OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 24/02065/FUL **Full Planning Application**

Proposal: **Restoration of RAF Upwood Guardroom to facilitate change of use to a community building**

Location: **Land Between Hart Road And Cann Way Bury**

Applicant: **Ms Charlotte Copley**

Grid Ref: **527387 283392**

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

This application relates to the former RAF Upwood Guardsroom. It forms part of the wider development site at RAF and Upwood Hill House, which is located between the villages of Bury and Upwood.

This Guardsroom site sits within the larger redevelopment of the wider site which has permission for “Selective demolition and clearance of existing (former defence) buildings, environmental remediation and the carrying out of employment-led mixed use development comprising about 2 hectares of employment (Use Class Order B1 uses) (including the conversion and change of use of some buildings) and residential (not more than 160 dwellings) development, together with the provision of infrastructure and the laying out of ancillary open space. (Phased Development)" which was granted in 2017 under 1201274OUT subject to conditions. Subsequent REM permissions have been granted and development is under way.

The site currently is derelict and the building is intact but in need of significant repair. The scheme proposes the re-development of a community based building, for a number of facilities to include PC office rooms, a small business area, a hall, catering kitchen and meeting rooms.

The building itself is in existence and is approx. 20m x 20m and nearly square. At the flat roof level the building will be approx. 5.5m high and to the tallest part of the ‘wings’ on the roof approx. 9m.

The redevelopment of the site will include enhancements to the surrounding land also and this will include a car park (with 3 EV points), bicycle and bin store areas, new access road to car park and significant structural soft planting.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE AND POLICY AND RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The National Planning Policy Framework Dec 2024 (NPPF) sets out the three economic, social and environmental objectives of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF confirms that ‘So sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development…’ (para. 10). The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for, amongst other things:

- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- achieving well-designed places;
- conserving and enhancing the natural environment;

- conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2019 are also relevant and material considerations.

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

LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)

- LP1 Amount of Development
- LP2 Strategy for Development
- LP4 Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
- LP5 Flood risk
- LP7 Spatial Planning Areas
- LP11 Design Context
- LP12 Design Implementation
- LP14 Amenity
- LP15 Surface Water
- LP16 Sustainable Travel
- LP17 Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
- LP19 Rural Economy
- LP29 Health Impact Assessment
- LP30 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31 Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
- LP35 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- LP36 Air Quality
  Ramsey Spatial Planning Area 12 RA 8 - Former RAF Upwood and Upwood Hill House, Bury

Bury Neighbourhood Plan

- Policy G1 - Definition of 'Built-up Area' (Settlement Boundary)
- Policy G2 - Comprehensive Development of Former Airfield
- Policy G3 – Community Engagement
- Policy ISF 1 - Sustainable Transport
- Policy ISF 2 - Highway Impact
- Policy ISF 4 - Infrastructure Provision

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide – Adopted 2017
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD – Adopted 2017
- RECAP Waste Management Design Guide (CCC SPD) – Adopted 2012

For full details visit the Council's website Local policies.

PLANNING HISTORY

None to date

CONSULTATIONS

No comments have been received from the Parish Council.

HDC Urban Design Officer – Recommends support for the development, subject to the imposition of a number of conditions.

County Council Highways - Requested further information for the proposed new access junction and also methos for preventing car parking in the forecourt. Applicant submitted required information and CC Highways thus recommend support for development.

REPRESNTATIONS

None received from any local residents or interested parties at the time of determination.

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 47 of the NPPF (2023). 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 Neighbouring Amenity
o Flood risk
o Parking Provision and Highway safety
o Biodiversity

Principle of the development;:

In principle, the refurbishment of the building is acceptable. The building and its uses are located within the built-up area of Bury and would accord with Policy LP 2, the specific functions set out within policy RA 8 and the Bury Neighbourhood Plan. The application would bring the derelict building back into use such that it is not considered there would be a material change of use (F1), nor would it create any significant detrimental impact on the surrounding area.

The effects of the proposal on visual amenity and its design

The application seeks to introduce additional entrance doors and windows on the side (north and south) and rear (west) elevations, utilising existing window openings (except for the new kitchen windows on the rear and north elevations). The front elevation is largely unchanged except for the introduction of new replacement windows and a glazed door (utilising the existing garage door opening) serving the retail unit.

Submitted elevations indicate the addition of a raised brick parapet (increasing the height of the building by 675mm, from approximately 4.07m to 4.75m above the ground floor finished floor level) which will be inset from the existing parapet by approximately 0.2m. The building sections show the overall height of the existing and proposed raised parapet (approx. 0.85m as measured above the proposed roof level) will screen the PV array and roof mounted ASHPs from ground level views and reduce the perceived height of the asymmetric butterfly roof over the central courtyard. Furthermore, the raised parapet removes the need for any roof access railings, avoiding the proliferation of roof clutter raised as a concern at pre-application stages.

The DAS indicates this parapet will be constructed from pale facing brickwork, reducing its prominence and maintaining the lower shoulder height of the existing parapet. Further details including manufacturer / product name and a sample of this brick should be provided by way of condition.

