OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00506/FUL Full Planning Application

Proposal: 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

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 permission for the creation of a 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.

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

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (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 2021 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 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 Centres
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP22: Local Services and Community Facilities
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2026
Policy E1 – Opportunities for Employment
Policy E2 - Business Investment
Policy BE1 - Design and Landscaping
Policy BE2 - Local Distinctiveness and Aesthetics

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

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

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

8802136OUT - Erect retail warehouses and garden centre with car parking, Stukeley Road & County Council Depot, (north of), Huntingdon – permission granted 06.06.1989
9000115REM - Retail Warehousing with garden centre and associated vehicle repair facilities Stukeley Road, Huntingdon – Details approved 11.05.1990
93/01044/ADV – Display shop sign – refused 08.10.1993
93/01409/ADV – Display illuminated fascia signs – consent granted 28.01.1994
93/01410/ADV – Display free standing sign – consent granted 21.03.1994
0001116ADV - Display of illuminated advertisements – consent granted 22.08.2000
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 – consent granted 12.05.2025
25/00507/FUL - Installation of 3 no. new full height sections of shopfront complete with automatic bi-parting entrance doors – permission granted 02.06.2025
25/00563/FUL - 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 – permission granted 05.06.2025

CONSULTATIONS

Huntingdon Town Council recommends approval. The Town Council supports the application on the basis that it supports policy E1 from the Neighbourhood Plan that supports economic development and doesn't conflict with the surrounding businesses and area.

HDC Environmental Health – No objections as long as the plant is installed as per the acoustic report. The acoustic report demonstrates that there will not be an unacceptable impact from the proposed plant. From the information provided regarding the sound levels of the proposed levels, it is not considered that there would be an adverse impact on the users of the application site and neighbouring property to the rear.

Cadent Gas – No objection in principle. It is noted that there are high pressure assets in the vicinity of the work area. The applicant is advised to refer to the Informative Note within the Decision Notice and follow the stated requirements.

REPRESENTATIONS

None received 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 (2021). 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".

In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan consists of a number of adopted neighbourhood plans, however, there is not an adopted neighbourhood plan in place for Yaxley. Therefore, in this case no neighbourhood plans are given weight in the determination of this application.

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, visual amenity and impact upon the character of the area
o Residential amenity
o Biodiversity and Geodiversity

*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 the creation of a plant compound to service the new business use of the commercial unit. Therefore, the proposal is considered to result in an overall enhancement to a retail provision for the local community and is considered to be acceptable in principle subject to compliance with other relevant policies and considerations.

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

Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 state that developments should respond positively to their context, draw inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings and contribute positively to the area's character and identity.

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, the National Design Guide and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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 advertising and building forms/designs in place. The proposed development will result in the creation of a plant compound (of Flow Forge material) and installation of plant, 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. This will be to the rear of the unit and will not be visible from the front facing public access to the unit.

It is noted that the plans include a new internal mezzanine level. However, as this is solely internal works, without any impact on the exterior of the building, this would not require planning permission and therefore is not included within the description of the application.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable with regard to design and visual amenity and would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area. It therefore accords with Policies LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and the NPPF (2021) 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.

Environmental Health has been consulted on the proposal and has no objection, subject to the plant being installed as per the acoustic report. It is noted that the acoustic report demonstrates

that there will not be an unacceptable impact from the proposed plant. Therefore, from the information provided regarding the sound levels of the proposed levels, it is not considered that there would be an adverse impact on the users of the application site and neighbouring property to the rear.

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.

Therefore, the proposal by virtue of its scale, design and location would not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity and therefore accords with Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

*Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal will 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.

Therefore, the proposal is considered 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;
* 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.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Olivia Manton**