

Design and Access Statement

The erection of a new commercial building for B1 (C) use at Dog Kennel Farm, Hitchin

1. Introduction

1.1. This statement sets out the design principles that have been applied to the proposed development at Dog Kennel Farm, Charlton Road, Hitchin.

2. The site

2.1. Dog Kennel Farm is located to the southwest of Hitchin and comprises a range of former agricultural buildings of various construction types arranged in an 'H' shape. The buildings are used for a variety of commercial uses including general industrial, light industrial and storage. The wider site is owned in part by the applicant and extends to approximately 72 acres of farm land used for the grazing of livestock.

3. The situation

3.1. The existing buildings shown on plan referenced NGS/AT/02 comprise:

a. 2 x Steel portal framed barn enclosed with part concrete wall part tin cladding under a corrugated sheet roof.
b. Timber framed barn with timber walling under a corrugated sheet roof.
c. Open fronted timber framed barn with timber walling under a corrugated sheet roof with a later prefabricated extension.
d. Range of brick under slate roof buildings.

3.2. Forming part of the site is a large area of hardstanding providing low key storage and turning area. A hardstanding track loops around the perimeter of the buildings providing access.

3.3. The site is bordered by Charlton Road to the east and the A505 to the west with agricultural land on all remaining sides.

4. The development

4.1. There is the need to accommodate the expansion of an existing tenants business at the site. The development therefore seeks permission to construct a new commercial building to accommodate that need. The development will utilise an area of brownfield land used for low key outside storage thereby minimising the impact on the surrounding area.



4.2. The development will involve the erection of a new commercial buildings to provide two new commercial units for B1 (C) Light Industrial use. The building will comprise a steel portal frame enclosed by composite panel walling under a composite panel roof with integrated skylights. Each unit will have a roller shutter door and a personal door.

4.3. We consider the proposed development would result in the immediate enhancement of the site, particularly in terms of its visual impact and a more sustainable opportunity for a greater variety of business. It will also tidy up an area of the site which is currently used for external storage in conjunction with the existing commercial units.

4.4. Parking and turning will be provided and if it is considered necessary a landscaping condition may be dealt with by way of a condition.

5. Transport and Highways

5.1. Parking and turning areas for cars and cycle parking will be provided which will not preclude disabled access. Vehicular access to the site will be via the existing access off Charlton Road and the development allows for the upgrading of the existing surface which may be dealt with by way of a condition.

6. Noise and Impacts of the development

6.1. The nearest dwelling is located to the north of the site and is owned by the applicant. In view of the other activities taking place on the wider site we consider that the development will not result in issues with noise but instead see a reduction in noise since operations will be contained within the building.

7. Contamination risks on the site

7.1. No investigation other than oral enquiries and a visual appraisal has been made with regard to any potential pollution or contamination. As far as we are aware there is no contamination risk at the site.

8. Flood risk

8.1. The site is not considered to be at risk from flooding and is within Flood Zone 1. No flood risk assessment is required.

9. Location and siting

9.1. We consider the location and siting of the development to be well suited, being close to Hitchin.

10. Policy

10.1. We have considered the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular paragraph 28, which promotes a strong rural economy, sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprises through, inter alia, well-designed new ones.



10.2. The proposed development would result in a significant improvement of the site, particularly in terms of its visual impact and a more sustainable opportunity for a greater variety of businesses. The redevelopment would remove the existing buildings which we consider are dated and in need of improvement. The new buildings would be well designed, capable of supporting a variety of businesses and much more sensitive to the rural nature of its location thereby meeting the requirements of paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

10.3. We have also considered the Local Plan 2011-2031 Proposed Submission Draft. The site is located in the Green Belt. Policy SP5 permits development proposals where they would not result in inappropriate development. We have considered this point and submit that a well-designed building such as that being proposed is less inappropriate/harmful than the continued use of the area for outside storage and therefore should benefit from support of local policy.

11. Conclusion

11.1. The proposed development is in accordance with the Core Strategy and benefits from the supported position within the NPPF.

11.2. The development will provide an essential rural employment location with excellent transport links.

11.3. The development is small scale and appropriate for the rural location, being sensitive the surrounding areas and character. Any perceived impacts are mitigated by the enhancement of the site that will come with the development. Further mitigation may be dealt with through a landscaping condition.