RTPI
Chartered Town Planners

ATLAS
PLANNING GROUP

PLANNING STATEMENT

Land to the west of the A345, High Post, SP4 6AT

July 2023

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SITE DESCRIPTION

1.1 The site, which measures approximately 4,300m^2 comprises an open area of land, previously used for salt storage and currently used for the storage of woodchip and timber in association with the operations of Tree Technique Ltd.



Figure 1 – An Aerial View of the Site



Figure 2 – The Site Viewed from the A345

1.2 The site is located within the open countryside, however, it does not lie within any other designation such as a Conservation Area, SSSI or AONB. The site is surrounded by agricultural land immediately to the north, south and west, and is bounded by the A345 to the east.

PLANNING HISTORY

PL/2022/09266 – LAWFUL DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATE

2.1 In 2022, the applicant submitted a lawful development certificate application to Wiltshire Council. The purpose of the application was to establish the lawfulness of the continued use of the site for B8 storage purposes. Although the site had been used for B8 storage for many decades, this had never been formally recognised within the planning system.

2.2 The lawful development certificate was granted on 30th May 2023 and thus the lawful use of the site for B8 storage purposes has been confirmed.

THE PROPOSAL

3.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a B8 storage building for the continued storage of woodchip and timber.

3.2 There is a need for Tree Technique Ltd to be able to store woodchip and timber within a weatherproof and lockable building for security, better lighting, and the enhanced ability for the stored material to be kept dry.

3.3 The new building would be sited at the northern end of the land which was confirmed to have a lawful B8 use under application PL/2022/09266. Internally, the building would provide approximately 314m^2 of B8 storage space.

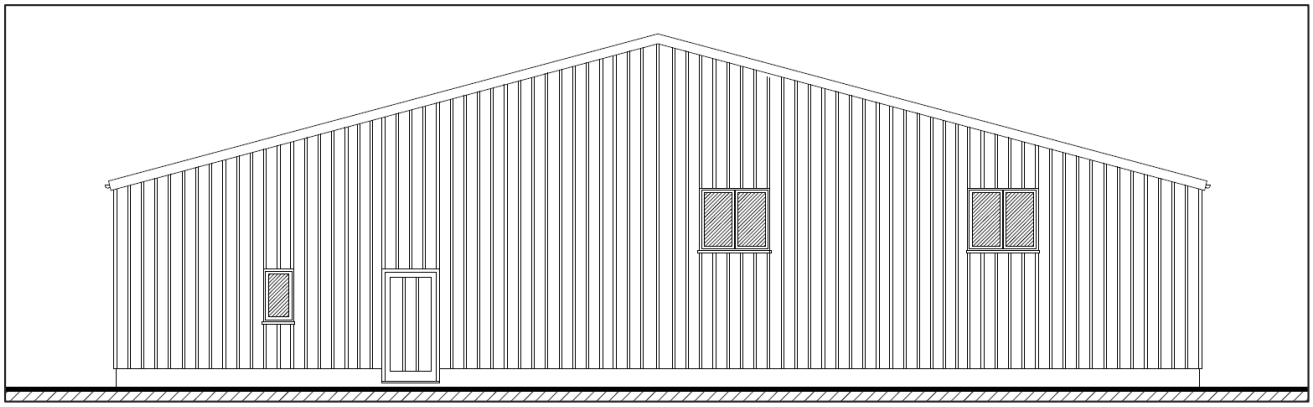

Figure 3 – Proposed Elevation

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 The Wiltshire Core Strategy is the Council's primary Development Plan Document (DPD), and the starting point for determining planning decisions within Wiltshire, in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides a national tier of policy and decision-making guidance for the planning system and forms a material consideration for all planning decisions.

