

**North Northamptonshire Area Planning Committee  
(Thrapston)  
29 March 2023**

<b>Application Reference</b>	<b>22/01407/FUL</b>
<b>Case Officer</b>	<b>Peter Baish</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Polebrook Airfield, Lutton Road, Polebrook</b>
<b>Development</b>	<b>Erection of an industrial storage building anchored to existing hardstanding</b>
<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Airfield Warehousing Ltd - Karen Munton</b>
<b>Agent</b>	<b>Mosaic Town Planning - Andrew Jalali</b>
<b>Ward</b>	<b>Thrapston Ward</b>
<b>Overall Expiry Date</b>	<b>08 February 2023</b>
<b>Agreed Extension of Time</b>	<b>20 February 2023</b>

**1. Recommendation**

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- 1.1 That Planning Permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

**2. The Proposal**

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- 2.1 Planning permission is sought for the erection of a warehouse building for the purposes of storage for the commercial, retail and agricultural sectors at Polebrook Airfield adjacent to an existing warehouse building. The building would be located on an area of existing hardstanding (currently used for outdoor storage) and would be used to securely store goods under shelter.
- 2.2 The warehouse building would measure 70 metres in length by 20 metres in width. In terms of height the building would measure 5.2 metres to the eaves and 8.5 metres to the ridge.
- 2.3 In terms of materials the extension would be constructed from 40mm composite steel walls with a twin layer insulated PVC roof.

### **3. Site Description**

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- 3.1 The site is located on a portion of a former WWII airfield, approximately 2km east of the settlement boundary of Polebrook and 1.8km south-west of the settlement boundary of Lutton. The site is not located within the Conservation Area and in terms of flood risk, the site is identified as being located within Flood Zone 1 and not at risk of flooding.
- 3.2 The site is a 2.6ha plot of land containing: existing buildings including a large warehouse occupying approximately 0.58ha and one other smaller building; areas of hardstanding used for storage, parking and access; limited areas of grass cover separating vehicle access routes; and an access road connecting the facilities to Lutton Road.
- 3.3 The site is surrounded by open countryside in all directions and is bordered by a mixture of mature trees and hedgerows to the north that hide the site from the public road (Lutton Road), whilst to the south agricultural land continues towards the village of Hemington.

### **4. Relevant Planning History**

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- 4.1 None Relevant

### **5. Consultation Responses**

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A full copy of all comments received can be found on the Council's website [here](#)

#### **5.1 Polebrook Parish Council**

*Comments received 13.12.2022*

The Parish Council in principle do not object to the actual planning application for the addition of industrial storage space anchored to an existing building, however the Parish Council are strong in their opinion regarding HGV traffic emanating from the site and request that the following is taken in to consideration when this application is reviewed:

- Signage on the entrance to the site to be improved/upgraded alerting HGV traffic they MUST NOT turn left and must only turn right out of the site, this is to alleviate HGV traffic through Polebrook village. It is noted this HGV traffic is still ignoring the current signage and only last week an HGV was observed in the village, this is unacceptable;
- Concerns regarding HGV traffic not only relate to the village school which is located in the Main Street, but in the village generally, though the school is of the biggest concern. The Parish Council would ask a weight restriction and other traffic calming measures are imposed in the village particularly within the vicinity of the school.

The Parish Council request these points are considered by the Planning Department when determining any application.

Officer Response:

- *This site has been used for HGV access in excess of the last 40 years*
- *There is no anticipated increase in traffic volumes as a result of the proposed development from that existing. The proposed area for the building is already being used for outside storage, and so it is essentially just providing cover for existing activity.*
- *The existing signage installed by the applicant informs drivers to turn right out of the site to the dedicated lorry route and away from Polebrook village.*
- *The applicant is not in control of drivers once they leave site. Without a legal restriction in place, there is nothing stopping drivers from disobeying these instructions. Additional signage would not change this position and would not deter any driver that intends to disobey the advised routes.*
- *There are some lorry movements in the area that originate from other local businesses. It is not the role of the applicant to control or manage these lorry movements, nor is it the responsibility of this new development for a storage building to resolve existing and unrelated highways issues.*

5.2 Highway Authority

*Comments received 09.12.2022:*

The LHA can confirm no objections to this application as the proposal does not demonstrate any intensification, however please note the following observations;

