

Site: 27 Rookwood Way, Suffolk, Haverhill, CB9 8PB

Proposal: Erection of Storage Building

Planning Statement

Applicant: Mr Newton LMK Thermosafe Ltd.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This application seeks detailed planning permission for provision of the erection of a storage building. The building is proposed to provide additional storage for LMK Thermosafe Ltd at their Rookwood Way factory to store adequate increased volumes of raw materials and with the future planned introduction of a robot machine, this can only be accommodated by removing a portion of the storage racking which needs to be replaced. The company also has a factory at Moonhall Business Park. This factory has been at capacity for many years.

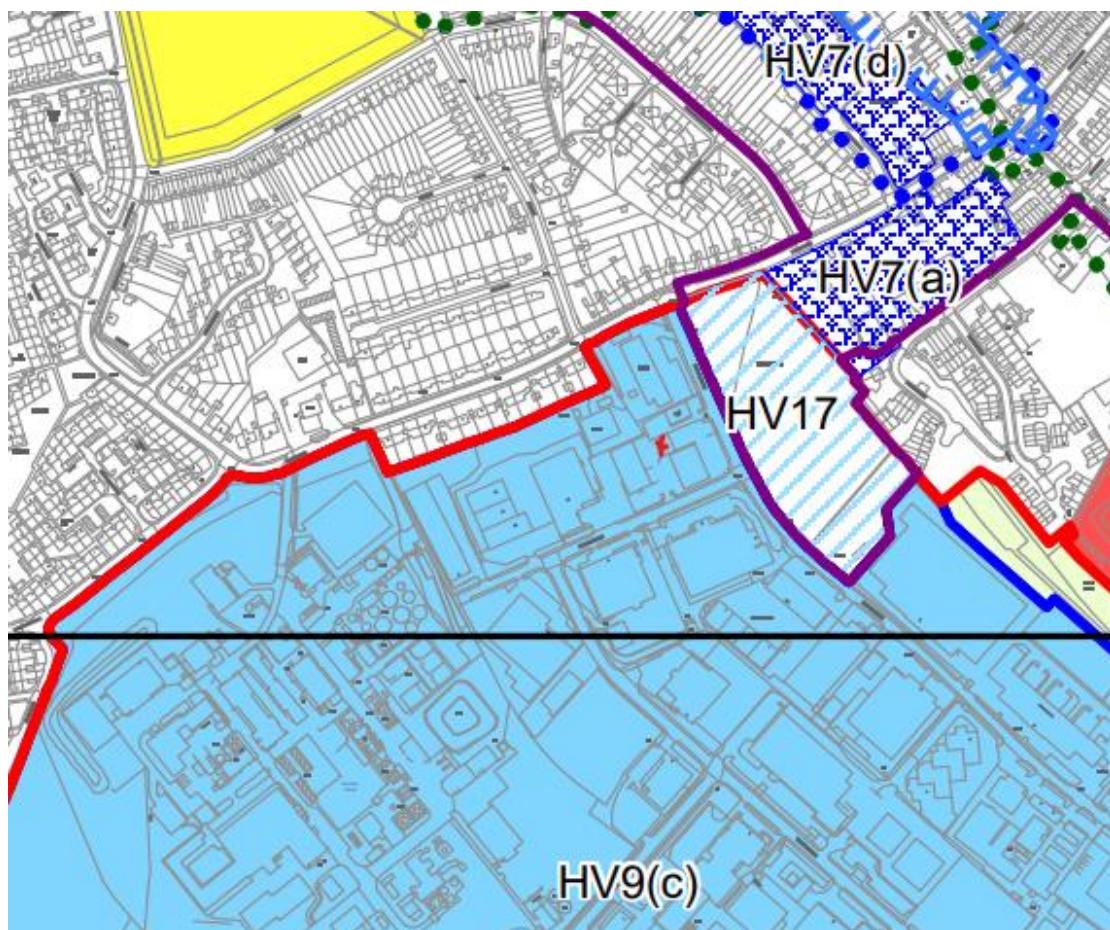
1.2 The site for the proposed building is part of the yard area to 27 Rookwood Way. It is proposed to locate the building in the northeast corner of the application site. It is an entirely hard surfaced area. The total site area is 1,938 square metres.