4.3 The policies and guidance contained within the statutory DPD and all other relevant material considerations have informed the design process to ensure that the proposed dwellings are an appropriate form of development for the area.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

4.4 Wiltshire's delivery strategy is detailed within Core Policy 2. The policy states, inter alia:

> *"Other than in circumstances as permitted by other policies within this plan, identified in paragraph 4.25, development will not be permitted outside the limits of development, as defined on the policies map. The limits of development may only be altered through the identification of sites for development through subsequent Site Allocations Development Plan Documents and neighbourhood plans."*

4.5 Paragraph 4.25 identifies several types of development which the Council will consider acceptable outside the defined limits of development, alongside the policies within the WCS which support these exceptions. These are:

- Additional employment land (Core Policy 34)
- Military establishments (Core Policy 37)
- Development related to tourism (Core Policies 39 and 40)
- Rural exception sites (Core Policy 44)
- Specialist accommodation provision (Core Policies 46 and 47)
- Supporting rural life (Core Policy 48)

4.6 Of these policies, only Core Policy 34 is applicable to the proposed development. Core Policy 34 states, inter alia:

"Outside the Principal Settlements, Market Towns and Local Service Centres, [employment] developments will be supported that:

i. are adjacent to these settlements and seek to retain or expand businesses currently located within or adjacent to the settlements; or

ii. support sustainable farming and food production through allowing development required to adapt to modern agricultural practices and diversification; or

iii. are for new and existing rural based businesses within or adjacent to Large and Small Villages; or

iv. are considered essential to the wider strategic interest of the economic development of Wiltshire, as determined by the council.

Where they:

a. meet sustainable development objectives as set out in the polices of this Core Strategy and

b. are consistent in scale with their location, do not adversely affect nearby buildings and the surrounding area or detract from residential amenity and

c. are supported by evidence that they are required to benefit the local economic and social needs and

d. would not undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations and

e. are supported by adequate infrastructure." [our clarification added]

4.7 The site lies in proximity to the 'small village' of Great Durnford and would create space for an established rural based businesses. Accordingly, criterion (iii) is satisfied. In order to fully satisfy the requirements of Core Policy 34, criteria (a) – (e) must also be met.

4.8 The WCS sets out several strategic objectives, which underpin the Council's approach to delivering sustainable development. These are:

Strategic objective 1: delivering a thriving economy

Strategic objective 2: addressing climate change

Strategic objective 3: providing everyone with access to a decent, affordable home

Strategic objective 4: helping to build resilient communities

Strategic objective 5: protecting and enhancing the natural, historic and built environment

Strategic objective 6: ensuring that adequate infrastructure is in place to support our communities

4.9 The proposed development would be able to directly contribute towards achieving strategic objectives 1, 2, 5 and 6.

4.10 Supporting the existing business at the site would greatly contribute towards the first strategic objective, in a sustainable rural location with good access to the larger settlements of Salisbury and Amesbury as well as their surrounding community areas.

4.11 The development would be able to incorporate sustainable energy technologies and sustainable methods of construction to reduce the environmental impacts of the scheme. Its location, in proximity to large existing communities and along a primary bus route (the 675, Activ8, X4 & X5 routes all pass the site) would also reduce the need to travel long distances using private vehicles.

4.12 In relation to strategic objective 5, the proposed development will have no tangible impact upon the existing qualities of the natural and historic environment, as the building will be sited on a storage yard with little biodiversity and heritage significance inside the site's boundaries.

4.13 The provision of a high-quality building would also arguably contribute to the achievement of the final strategic objective.

4.14 The proposal is therefore considered accordant with Core Policy 34's criterion (a).

4.15 The site is not located in proximity to any residential dwellings and so would have no impact upon the residential amenity of existing properties. The proposals would therefore accord with criterion (b) of Core Policy 34.

4.16 The 2018 Wiltshire Employment Land Review produced by Hardisty Jones Associates found there to be a total demand for employment space over the WCS period of 157 – 182 hectares. However, the same review confirmed that only 166 hectares of employment land would likely be available meet that demand. Specifically referring to the A303/Salisbury area, the report states:

> *"In the A303/Salisbury FEMA, there is sufficient land to meet demand during the first five years of the Local Plan period, but not enough land to meet the forecast demand over the whole 20-year plan period. There is potential for more allocations in the Salisbury area to enable growth here, but sites have not yet been identified."*

4.17 The continued use of the site for employment purposes would help the Council secure the strategic demand for employment space over the long-term. The continued use of existing employment sites is arguably just as important as the delivery of new sites in this regard. The development is therefore considered to be accordant with Core Policy 34's criterion (c).

4.18 As the site is not allocated for any future employment development, and because development would only facilitate the continued operations of Tree Technique and is a relatively small site in context, there is no danger that the development would jeopardise any strategy employment allocations.

