July 2024

Land off Willow Lane, Huddersfield, HD1 5EB

Planning Statement

Full Planning Application for the change of use of land for a secure self-storage facility (maximum of 93 movable storage containers) on Land off Willow Lane, Huddersfield, HD1 5EB

On behalf of

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1. Introduction and Background

Purpose of the Statement

1.1 This Planning Statement has been produced on behalf of Teakwood Investments Ltd to support a full planning application for the use of land for a secure self-storage facility (maximum of 93 movable storage containers) on Land off Willow Lane, Huddersfield, HD1 5EB.

1.2 This Statement describes the application site and planning history before identifying and examining issues relevant to the application. In seeking to establish whether the development proposed is acceptable, particular regard has been had to the statutory development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.3 This planning application submission is supported by a comprehensive package of plans and technical evidence documents including: -

- Planning application form and certificates;
- Site Location Plan;
- Existing and Proposed Site Layout;
- Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations;
- Planning Statement;
- Transport Statement
- Drainage Technical Note
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Ecology Report
- BNG Report
- Lighting Report
- Tree report
- Phase 1 Desk Study

Planning History

1.4 The majority of the planning history of the site relates to the adjacent former Britvic Factory, which closed in June 2013, and is therefore not relevant to this application. The site itself is the former staff car park of the Britvic Factory.

2. Site Description and Context

Site Location and Description

2.2 The site is the former staff, visitor and service car park serving the former Britvic Soft Drinks Factory site located to the north west side of Willow Lane and to the east of St John's Road.

2.3 The application site is an irregular shape broadly triangular and is bound to the west by St John's Road, to the south by Willow Lane, to the north east by the former Britvic Factory and to the north by residential properties (7 & 9 Bay Hall).

2.4 The site is in a sustainable location, with St John's Road in a north/south orientation leading to the Town Centre and Train Station. Development of the site for self storage purposes will provide for local residents and, significantly, local commercial operations providing ancillary storage for day to day and longer term requirements.

2.5 The site extends to an area of approximately 0.25 hectares. The site is within the Birkby Conservation Area (no appraisal completed) with the Grade ii listed residential dwellings (7, 9, 23-27, 29 & 31 Bay Hall) to the north of the site and the Grade ii* listed Church of St John to the west on the western side of St John's Road. In addition, trees to the boundary of the proposed site are largely protected by a number of Tree Preservation Orders.

2.6 In formulating the development proposals for the site, relevant Local Plan Policies have been considered including the Kirklees Local Plan. It is considered that the scheme addresses an identified need in this area of Huddersfield for such a facility.

3. The Proposed Development

Introduction

3.1 The following section provides a brief description of the proposals. This text should be read in conjunction with other plans submitted in support of the application.

3.2 The proposal seeks full planning permission for the use of land for a secure self-storage facility (maximum of 93 movable storage containers). All shipping containers brought to the site will be brand new 'single trip' shipping containers of a uniform colour that have not previously been used.

3.3 It is anticipated the facility would be operational mainly during day time hours with more domestic storage users accessing the site on early evenings and weekends. No outdoor external storage will be allowed, and all storage would be within the containers. Users would likely access the site for a short period of time to load and unload their vehicles.

3.4 The site layout shows how the site will be laid out at capacity together with areas for landscaping, parking and circulation.