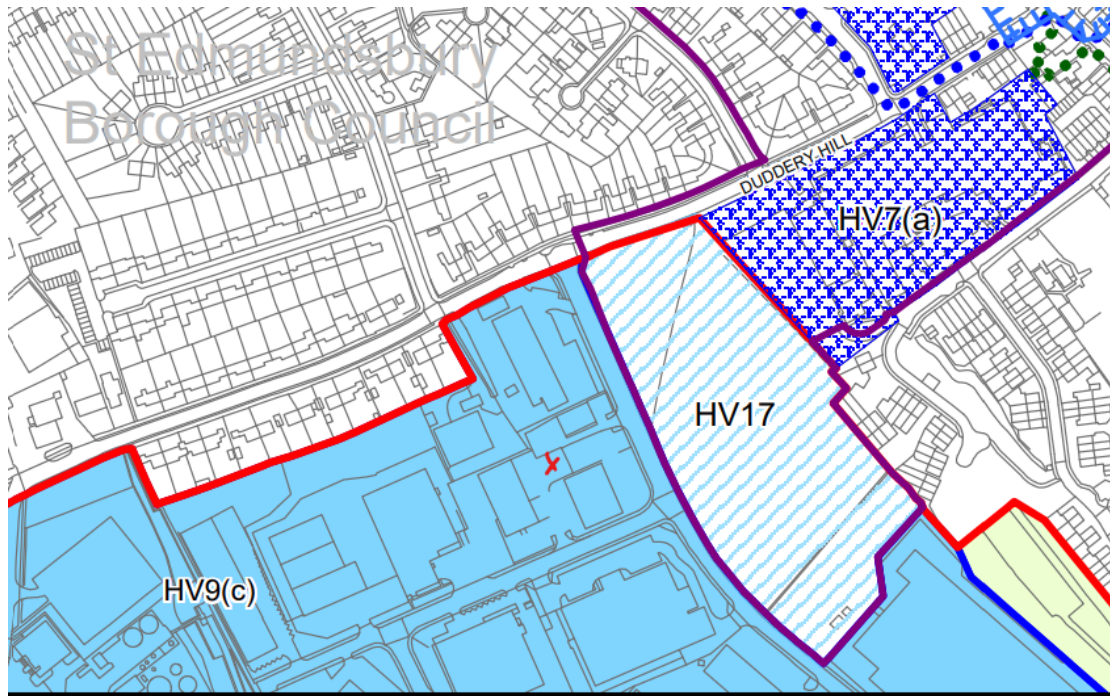
1.3 The company was incorporated in 1986. The company produces, amongst other products commercial Induction Heaters, heaters, temperature controllers and heating jackets, distributing to 33 countries worldwide. The proposal will result in an additional 3 people being employed the Rookwood Way site.

1.4 To sustain the future of the company and facilitate the expansion of the business it is essential at this time for the Authority to allow for the erection of the proposed storage building. The alternative is to relocate the entire business to a more affordable premises, away from Haverhill and the District. The proposed building is very simple in design and form with the external fenestration of core composite

panelling and roof cladding. The building will be partly screened from the highway by the modern two storey Powerdrive Systems engineering merchant building which is accessed from Hollands Road.

1.5 The St Edmundsbury Local Plan 2015, Inset Map 3 for Haverhill, shows the site situated in a General and Rural Employment Area. Policy HV9 in the Haverhill Vision 2031 Local Plan. The Policy designates the industrial estate as a General Employment Area which permits uses B1, B2 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. Please see Proposals Map Inset 3 and 4 below. The application site is marked with a red cross.





1.6 The Haverhill Vision 2031 states that *“existing vacant land and premises within the defined employment areas will continue to provide a meaningful range of sites for a variety of employment uses”*. Reference Paragraph 6.10. Fundamentally, expanding an existing business with additional floorspace within an industrial area, is an appropriate location for this type of development. The development is sustainable and located in a suitable location.

2.0 The Site and Surrounding Area.

2.1 The property is situated on the main spine road of Rookwood Way serving the majority of the units within the established industrial area in the south west corner of the town. Rookwood Way is part of the early and established commercial areas of Haverhill. The site includes a number of modern redeveloped and the older established industrial and warehouse buildings.

2.2 The site is 0.19 hectares in size, situated some 800 metres from the A1017 with access to Cambridge. The company premises are at the northern portion of the primary employment area of Haverhill. The site is abutted by the Powerdrive Systems building to the south east, a Gym / Health and Fitness building to the north and to the west Smithfield House an older office, industrial and warehouse building.

2.3 The boundary of the site is defined by a horizontal rail and a low brick wall. The surface treatment is concrete. Views into the site are partly limited by the Powerdrive systems premises and the associated containers.

3.0 The Proposal

3.1 As set out in the introduction section of this Statement, the business needs to increase the warehouse accommodation to expand the business and improve efficiency with new robotic equipment. Within the main building, the internal storage racking system will be reduced in size, and this portion of the storage area will be relocated to the proposed storage building. The company also has a factory at Moonhall Business Park, but this is currently at capacity, and has been since 2011.

3.2 The proposed building is a modern but simple design, which is proposed to be located in the north east corner of the existing concrete yard area. It has a footprint of 13.5 metres by 15 metres and a height to eaves of 6 metres and to the ridge 7.43 metres. The footprint is 203 square metres. The building has a slack pitch roof. Six roof lights are proposed. On the west elevation is proposed a roller shutter door and a single doorway. The external fenestration is of core composite panelling and roof cladding.

3.3 The building will be partly screened from the highway by the modern two storey Powerdrive Systems engineering merchant building and the existing 2 containers which fall outside the application site.

4.0 The legal framework

4.1 The application is required to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan. The legal position is set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which requires *“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”*.

