

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed office and warehouse building for Woodpecker Flooring

**Unit 28, Pantglas Industrial Estate,
Bedwas, Caerphilly, CF83 8DR**

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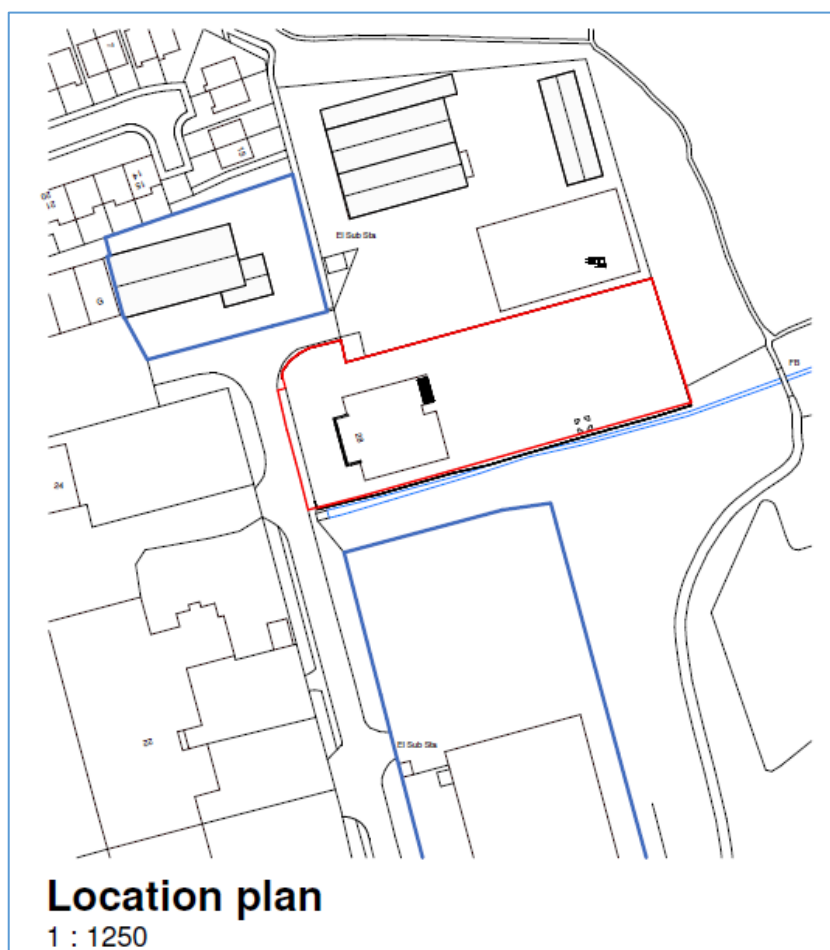
WOODPECKER
NATURALLY INSPIRED FLOORING

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1 Site location and Description

- 1.1 Unit 28 is located at the northern end of Pantglas Industrial Estate in Bedwas. The rectangular shape brownfield site is on the east side of the estate road (known as Stream Side) and is enclosed with 2.4M high galvanized palisade security fencing. The site is marked with a red outline on the location plan below.