4.19 The development is well served by primary roads which enable quick access to the larger settlements of Wiltshire and beyond. There is no reason to suggest that a development of the scale proposed would require any additional infrastructure. Criterion (e) is therefore met.

4.20 As the development proposal would accord with criterion (iii) and sub-criteria (a) - (e) Core Policy 34 offers direct support for the scheme.

4.21 The policies of the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review are also of relevance to the current proposal, even pre-adoption. The policy which is due to replace CP34 is Policy 64. This policy states:

> *"Proposals for employment development (within use classes B2, B8 or E(g)(i-iii)) will be supported on unallocated sites within or adjacent to Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large and Small Villages where they are appropriate to the roles and function of the settlement.*
>
> *Employment development proposals elsewhere will be supported that:*
>
> *i. are for farming; or*
>
> *ii. diversify and support an existing rural based business; or*

iii. are considered essential to the wider strategic interest of the economic development of Wiltshire, as determined by the council.

Proposals will only be supported where they:

a. are appropriate in scale with their location, do not adversely affect the operation of nearby uses or unacceptably harm residential amenity;
b. do not lead to unacceptable impacts on the historic environment;
c. do not represent unacceptable harm to landscape character or visual intrusion;
d. would not undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations;
e. lead to no unacceptable impacts on the local transport network; and
f. are supported by adequate infrastructure, including broadband."

4.22 For the same reasons as above, the development site is considered to lie adjacent to the village of Great Durnford and therefore would be supported by Policy 64. However, it is worth noting that even if the site was considered to lie away (not adjacent to) from the settlement, the development proposal would still be supported by the latter half of the policy.

4.23 The development would support an existing rural based business (criterion ii) and would be appropriate to the site's context, would not lead to harm to the historic environment, the surrounding landscape or the local highway network, would not undermine the deliver of any strategic employment sites, and would be supported by adequate infrastructure for the proposed use.

4.24 The development is therefore supported by both the adopted development plan and the emerging development plan.

IMPACT UPON CHARACTER & APPEARANCE OF THE AREA

4.25 Core Policy 57 outlines the Council's requirement for all new developments to be of a high-quality design. The policy states, inter alia:

> "*A high standard of design is required in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings. Development is expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complimentary to the locality"*

4.26 The proposed scheme is considered to be of a scale which is appropriate for the continued use of the site for B8 storage for Tree Technique and respectful of neighbouring agricultural uses.

4.27 Views of the site are only achievable when passing along the A345, and the addition of a building would not be out of keeping with the existing development to the south of the site, which includes the Stones Hotel, a local petrol station, High Post Golf Club and the High Post Business Park.

4.28 Accordingly, it is considered that the new building will have an acceptable impact upon the landscape character and appearance of the surrounding area.

IMPACT UPON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

4.29 The site does not lie in proximity to any residential dwellings and so no adverse impacts in terms of residential amenity would arise as a result of the proposed development. The development would therefore be in complete accordance with criterion (vii) of Core Policy 57.

IMPACT UPON ECOLOGY

4.30 Although the site is not considered to be of any real arboricultural or ecological merit, a preliminary ecological survey of the land could be undertaken at the request of the local authority to ensure that no protected species are put at risk because of the proposed development.

4.31 If any protected species were found, it is likely that sufficient mitigation could be put in place following the recommendations of an ecological report, to ensure that the development has a positive ecological impact.

FLOOD RISK

4.32 The Environment Agency's 'Flood Map for Planning' has been consulted to gauge the site's likelihood of experiencing a flood event. The map below confirms that the site lies within Flood Zone 1, where there is a low chance of flooding.

