

PART A	
Report of: HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	
Date of committee:	10th March 2016
Site address:	HD House, Imperial Way
Reference Number:	15/01283/FULM
Description of Development:	Demolition of existing 2 storey office building to front of warehouse and erection of new 5 storey office building.
Applicant:	Sigma Pharmaceuticals Plc
Date Received:	12th October 2015
13 week date (major):	11th January 2016 (extended by agreement to 11th April 2016)
Ward:	Tudor

1.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 1.1 The site is located on the eastern side of Imperial Way, between the junctions with Colonial Way to the south and Bermer Road to the north, within the Imperial Way/Colonial Way industrial estate. It has a site area of 0.24 hectare and comprises a 2 storey warehouse with 2 storey office block on the Imperial Way frontage. The building is constructed of buff brickwork and white cladding with high level metal strip windows. It was formerly occupied by Securicor but is currently vacant. The site includes car parking to the frontage and along the side boundary off Bermer Road and has a rear servicing yard.
- 1.2 The surrounding buildings are typically 2 storeys in height and of various designs and materials, as would be expected in an industrial area of this nature. They are in Class B1 and B8 uses.

2.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 The proposal is to demolish the existing office building (248m²) and erect a new 5 storey office building (1,572m²), refurbish the existing warehouse (1,390m²) and erect a new canopy over the rear servicing yard. The proposed building will have 4 full storeys and a significantly smaller, recessed top storey. The overall appearance of the building will be of 4 storeys. The proposed materials are dark grey and light grey insulated cladding panels with grey framed windows. For the warehouse, the existing white cladding and high level strip windows will be replaced by new white cladding.
- 2.2 The frontage to Imperial Way will include a drop-off facility, 4 parking spaces and a cycle store. The parking spaces along the northern side of the building on Bermer Road will be replaced by parking for vans waiting to load (the parking spaces will be relocated to the adjoining site, also in the applicant's ownership).
- 2.3 The applicant owns a total of 7 buildings within the area bordered by Colonial Way, Imperial Way and Bermer Road which forms the company's headquarters. It also leases other satellite buildings on Clive Way nearby and elsewhere in Watford. The proposal forms the first phase of a redevelopment as part of an expansion and consolidation of the company on their Colonial Way/Imperial Way site.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The existing warehouse/office building was granted planning permission in 1970 (ref. 4404/70).

4.0 PLANNING POLICIES

Development Plan

4.1 In accordance with s.38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Development Plan for Watford comprises:

- (a) *Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31*;
- (b) the continuing “saved” policies of the *Watford District Plan 2000*;
- (c) the *Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2011-2026*; and
- (d) the *Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016*.

4.2 The *Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31* was adopted in January 2013. The *Core Strategy* policies, together with the “saved policies” of the *Watford District Plan 2000* (adopted December 2003), constitute the “development plan” policies which, together with any relevant policies from the County Council’s *Waste Core Strategy* and the *Minerals Local Plan*, must be afforded considerable weight in decision making on planning applications. The following policies are relevant to this application.

4.3 **Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31**

- WBC1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- SS1 Spatial Strategy
- SD1 Sustainable Design
- SD2 Water and Wastewater
- SD3 Climate Change
- SD4 Waste
- EMP1 Economic Development
- EMP2 Employment Land
- T2 Location of New Development
- T3 Improving Accessibility
- T4 Transport Assessments
- UD1 Delivering High Quality Design

4.4 **Watford District Plan 2000**

- SE7 Waste Storage, Recovery and Recycling in New Development

SE27	Flood Prevention
T10	Cycle Parking Standards
T21	Access and Servicing
T22	Car Parking Standards
E1	Employment Areas

4.5 **Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2011-2026**

No relevant policies.

1A	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
2	Waste Prevention and Reduction
12	Sustainable Design, Construction and Demolition

4.6 **Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan Review 2002-2016**

No relevant policies.

4.7 **Supplementary Planning Documents**

The following Supplementary Planning Documents are relevant to the determination of this application, and must be taken into account as a material planning consideration.

4.8 *Watford Character of Area Study*

The Watford Character of Area Study was adopted in December 2011. It is a spatial study of the Borough based on broad historical character types. The study sets out the characteristics of each individual character area in the Borough, including green spaces. It is capable of constituting a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.

4.9 **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The following provisions are relevant to the determination of this application, and must be taken into account as a material planning consideration:

Achieving sustainable development

The presumption in favour of sustainable development

Core planning principles

Section 1 Building a strong, competitive economy

Section 7 Requiring good design

Section 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Decision taking

5.0 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Neighbour consultations

Ten properties surrounding the site were notified. No replies have been received.

5.2 Statutory publicity

The application was publicised by site notice posted on 23rd October 2015 and by advertisement in the Watford Observer published on 23rd October 2015. The site notice and newspaper advertisement periods expired on 13th November 2015.

