#### DELEGATED REPORT

## Report considered and agreed by Team Manager, Planning Policy & Development Management

…*Sarah Iles*…………….. Date ……20 March 2018………

## Report considered and agreed by Principal Planning Officer, Planning Policy & Development Management

…*JAS Patterson*……………….. Date …12 March 2018………………………

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| Report by: | **Director of Communities, Economy and Transport** |
| Proposal: | **To construct a shed over an existing walled area with foundation slab already in place from previous use of the uncovered area. The provision of a shed covering this area will enable dry storage of mechanical spares associated with the current on- site manufacturing process.** |
| Site Address: | **British Gypsum Ltd, Eatenden Lane, MOUNTFIELD, TN32 5LA** |
| Applicant: | **Mr Eric Clarke, British Gypsum Ltd** |
| Application No. | **RR/804/CM** |
| Key Issues: | **1.Purpose of the development**  **2.Siting, Design and Impact on High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** |
| Contact Officer: | **Ms Kiran Sajjan Tel. 01273 481595** |
| Local Member: | **Councillor Kathryn Field** |

**RESOLUTION OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES, ECONOMY AND TRANSPORT**

**Under the powers delegated to me by the Governance Committee on 30 January 2003, I resolve to approve the proposal subject to the conditions set out in the recommendation.**

# CONSIDERATION OF RELEVANT PLANNING MATTERS

## The Site and Surroundings

1.1 British Gypsum Ltd is a major supplier of gypsum-based products to the UK construction industry and the Robertsbridge Works near Mountfield (referred to subsequently as ‘the Works’) are the principal element of the company’s manufacturing operations in southern England. The Works are located a short distance to the north-east of Netherfield village and south-west of the village of Mountfield and approximately 4 kilometres to the north of Battle. The site is accessed via a private access road, some 2 kilometres in length, from the A2100 to the east.

1.2 The site is a significant industrial development, set within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and comprises a gypsum processing facility, plasterboard manufacturing facility, two closed gypsum landfill sites, railway sidings, lorry and car parking and office facilities. An overland conveyor, approximately 5 kilometres in length, transports gypsum from the Brightling Mine to the north west of the site, to the processing facility at the Works. The western part of the site formed part of the Mountfield Mine complex, and has now been restored, although some areas have been retained for the storage of mined rock and imported gypsum.

1.3 The application site is located in the north of the site adjacent to an area of dense ancient woodland, known as Castle Wood, and forms part of the existing development of ‘the Works’.

## 2. The Proposal

2.1 It is proposed to erect a structure over an existing uncovered walled area and foundation slab in the north of the site adjoining an area of woodland. The proposed structure would provide additional dry storage space to support the manufacturing of gypsum products and would provide space to stock mechanical spares associated with the current on-site manufacturing process. The existing concrete structure has an area of approximately 191 square metres with walls that are currently 3.4 metres high which will increase to 7.9 metres as a result of the proposal. The existing uncovered area previously accommodated a fuel tank which has now been removed from the site, leaving this area vacant.

# 3. Site History

3.1 There have been several planning permissions at the site over the last few years; however there are none relevant to this proposal.

## 4. Consultations and Representations

4.1 Rother District Council: Raises no objections to the proposal.

4.2 Mountfield Parish Council: Supports the proposal.

4.3 Local representations: None received.

**5.** **The Development Plan and other policies of relevance to this decision are:**

5.1 East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan 2013: Policies WMP23a (Design Principles for Built Minerals and Waste Facilities); WMP25 (General Amenity); WMP27 (Environment and Environmental Enhancement)

5.2 Rother District Local Plan Core Strategy 2014: Policy EN3 (Design Quality)

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework: The NPPF does not change the status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making and constitutes guidance as a material consideration in determining planning applications. Part 11 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment) is relevant in this case.

**6. Considerations**

**Purpose of the development**

6.1 The Robertsbridge Works are the principal element of the company’s manufacturing operations. Due to the nature of the production, spare parts are required to be kept on site to ensure replacement can take place quickly and easily. At present, the spares are kept within the factory where they are taking up valuable manufacturing space. The proposal would provide dry storage space to house spare parts which are currently stored in the plasterboard works and warehouse building.

6.2 Once the parts have been relocated to the proposed building, they would only need to be transported a short distance (approx. 30 metres) when required, through an entrance to the warehouse to the west of the proposed storage shed.

6.3 As the foundations of the building are already in place, and the area of land has been operational for a number of years, it is considered that the proposed development would be an asset to the site as it would increase functionality by making available additional space within the factory.

**Siting, Design and Impact on High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

6.4 Policy EN3 of the Rother District Local Plan Core Strategy requires development to contribute positively to the character of the site and surroundings. Policy WMP23a of the Waste and Minerals Local Plan states that buildings associated with minerals development should be of a scale, form and character appropriate to its location. Additionally, Policy WMP25 of the same plan states that proposals should ensure that there is no unacceptable effect on the standard of amenity appropriate to the established, permitted or allocated land uses of the local and host communities likely to be affected by the development. Furthermore, Policy WMP27 also states that permission should not be granted where development would have an adverse impact on the High Weald AONB.

6.5 The proposed development lies in the north of the site, adjacent to an area of woodland, which is also in the ownership of British Gypsum. The existing plasterboard works and warehouse building is located adjacent to the south of the proposed application site. The existing concrete foundations and walls of the proposed structure have been present for many years and this proposal would create a steel frame within the existing concrete foundations to support a new roof and cladding.

6.6 The proposed storage building would not exceed the height of the adjacent factory and would be coloured goosewing grey to also match the existing buildings on site. The proposed location of the storage building would form part of the existing development footprint of ‘the Works’ and therefore would blend well with its surroundings. Although the site is located within the High Weald AONB, the proposal is considered to have a negligible effect on the landscape as there are no public views into the application site and the proposal would nevertheless be set against the backdrop of other industrial buildings within the site.

6.7 It is therefore considered that the siting and design of the building would not have an adverse impact on the character of the area and would have a negligible impact on the High Weald AONB and therefore the proposal is considered to accord with Policies WMP23a, WMP25 and WMP27 of the Waste and Minerals Local Plan as well as Policy EN3 of the Rother District Core Strategy.

**7. Conclusion and reasons for approval**

7.1 In accordance with Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the decision on this application should be taken in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.2 Planning permission is sought for the construction of a storage building over an existing uncovered structure. A concrete slab and part side walls are already in place on site from the previous use. The location of the building is set well within the site with the rest of the works and the design matches that of the existing warehouses on site. It is therefore considered that the proposed development complies with Policies WMP23a WMP25 and WMP27 of the East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan 2013 and also Policy EN3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy 2014. The proposal is also supported, in principle, by the provisions within the NPPF.

7.3 In determining this planning application, the County Council has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner. The Council has also sought views from consultees and neighbours and has considered these in preparing the recommendation. This approach has been taken positively and proactively in accordance with the requirement in the NPPF, and as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

7.4 There are no other material considerations and the decision should be taken in accordance with the Development Plan.

**8. Recommendation**

8.1 To grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:-

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

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the plans and documents listed in the Schedule of Approved Plans.

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

Schedule of Approved Plans

Boundary & Site Plan 26233-OB A1, Elevations 26233-PE A1, Location Plan 26233-LP Rev A, Typical Cross Section 26223 GSA07 01, West Gable Wall Frame 26223 GSA05 02

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

20 March 2018

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Application file RR/804/CM

Rother District Local Plan Core Strategy 2014

East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan 2013

National Planning Policy Framework 2012