OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00563/FUL Full Planning Application

Proposal: Partial blocking up of existing roller shutter opening and double fire exit door and installation of new, smaller roller shutter, 2 no. single doors and construction of lean-to canopy over.

Location: 3 Stukeley Road Retail Park Huntingdon PE29 6DA

Applicant: Mr Ken Jones

Grid Ref: 523305 272750

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site is unit 3 Stukeley Road Retail Park. The unit forms part of a small retail development close to the centre of Huntingdon Town. The site is within Flood Zone 1 and there are no designated heritage assets close by.

This application seeks approval for the partial blocking up of an existing roller shutter opening and double fire exit door and the installation of a new roller shutter, 2 no. Single doors and the construction of a lean-to canopy over.

This application has been accompanied by a Flood Risk Statement and Planning Statement.

Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):

* delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
* building a strong, competitive economy;
* achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 - adopted May 2019

LP2: Strategy for Development
LP8: Key Service Areas
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP15: Surface Water
LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
LP22: Local Services and Community Facilities
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2026 - adopted September 2019

Policy E1: Opportunities for Employment
Policy E2: Business Investment
Policy BE1: Design and Landscaping
Policy BE2: Local Distinctiveness and Aesthetics

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:
Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):
* Place Making Principles Part 3.8 Building Detailing

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2017

The National Design Guide (2021)

* C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
* I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
* I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
* B2 - Appropriate building types and forms

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There are a number of application on this site - the most relevant of which are:-

25/00507/FUL - Installation of 3 no. New full height sections of shopfront complete with automatic bi-parting entrance doors - Approved.

25/00506/FUL - Creation of plant compound (of Flow Forge material) and installation of plant thereto together with the creation of 1 no. Bin store (of Flow Forge material) and forming of 2 no. Openings in external wall for pipework and 2 no. Openings for vent grilles - Pending consideration.

25/00505/ADV - High level sign to front elevation, replacement vinyls/panels to existing totem poles, loading bay sign to rear elevation, hoop sign and vinyl graphics to internal face of windows/doors - Approved.

CONSULTATIONS

Huntingdon Town Council - Recommend approve. This application supports policy E1 in the Neighbourhood Plan which states that proposal for economic development will be favourably considered.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Highway Authority - No objections to the proposal.

Huntingdonshire District Council's Environmental Health - No objections to the proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

No third-party representations were received during the course of the application.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.

As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within paragraph 48 of the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the 2004 Act as "the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area".

The statutory term 'material considerations' has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.

The main issues to consider are:

o The Principle of Development
o Design and Visual Amenity
o Residential Amenity
o Highway Safety
o Flood Risk and Surface Water
o Biodiversity

*The Principle of the Development

Policy LP22 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Local Services and Community Facilities) states that "a proposal for a new local service or community facility within a built-up area, or the extension of and existing local service or community facility on land immediately adjoining the built-up area, will be supported where it:

a. Is of a scale to serve local needs;

b. Comprises up to a maximum of 600m² net internal floorspace for a main town centre use; and

c. Provides for a new service or facility or enhances an existing service or facility, including through the provision of premises suitable for mixed use or multiple community functions.

In this case, the proposal would result in an enhancement to the appearance of the area and of the business itself. As such, the proposal is considered to result in an overall enhancement to an

existing retail provision for the local community. Therefore, the principle of development is considered to be acceptable in this instance, subject to compliance with other relevant policies and considerations.

*Design, Visual Amenity and Impact Upon the Character of the Area

Policy LP11 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context. Policy LP12 states that new development will be expected to be well designed and that a proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it contributes positively to the area's character and identity and successfully integrates with adjoining buildings and landscape. This is also reflected in the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

This application seeks approval for the partial blocking up of an existing roller shutter opening and double fire exit door and the installation of a new roller shutter, 2 no. Single doors and the construction of a lean-to canopy over at No. 3 Stukeley Road Retail Park, Huntingdon.

The application site is located within a small retail park where there are a variety of different retail uses, including Halfords and The Range and therefore there are a variety of different building forms and designs in place. Given the minor alterations proposed to the rear elevation, that would not be visually prominent within the streetscene or surrounding area, the replacement roller shutter and installation of fire exit doors are considered acceptable.

Furthermore, the proposed lean-to element is considered to be small in scale (maximum height of 3.3m) and would be well related to the main building, reducing its visual prominence. It is also worth noting that the proposal would be constructed using matching materials to the main building.

The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policies LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policies BE1 and BE2 of the Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Residential Amenity

Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036 states a proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of the proposed development and maintained for users and occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings.

Given the scale of the proposed development and the distance to the closest neighbouring residential properties, the Local Planning Authority are satisfied that the proposal would not result in any detrimental impacts on the amenity of any neighbouring properties.

As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on residential amenity and therefore accords with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Highway Safety

Policy LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036 seeks to ensure that new development incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates access for emergency vehicles and service vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles. Policy LP16 seeks safe physical access from the public highway.

Due to the nature of the proposal and the location of the premises, set back within the site, with obscured views from the public highway within the retail park, it is considered that the proposal will have no impact on the public highway.

As such, the proposal would be in accordance with Policy LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Flood Risk

National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in the NPPF (2024).

The application site is situated in Flood Zone 1 based on the Environment Agency Floods Maps and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024). This results in a low probability of fluvial flooding and is not subject to the sequential and exception tests as set out within the NPPF. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 and the NPPF (2023) in this regard.

*Biodiversity

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF (2024) states planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated and ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.

It is noted that the proposal is below the development threshold applying to the requirement to provide a Biodiversity Net Gain as set out in Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and further that a priority habitat would not be impacted by the application.

As such, the proposal is deemed to be in accordance with Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Conclusion

The proposed development is considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as it is:

* Acceptable in principle
* Would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the area;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours;
* Would not be detrimental to highway safety in the locality;
* Is acceptable with regards to the impact on biodiversity;
* There are no other material planning considerations which lead to the conclusion that the proposal is unacceptable.

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388424 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Jennifer Wallis**