5.3 Technical consultations

The following responses have been received from technical consultees:

Hertfordshire County Council (Highway Authority)

Notice is given under article 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to the following conditions:

Condition 1. Prior to the commencement of the site works the applicant shall submit a construction management plan setting out details of on-site parking for all contractors, sub-contractors, visitors and delivery vehicles, storage of materials to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the

Highway Authority and that area shall be maintained available for use at all times during the period of site works.

Reason:- To minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway.

Planning Application

Application is for demolition of existing vacant two storey office building and construction of 4 storey office building. This is a modernisation of the existing office building and does not include increase in employee.

Site and surrounding

The application site is vacant and is part of a wider site that comprises offices, industrial, ware houses and distribution. The complex is enclosed by Imperial Way, Colonial Way and Bermer Road. Both Imperial Way and Colonial Way contain number of commercial establishments.

Local Road Network

The site is at the corner of Imperial Way/Bermer Road. Colonial Way forms a Roundabout junction with M1 Link Road. Colonial Way after an sharp bend turn in to Imperial Way which forms a junction with Balmoral Road which leads to A412 St Albans Road. The local road network provides easy access to Watford Town Centre or to Berry Grove Roundabout to wider road network such as M1, A40 and M25. There is on-street parking restriction along Imperial Way by means of single yellow line.

Accessibility

The site is within few minutes walking distance to Watford Junction Railway Station and a short bus ride to Watford Town Centre or north to North Watford. Watford Junction Railway Station is one of the main railway stations in the area providing regular service to London and various other destinations. If employers wish to commute from long distance from London an express train from Watford Junction Station my take around 16 minutes by train. Watford Junction is also a major

bus/rail interchange providing bus services to various destinations at regular interval.

Watford Town Centre is only a few minutes bus ride from the development site. The town is a major regional shopping area with all the daily necessary facilities.

A bus stop is only 40meters from the site where there is an hourly bus service (no19) from the site to Watford Junction North Bushey ,Bushey, Carpenters Park and South Oxhey.

There are good walking facilities with footways adjacent to the road network. Public Right of Way Footpath 22 is located to the east of the application site. The cycle route 6 of the national bicycle route network runs along parts of Radlett Road which is in the vicinity of the application site.

In summary the site is in a highly sustainable location. However, it should be noted that the proposed development is a redevelopment which is a modernisation and employing the same staff.

Access and Parking

On-site parking is a matter for the local planning authority. However, there are opportunities to park in the wider complex. There is also a public car park within 700m walking distance at Timberlake Car park with an all-day parking charge of £3.

Conclusion

For the previous application the Highway Authority recommended refusal on lack of information and without a Transport Statement. A transport statement was recently submitted as an amendment which clearly indicates that the proposed redevelopment is unlikely have a material impact on the highway network. The Highway Authority does not wish to restrict the grant of consent subject to the above conditions and advisory notes.

Hertfordshire County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority)

Thank you for re-consulting us for the above application. Following the review of the additional information submitted 11 January 2016 we can confirm that we are now in a position to remove our objection which was raised on flood risk grounds.

We note that the proposed extension will be rebuilt on land which is currently occupied, therefore there will be no increase in impermeable surfaces and the existing drainage will remain.

The site currently drains to existing surface water sewers and we note that Thames Water have been contacted to continue to utilise the connection.

Thames Water

Surface Water Drainage - With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or a suitable sewer. In respect of surface water it is recommended that the applicant should ensure that storm flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. When it is proposed to connect to a combined public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Connections are not permitted for the removal of groundwater. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required.

Thames Water would advise that with regard to sewerage infrastructure capacity, we would not have any objection to the above planning application.

No impact piling shall take place until a piling method statement (detailing the depth and type of piling to be undertaken and the methodology by which such piling will be carried out, including measures to prevent and minimise the potential for damage to subsurface sewerage infrastructure, and the programme for the works) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in

consultation with Thames Water. Any piling must be undertaken in accordance with the terms of the approved piling method statement.

Reason: The proposed works will be in close proximity to underground sewerage utility infrastructure. Piling has the potential to impact on local underground sewerage utility infrastructure.

6.0 APPRAISAL

6.1 Main issues

The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are:

- (a) Principle of the development.
- (b) Scale and design.
- (c) Transport and parking.

6.2 (a) Principle of the development

The site lies within the Imperial Way/Colonial Way industrial estate, a designated employment area. It is characterised by uses falling within Use Classes B1 (business) and B8 (storage or distribution). It is likely that some of the uses also fall within Class B2 (general industrial), as would be expected within an industrial area of this nature. The existing office building is an ancillary element to the warehouse use.

