
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 April 2026

by **N Bowden BA(Hons) Dip TP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 May 2026

Appeal Ref: 6005351

Hitchin Storage Centre, Cadwell Lane, Hitchin SG4 0SA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr I Turness against the decision of North Herts Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/03147/FP.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a second layer of storage units (17no. additional units) for self-storage above existing storage units.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council gave the site address as “land adjacent to Unit 3 on the west side of Cadwell Lane” on its decision notice. I have used the site address given on the application form in the banner heading above.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area and upon the amenity of the users of the adjacent recreation ground.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is at the edge of a commercial area which extends broadly towards the north and east of the site. This is formed of a range of commercial and industrial uses in various different types of buildings and yards. The appeal site is not dissimilar to these in terms of its overall style and appearance, being formed of an area of hardstanding with shipping containers, finished in green, being positioned on the land.
5. However, the site is in a prominent location, being set immediately to the north of Cadwell Lane Playing Field recreation ground. The site is set at a slightly lower level and in direct line of site as Cadwell Lane curves around to the east. As a consequence of this, it is in a highly visible position when viewed from the nearby residential areas to the south. This visibility makes the site significantly starker and more noticeable than its other commercial neighbours.
6. The creation of the double height shipping containers would emphasise this. The containers presently on the site are visible in fleeting views but this is ameliorated by the choice of a muted dark green colour and the screening on the boundary with Cadwell Lane Playing Field. However, the increase in height would render the

containers notably more visible, despite the muted colour tone. Their industrial form and appearance would not be offset by this choice of colour.

7. Fundamentally, it is this juxtaposition of the distinctly industrial containers and the visibility from the residential areas that is of concern here. I do accept that the existing hedge would provide some screening and this works effectively with the existing arrangement, however it is apparent this would not be the case with double stacked containers. As such I conclude that the proposal would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area when viewed from the nearby residential areas to the south of the site. This conflicts with policies SP9 and D1 of the North Herts Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (NHLP) insofar as it would not respond positively to the site's local context.
8. The containers would be visible from Cadwell Lane Playing Field. However, equally, other parts of the nearby commercial area are also visible from this recreation ground. Users of the recreation ground would be under no illusion that it is near to a commercial area. Accordingly, I am unable to conclude that the addition of the shipping containers would adversely affect the amenity of those using it. Indeed, I note that the Council has cited policy D3 of the NHLP and this is concerned with living conditions. As Cadwell Lane Playing Field is not within a residential use or otherwise used for habitation, I am unable to find any conflict with this policy of the Plan.

Conclusion

9. The proposal would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area due to its prominence and visibility from the nearby residential area. It therefore conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, for the reasons given above, the appeal should be dismissed.

N Bowden

INSPECTOR