

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Thursday 08 September 2022

ADDITIONAL LATE OBSERVATION SHEET

4.1 22/00683/FUL - Berkeley House, 7 Oakhill Road, Sevenoaks, Kent

TN13 1NQ

An Economic Needs Study that has been commissioned by the Council, in order to update the Council's existing economic evidence base for the emerging local plan has been published today. This study seeks to determine the future business space requirements of the District. The study brief sets out three specific objectives:

- Update the economic land needs for the District, to 2040, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Government's latest advice contained within the National Planning Practice Guidance;
- Provide evidence and commentary on the emerging economic trends in commercial floorspace with a particular focus on office accommodation;
- Make recommendations for the Local Plan to support and enhance the District's economic value and competitiveness and identify opportunities for growth.

The Study has assessed all existing allocated employment sites designated by Policy EMP1 of the Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan.

Under Section 7.2, page 102 of the Economic Needs Study, Erskine House (EMP1(d) - otherwise known as Berkeley House has been assessed. The study states:

"This is a freestanding brick-built office building in an otherwise exclusively high value private residential street. It is used by Berkeley Group, the house builder, and appears suitable for the needs of an HQ style office. However, its location suggests that, should the occupier choose to vacate, it would readily attract interests from house builders - not least, potentially, the occupiers, and there is no specific merit in retaining it for employment use. Further the- at time of writing - under construction Hendry House at the station end of Oak Hill Road would be a more appropriately located and like-for-like replacement.

Recommendation: Release if vacated"

Berkeley House has been vacated. Taking note that Berkeley have vacated the site of the recently published Economic Needs Study, supports the view of the applicant and that SDC Planning Policy team that the existing employment designation of the site should be removed. Even though this Study is part of the

evidence base for the emerging Local Plan, still some weight can be contributed to it as a material consideration and further supports the recommendation that the loss of this employment site is justified.