

Former Car Showroom and Workshop, Duddery Hill, Haverhill

Redevelopment to Create Class B8 (Self-Storage) Facility

(part retrospective)

Planning Statement including

Statement of Community Involvement

Prepared by Jon Dingle Ltd

October 2023

Contents

Section	Paragraphs	Pages
1. Introduction	1.1 – 1.7	1 – 2
2. Site and Surroundings	2.1 – 2.11	3 – 11
3. Pre-Application Consultation	3.1 – 3.4	12
4. Proposals	4.1 – 4.5	13 – 14
5. Development Plan and Guidance	5.1 – 5.6	15 – 17
6. Planning Considerations	6.1 – 6.32	18 – 24
7. Conclusions	7.1 – 7.9	25 – 26

1. Introduction

1.1. This Statement has been prepared on behalf of Cinch Self-Storage in support of a planning application for the demolition (retrospective) of the former car showroom and service/MOT/repair centre located on Duddery Hill, Haverhill and construction of a new Class B8 (self-storage) facility.

1.2. The proposed development can be described as:

Demolition of existing building (retrospective) and construction of new building arranged over ground, first and second floors for Class B8 (self-storage) purposes with associated vehicular and cycle parking and landscaping.

1.3. The application is submitted following the grant of planning permission (DC/22/1719/FUL) on 21st December 2022 for:

Change of use from car sales (sui generis) to self-storage (B8); a. extensions and alterations to existing building; b. vehicular and cycle parking and landscaping

1.4. The intention had been to retain and extend the structure of the existing building. The structure was found to be inadequate and was demolished in October 2022. A new planning application is therefore required.

1.5. The application now submitted seeks approval to create a building identical to that approved in planning permission (DC/22/1719/FUL) save for the proposed minor amendments to the elevations and roof form proposed in

the now withdrawn application (DC/23/1542/VAR), which are included in this planning application.

1.6. This Statement addresses the land use and planning policy matters raised by the planning application proposals.

1.7. This Statement is set out under the following sections,

Section 2 describes the site and its surroundings, planning designations and planning history

Section 3 details the pre-application consultation

Section 4 sets out the proposals

Section 5 sets out the relevant development plan policies and guidance

Section 6 considers the planning issues

Section 7 provides a conclusion

2. Site and Surroundings, Planning Designations and Planning History

- 2.1. The application site comprises the now demolished former car showroom and service/MOT/repair centre on Duddery Hill and is edged red in Figure 1 below. The site area is 4,105sqm.

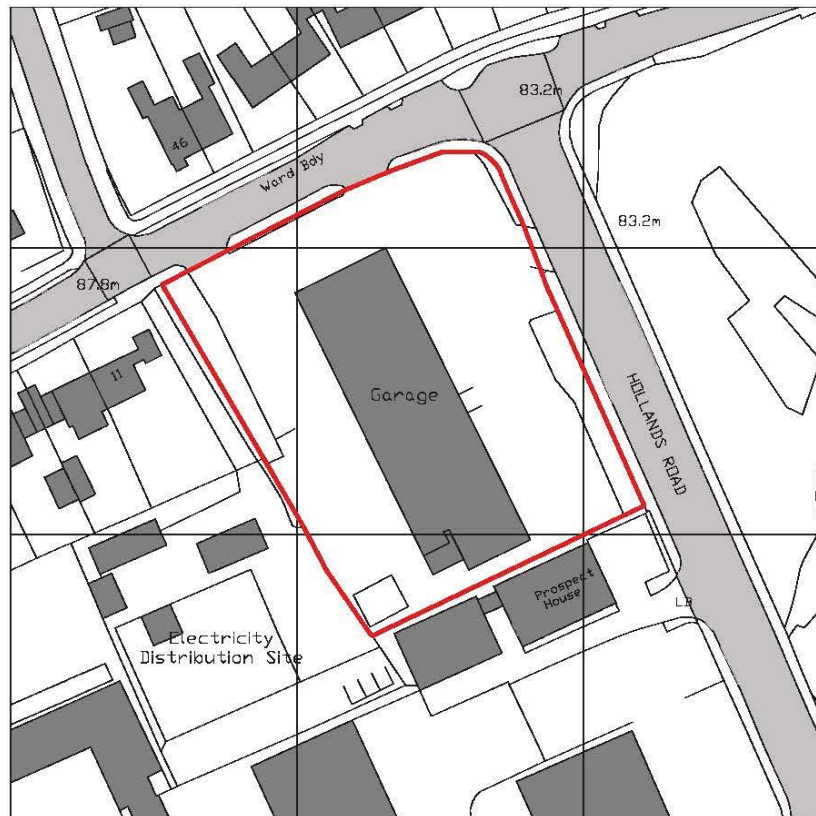


Figure 1 - Location Plan

- 2.2. The site lies to the south of the Duddery Hill and Hollands Road roundabout, opposite a row of residential properties to the north and a large area of commercial properties to the south. Residential properties are also located on Duddery Hill to the west of the site. The large area of land to the east on the opposite side of Hollands Road is vacant. The site is currently accessed

