DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Sam Dicocco.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
18/01131/FP	Change of Use from Light Industrial B1/Warehousing B8 to Funeral Directors (Sui Generis)	Unit 3 Royston Road Baldock Hertfordshire

Submitted Plan Nos

D298/05 D298/04

1.0 Policies

LP8	Development in Towns

LP36	Employment Provision
LP55	Car Parking Standards
SECT1	Building a Strong, Competitive Economy
SECT4	Promoting Sustainable Transport
SPDVP	Vehicle Parking at New Development
XETC1	Appropriate Uses in Employment Areas
XSP3	Employment
XT2	Parking

2.0 Site History

2.1 None relevant.

3.0 Representations

3.1 None received.

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 Site and Surroundings

4.1.1 The site lies within the settlement of Baldock. The site also lies within an employment area. The building within the site is a unit at the end of a block of three industrial, utilitarian style units.

4.2 Proposal

4.2.1 The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the premises from B1 light industrial/B8 storage and distribution to funeral directors (Sui-Generis). No changes are proposed to the external elevation.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 The site lies within a designated employment area. Policy 36 of the Saved Local Plan promotes development or redevelopment for employment uses within employment area. The policy does not specify or define employment uses, however, the policy does state that development or redevelopment to meet the needs of the available labour supply and changes to the local economy should be permitted. This gives some flexibility in regards to the term employment uses.

4.3.2 Policy ETC1 of the 2011-2031 Local Plan Proposed Submission specifies that permission would be granted for uses falling within classes B1, B2 or B8 on the site. The policy goes further that, as an exception, other uses would be granted where they; are ancillary to the above uses; are essential to the continued operation of an established premises; would bring comparable benefits to a B-class use in the same location; or would make use of a site that would otherwise be likely to become vacant for an extended period of time.

4.3.3 Paragraph 19 of the NPPF is clear in that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth, and that planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment.

4.3.4 It is considered that the proposed use would have a comparable level of employment generation to other likely uses on the site. Of course, there is great variation in employment generation between a B1 use class of the same floor space to a B8 use class covering the same floor space. It is considered less likely that the site, in its existing form and appearance, would lend itself to high density offices within a B1 use class. Following employment density evidence within the North Hertfordshire Employment Land Review (pg.87-88) it is considered that alternative B1c and B2 use would result in the generation of approximately 7 FTE employment opportunities, and B8 would account for approximately 4 employment opportunities. As such, the 13 FTE employment opportunities arising from the change of use is considered equivalent if not greater than potential other employment uses.

4.3.5 The use is a mix of office space (at first floor level on the mezzanine), as well as a small reception and chapel customer space, and processing space at ground floor level. It is considered that the mix of office and processing space is the principle use of the space, and the customer fronting part of the resultant layout clearly ancillary. It is stated within the design and access statement that the principle customer interaction part of the business will continue to take place at another premises (50 High Street, Baldock). A further consideration is the ‘freeing up’ of 23A Hitchin Street Baldock, which is the current location for the proposed use.

4.3.6 It is important in terms of highways and parking impact to take into consideration the above discussion in relation to the use not being fundamentally different in terms of employment generation from an alternative employment use with ancillary customer interaction. Policy 55 of the Saved Local Plan states that for other uses, the Council will require an appropriate level of car parking provision based on an assessment of the proposed activity, its scale, type and location. Given that the scale and type of use is equivalent to the prevailing and potential alternative uses, and that the location has not changed, then the existing external parking provision is considered acceptable. It is

noted that the likely additional parking requirement as a result of the proposed use would be located internally.

4.3.7 Taking into consideration the above discussion, it is considered that the proposed use would not be a variation from an employment generating use that would hinder economic growth. Accordingly, the proposed use would promote a strong and competitive economy. Following consultation and consideration, I can foresee no environmental or social harm as a result of the proposed use that would justify a decision otherwise to the development plan.

4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 The proposal accords with Policy 36 of the Saved Plan and Policy ETC1 of the 2011-2031 Local Plan Proposed Submission. There are no other material considerations which would indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise to the provisions of the development plan. As such, it is considered that the proposed development should be approved.

5.0 **Recommendation**

5.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

   Reason: To comply with the provisions 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 wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting approved documents and plans listed above.

   Reason:To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

Proactive Statement:

Planning permission has been granted for this proposal. Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted proactively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Signed	

 Simon Ellis Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 26 June 2018	