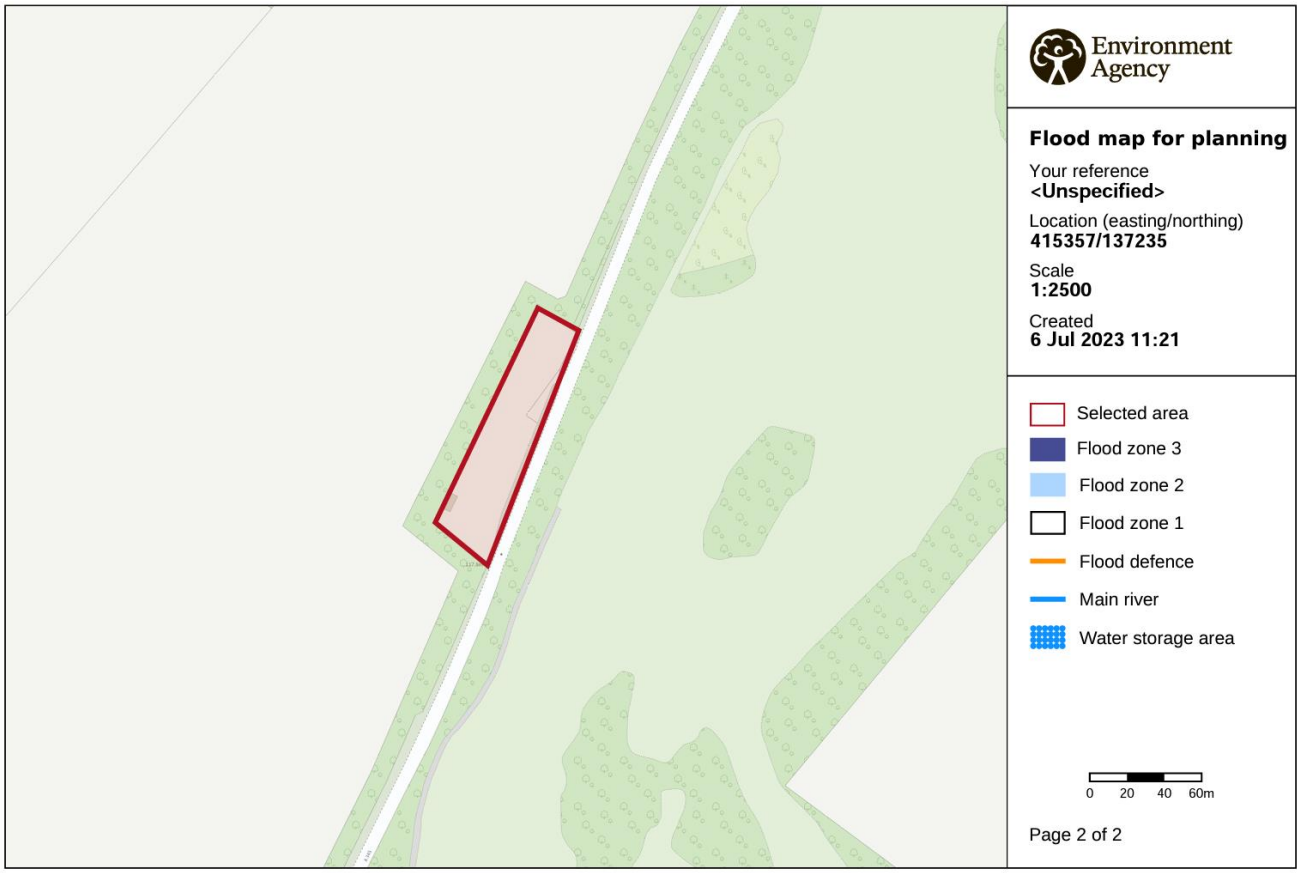

Figure 4 – Flood Map for Planning

IMPACT UPON HIGHWAY SAFETY

4.33 Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is provided from an existing access onto the A345. It is proposed that this access is retained and used in connection with the proposed development.



Figure 5 – The Site Access

4.34 The existing access provides long stretches of visibility to the nearside kerb in both directions, owing the site's position on the inside of a slight bend.

4.35 As the proposed development will not intensify the activities on the site, simply providing a secure indoor environment for logs to be kept dry (which would otherwise have been stored on the site in the open air), the continued use of the lawful access is considered to be acceptable.

CONCLUSIONS

5.1 This statement accompanies an application seeking full planning permission for the erection of a B8 storage building for the continued storage of woodchip and timber. The proposal ensures:

- ✓ The development accords with National and Local Planning Policies;
- ✓ The store will not have an adverse impact upon either the character or appearance of the area;
- ✓ The scheme would have no impact on the residential amenity of existing properties;
- ✓ The development would have an acceptable impact in relation to flood risk;
- ✓ The development is acceptable in highways terms.

5.2 We therefore commend these proposals to you.