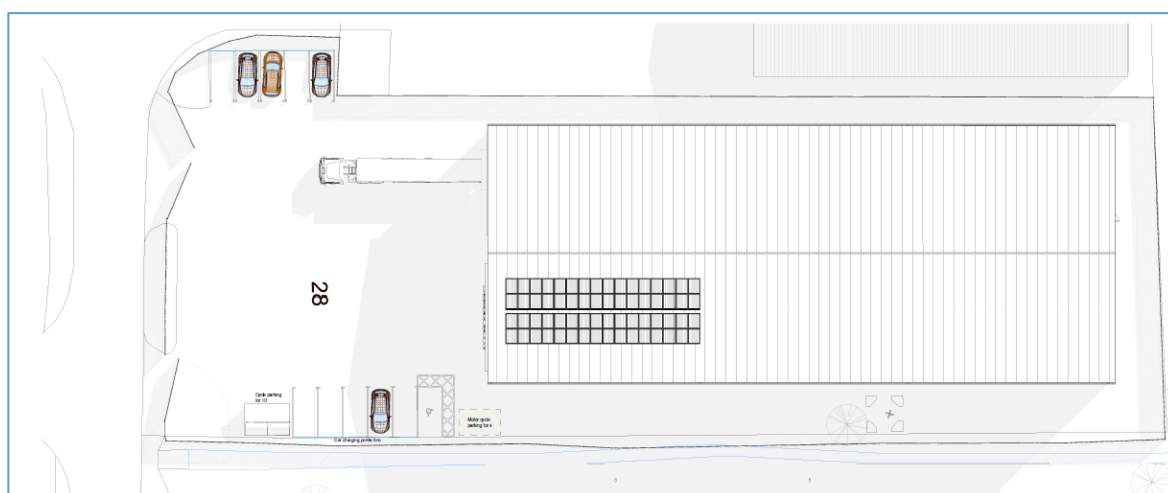


- 1.2 Within the site is a detached commercial building situated near the site frontage and primarily used as warehousing and HGV maintenance with two storey offices along the front roadside elevation. The curtilage is presently used for the parking of HGV's.
- 1.3 Approximately two thirds along the southern boundary is a mobile phone mast. Site levels are generally flat. The site and has two vehicular access points on to the estate road.

- 1.4 North, south and west are further mixed 'B' use class units of varying scales and to the rear (east) is an area of Council owned public open space known as Riverside Park. Running along the southern boundary is a small watercourse which connects with the River Rhymney to the south.