- The access appears to be substandard with regards to; its width, as commercial accesses serving HGV's need to be a minimum of 7.3 metres for the length of the longest vehicle to use the site, from the highway boundary.
- The applicant will be required to demonstrate the necessary vehicular visibility splays of 2.4 metres x 215 metres (for a 60mph road) on both sides of the access. These splays must not contain any other third party owned land and shall be permanently retained and kept free of all obstacles to visibility over 0.6 metres in height above access / footway level.
- The proposed development site is situated in a remote, unsustainable location in respect of transport; all journeys to and from the site will need to be made by private motor vehicle, there are no public transport services serving the site

Officer Comment:

*The LHA observations are noted but have no bearing on the determination of this planning application due to the existing situation and the fact that the proposal is not resulting in an intensification of the existing use.*

5.3 North Northants Waste

*Comments received 21.11.2022:*

No Comments or Objections

5.4 North Northants Environmental Protection

*Comments received 05.12.2022:*

The site was used during WWII as a heavy bomber base and afterwards by the RAF for storage, and as a missile site. From my sources, and that readily available on the internet, the location of new building is situated where the old hangers were placed. I have been unable to find where the old bomb store was but would expect it to be located some distance from the main buildings. The fuel stores were situated well to the east and west of the proposed building. With any development on former military site there is always the potential risk from contamination and unexploded ordnance.

The building will be anchored to the existing concrete slab. From the Design and Access Statement 'it will be attached to the existing hardstanding, meaning that no intrusive groundworks, drainage or foundations are required for the erection of this storage building'. Given that no new contaminant pathway will be introduced there is no additional risks from contamination. Furthermore, as no excavations or penetrations will be made into the underlying strata there is no risk of encountering unexploded ordnance. As such no ground investigation will be required. However, it would be prudent to place the following condition on the planning permission with respect to unexpected ground conditions.

Unexpected contamination

If, during development, contamination (including unexploded ordnance) is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the LPA) shall be carried out until a remediation strategy detailing how this contamination will be dealt with has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.

Reason

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

5.5 Environment Agency

*Comments received 23.11.2022:*

No comments to make

5.6 North Northants Ecology

*Comments received 14.12.2022:*

No comments to make

5.7 Naturespace

*Comments received 14.12.2022:*

I am satisfied that if this development was to be approved, it is unlikely to cause an impact on great crested newts and/or their habitats.

It would be unreasonable to require the applicant to submit a survey because this could be considered disproportionate to the scale and the likely impacts of the development. However, the application site lies within a red impact zone as per the modelled district licence impact map, which indicates that there is highly suitable habitat for GCN within the area surrounding the application site. Therefore, I recommend the use of the following informative:

The applicant is reminded that, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to (amongst other things): deliberately capture, disturb, injure or kill great crested newts; damage or destroy a breeding or resting place; deliberately obstruct access to a resting or sheltering place. Planning approval for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under these acts. Should great crested newts be found at any stages of the development works, then all works should cease, and Natural England should be contacted for advice.

5.8 North Northants Police Liaison Officer

*Comments received 23.11.2022:*

In relation to designing out crime I have studied the submitted documentation and in adherence to national and local planning policy whilst being commensurate with risk I make the following comments.

Northamptonshire Police have no objection or concerns with this application as proposed. All crime prevention related measures quoted within the original submitted documentation, should be implemented as agreed.

If the scheme is revised due to other consultees concerns I ask to be re-consulted to reassess any further designing out crime implications.

## 5.9 Campaign for Dark Skies

*Comments received 21.11.2022:*

CFDS notes from Section 6.22, Planning and Design Access Statement dated November 2022 that there is no proposal to install interior or exterior lighting to this new unit as part of this application.

As a result, CFDS is happy with the proposal.

Should interior ( due to the translucent roof ) or exterior lighting be proposed in the future then CFDS would expect the proposed scheme to meet National and Local Planning Guidance on the control of Light Pollution and that a full design is submitted to Planning for consideration.

## 5.10 North Northants Fire and Rescue

*Comments received 21.11.2022:*

No comments to make

## 5.11 Neighbours / Responses to Publicity

Five representations have been received stating the following concerns:

- Volume of HGVs coming through the village
- HGVs are a road and pedestrian safety issue in the village
- Stop HGVs in the village

## **6. Relevant Planning Policies and Considerations**

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### 6.1 Statutory Duty

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### 6.2 National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)  
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)  
National Design Guide (NDG) (2019)

### 6.3 North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (2016)

Policy 1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
Policy 3 – Landscape Character  
Policy 4 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity  
Policy 5 - Water Environment, Resources and Flood Risk Management  
Policy 6 – Development on Brownfield Land and Land Affected by Contamination  
Policy 8 - North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Principles  
Policy 9 - Sustainable Buildings  
Policy 22 – Delivering Economic Prosperity