The proposals introduce a glass roof lantern over the courtyard, creating a covered atrium in the centre of the building. Elevations show this forms an asymmetric ‘butterfly’ roof and rises from approximately 5.35m in the centre to 6.7m (north) and 6.1m (south) as measured above the ground floor finished floor level. The submitted elevations show this roof lantern will be glazed on the front (east) and side (north and south) elevations but will clad in gold anodised copper standing seam cladding on the rear (west) elevation and the roof. The height of the glass lantern is supported in design terms, internalises the central courtyard space, and forms a prominent feature, enhancing this key civic building.

The arrangement of proposed lighting shown on dwg SDA 3589/SK5 P2 is acceptable in design terms.

The site is very spacious and the physical impact of the proposed redevelopment would not have a detrimental impact on the users/occupiers of neighbouring land, dwellings and buildings.

It is considered that the proposal in terms of its design and use will not have a harmful impact upon the character of the area. Accordingly, the proposal is in accordance with Policies LP10, LP11 and LP12 of the Local Plan to 2036.

Amenity of surrounding Neighbours

The building, once redeveloped, will have separation distances from existing residential dwellings of 29m to the closest dwelling on Lincoln Road to the south of the site. To the west, the distance is 50m to the nearest dwelling on Hart Road. The refurbished guardroom will not therefore have a detrimental impact on the existing residents by way of overlooking or over shadowing. The use of the land closest to the dwellings is that of car parking areas and landscaping. With regard to the potential for disturbance, the hours of use of the building and amplified music will be conditioned and seek to minimise late night use and intrusive noise.

In turn, having regard to the development and its impact on the recently commenced residential construction, the nearest new house will be approximately 40m to the north.

Overall, given the above assessment the development is considered acceptable in terms of amenity impacts and will have no negative bearing on the amenity of surrounding neighbours and therefore accords with Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036.

Flood Risk

The site lies within Flood Zone 1. Given that this proposal relates to a change of use it is not subject to the Sequential or Exception Tests nor does it introduce a 'more vulnerable use' as per the NPPF (2024).

Whilst it is not extensive, given the assessment above the proposal is considered to be acceptable and broadly accords with Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036.

Parking/highway safety:

The application site is located within a sustainable location with parking provision and access to public transport within easy walking distance. The nearest bus stop is found on Ramsey Road approx. 250m away.

The application includes 30 space car park (including 2 x accessible parking spaces and 3 x EV charging spaces) to the rear of the building. The standard parking spaces each space is 2.5m x 5m, broken up into groups of 3 and 4 spaces by wide landscape beds and are backed by timber knee rails and hedge planting. The design of the car park is acceptable and in accordance with the guidance set out in the HDC Design Guide (page 91) for Employment and Commercial car parks.

The coloured landscape masterplan included within the DAS (page 11) shows the car park will be surfaced in permeable coloured stone with a contrasting permeable coloured stone for the individual parking spaces and permeable block paving for the footpaths. Whilst supported further details of the product and colour of the hard surface finishes (including the means of demarcating and numbering the individual parking spaces) should be confirmed by way of condition.

The forecourt includes retained areas of tarmac with proposed hedge planting, modified grassland and a small urban tree flanking the front elevation together with a level access ramp and cycle parking.

Further details of the cycle storage enclosure including the number of spaces will be confirmed by way of condition.

It is noted that, subsequent requests for revised plans relating to visibility splays, access deign and frontage area design, CCC Highways ae now satisfied that the proposal is acceptable and subject to a few planning conditions should be recommended for approval.

Therefore, for this reason, alongside the sustainable location, the development is considered acceptable in respect of access and parking provision.

Overall, it is concluded that the development is acceptable in terms of its impact on highway safety and parking provision and therefore accords with Policy LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036.

Biodiversity

Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 states that a development should ensure no net loss in biodiversity and achieve a net gain where possible. In this case, given the previously developed nature of the site and its surroundings as well as the nature of the development proposed, it is considered that achieving an on-site net gain would be challenging. However, the applicant is proposing measures to ensue that the mandatory 10% increase in BNG is achieved.

The off-site land is Parish Council owned and controlled, its use will be secured via a planning condition for the submission of a Biodiversity Management Plan.

In considering the recent Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) regulations, it is considered that this would provide for sufficient increase in BNG on the off-site land and therefore satisfy LP 30 of the Local Plan to 2036.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development is considered to be compliant with relevant national and local planning policy, and can therefore be approved as:

- the development is acceptable in principle.
* Makes efficient use of the site
* Would be a suitable renewable and low carbon energy proposal within an existing operational site
* Would not have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the area
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours
* Would not have a harmful impact upon highway safety

There are no other material planning considerations which have a significant bearing on the determination of this application. For these reasons, the proposal is considered to constitute sustainable development and accords with the Development Plan. There are no overriding material considerations that indicate that permission should not be granted in this instance and the application is therefore recommended for approval subject to the stated planning conditions.

Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is therefore recommended that planning permission should be granted.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
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