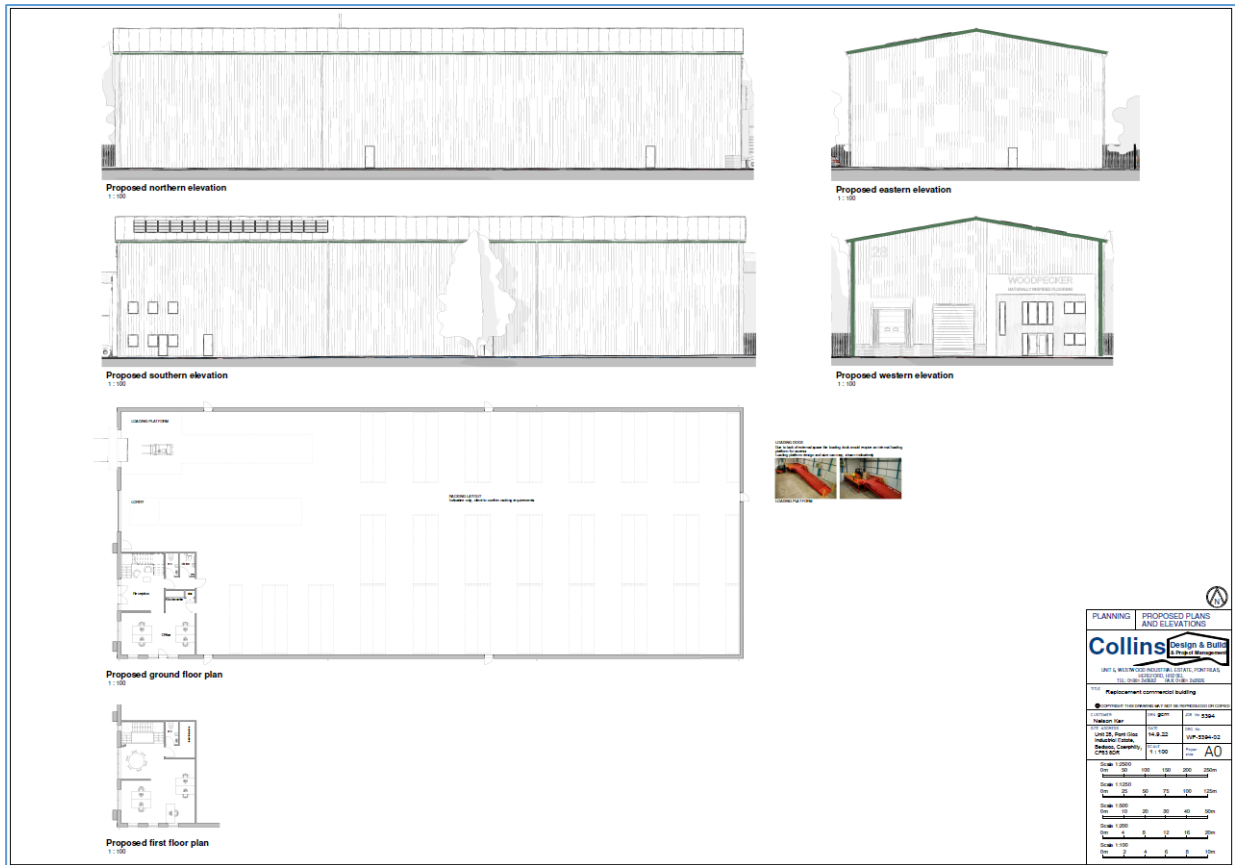
2. The Proposal

- 2.1 Full planning permission is sought for the following:
Demolition of existing commercial unit and construction of a new warehouse with ancillary offices for Woodpecker Flooring.
- 2.2 This proposal is to support the expansion of Woodpecker Flooring who currently occupy unit 26 to the north west and unit 30 immediately to the south.
- 2.3 Full planning permission is sought for the construction of a detached commercial building totalling 1443 sq.M gross internal floor area split between 133 sq.M of offices and ancillary areas and 1310 sq.m of warehousing. The building is set back from the road to accommodate frontage parking and HGV loading and unloading areas. The existing accesses will be utilised with the northern access primarily used by HGVs.

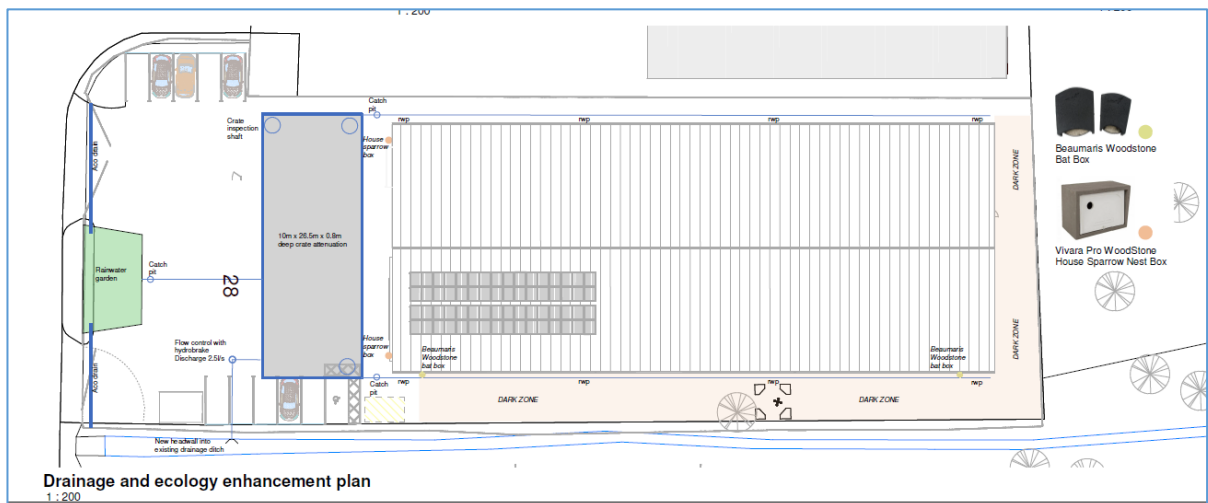


Proposed Site Plan

- 2.4 The principal road frontage elevation will house two storey offices located on the south west corner with the remainder of the building housing racking for warehouse storage. The building will be clad with vertical dark grey powder coated composite sheeting with the building silhouette defined with different colour trims.