from Duddery Hill and Hollands Road, with two points of access on Duddery Hill and one from Hollands Road.

- 2.3. The site is currently vacant but, prior to its demolition, accommodated a former car showroom and a servicing, MOT and repair centre. Most of the site is given over to hardstanding, which was used for the display and parking of vehicles. The use ceased in May 2020, but the site is pictured in use in Figures 2 and 3 below. The building was demolished without permission in October 2023.



Figure 2 - View across site in active use from Duddery Hill c2020 (Source: Google)



Figure 3 - View across site in active use from roundabout c2020 (Source: Google)

2.4. The site had become dilapidated and was an unattractive feature in the local area. The site and its surroundings as they stood in January 2022 are pictured in Figures 4 – 12 below.



Figure 4 – View towards the site from junction of Duddery Hill and Hollands Road



Figure 5 - View from Duddery Hill looking east across the site



Figure 6 - View looking north along Hollands Road towards Duddery Hill junction



Figure 7 - Commercial properties to south-east of site on Hollands Road



Figure 8 - View west along Duddery Hill from junction with Hollands Road



Figure 9 - View of site frontage from Duddery Hill



Figure 10 - View of front of site looking north-east



Figure 11 - View from rear of site towards Duddery Hill



Figure 12 - View of rear of site looking south-east towards commercial buildings

Planning Designations

2.5. The site falls within a General Employment Area and is adjacent to the Housing Settlement boundary, the Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan area and a Further Education Facility site allocation. An extract from the Proposals Map (February 2015) is shown below in Figure 13.

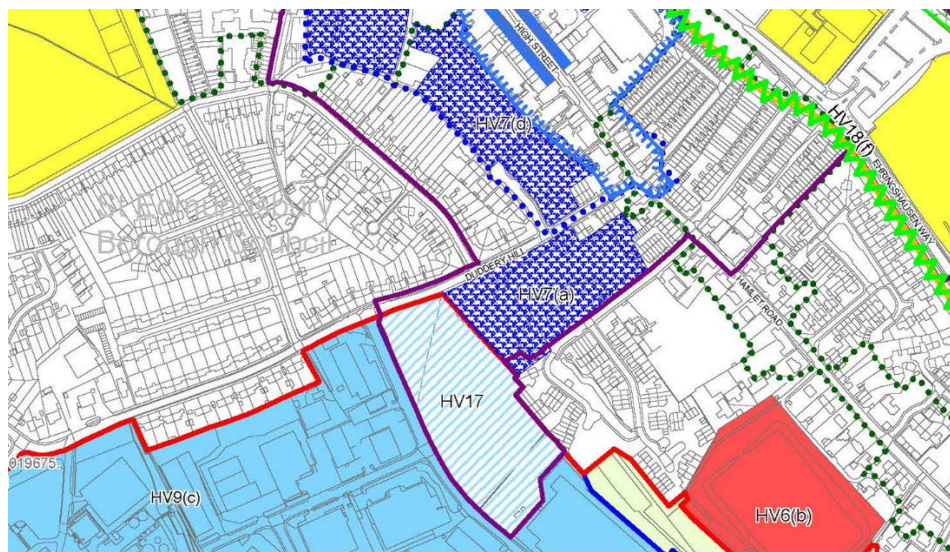


Figure 13 – Haverhill Town Centre Inset 4 Proposals Map Feb 2015 extract

2.6. The General Employment Area in which the site falls is the Haverhill Industrial Estate.

2.7. The site is not located within or adjacent to conservation areas. The building on site is not statutorily or locally listed and the site does not fall within the curtilage or setting of any heritage assets.

2.8. The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and is at very low risk of flooding from rivers. The Environment Agency notes that the site is at medium risk from surface water flooding.