- 6.2.1 The applicants own and occupy 7 buildings in this part of the estate, bordered by Colonial Way, Imperial Way and Bermer Road. They are one of the country's largest distributors of pharmaceuticals, employing over 450 people, and this is where their headquarters are based. They also lease other warehouses on Colonial Way and Clive Way to the south and at the Croxley Business Park. These leases are all to come to an end over the next few years and the company wishes to consolidate and expand their operations around their existing properties on Imperial Way/Colonial Way. The application proposal forms the first phase of an ambitious expansion plan for the company including new and refurbished office and

warehouse facilities.

6.2.2 In this context, there is no objection to the proposal. The offices will form part of the company's warehousing and distribution operations centred around the site and is an appropriate use for this location. It will include head office functions, accommodation for the company's directors, conference rooms and staff facilities for employees within the offices, the warehouse and adjoining buildings. The existing warehouse will be refurbished and improved loading and waiting facilities provided for distribution vans. At present, vans arriving to collect goods have to park on the highway around the Imperial Way/Colonial Way junction in order to access the existing warehouses adjoining the site to the south. These warehouses will be linked internally to the refurbished warehouse on the site so that this becomes the main collection point. This will significantly improve the existing highway situation (see Section 6.4 below).

6.3 (b) Scale and design

The proposed office building will have 5 storeys although the top storey is only approximately 30% of the area of the lower floors. As such, the building will have the appearance of a 4 storey building. This is double the height of buildings in the immediate locality which are all 2 storeys in height. However, this industrial estate contains a wide range of buildings that include 5 no. 4 storey office buildings at The Belfry on Colonial Way, only 150m to the east of the site. 100m to the west on Imperial Park are larger scale warehouse buildings. In both cases, these buildings have a significantly larger footprint than that of the proposed building. The scale of the proposed office building will not, therefore, be out of character with this industrial area where buildings of a significantly larger scale are found.

6.3.1 In terms of appearance, the office building is rectangular in shape and will be clad in dark grey and light grey insulated cladding panels with grey metal framed windows on a blue engineering brick plinth. Whilst a not particularly inspiring or innovative design, it is appropriate for an industrial area of this nature and the materials will be high quality and long-lasting. The warehouse building will be refurbished with the existing lower level buff brickwork retained and the use of new

white cladding panels to replace the existing white cladding and high level strip glazing. Overall, the appearance of the building will be a significant improvement over the existing and will enhance the locality.

6.4 (c) Transport and parking

In terms of the applicant's overall operations from their complex on Imperial Way/Colonial Way and the number of employees, these will remain unchanged as a result of the proposal. Existing staff and packing/distribution operations will be moved into the application building from other adjoining buildings which will improve efficiencies and allow other buildings to come forward for refurbishment and redevelopment.

6.4.1 In terms of staff, there are currently 349 employees within the 7 buildings. Of these, 263 work daytime shifts between the hours of 07.00 and 19.00 and 86 work night-time shifts between the hours of 19.00 and 07.00. It is not proposed to change the numbers of staff or their shift patterns.

6.4.2 In terms of collections from and deliveries to the site these follow the following pattern:

i) Collections

Monday to Saturday, between 05.00 to 09.00 hours – 60 transit vans.

Monday to Friday, between 13.00 and 15.00 hours – 40 transit vans.

ii) Deliveries

Monday to Friday, between 20.45 and 21.15 hours – 2 HGV articulated lorries.

6.4.3 These deliveries and collections take place outside 3 of the existing buildings around the Colonial Way/Imperial Way junction. With on-site loading facilities limited, this results in a number of vehicles having to park and wait on the surrounding roads. The application proposal will allow all these delivery and collection operations to take place from the application site. The rear service yard is of sufficient size to allow the articulated delivery lorries to enter and unload into the

warehouse. The rear service yard will also be the sole loading area for the distribution vans. The submitted drawings show that up to 7 vans can park and load within the service yard with 6-7 vans waiting within the parking area along the northern side of the building on Bermer Road. With a new automated assembly and packing system to be installed within the warehouse, goods can be ready for loading as the vans arrive at the site, reducing waiting times. As such, the proposal will significantly improve the existing situation on Imperial Way and Colonial Way.

6.4.4 In terms of car parking, there are currently 138 spaces available for employees within the applicant's complex of buildings and this will reduce slightly to 131 spaces as parking and servicing areas are reconfigured. Parking on Imperial Way and Colonial Way during the daytime by employees is prohibited by single yellow lines. The nearest public car park is the Timberlake Car Park on Radlett Road which has 56 spaces and allows all day parking. On Wednesday 3rd February 2016 at 11.30am this was observed to have 37 spaces available.