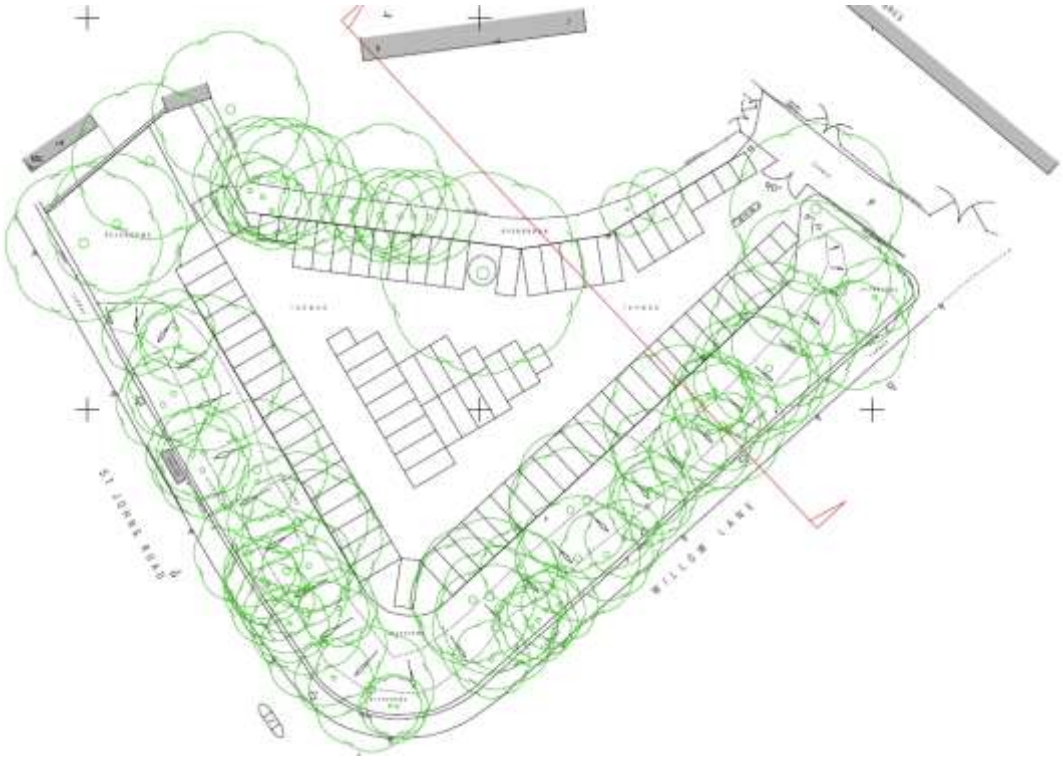
Layout and context

3.5 The massing and appearance of the development reflects the existing industrial character of the surrounding area, particularly to the south of Willow Lane, whilst being laid out to ensure any impacts upon residential amenity are minimised. It is important to note the former use of the site as the Britvic Soft Drink Factory had unrestricted use of the application site for parking, either for staff, visitors or for HGVs.

3.6 The proposed development comprises a linear arrangement of storage containers to the site perimeter with a central 'island' of containers arranged to allow efficient usage and parking for clients whilst maintaining circulation for vehicles.

3.7 The proposed development will provide a self-storage facility to meet identified demand in the north-Huddersfield Area meeting the Spatial Priorities of Policy LP3 and LP7 of the Strategy and Policies Plan, including supporting 'the reuse or adaptation of vacant or underused' land.

3.8 There would be no external storage provision proposed as part of the development, all storage would be within the customer's allocated container and any external storage will be removed by the management.



Landscaping and Open Space

3.9 The layout plan shows existing trees to the development site boundaries, the site characteristics and to ensure adequate circulation space require the vast majority of the site to accommodate the containers themselves or the associated hard surfacing and parking areas, no formal landscaping is proposed as part of the development. The proposed layout has considered the impact upon the TPO trees and is assessed in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

Access and Transport

3.10 The site is to be accessed through an existing vehicular entrance from Willow Lane. The number of vehicle movements would be significantly reduced from the unrestricted former staff/visitor car park scenario to the benefit of highway safety.

3.11 No additional dedicated parking would be required given the nature of the proposed use with customers driving their vehicles directly to the location of their allocated container for loading and unloading of vehicles.

3.12 St John's Road is a main arterial bus route in the area with direct links throughout Huddersfield for those using public transport. Vehicle access can be safely and efficiently accommodated from Willow Lane, via the access which was previously used to access the former car park on the site. The proposals do not represent a significant impact on the operation of the wider highway network.

4. Relevant Planning Policy

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was revised in December 2023 and replaces all previous iterations. The introduction to the document confirms that it is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

4.2 The NPPF is clear that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development where there is no conflict with the development plan

4.3 The revised publication confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out the three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are:

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) **an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy**.

4.4 Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In relation to decision taking this means:

"c) approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are the most important for determining the application are out-of-date7, granting permission unless:

i. The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole".