Planning History

- 2.9. There is one decision relating to this site that is significant. On 21st December 2022, the Council granted planning permission for:

Change of use from car sales (sui generis) to self storage (B8); a. extensions and alterations to existing building; b. vehicular and cycle parking and landscaping.

- 2.10. The permission required the retention, extension and alteration of the existing building and its change of use to self-storage purposes (Class B8).

- 2.11. Following further investigations, the building's structure was found to be unfit for purpose and, in October 2023, the building was demolished. This is the reason for the new planning application.

3. Pre-Application Consultation

- 3.1. Prior to the submission of planning application (DC/22/1719/FUL), Council officers, local councillors and neighbours have been consulted on the proposals.
- 3.2. Two pre-application meetings, one virtual and one on site, have been held with a Council officer. Feedback on the initial proposals resulted in their evolution to take onboard the points raised. The updated pre-application scheme received positive feedback. This scheme forms the basis of the planning application.
- 3.3. Following the discussions with the Council officer, local councillors and residential neighbours were contacted to make them aware of the proposals and to see if a meeting or discussions about them would be beneficial.
- 3.4. Feedback was received from two parties asking for clarification and more information on certain aspects of the proposals. Responses were provided to the questions raised.

4. Proposals

- 4.1. The proposals are described in detail in the Design and Access Statement prepared by Roger Mears Architects, which forms part of the planning application submission.
- 4.2. In summary, the application proposals involve the:
- i. Demolition of the existing building (retrospective).
 - ii. Construction of new building arranged over ground, first and second floors. The first and second floors would be constructed as mezzanines. The building would be used for Class B8 (self-storage) purposes.
 - iii. Closure of the eastern vehicular access / egress point on Duddery Hill, and retention of the western access / egress point on Duddery Hill and the single access / egress point on Hollands Road.
 - iv. Creation of cycle and vehicle parking and a servicing area.
 - v. Landscaping to the boundaries of the site.
- 4.3. The floorspace schedule submitted in support of the application provides a breakdown of the existing and proposed space by floor, use and type of floor construction.

- 4.4. As the schedule shows, the ground floor will be a permanent, concrete floor, while the first and second floors will be mezzanines. The proposals have been assessed on the basis that all the space within the building will be created so that the potential impacts of the scheme can be properly assessed.
- 4.5. The self-storage space will be subdivided into a great number of separate units of varying sizes. Business and domestic customers would be able to expand or contract the amount of space they utilise as their needs change. The space is extremely flexible and is able to cater for the changing needs of small and medium-sized enterprises.

5. Development Plan and Guidance

- 5.1. Section 38 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 70 of the Town & Country Planning Act requires decision makers to have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations.

Development Plan

- 5.2. The development plan comprises the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy (December 2010), the Haverhill Vision 2031 (September 2014) and the Joint Development Management Policies Document (February 2015).
- 5.3. The following policies are relevant to the pre-application proposals:

St Edmundsbury Core Strategy

Policy CS1 – St Edmundsbury Spatial Strategy

Policy CS2 – Sustainable Development

Policy CS3 – Design and Local Distinctiveness

Policy CS7 – Sustainable Transport

Policy CS9 – Employment and the Local Economy

Policy CS12 – Haverhill Strategic Growth

Policy CS14 – Community Infrastructure Capacity and Tariffs

Haverhill Vision 2031

Policy HV1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy HV9 – General Employment Areas – Haverhill

Joint Development Management Policies Document (JDMPD)

Policy DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy DM2 – Creating Places – Development Principles

Policy DM6 – Flooding and Sustainable Drainage

Policy DM7 – Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy DM8 – Low and Zero Carbon Energy Generation

Policy DM30 – Appropriate Employment Uses and Protection

Policy DM45 – Transport Assessments and Travel Plans

Policy DM46 – Parking Standards

Guidance

- 5.4. The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) are material considerations.

- 5.5. The NPPF notes that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives – economic, social and environmental¹. These objectives support the creation of a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and making effective use of land.

¹ Paragraph 7, page 5

- 5.6. The NPPF confirms that *“significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development”*².

² Paragraph 81, page 23

6. Planning Considerations

6.1. In the light of development plan policy and material considerations, the proposals can be considered as follows.

6.2. The application proposals are considered to raise the following issues:

- i. Land Use
- ii. Height, Mass, Bulk and Design
- iii. Amenity
- iv. Highways and Transport
- v. Sustainability

Land Use

6.3. The site falls within the Haverhill Industrial Estate, one of the General Employment Areas, and Policy HV9 is relevant. The policy confirms that within the Estate, Use Classes B1, B2 and B8 will be permitted if space requirements, parking, access, travel and general environmental considerations can be met.