6.4.5 As part of the submitted Transport Statement, the applicant has proposed a draft Delivery and Servicing Management Plan to manage the on-site servicing and delivery operations and associated service vehicle arrangements. Also proposed is a draft Workplace Travel Plan to encourage employees to car share, use public transport, cycle and walk. Both of these will help to reduce further impacts on the highway network and can be secured by condition. They will also form a robust basis for future development proposals for the applicant's other buildings with deliveries, collections and employee numbers likely to increase. These can be secured by appropriate conditions.

7.0 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY AND PLANNING OBLIGATION

7.1 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Council introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with effect from 1 April 2015. The CIL charge covers a wide range of infrastructure as set out in the Council's Regulation 123 list, including highways and transport improvements,

education provision, youth facilities, childcare facilities, children's play space, adult care services, open space and sports facilities. CIL is chargeable on the relevant net additional floorspace created by the development. The charge is non-negotiable and is calculated at the time that planning permission is granted.

The CIL charge applicable to the proposed development is:

Watford Charging Schedule

Type of Development	CIL Rate
Office	£0 per sqm
Industrial	£0 per sqm

Accordingly, no liability to CIL arises in the case of the development proposed in this application.

In accordance with s.70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by s.143 of the Localism Act 2011, a local planning authority, in determining a planning application, must have regard to any local finance consideration, so far as material to the application. A local finance consideration is defined as including a CIL charge that the relevant authority has received, or will or could receive. Potential CIL liability can therefore be a material consideration and can be taken into account in the determination of the application.

7.2 S.106 planning obligation

The Council introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with effect from 1 April 2015. On and from this date, s.106 planning obligations can only be used to secure affordable housing provision and other site specific requirements, such as the removal of entitlement to parking permits in Controlled Parking Zones and the provision of fire hydrants. There is no requirement for a s.106 planning obligation in this case.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposal forms the first phase of the applicant's plans for the consolidation and expansion of its operations within its complex of buildings on Colonial Way/Imperial Way. The proposed development, involving the erection of a new office building and the refurbishment of the existing warehouse, is acceptable in principle in this employment location in respect of its use, scale and appearance. The proposal will also allow the applicant's distribution operations to be focussed on the application site which will improve the current highway situation where vehicles have to load/unload from within the highway.

9.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Local Planning Authority is justified in interfering with the applicant's human rights in order to alleviate any adverse effect on adjoining properties and their occupiers and on general public amenity. With regard to any infringement of third party human rights, these are not considered to be of such a nature and degree as to override the human rights of the applicant and therefore warrant refusal of planning permission.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun within a period of three years commencing on the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:-

4739/2/01, 02, 03, 04, 05

4739/3/06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13

1861/200A, 210A

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. No construction works shall commence within the site until a Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall include details of access for construction vehicles, contractors parking, the delivery and storage of materials, measures to mitigate noise and dust, wheel washing facilities, plant and equipment and a contact procedure for complaints. The Plan as approved shall be implemented throughout the relevant demolition and construction periods.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring properties and prevent obstruction of the adjoining highway during the time that the construction works are being undertaken. This is a pre-commencement condition as these details need to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority before the works commence.

4. No impact piling shall take place until a piling method statement (detailing the depth and type of piling to be undertaken and the methodology by which such piling will be carried out, including measures to prevent and minimise the potential for damage to subsurface sewerage infrastructure, and the programme for the works) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any piling must be undertaken in accordance with the terms of the approved piling method statement.

Reason: The proposed works will be in close proximity to underground sewerage utility infrastructure. Piling has the potential to impact on local underground sewerage utility infrastructure.

5. No occupation of the office building or refurbished warehouse shall take place until the following documents have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
 - i) Delivery and Servicing Management Plan.
 - ii) Workplace Travel Plan.

Both of these documents shall be based on the draft Plans contained in Appendices F and H respectively of the submitted Transport Statement dated February 2016 by TTP Consulting. These Plans shall be implemented as approved at all times during the occupation of the development.

Reason: To reduce the impact of the proposal on the local highway network.

Informatives

1. Road Deposits: Best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the development site during construction of the development are in condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Reason: This is to minimise the impact of construction vehicles and to improve the amenity of the local area.
2. The applicant is advised that storage of materials associated with the development should take place within the site and not extend into within the public highway without authorisation from the highway authority, Hertfordshire County Council. If necessary further details can be obtained from the County Council Highways via either the website <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/highways/> or telephone 0300 1234047 to arrange this. Reason: In the interest of highway safety.

3. The developer should be aware that the required standards regarding the maintenance of the public right of way and safety during the construction. The public rights of way along the carriageway and footways should remain unobstructed by vehicles, machinery, materials and other aspects of construction works. Reason: In the interest of highway users safety

Drawing numbers

4739/2/01, 02, 03, 04, 05

4739/3/06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13

1861/200A, 210A

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