PLANNING STATEMENT

Retrospective retention of two existing flagpoles

Planning Application Reference: 26/01927/HDC
Site: Pathfinder House, Huntingdon
Status: Final to be read alongside the Heritage Statement

1. Proposal

This application seeks retrospective planning permission for the retention of two existing flagpoles within the paved courtyard at Pathfinder House, Huntingdon. The flagpoles were installed approximately four years ago. No additional flagpoles, construction, ground disturbance, vegetation removal or alterations are proposed as part of this application.

Each flagpole is 10,000 mm (10.0 m) high. The measurements are 5.8 m between the poles (centre to centre) and 4.4 m from the corner of Building B to the nearer pole, along the alignment shown on the accompanying site plan. These measurements and the precise measurement reference points should be checked against the final scaled drawings.

Planning history and reason for retrospective application

The two existing flagpoles were installed approximately four years ago. During the preparation and submission of a separate retrospective application for Consent for the Display of Advertisements (reference 26/01926/ADV), relating to the display of the Emergency Services Flag, Remembrance Day Flag and LGBTQ+ Progress Pride Flag, we identified that no original planning permission could be located for the flagpoles themselves. This application (reference 26/01927/HDC) has therefore been submitted to seek retrospective permission for their retention. It concerns the existing flagpoles only; no additional poles, alterations or further groundworks are proposed.

2. Site context

Pathfinder House is situated on St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, within an established civic and administrative setting characterised by a mixture of historic and contemporary buildings, mature trees, landscaped areas and paved pedestrian spaces.

The site lies within the designated Huntingdon Conservation Area and is situated in close proximity to heritage assets, including the Grade II* listed Castle Hill House. The historic character and architectural significance of the surrounding environment are therefore important considerations in assessing the proposal.

The two existing flagpoles are positioned within the established hard-landscaped courtyard, on an alignment extending from the corner of Building B. Their location is identified on the accompanying site layout plan, together with the application boundary and relevant dimensions.

The flagpoles are slender, freestanding structures of a traditional design, finished in white and incorporating gold-coloured finials. Their appearance is consistent with their civic function and the established administrative use of the site.

The application seeks retrospective permission for the retention of these existing structures. No additional construction, alterations to surrounding buildings, removal of vegetation or changes to the existing courtyard landscaping are proposed.

In considering the proposal, regard is given to the character and appearance of the Huntingdon Conservation Area and the setting of nearby designated heritage assets, with particular consideration to the scale, siting, materials and visual prominence of the flagpoles.

3. Need and purpose

The two existing flagpoles at Pathfinder House support Huntingdonshire District Council's adopted Flag Flying Policy and provide a prominent and appropriate location for the display of flags in recognition of civic occasions and commemorative events.

The Council's Flag Flying Policy seeks to promote civic pride, strengthen local identity and encourage community cohesion. It also provides for the recognition of national, regional, civic and local commemorative events through the flying of appropriate flags.

The flagpoles facilitate the practical implementation of these policy objectives, enabling the Council to acknowledge significant occasions, demonstrate civic recognition and reflect events of importance to the communities it serves.

Their continued presence at Pathfinder House supports the Council's civic functions and provides an established means of recognising occasions of public significance, consistent with the principles and objectives of its Flag Flying Policy.

4. Design, scale and appearance

The two flagpoles have the following applicant-confirmed specification:

Quantity	Two existing flagpoles
Height	10,000 mm (10.0 m) each
Material	Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP)
Finish	White
Base	Hinged base plate
Finial	Gold onion finial
Halyard	Internal
Installation	Existing; approximately four years ago

The poles are slender vertical features within an established paved area. The accompanying elevations and site plan show their height and position accurately. No lighting is present nor planned.

5. Neighbour amenity, highways and infrastructure

The application concerns retention of existing structures and does not propose additional floorspace or associated vehicle movements. As no new works are proposed, no further excavation or alteration to the courtyard is anticipated. We can confirm that pedestrian circulation, accessibility, existing utilities and neighbouring amenity are not adversely affected, including any relevant flag movement or noise considerations.

6. Biodiversity

The application relates to the retrospective retention of two existing flagpoles situated within an established hard-landscaped courtyard at Pathfinder House. No further construction, ground disturbance, vegetation removal or alterations to the surrounding landscaping are proposed.

The nearest flagpole is located approximately 193.28 metres from the bank of the River Great Ouse, as measured using Google Earth.

Given the nature of the development, its existing location within a paved courtyard and the absence of any proposed additional works, the applicant sought clarification from Huntingdonshire District Council regarding the ecological assessment requirements.

The Council has confirmed in writing that a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) is not required in this instance. A completed Biodiversity Checklist is provided in support of the application.

7. Consultation

On 21 October 2026, the applicant contacted Huntingdonshire District Council's Planning Department to seek clarification regarding the biodiversity validation requirements, specifically in relation to the proximity of the existing flagpoles to the River Great Ouse.

In its written response dated 22 October 2026, the Council confirmed:

"A PEA is not required in this instance; however we still require the completed biodiversity checklist."

In accordance with this advice, the applicant has completed and included the required Biodiversity Checklist with the planning submission.

The Council's written confirmation is also provided as supporting evidence.

6. Conclusion

The application seeks retrospective permission to retain two existing 10 m-high white GRP flagpoles within the established paved courtyard at Pathfinder House. No further installation works or disturbance are proposed. We ask the local planning authority to consider the submitted drawings, completed biodiversity checklist, relevant planning considerations and supporting information in determining the application.