2.5 Surface water will be managed sustainably with rain water gardens and underground storage to accommodate an attenuated discharge to the stream to the south.



2.6 The application is supported by the following documents:

- Ecology survey including a bat activity survey
- Site investigation
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy including soakaway tests

3. Background

- 3.1 Woodpecker Flooring specialise in wood flooring products and was established in 1973 in a small garage in Bristol. They moved to Bedwas in 2007 and have since expanded across two sites and grown to employing 70+ people. They now also have offices and showrooms in the USA and are growing by between 20%-30% a year.
- 3.2 They strive to be an environmentally sustainable business and have committed to becoming carbon negative by 2030. As part of this, they are planting 50,000 oak saplings across 200 acres in South Wales.
- 3.3 The growth over the last ten years has placed increasing pressure on warehouse space and they are now having to rent off site storage, which is inefficient and costly, both financially and environmentally.
- 3.4 The new warehouse will provide the needed capacity to continue expansion with the anticipated creation of another 30 jobs over the next 3 years and continued year on year growth in sales and turnover.

4. Planning Policy – The Principle

The Development Plan

- 4.1 The Development Plan consists of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Plan adopted November 2010 which runs up to 2021. The plan is now time expired as it is more than five years since adoption. Work is progressing on a replacement local plan but this has not advanced sufficiently to be given any material weight in the consideration of this application and so the current adopted local plan remains the relevant development plan for decision making purposes.
- 4.2 The site sits within the Southern Connections Corridor Development Strategy Area. **Policy SP3 Development Strategy - Development in the Southern Connections Corridor** promotes developments in this area that
- A Uses previously developed land within settlement limits
 - B Reduces car borne trips by promoting more sustainable modes of travel
 - C Makes the most efficient use of the existing infrastructure
 - D Has regard to the social and economic function of the area and
 - E Protects the natural heritage from inappropriate forms of development

The proposal accords with these local plan objectives for the area.

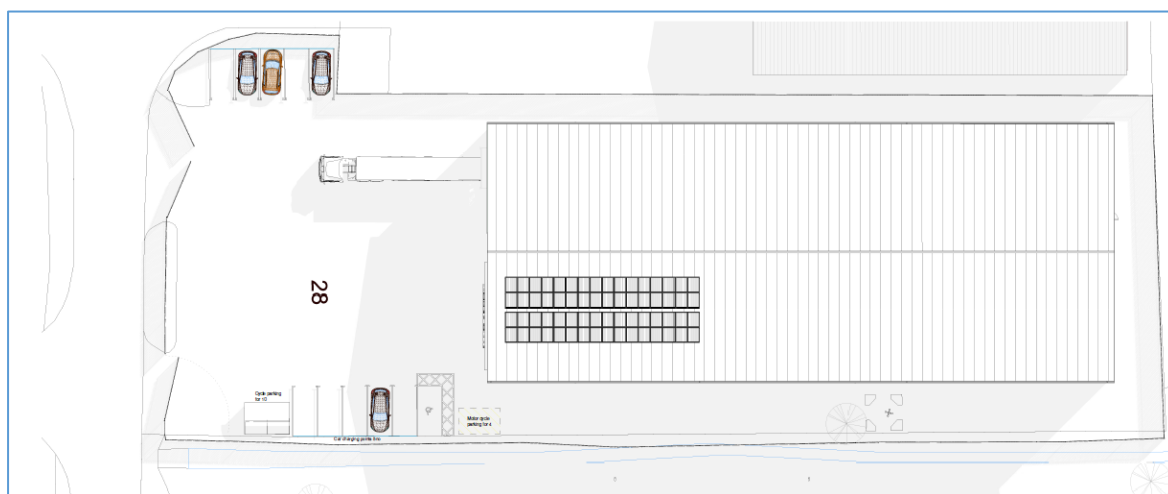
- 4.3 **EM2 – Employment Sites Protection** – This policy protects existing primary and secondary employment sites for mixed ‘B’ use class purposes. The site forms part of Pantglas Industrial Estate, Bedwas which is designated as a primary employment site.
- 4.4 **CW13 - Use Class Restrictions - Business and Industry.** This defines the type of uses that are permissible on established employment sites as follows
- On sites allocated or identified as Primary Sites, development will only be permitted if it is:*
- i within use classes B1, B2 or B8*
 - ii an appropriate sui generis use*
 - iii to provide an ancillary facility or service to the primary employment use*
- 4.5 It is clear that the principle of the site being re-developed for mixed B1 and B8 use is supported by the adopted Local Plan