6.4. The replacement of the sui generis (car showroom and service, MOT and repair workshop) with Class B8 (self-storage) is therefore acceptable in principle. The effects of the proposed use on the site and its surroundings must be assessed in order to satisfy Policy HV9; this assessment is provided in the rest of this section and in the various reports prepared in support of the planning application.

Height, Mass, Bulk and Design

- 6.5. The proposals involve an increase in the height, mass and bulk of the building on this site. At present, the large site is under-utilised, with a one and a half storey tall building occupying only a quarter of the total site area; when in use, the remainder of the site was dominated by cars parked either for display purposes or waiting for work to be undertaken or collection by customers. This employment-designated site is not, therefore, currently being used sustainably or efficiently.
- 6.6. Having been vacant for more than two years, the site has become unsightly. The demolished building was utilitarian in appearance, albeit with some animation; it had fallen into disrepair.
- 6.7. The site itself is dominated by hardstanding with little, if any, landscaping to soften its appearance. There is, therefore, significant scope to make better use of the site and to create a building and a setting that makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the local area.
- 6.8. The proposed scheme seeks to make the best use of the site by increasing the size of the building. The footprint would be extended in part towards Hollands Road and in part towards the electricity sub-station and No. 11 Duddery Hill. There would be no extension towards Duddery Hill.
- 6.9. The height of the building would be raised so that it was comparable to the residences on the opposite side of Duddery Hill. Due to the slope, the building would be lower than the residences to the west – Nos. 11 and 13. In this part of Duddery Hill, there would be nothing at all unusual, therefore, about the building's height.

- 6.10. Not only would the height of the building be commensurate with its neighbours to the west and north, it would relate well to its commercial neighbours to the south and beyond; the Haverhill Industrial Estate is characterised by large, commercial buildings of similar footprints and heights.
- 6.11. The mass of the building has been broken down using set-backs and a variety of materials. The plinth upon which part of the building sits is a distinctive element along the Holland Road façade; glazing is prominent on the ground floor facing Duddery Hill; the upper floors are broken through the use of different materials and colours.
- 6.12. The long side elevations are broken down in several ways. Along the relatively discrete west elevation, the elevation is broken down using different materials to make the ground and first floors distinct from the second floor and roof, the second floor is set-back from the floors below, while obscurely glazed windows add further interest and glazing continues from Duddery Hill onto this elevation.
- 6.13. On Hollands Road, the building is broken down by a substantial set-back away from the roundabout which, together with differing elevational treatments gives the appearance of two distinct, but complimentary elements. The lower floors are treated differently to the top floor which is also set-back. Horizontal banding, doors and obscure windows add further visual interest and break up the elevations.
- 6.14. While it is a single building, there are three elements and each of these is given its own shallow pitched roof. This treatment adds interest and helps break down the bulk of the building.

- 6.15. While the footprint of the building has increased, there is plenty of space on the site for parking, vehicular manoeuvring and landscaping along the Duddery Hill and Hollands Road frontages, and between the building and the residential neighbour to the west. The landscaping in these key locations will enhance the appearance of the site and the contribution it makes to the local area.
- 6.16. Therefore, while the proposals represent an increase in the size of the building on the site, the lateral and vertical extensions have been designed to respond appropriately to the local context. In addition, the design breaks down the building's mass and creates visual interest.
- 6.17. The proposals will make best use of this site in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and the policies that promote it, and will do so in a way that enhances the appearance of the building, the site as a whole, and the wider context.

Amenity

- 6.18. The proposed building has been designed with the amenity of nearby residents in mind. The building will not be extended towards the site's frontage with Duddery Hill, but it will be partially extended to the west towards the sub-station and No. 11 Duddery Hill. However, this extension has been designed to end before the houses at Nos. 11 and 13 begin so that the two structures will not run parallel to one another. There will be 10.5 metres between the edge of the extension and the boundary with No. 11.