Policy 23 – Distribution of New Jobs

Policy 25 – Rural Economic Development and Diversification

6.4 East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2: Submission Plan March 2021 (2011 – 2031)

Policy EN1 – Spatial Development Strategy

Policy EN13 – Design of Buildings/Extensions

Policy EN18 – Commercial Space to Support Economic Growth

6.5 Other Documents

Northamptonshire County Council – Local Highway Authority Standing Advice for Local Planning Authorities (2016)

Northamptonshire County Council – Local Highway Authority Parking Standards

Joint Planning Unit – Design Supplementary Planning Document (March 2009)

Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (February 2016)

## **7. Evaluation**

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Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, require that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The following considerations are relevant to the determination of this application:

- Principle of Development
- Design and visual impact
- Impact on neighbouring amenity
- The effect on highway safety and parking
- Flood Risk
- Ecology

### **7.1 Principle of Development**

7.1.1 The proposed development site is located within the Polebrook Airfield, an established employment site. The new building would be ancillary to existing operations on site and will allow the business to grow by addressing changing demands from its customers in line with the guidance contained within policies 22 (Delivering Economic Prosperity) and 25 (Rural Economic Development and Diversification) of the North Northants Joint Core Strategy (2016) which encourage the enhancement of existing employment sites and the regeneration of previously developed land.

7.1.2 The proposed development would utilise previously developed land, making efficient use of existing employment land whilst limiting the impact of on-site operations and the surrounding area. Emerging Policies in the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 continue this policy approach. Draft Policy EN19 allocates Polebrook Airfield as an existing rural employment area that should be safeguarded for employment use.

- 7.1.3 The proposed storage building would allow the business to operate more efficiently, providing more sheltered, secure space for storage of its customers' goods. As the area is currently used for external storage, the changes would not impact on existing site operations and would instead improve efficiencies.
- 7.1.4 The proposal is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework which sets out that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. The principle of development in this location is therefore considered acceptable subject to material planning considerations as assessed below.

## **7.2 Design and Visual Impact**

- 7.2.1 The NPPF and Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2016 expect developments to be designed sympathetically and in keeping in their surroundings, in terms of the detailed design and landscaping.
- 7.2.2 The proposed building would not be highly visible from any public viewpoints given its location to the rear of an existing large commercial property. By siting it adjacent to the main warehousing unit to the north, it ensures maximum efficiency of movement within the site and allows for continued and safe use of existing access routes.
- 7.2.3 The proposal is to construct a warehouse storage building measuring 70 metres in length by 20 metres in width. In terms of height the building would measure 5.2 metres to the eaves and 8.5 metres to the ridge. The building will be constructed from a dull aluminium frame with galvanised steel connections and a white/translucent PVC single skin roof. The translucent roof allows the transmission of natural light and helps to retain heat, reducing the need for electrical lighting or heating during daylight hours.
- 7.2.4 The design has been chosen such that the proposed building reflects the industrial nature of the surrounding buildings and their materials. Its scale and massing and proximity to existing large structures will limit its impact on the surrounding natural landscape. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have a significant detrimental impact upon the existing street scene by virtue of its location, design and appearance which is considered to complement the host building and not harm the general character of the area in accordance with the NPPF and Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2016.

## **7.3 Residential Amenity**

- 7.3.1 The NPPF and Policy 8 of the Joint Core Strategy (2016) seek to protect amenity of neighbouring users. The policy also seeks to ensure residential amenity is not harmed as a result of development; the NPPF within the core principles states that planning should *"always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings"*.
- 7.3.2 Given the location of the site and the complementary nature of the works, it is unlikely the proposal would have any significant impact on neighbouring



amenity due to its location within the open countryside. The closest dwellings are located over 600 metres away to the north (Bluestone Cottages) and it is considered that the proposal will have no significant impact upon their amenity.

- 7.3.3 The Council's Environmental Protection Team has not raised any concerns with regards to noise and the building would be used to support the existing operations occurring on site. Therefore this does not raise any concerns. They have however, due to the history of the site, requested that a condition be included that if, during development, contamination (including unexploded ordnance) is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the LPA) shall be carried out until a remediation strategy detailing how this contamination will be dealt with has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority.
- 7.3.4 Overall, the relationship with the neighbouring properties is considered to be acceptable, accordingly the proposal is considered to have no significant detrimental impact upon neighbouring amenity and is therefore in accordance with the NPPF and Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2016.

