

GEMACO HOLDINGS LIMITED

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FAO :- Mr. Cliff Lane
Director – Planning
Savills Ltd
Wessex House
Priors Walk
Wimborne BH21 1PB

Ref :- 12133

16th May 2016.

Ref :- Davis Land Adjacent Sunrise Roundabout.

Hi Cliff,

As discussed Gemaco Holdings owns Cable First Ltd in Poole where we currently employ around 50 staff and also Concept Cables Ltd in Blandford which employ around 35 staff currently, the companies inter trade which each other in offering our end customers a turnkey solution to their cabling needs.

Due to the continuing success of Concept Cables I have been trying to obtain permission or at least guidance with the need to be able to expand in the Blandford area for nearly three years now and still feel no further forward than I did when I started this journey.

I have been to the council to press the point that I as a local employer have a need to expand my business within the local community and the options that the local plan covers are technically flawed.

I have a need for a 100,000sq ft facility and I want it to be in Blandford, I could move the operation to Poole but I do not want to have to be forced into that approach as I know with any move not all staff will move with the business.

So the problem is there is no available land in Blandford for me to build my factory on, the local plan does show there is employment land available off Shaftsbury Lane but this was given planning for ASDA to build on the site and although they may not be going through with the build now it will almost definitely be developed for retail use.

So that land is not available, the next site with availability is the Brewery site but all the premises are on a leasehold basis only, the wrong shape for our needs and the maintenance charge is considerable so pricing is not competitive.

So taking into account that these areas are not really available the local plan cannot possibly be considered correct, I have also been to the Parish offices on one of the open days and met with Trevor Warwick from NDDC, we had a constructive discussion and I felt he was very supportive but after 2 hours of talking I am not sure really where we got to as the problem is as we both discussed that although the local plan shows you have enough land / factories available there is nothing which will suit us.

I have previously spoken to Mike Burt with regards to the Chicken Factories at Child Oakford and one is already under redevelopment and the other plot is also trying for residential properties on the land. I have also spoken to Andrew Wilkins at Lone Star LLP which were handling the planning issues but these have all been passed over now so he has nothing more to do with this.

I have also previously spoken to John Day at Wessex park Homes and again they were not happy to sell a part of the site, they are also going for planning on a mixed commercial and residential development. This will help them maximise land value, but by putting residential next to commercial you will end up with the residential properties complaining about the factories "next door", this then leads to restricted working hours which will make the site unworkable.

I have also looked at premises at Shillingstone but due to again restricted working hours this was not something we could work with so could not proceed.

As you can see I am trying to sort something out but although the local plan says one thing the reality of what is really going on is another, we have a fantastic opportunity NOW to add the next stepping stone to a positive future for Concept Cables Ltd growth in Blandford but I cannot find any space suitable.

I originally had discussions at NDDC with Hilary Ritchie the Economic Development officer and she was very supportive of my plans and advised me to pursue the Davis land next to the roundabout, this was also supported by her replacement John Hammond so everyone seems very positive of what we are trying to bring to Blandford.

In essence I have been trying and trying and I feel I have the support of Blandford Council in looking at developing the Davis Land adjacent to Sunrise roundabout and although this is not part of the local plan I feel as an employer in Blandford with a positive need an expanding company the only decision must be to allow the development of the site for the future of Blandford. I alone am looking to invest around £ 4,000,000 into the town which surely can only be a positive step.

I understand there has been planning agreed for a further 800 houses on the south of Blandford so my question would be simple – with all the extra people hopefully going to move to Blandford with this expansion where are they all going to work ?? Surely with the increase in homes which you have already agreed too how now can the plan still be correct with no expansion in employment land.

Currently we operate for 5 factories in Blandford which is a logistical nightmare, we have customer demand now – we have finance agreed – NOW – so we have to act NOW.

I hope my comments go some way in trying to get Blandford to see that with companies like ours we have the best interest of the town uppermost in our thoughts and this is where we want to be for today and into the future.


Gemaco Holdings Ltd.