4.5 Section 6 sets out the Government's policies for 'Building a strong, competitive economy'. This section details that Planning Decisions should "create the conditions

in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt". The provision of a new self-storage facility will allow businesses and residents in the area to store home and business contents in the local area.

4.6 Section 9 considers transport related matters. Considering development proposals, paragraph 114 advises that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes should be taken up, given the type of development and its location; that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and any significant impacts from the development upon the transport network or on highway safety can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree. Paragraph 115 advises that developments should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact upon highway safety or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

4.7 Making an effective use of land is covered in section 11 with paragraph 123 advising that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for [homes and] other uses and that previously-developed land should be used as much as possible.

4.8 Section 12 covers design and advises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 135 lists a number of criteria that planning policies and decisions should include and reflect. The proposed plans for the development accords with these principles, whilst providing a functional and usable facility for local businesses and residents.

Statutory Development Plan Policies

4.9 The statutory Development Plan consists of the Kirklees Local Plan and, in applicable areas, the Holme Valley Neighbourhood Development Plan (the application site is not within the NHP area). A number of Supplementary Planning Documents are also adopted by Kirklees Council.

4.10 The application is now considered against the relevant planning policies below.

Kirklees Local Plan (Adopted 2019)

4.11 Policy LP7 encourages the re-use of previously developed land as well as vacant and underutilised sites.

4.12 Policy LP9 supports job creating development which are ancillary to surrounding employment uses.

4.13 Policy LP21 ensures developments can utilise a safe and suitable access for pedestrians and vehicles.

4.14 Policy LP24 aims to achieve good design in all new development.

4.15 Policy LP30 seeks to protect and enhance the biodiversity of Kirklees.

4.16 Policy LP33 ensures the protection of trees and the amenity benefits of Arboricultural value.

4.17 Policy LP35 seeks to preserve and enhance historically important assets.

5. Assessment against Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires development to accord with the Statutory Development Plan and advises: -

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

5.2 As set out in the previous section, the Statutory Development Plan comprises the policies contained within the Local Plan.

5.3 The proposed development would make efficient use of 'previously developed land', strategically located on the local highway network in close proximity to the trunk road network and is within walking distance of good public transport links. The development would therefore constitute sustainable development.

Principle of Development

5.4 The use of the site as a self-storage facility falls within the B8 use class. The use of the site is not explicitly cited given the site is 'unallocated' as notated on the adopted Policies Map. However, the site is previously developed land in a highly sustainable location close to the main highway network. The Local Plan encourages the "efficient use of previously developed land in sustainable locations" in Policy LP7.

5.5 As such, the proposal would comprise sustainable development resulting in the reuse of an underutilised and derelict site within the main urban area and the principle of development is considered acceptable in line with Policy LP7. Other material planning considerations are set out below.

Other Material Considerations

Landscaping and Design

5.6 The proposal maintains and protects areas of existing protected trees. The proposed use of the application site utilises all of the floor area to be hard surfaced with shipping containers located within the tree lined boundary of the site. Landscaping beyond the site boundary will be protected given the TPO afforded to the vast majority of boundary trees.

5.7 The site characteristics have determined the layout and scale of development which requires the vast majority of the site to accommodate the containers or hard surfacing, the majority of the site as existing is hard surfaced following its historic use as a car park for the adjacent factory.

Ecology

5.8 The existing derelict site has been maintained and currently consists of a crushed hardcore surface providing no ecological habitats which would be unduly affected by virtue of the development; as such, there would be no undue impact created as a result of the proposed development. This is confirmed within the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

5.9 The assessment of the proposed development against the current baseline indicates that a decrease in biodiversity performance of the Site of approximately 0.45 BU (-44.61%) in habitat will occur as a result of the current post-development layout plans.

5.10 A minimum of 0.5 BU will therefore be needed to achieve the required 10% net gain. This will likely require at least partial use of off-site biodiversity units, with credits needing to be specific to habitat type to meet the trading rules.

Amenity

5.11 A core principle of the NPPF at paragraph 130 is to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupants.

5.12 The layout of the site ensures the most efficient use of the site in compliance with the NPPF and local policy and promotes a safe, functional and accessible environment.

5.13 Residential dwellings are located to the north of the site. The containers will form a perimeter wall around the full boundary of the site, providing a built-in noise barrier. The noise impact assessment confirms the potential impact of noise from the proposed development is not predicted to be significant and no additional mitigation to control noise is required.