- 4.6 Further policy guidance is contained within Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Notes will be referenced where relevant in the following sections.
- 4.7 The only Supplementary Planning Guidance of relevance concern parking standards.

5 Design

Layout and Siting

- 5.1 The dimensions and proportions of the site largely dictate the site layout. The site benefits from two existing accesses which mean that in order to make a more efficient use of the site, the most appropriate location for car parking and HGV loading/unloading is within the frontage. The building is set back from the industrial estate road in order to accommodate adequate HGV manoeuvring space.



- 5.2 The layout enables the offices to be accommodated within the frontage ensuring an active frontage is retained. This also has benefits for passive solar gain as the offices are on the west and south elevations. The building largely occupies the remainder of the site other than being offset from the southern boundary to safeguard access to the telecommunications mast.

Scale and appearance

- 5.3 The proportions and height of the building are fairly typical of a modern commercial building that incorporates warehouse racking. The scale is compatible with other units on the business park and the setting of the site. The scale will not impact on neighbouring businesses and as the frontage is set back from the road, it will not dominate the street scene. Furthermore, along the southern boundary is an area of semi mature trees and vegetation which will largely screen the new building from a southerly vantage point.



- 5.4 The office part of the building on the front elevation is distinguished with larger areas of glazing surrounded by a protruding frame clad with higher quality architectural cladding to create a legible entrance to the building.
- 5.5 The remainder of the building will be clad and roofed with vertical grey composite cladding with additional interest added through the use of coloured corner and fascia trims to define the silhouette of the building creating a modern crisp appearance.

Landscaping

- 5.6 In order to make an efficient use of the site, the scope of for new planting is limited to the site frontage but this is where the planting will have largest impact on the street scene. Existing trees along the road frontage will be supplemented with new tree and shrub planting to enhance the site frontage.
- 5.7 These landscape measures will assist in integrating the development into the context whilst enhancing the biodiversity value of the site.