#### **7.4 Highway Safety and Parking**

- 7.4.1 Under this application the existing access arrangements and the on-site manoeuvring space remain unchanged.
- 7.4.2 The Parish Council and a number of residents have submitted concerns in regard to highway safety, mainly focusing on the fact that HGVs appear to drive through the village of Polebrook. It should be noted at this point that the Local Planning Authority have no evidence to suggest the number of HGVs passing through the village and whether these HGVs are in fact accessing the site. The road the runs through the village is a public highway that is accessible by all vehicles.
- 7.4.3 It is however considered that it is likely that there may be some HGVs that travel through the village despite existing instruction and signage to inform HGV drivers not to drive through the village. The applicant is not in control of drivers once they leave site. Without a legal restriction in place, there is nothing stopping drivers from disobeying these instructions.
- 7.4.4 The site has been used for HGV access for in excess of 40 years and due to the fact that the proposal is to simply cover an area of existing outdoor storage into indoor storage, there is no anticipated increase in traffic volumes as a result of the proposed development.
- 7.4.5 The Local Highway Authority confirm no objections to this application as the proposal does not demonstrate any intensification. They do make some observations in terms of access width and visibility however this is irrelevant to the determination of this application as there is no proposed change to the existing operations on site. There will be no increase in vehicle numbers and no intensification to the existing access arrangements. The Local Highway Authority acknowledge this by confirming no objections to the scheme.

7.4.6 The Parish Council and local residents concerns are noted and it is suggested that if HGV movements are severely affecting the village then data on vehicle movements should gathered and presented to the relevant department at the Local Highway Authority to escalate the issue with the view to enforceable HGV control in the village (such as a weight limit). This falls outside of the realms of planning and is not considered as part of this planning application.

## **7.5 Flooding**

7.5.1 The application site is in Flood Zone 1, which means it has a low probability of flooding. In terms of drainage, the proposal would result in no additional hard surfaces as the building would sit on existing hardstanding; there should therefore be no additional impact from surface water run-off. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable and complies with Policy 5 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2016.

## **7.6 Ecology**

7.6.1 Policy 4 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2016 requires all development to safeguard existing biodiversity. The proposal would have a neutral impact upon biodiversity, therefore the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy 4 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2016.

## **8. Other Matters**

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8.1 Equality Act 2010: It is not considered that the proposal raises any concerns in relation to the Equality Act (2010).

## **9. Conclusion / Planning Balance**

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9.1 In this instance the proposed erection of a warehouse building for the purposes of storage is not considered to cause significant harm that would outweigh the economic, social and environmental benefits of the proposal, therefore given the current policy position, the proposed development is considered to be compliant with relevant national and local planning policy as:

- Is of an appropriate scale and design
- 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 highways safety and provide sufficient off road parking provision
- Would be acceptable in terms of flood risk
- Would safeguard existing biodiversity
- There are no other material planning considerations which have a significant bearing on the determination of this application

## 10. Recommendation

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- 10.1 Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is therefore that Planning Permission be **GRANTED** subject to conditions.

## 11. Conditions

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1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: To ensure compliance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out strictly in accordance with following plans received by the Local Planning Authority on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022:

- Location Plan – 22-031 - 3000
- Proposed Site Plan – 22-031 - 3001
- Proposed Warehouse Plan & Elevations – 22-031 - 3002

Reason: In order to clarify the terms of this consent and to ensure that the development is carried out as permitted.

3. The development hereby permitted shall be constructed in accordance with the materials as specified within the Application Form submitted as part of this application for planning permission (received 07.11.2022) unless submitted to and agreed otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2016.

4. If, during development, contamination (including unexploded ordnance) is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the LPA) shall be carried out until a remediation strategy detailing how this contamination will be dealt with has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

5. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order 2014, (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), the building hereby permitted shall be used for the following uses:

- Storage of commercial, retail and agricultural goods associated with Airfield Warehousing Ltd.

The building shall not be used for any other purpose outside of the permitted uses listed above, including any other use within the same use class (B8).

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity, highway safety and because this application has been considered on the basis of the information submitted by the applicant for the current building uses and not for any other.

## 12. **Informatives**

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1. The applicant is reminded that, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to (amongst other things): deliberately capture, disturb, injure or kill great crested newts; damage or destroy a breeding or resting place; deliberately obstruct access to a resting or sheltering place. Planning approval for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under these acts. Should great crested newts be found at any stages of the development works, then all works should cease, and Natural England should be contacted for advice.