proposals Map.
14. Policy GAT4 states that planning permission will not be granted for development which is not required for operational, functional, safety or security reasons. Planning permission for unallocated land will not be permitted under this policy.
15. Policy GAT3 requires development at Gatwick to mitigate any environmental impact it may have.
16. PPG24 “Planning and Noise” gives guidance to local planning authorities on the consideration to be given in determining applications for noise sensitive development to minimise the impact.
17. SPG 16 “Transport Contributions and Parking Standards” is also relevant if the objective of GAT 8 is to be achieved of improving access to Gatwick by means other than by the car.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:-

18. This application seeks planning permission for a Home Office Immigration Removal centre of up to 3 storeys in height and extending to 12,685 m2 gross external floorspace on land to the south of the southern internal perimeter road at Gatwick.
19. Immigration Removal Centres provide a secure facility in which those people not entitled to be in the UK are held pending the outcome of their claim and/or their removal from the country.
20. In view of the limited detention capacity available (c 2,600 spaces in the UK) the Home Office regard this proposal as being in the national interest.
21. There are clear operational, functional, safety and security reasons why an on-airport location would be suitable or desirable for this development as required by Policy GAT4 of the approved Local Plan. Close proximity to the airport terminals and immigration handling facilities provides the functional link and relatively short distances to transport detainees. Whilst the building itself will be secure, an on-airport location provides an extra element of security, away from the main built up areas of Crawley.

22. The site lies within the airport boundary in an area allocated for ancillary development. Whilst the site is “greenfield “ in that it is not PDL it does lie within the built-up area boundary. To the east of the site is a commercial building used in the airline catering business. The proposed development would be in scale and massing for the location and would therefore not adversely affect the character of the area. The building would be a large building in close proximity to the airports boundary but there is substantial screening just outside the boundary which would not be affected by the development.
23. The building would be 200 metres from the main runway and would therefore be subject to high levels of aircraft noise. The insulation of the development has been agreed with colleagues in the Environmental Health Division based upon limited time occupation of the building by individual detainees.
24. Vehicular access to the development would be from the airport’s internal road system and parking on site is largely limited to staff, with only a limited number of visitor spaces. The HoTPS is satisfied from a highway safety point of view, subject to a contribution to transportation measures. The applicants have submitted a unilateral undertaking to provide such a contribution.

CONCLUSIONS:-

25. Policy GAT 4 of the Local Plan requires there to be clear operational, functional, safety and security reasons for new development to be acceptable on the airport. For the reasons given above they are considered to exist in this case.
26. Whilst the development would be an intensive and significant development, it is concluded that it would meet the Local Plans normal site development criteria.