Sustainable Construction, Energy and Water Efficiency

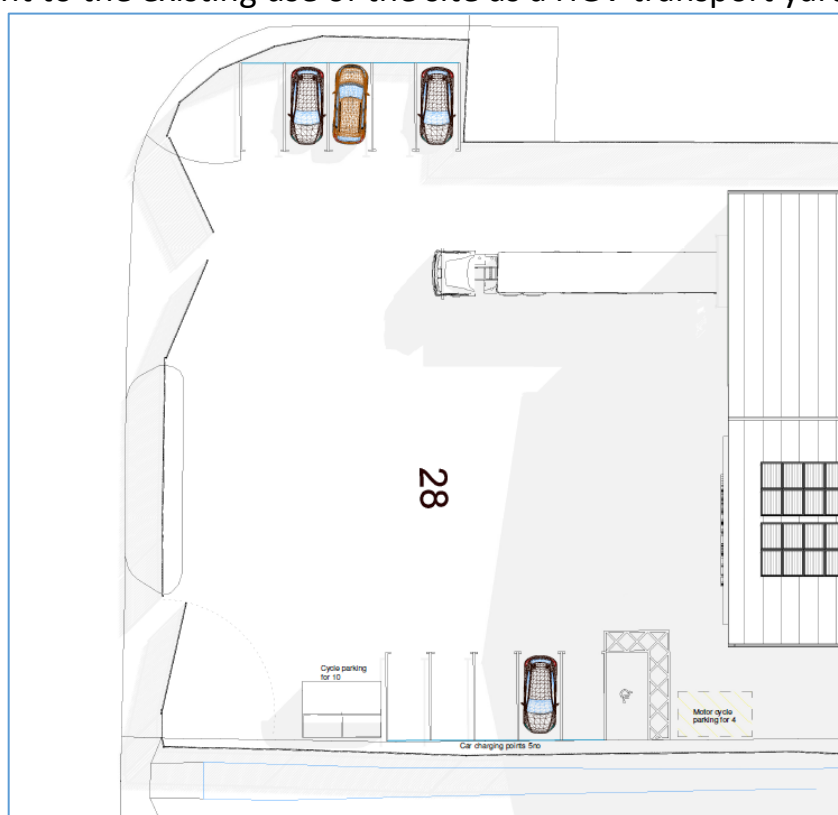
- 5.8 The government announced earlier this year that changes to Building Regulations to increase the energy efficiency requirements for new commercial buildings come into force November 2022. The proposal will embrace these changes.
- 5.9 More stringent targets for the U-values of walls, floors, roofs, windows and doors, along with thermal bridging and air tightness will be specified in order that the energy demands of the new building is minimised.
- 5.10 This entails adopting a 'fabric first' approach to the design and construction to achieve a super insulated air tight structure that minimises heat loss. To aid with achieving this, a building form should be relatively simple. The proposed design adopts these principles.
- 5.11 The layout has the offices on the south west corner of the building enabling the benefits of passive solar gain to be maximised. This will be complemented with solar PVs on the south roof slope. The development will also include several fast charge electric vehicle charging points along with secure covered cycle parking. A low energy lighting system will also be installed throughout.
- 5.12 Materials will be sourced that are 'A+' rated in the BRE green materials guide whilst any timber used in construction will be sustainability sourced and Forest Stewardship Certified.
- 5.13 Water efficiency measures will also be employed including the use of dual flush toilets and sensor taps along with smart metering and leak detection systems.

Design Summary

- 5.14 In summary, a quality sustainable development is proposed that is compatible with the built context of the site and wider business park in accordance with the requirements of Local Plan policy SP6 and guidance within PPW and TAN 12.

6. Access and Parking

- 6.1 The site has two existing accesses off the industrial estate road (Stream Side). At around ten metres, the northern access is sufficiently wide for a HGV to enter and leave simultaneously and is of an appropriate radius to accommodate HGV's. The southern access is also of adequate width to accommodate HGV's although is likely to be limited to cars/LGV's only. There is a two metre wide grass verge on the development side of Stream Side which ensures that adequate visibility is available from these accesses. The site is served by an adopted industrial estate road which has capacity to accommodate the development traffic associated with this proposal, which will not be materially different to the existing use of the site as a HGV transport yard.



- 6.2 Within the site, the proposal accommodates 11 parking spaces along with HGV loading and unloading and manoeuvring area and operational parking. 5 of the parking spaces will include EV chargers. This is all in accordance with the Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document and is commensurate with floorspace mix and the Zone 5 location of the site.
- 6.3 The development will also include secure cycle parking for 10 bicycles.
- 6.4 Access to the unit is via loading doors with level thresholds and personnel doors with the same thresholds. There will also be Part M compliant disabled WC

facilities in the unit. The land is essentially flat so there is no need for ramps and steps.

- 6.5 Safe access is available with appropriate vehicle and cycle parking in accordance with LP policies CW1 and CW3 and the parking SPD .

7. Other Technical Considerations

Biodiversity

- 7.1 The application is supported by a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and bat activity survey. The PRA consisted of a field survey undertaken in July 2022 and desk study undertaken in October 2022 following best practice.
- 7.2 The PRA identified a low potential for bats and so a dusk bat survey was undertaken in August 2022. No bat roosts were identified.
- 7.3 Beyond the bat roost potential of the building, the site is entirely occupied by hardstanding and a detached commercial building and so is of low ecological value.
- 7.4 The survey makes recommendations to compensate and enhance the biodiversity value of the site through the provision of bat and bird boxes and sparrow terraces along with the control of external lighting, particularly along the southern boundary. The surface water drainage scheme will also include additional planting areas and rain gardens which will be planted up with wildlife friendly planting. The demolition will also need to take place outside the bird nesting season.
- 7.5 No other protected species were found likely to be present on site and no other habitats offering potential for protected species will be affected by the development.
- 7.6 The development will both safeguard and enhance the ecological value of the site and meets the requirements of LP policy SP10.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Flood Risk

- 7.7 The application is supported by a Flood Consequences Assessment (FCA) as the site falls within a floodzone.

