

**East Malling &
Larkfield**
Larkfield North

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**15 December
2006**

TM/06/03559/FL

Proposal: Change of use to B2 - general industrial - to house new printing facility
Location: Unit 4 Exel Logistics 13 Sheldon Way Larkfield Aylesford Kent ME20 6SF
Applicant: Kent Messenger Group Newspapers

1. Description:

- 1.1 This full application proposes a change of use from light industrial (B1/B8) to B2 general industrial to house new printing facilities for Kent Messenger Group at Unit 4, 13 Sheldon Way, Larkfield. The site is currently owned by the applicant and used for staff training and offices, and as a storage warehouse for newsprint. The proposal involves the installation and operation of a single printing machine consisting of six units and a folder in the existing warehouse portion of the building, the retention of first floor office space to accommodate four office staff, and a ground floor 'quiet room' for use by the machine operating personnel. The proposal does not involve any changes to the exterior of the building and all existing uses are to be moved off site.
- 1.2 The number of full time staff working on the site will reduce from 16 to 10, and the trainee staff, up to twenty per day, will no longer visit the site. This will result in a reduction of approximately 48 traffic movements per day. The application also states that the existing HGV movements will be reduced by 50% and the number of vans visiting the site will remain at approximately eight per day. No changes are proposed to car parking numbers or parking layout.

2. The Site:

- 2.1 Unit 4, 13 Sheldon Way is located at the end of a cul-de-sac characterised by industrial and light industrial uses which are dominated by Kent Messenger Group. The site contains the existing warehouse and office building with associated car parking along the western side of the site. The site is located within an Employment Area as defined in TMBLP 1998. Adjoining the site to the south and east are industrial / commercial uses, with residential properties located to the west and north (urban confines). The site is essentially rectangular in shape, with a narrower dog-leg type access to Sheldon Way located in the south east corner of the site. The site also slopes down from front to back, with the building and curtilage of the building being level and retaining walls running along the west and south sides of the site.

3. Planning History:

TM/69/10714/OLD Grant with conditions 1 January 1969

The construction of a Trading Estate Road.

TM/74/11927/OLD Grant with conditions 18 January 1974

Change of use of part of warehouse to light industrial.

TM/80/10112/FUL Grant with conditions 19 August 1980

Extensions to accommodate marketing sales dept, printing dept, paper and exhibition store and workshop.

TM/89/10384/FUL Grant with conditions 4 August 1989

First floor office extension.

TM/89/10557/FUL Grant with conditions 6 December 1989

Application for relaxation of condition (v) of TM/89/0649 to allow 500mm deep windows to be inserted beneath approved windows in west elevation of extension.

TM/91/11343/FUL Grant with conditions 19 July 1991

Compressor house.

4. Consultees:

- 4.1 PC: No objection. Would prefer to see any permission to be personal to Kent Messenger Group as do not want the light industrial to be replaced by general industrial use which could be taken up by subsequent owners. Ask that Environmental Health make sure there is no noise problem as there are houses to the north in New Hythe Lane.
- 4.2 KCC (Highways): No objection. It seems that the existing and proposed uses are within similar classes; therefore parking requirements would also be similar, with no changes proposed to the parking arrangements. I note that the existing parking provision does not provide the full theoretical provision; however, the proposed office element of the site will be smaller and could slightly reduce the overall

parking requirement. Therefore, when taking into account a proposed reduction in staff numbers for the proposed use, subject to existing parking remaining, I would raise no objections.

- 4.3 DHH: No objection. In my previous comments concerning this application I identified the environmental health issue to be the potential for airborne and ground borne noise from the printing press and folder to adversely affect the aural amenity of nearby residents and requested additional measurement information in relation to the noise emission characteristics of the printing press.
- 4.4 I have since discussed this aspect with the applicant's noise consultant and the machine manufacturer. It has become clear that when it is installed the machine will require some acoustic treatment to control workplace noise levels which means that any measurements carried out now will be of limited value in predicting off-site noise levels attributable to the operation of the "in service" machinery.
- 4.5 I am satisfied that it is possible to control airborne and ground borne noise so that it does not cause significant detriment to aural amenity and on reflection do not wish to object to the application subject to the imposition of conditions setting out maximum levels for airborne and ground borne noise.
- 4.6 Private reps: 11/0X/1R/0S. One letter of objection received with attached petition signed by 29 local residents raising the following issues:
- Already having to contend with lots of noise, pollution and traffic from the existing printing facilities which gets unbearable at times and we are having to close our windows in order to get a good night's sleep.
 - Unit 4 Exel Logistics is much closer to all our houses and adjacent to our gardens. There will be an excess of traffic, more pollution and the noise will be incessant and unbearable. This would make it difficult for all families, especially children, to spend time peacefully in our own gardens or indeed, inside our own houses.
 - We wish the council to take action and reject the above mentioned application.

5. Determining Issues:

- 5.1 The site is located within an Employment Area where employment development in classes B1, B2 or B8 is considered appropriate in principle subject to there being no unacceptable impact on residential amenity by virtue of noise, dust, smell, vibration or other emissions, or by visual intrusion, or the nature and scale of traffic generation. As there are to be no exterior alterations to the building and the car parking layout will remain the same there will be no change in the visual amenity of the site. Given that the existing use of the site is industrial / commercial, the main issue is whether the proposal will unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring residents with regard to traffic and noise.

- 5.2 The private reps received raise concerns about existing noise levels and anticipate an increase in noise as a result of the proposal. I have checked with Council's Environmental Health team who confirm that no complaints have been received in relation to the application site. With regard to the potential for increased traffic and traffic noise, as discussed above, the number of staff and HGV vehicle movements will be reduced, however the parking arrangement on the site will remain unchanged. The existing access in the south east corner of the site will remain and it is noted that all HGV movements will occur in this corner of the site where the loading bay is located. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal will not result in an increase in traffic or traffic noise and is more likely to result in a reduction in the existing levels of both.
- 5.3 DHH has identified the environmental health issue to be the potential for airborne and ground borne noise from the printing press and folder to adversely affect the aural amenity of nearby residents. DHH raises no objection to the application and is satisfied that both airborne and ground borne noise can be controlled so that it does not cause significant detriment to neighbouring properties. Requiring specific methods of 'on machine' insulation is not deemed to be the most effective method of achieving specific noise levels due to the operational requirements of the machinery and the need to adjust controls / insulation once the machinery is in operation. Should planning permission be approved DHH has recommended two conditions setting maximum noise levels for ground borne noise and background noise.
- 5.4 Overall, given the established industrial use of the site, the reduction in staff numbers and anticipated traffic movements, and thus a likely reduction in traffic noise, and the ability to place controls on noise levels from the proposed activity, it is considered that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on the amenities of surrounding residential properties. On this basis the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of policy P5/9 of the TMBLP 1998.

6. Recommendation:

6.1 Grant Planning Permission, 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: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The premises shall be used for the printing facility proposed and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class B2; of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument amending, revoking and re-enacting that Order) except for uses allowed for in Class B1 or B8.

Reason: To protect the amenity of nearby neighbours.

3. At no time shall ground borne noise from the operation of all fixed plant and machinery within the development hereby permitted exceed 25LAeq dB (5 minute) in the bedroom of any dwelling.

Reason: To protect the aural amenity of nearby residents.

4. At no time shall the noise rating level LAr, T, calculated in accordance with the method provided in BS4142:1997, attributable to the operation of all fixed plant and machinery within the development hereby permitted exceed the background noise level L A90, T by more than 3dB at the outside of any noise sensitive premises.

Reason: To protect the aural amenity of nearby residents.

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