- 6.19. The building would increase in height but only to a level commensurate with the residential properties on the opposite side of Duddery Hill; a height that, by definition, is in keeping on this road. In addition, the proposed building would be 29.5 metres away from the residences on the opposite side of Duddery Hill.
- 6.20. The self-storage building would have windows with active uses behind them only at the north-western corner where the ground floor reception and associated offices are located. There will be no opportunities for overlooking from the rest of the building.
- 6.21. The proposed design and separation distances are such that there is no likelihood that there will be adverse impacts in respect of sunlight and daylight received by neighbours, nor in terms of overlooking or sense of enclosure.
- 6.22. As the Transport Statement notes, the proposed scheme will attract a low level of vehicular activity. Customers will arrive at the site via Hollands Road, park next to the building to use one of the two entry points, unload their goods and visit their storage unit, or visit their storage unit and load goods into their vehicle. They will leave the site via the Duddery Hill exit.
- 6.23. There should be a substantial reduction in the amount of activity at the site. There is no reason to believe that residential amenity would be harmed as a result of the use of the proposed self-storage facility.
- 6.24. The proposals will not, therefore, give rise to unacceptable impacts on amenity.

Highways and Transport

- 6.25. The highway, transport and parking issues raised by the proposed scheme are assessed in detail in the Transport Statement prepared by TTP.
- 6.26. In accordance with Policy DM45 of the JDMPD, a Transport Statement has been prepared that is appropriate to the scale of the development and the likely extent of transport implications, and a Travel Plan has been prepared and submitted in support of the application. Both documents demonstrate that the proposals will have no detrimental travel impacts on the highway network.
- 6.27. Policy DM46 (Parking Standards) notes that the Council will seek to reduce over-reliance on the car and promote more sustainable forms of transport. All proposals for redevelopment, including changes of use, will be required to provide appropriately design and sited car and cycle parking.
- 6.28. As the Transport Statement sets out, using data from the survey of a similar Cinch Self-Storage store and the TRICS database, the proposed level of parking will cater for the maximum demand for spaces. As Cinch are willing to accept a planning condition restricting the use of the Class B8 to self-storage only, this level of car parking is entirely appropriate.
- 6.29. Cycle parking has been provided at a level commensurate with the demand. Storage customers do not use bicycles to move their goods to and from the store, but staff and new customers may do and cycle parking has been provided to meet these needs.

Sustainability

- 6.30. Policy DM7 (Sustainable Design and Construction) confirms that all new non-residential developments over 1,000 sqm will be required to achieve the BREEAM Excellent standard or equivalent unless it can be demonstrated that it is not possible to meet one or more of the mandatory credits for an Excellent rating.

- 6.31. A BREEAM pre-assessment has been undertaken which concludes that the scheme will be able to reach a Very Good rating, but it is not possible to reach Excellent. The reasons for this are set out in the report prepared by QuinnRoss.

- 6.32. Policy DM7 also requires new developments to set out how the proposed scheme will meet the energy standards set out in the national Building Regulations. The Energy Statement prepared by QuinnRoss confirms how the scheme will meet these standards.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1. This Statement has been prepared on behalf of Cinch Self-Storage in support of a planning application for the demolition (retrospective) of the former car showroom and service, MOT and repair centre on Duddery Hill, Haverhill and its replacement with a self-storage building arranged over ground, first and second floors.
- 7.2. The site has been vacant since May 2020 when Vauxhall closed its car showroom building and associated workshop. Most of the site is given over to hardstanding, which was used for the display and parking of vehicles. The site had become dilapidated and was an unattractive feature in the local area. The existing building was demolished in October 2023.
- 7.3. The site falls in a General Employment Area, known as the Haverhill Industrial Estate. At present, it is under-utilised.
- 7.4. The principle of self-storage on this site is considered acceptable. The size and configuration of the building has been carefully considered and is considered to respond appropriately to its surroundings. The proposals have been designed to make best use of the site while respecting the character of the local area and the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 7.5. The proposed building's design has been carefully considered; the mass has been broken down and visual interest created on each elevation. The addition of landscaping to the site further enhances the visual quality of the application proposals.

- 7.6. The proposed building would be no higher than the nearby houses. With significant separation distances between the proposal and surrounding properties, there is no reason for harm to be caused to residential amenity.
- 7.7. With traffic movements to and from the site low and spread throughout the day, the proposed self-storage facility will be a quiet and secure neighbour to the residents and commercial properties in the area.
- 7.8. The application now submitted seeks approval to create a building identical to that approved in planning permission (DC/22/1719/FUL) save for the proposed minor amendments to the elevations and roof form proposed in the now withdrawn application (DC/23/1542/VAR), which are included in this planning application.
- 7.9. The application proposals seek to make the best use of this currently under-utilised, employment-designated site. The proposals are of high design quality and would not cause harm to amenity. The proposals are, therefore, sustainable development and are supported by the NPPF and development plan.