Highways, Access and Parking

5.14 The existing access to Willow Lane (which was used to access the former car park on the site) will be reused to serve the development. Based on information provided by the applicant, customers predominantly arrive and load / unload using vans, and on this basis the junction is adequate for the intended use (for instance, access by larger vehicles or HGVs is not anticipated on a regular basis).

5.15 Within the site, the proposed storage containers are arranged in a loop, and therefore vehicles are able to access individual containers directly for loading purposes, before continuing around the loop to exit the site in forward gear.

5.16 A Transport Statement is submitted with the application The report demonstrates the following, opportunities are available to travel to the site by modes other than single occupancy car trips, including walking, cycling and public transport. Vehicle access can be safely and efficiently accommodated from Willow Lane, via the access which was previously used to access the former car park on the site. The proposals do not represent a significant impact on the operation of the wider highway network.

Heritage

5.17 A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been submitted in support of this application. The purpose of this HIA is to thoughtfully evaluate the impact of the proposed development on the significance and setting of identified heritage assets. This statement has been prepared in the context of relevant national and local planning policy and has considered supplementary guidance relating to the conservation of the historic environment.

5.18 The proposed site lies within Birkby Conservation Area, which does not benefit from a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

5.19 In addition, A 150m study area was established around the central grid reference point of the proposed development area to assess proximate heritage assets which could be affected by the proposal.

5.20 The West Yorkshire Historic Environment Record (HER) search revealed 7 records within the 150m search radius:

1. 23-27 Bay Hall, grade II, LEN: 1134413
2. 29 Bay Hall, grade II, LEN: 1220294
3. 31 Bay Hall, grade II, LEN: 1313794
4. 7 Bay Hall, grade II, LEN: 1220288
5. Wall around Church of St John, grade II, LEN: 1277388
6. Church of St John, grade II*, LEN: 1217625
7. 9 Bay Hall, grade II, LEN: 1313793

5.21 A full assessment of the impact upon the character appearance of the Conservation Area, and the setting of the identified heritage assets is presented in Section 4 of the accompanying HIA.

5.22 The conclusions of the HIA have been determined in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 205 where great weight has been assigned to the conservation of all identified assets. The proposed works have considered the significance of the site itself, and its contribution to the character appearance of the Conservation Area. In brief, it is concluded from the assessment of impact that there will be ‘less than substantial harm’ to the Conservation Area, and the setting of proximate assets. Section 4 of the HIA thoroughly outlines the methodology employed to reach these conclusions.

5.23 The ‘less than substantial’ harm is considered to be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposed development which include, the improvement of storage amenity for surrounding neighbourhoods, and the maintenance of the wall of trees shrouding the proposed containers from view. The proposed containers are considered to be acceptable in context as they are largely shielded from view and will not unduly affect the character appearance of the Conservation Area, or the setting of proximate listed buildings.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 This Planning Statement has been produced on behalf of Teakwood Investments Ltd to support a full planning application for the use of land for a secure self-storage facility (maximum of 93 movable storage containers) on Land off Willow Lane, Huddersfield, HD1 5EB.

6.2 The proposal has a number of significant benefits deriving from it and should be supported by the Local Planning Authority for the following reasons: -

- The development of the site will make effective use of Brownfield Land which is currently underutilised and derelict;
- The site is close to strategic routes on the highway network, whilst being in walking distance to good public transport links so is considered a sustainable and appropriate location for B8 self-storage;
- The application seeks to provide an additional employment facility within north Huddersfield which would aid the Economic Development of the city and provide an ancillary facility for local businesses and residents;
- The potential impacts of the proposals have been carefully considered and appropriately addressed alongside all relevant planning policies and material considerations;
- The development would not have a significant impact upon the local highway network; and
- The assessment provided has demonstrated that the proposal meets the objectives of the Framework and no adverse impacts of development exist which would lead to a refusal of planning permission.

6.3 In view of the above, it is considered the scheme satisfies national and local policy and represents a suitable development proposal for the site that addresses all the relevant and material considerations. In this context, the proposal satisfies Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and it is considered that planning permission should be granted.