

Project: Extension to Storage Building at Hillbrush
Company Ltd, Norwood Park, Castle St, Mere,
Wiltshire, BA12 6FE

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PLANNING STATEMENT

1.0 APPLICATION SITE AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This application relates to Hillbrush Company Ltd, the UK's leading manufacturer of brushes and hygienic cleaning tools, located at Norwood Park in Mere, which is strategically positioned with excellent access to the A303 and the wider National highway network.
- 1.2 The application seeks full planning permission for the extension of an existing storage building within an existing yard, for purposes ancillary to the existing business, which is a major local employer in the area. The development will create the need for several additional full-time jobs.
- 1.3 The extension to the storage building is required to facilitate the growth of the company, which has outgrown its current storage facilities, as can be seen from a walkover of the site and an inspection of the existing buildings.
- 1.4 The site is adjoined by an allocated employment site to the east, known as the '303 Interchange' where a new care home has recently been constructed, with the remainder of the units/ plots either for sale, under offer, or yet to be implemented. As such the extension will be well related to existing commercial development found within this locality without causing any visual harm.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 Planning permission was originally granted for the main Hillbrush premises, including the erection of a new factory incorporating storage areas, offices, brush museum, areas used for goods in and goods out and the formation of vehicular and pedestrian access thereto, which was permitted back in December 2014 (ref: **14/06624/FUL**).
- 2.2 Planning permission was subsequently granted in May 2021 for a storage building (ref: **21/02002/FUL**), but the storage capacity of this building has been exceeded for some time, due to the continual growth of the company.
- 2.3 A discharge of condition application, relating to condition 4 (landscaping) of planning permission 21/02002/FUL was approved back in August 2021 (ref: **PL/2021/07555**).

3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

Development Plan

- 3.1 The Core Strategy adopted in January 2015 and the Site Allocations Plan adopted in February 2020 form the development plan for this proposal. The following development plan policies are relevant to this application:
- Core Policy 1 (Settlement Strategy)
 - Core Policy 2 (Delivery Strategy)
 - Core Policy 35 (Existing Employment Land)
 - Core Policy 48 (Supporting Rural Life)
 - Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and Geo-Diversity)
 - Core Policy 51 (Landscape)
 - Core Policy 57 (Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping)
 - Core Policy 58 (Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment)
 - Core Policy 62 (Development Impacts on the Transport Network)
 - Core Policy 67 (Flood Risk)

Other Material Planning Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024):
 - Chapter 2 (Achieving Sustainable Development)
 - Chapter 4 (Decision-Making)
 - Chapter 6 (Building a Strong, Competitive Economy)
 - Chapter 9 (Sustainable Transport)
 - Chapter 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change)
 - Chapter 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment)
 - Chapter 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment)
- Planning Practice Guidance
- Cranborne Chase National Landscape Management Plan 2019 – 2024

4.0 ANALYSIS OF RELEVANT PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Development

- 4.1 The application site relates to an existing commercial premises located on an allocated employment site on the western edge of Mere, which was established with the benefit of planning permission, as covered within section 2.0 (Planning History) above.
- 4.2 The extension to the storage building proposed is needed to provide covered, secure storage to support an established and successful business that has outgrown its existing storage facilities.
- 4.3 The site is adjoined by an allocated employment site to the east, known as the '303 Interchange' where a new care home has recently been constructed. As such the extension to the storage building will be well related to existing commercial development found within this locality, and will also offer knock on economic benefits for the wider area.
- 4.4 The proposal is therefore supported by Core Strategy Policies 1, 35 and 48 and Chapter 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) as a matter of principle.

Effect upon the Landscape Character of the AONB

- 4.5 The site is within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape. Core Strategy Policy 51 states that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character of the National Landscapes (formerly AONBs), and this policy is consistent with Chapter 15 of the Framework.
- 4.6 The proposed building is on previously developed (brownfield) land within the curtilage of the established commercial premises which is well-screened. The size and design of the proposed building is in-keeping with the character and scale of the existing buildings found on the site, and need to be viewed in the context of their relationship to the adjoining commercial site at the 303 Interchange. The extension will be sited on an area of hardstanding, currently used for external storage and it will therefore provide a more efficient and tidier facility for essential storage.
- 4.7 The premises is an established feature within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape and the provision of sensitive development within the curtilage of the premises will preserve the landscape character of this National Landscape in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 51 and Chapter 15 of the Framework.

Residential Amenity

- 4.8 The use of the proposed storage building/ extension for purposes ancillary to the existing, established business will have no impact whatsoever on the living conditions enjoyed by the occupants of the nearest residential properties, or upon the amenities of adjoining commercial uses. The proposal therefore complies with Core Strategy Policy 57 and Chapter 12 of the Framework.

Highway Safety

- 4.9 The proposed extension to the storage building will provide more efficient storage space for the business without generating additional traffic, and will therefore not have any impact on the safety of highway users in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 62 and Chapter 9 of the Framework.

Biodiversity

- 4.10 The development is exempt from the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in Schedule 7A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021) as *de minimis* because it involves development of a hard surfaced yard.
- 4.11 The industrial nature of the existing site with associated activity does not provide a suitable habitat for any protected species and the proposal will therefore have a neutral impact on biodiversity in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 50 and Chapter 15 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk

- 4.12 The application site is not within an area at risk of flooding and surface water run-off from the additional roof(s) will be drained to a soakaway that runs into an existing drainage pond within the site, which has sufficient additional capacity. As such, the proposal complies with Core Strategy Policy 67 and Chapter 14 of the Framework.

Historic Environment

- 4.13 The site is not a designated or non-designated heritage asset and does not contribute towards the setting or significance of any such assets, and must be viewed within the commercial context of the current site and that of the 303 Interchange. The historic environment will therefore be conserved in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 67 and Chapter 16 of the Framework.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The proposal fully complies with the development plan and the Council is therefore respectfully requested to grant planning permission in accordance with the ordinary (statutory) planning balance and presumption in favour set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and paragraph 11 (c) of the Framework.