- 7.8 The Welsh Government Development Advice Map (DAM) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Flood Risk from Rivers map identifies approximately the front half of the site is located within Zone C1 and a 'low' flood risk zone, while the rear of the site is not at risk of flooding.
- 7.9 Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 15 (TAN 15): Development & Flood Risk defines Zone C1 as '*Areas of floodplain which are developed and served by significant infrastructure, including flood defences.*' This indicates that development can take place subject to the application of the justification test, including acceptability of consequences.
- 7.10 The classification of the front half of the site as 'low' flood risk is defined as a chance of flooding between 1 in 1000 (0.1%) and 1 in 100 (1%). From TAN Figure 2 general industrial and commercial development is classified as 'Less vulnerable development'. Table A1.14 provides a prescriptive assessment of allowable development with industrial/commercial flood threshold frequency (years) shown as 1 in 100 year (1%). As shown in TAN section 1.15, beyond the threshold frequency it would be expected (acceptable) to flood under extreme conditions, with a maximum flood depth of 600mm. From the available data from flood maps and recorded historic flooding, the only perceived flood risk will be to the front car park and delivery area, which will be well within the defined 600mm maximum allowable flood risk.
- 7.11 As such, the flood risk to the site is acceptable, meeting the criteria set out in Tan 15, and the development will not increase flood risk to any adjoining or downstream areas.

Drainage

- 7.12 A sustainable drainage system is proposed to manage surface water. Soakaway tests have been completed which have revealed that ground conditions will not support infiltration drainage. Surface water from the parking areas and building will therefore be conveyed first into rainwater gardens where practical, then discharging into attenuation crates before final discharge into the watercourse running along the southern boundary.
- 7.13 Discharge will be restricted with a hydrobrake to 2.5 l/s thus ensuring there is no increased flood risk to third parties. This is also a significant improvement on the current situation, which has uncontrolled surface water runoff from the

site and building at a rate of 11.4l/s. The system will also incorporate additional pollution prevention measures such as catch pits.

- 7.14 The surface water drainage system will have capacity to accommodate a peak 1 in a 100 year +30% CC rainfall event. An exceedance drawing is also included demonstrating that in the event of a blockage, flood waters will be contained on site within parking and landscaped areas.
- 7.15 Foul drainage will be discharged to the mains sewer located in the site entrance. There will be no surface water discharges to the public sewer network.
- 7.16 The development satisfies the flood risk, drainage and water quality requirements of LP policies CW5.

Consultation

- 7.17 A statutory community and stakeholder consultation is being undertaken in accordance with the requirements of Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2016 and this report will be updated and the development proposals amended as required in response to this consultation exercise.

8 Summary

- 8.1 Woodpecker Flooring is a successful local business but the growth is hampered by the constraints of their existing storage facilities. The proposal will deliver a modern warehouse facility with state of the art automated racking enabling the company to meet customer demands and continue to grow. The result is the creation of another 30 jobs over the next three years.
- 8.2 It is clear that the principle of the site being re-developed for mixed B1 and B8 use is supported by the adopted Local Plan policies EM2 and CW13.
- 8.3 Paragraph 5.4.4 PPW states that '*Wherever possible, planning authorities should encourage and support developments which generate economic prosperity and regeneration*'.
- 8.4 This report demonstrates that the technical requirements of other local plan policies concerning matters such as design, access, biodiversity, flood risk and drainage have been met and there are no unacceptable adverse impacts associated with either the site or proposed development.
- 8.5 In summary, the development is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, compliant with the development plan and there are no technical reasons why permission should be withheld