4.2 The above has been a fundamental tenet of the planning system for many years.

5.0 Development Plan and Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

5.1 The Development Plan for West Suffolk Council includes the adopted Core Strategy, Haverhill Vision 2031 (HV) and Joint Development Management Policies Document. (JDMP). As mentioned in the Introduction the site falls within an area of employment. Policy HV9 of the Haverhill Vision 2031 Local Plan is relevant and this designates the industrial estate as a General Employment Area which permits uses B1, B2 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. Also, the Core Strategy Policy CS3 - Design and Local Distinctiveness

5.2 Relevant Policies in the Joint Development Management Policies document, include Policy DM1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development Policy, DM2 Creating Places Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness and Policy DM46 Parking Standards.

5.3 The Government's Planning Policy within the NPPF, is to achieve sustainable development with three overarching objectives, creating firstly a strong, responsive and competitive economy. The second is a social objective to support the communities and an environmental objective. In addition, local circumstances should be taken into account to reflect character, needs and opportunities for each area. Reference paragraph 8 of the NPPF. The Framework advises that the Planning System should do everything to support sustainable economic growth. Further in the chapter 'Building a strong, competitive economy', the Government sets out very positive statements that decisions should *"help create the conditions in which businesses can invest,*

expand and adapt. 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”. Paragraph 85. Further planning decisions inter alia “should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for”:

“c) the expansion or modernisation of other industries of local, regional or national importance to support economic growth and resilience”. Paragraph 87.

5.4 Policy DM1 of the JDMP, like the NPPF 2024, supports the Presumption in Favour of sustainable development. The Policy also refers back to the legal position is set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Policy DM1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Councils will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Note: This policy has been published by the Planning Inspectorate and is required to be included in all Local Plans.

5.5 Policy DM 2 Creating Places – Development Principles and Local Distinctiveness and the supporting Local Plan text, requires there to be an integration of new buildings into their surrounding area, and of an acceptable scale and appearance. It recognises

that development should be functional.

5.6 As set out above, the Local Plan Policy does address this specific industrial site. The then St Edmundsbury Borough Council Local Plan Policies Map February 2015, identified within Inset 3 Haverhill of the Proposal Map as a General and Rural Employment Area. Policy HAV4 of the St Edmundsbury Local Plan was replaced by Policy HV9 within the HV Local Plan. This designates the site and estate as a General Employment Area. The HV, when identifying employment sites states that the Council will *“help to increase the range of jobs by protecting existing sites as well as providing sites which can attract research and technology-based industries together with sites for the support industries needed to maintain the growing economy of the Cambridge sub-region, in accordance with the requirements of Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy”*. Reference Para 6.9 of the HV A sets out a wide- and far-reaching statement in support of increasing employment opportunities in the Council area. The supporting text to HV Policy HV9 states *“Existing vacant land and premises within the defined employment areas will continue to provide a meaningful range of sites for a variety of employment uses”*. Reference Para 6.10 of the HV.

5.7 Policy HV9 is set out below.

POLICY HV9: GENERAL EMPLOYMENT AREAS – HAVERHILL

The following areas are designated as general employment areas.

		Use Class
a	Bumpstead Road	(B1, B2, B8)
b	Falconer Road	(B1, B2, B8)
c	Haverhill Industrial Estate	(B1, B2, B8)
d	Homefield Road	(B1, B8)
e	Stour Valley Road	(B1, B2, B8)

Proposals for industrial and business development within the use classes identified for each of the General Employment Areas in the table above will be permitted providing that space requirements, parking, access, travel and general environmental considerations can be met.

Note: References to Classes B1, B2 and B8 are as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).

5.8 In the case of Rookwood Way, HV9 supports the full range of commercial uses. The uses mentioned are B1, B2 and B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. These use classes have been updated on the 1st September 2020, use classes B2 and B8 remain, (B2 – General Industrial and B8 storage and distribution which includes open air storage). Use class B1 has been subsumed into the new Class E – Commercial, Business and Service, and specifically Class E (g). The storage of materials in the processing of industrial products falls within Use Class B8 storage and Distribution.

5.9 The proposal will provide increased employment opportunities in a highly technical field of technology. This accords with the Council's wish to provide a variety of employment opportunities.

5.11 Haverhill itself has an established labour force that can be tapped into by the Applicants. The town provides services and facilities that will support the long-term future of the business. The site is highly sustainable situated within the town on an

established and zoned and protected industrial park area. We conclude, that on the matter of principle, this is acceptable and should be supported by the Council.

Impact in Appearance and effect upon Amenity

5.12 The development structure proposed, is a simple pitched roof building. It would occupy a limited amount of the overall curtilage of the site area and will be low in height and have a modern appearance. The site and area is industrial and the structure will have little impact visually on the immediate and wider area. With the existence of the large adjoining building, only a small proportion of the building will be visible in the street scene. The building will integrate into the surrounding area, and is acceptable in scale and appearance, in accordance with Policy DM2 of the JDMP. There are no residential uses present and therefore no loss of amenity. The proposed use is conducive with an industrial estate and will not impact upon the amenities of local businesses.

Access and Parking

5.13 On the matter of vehicle Parking, Policy DM46 of the JDMP, the current standards focus on the use and the amount of floorspace to dictate the required parking requirement. Suffolk County Council Guidance for Parking May 2019. The most appropriate standard for this use is, given the internal use of the existing building, a 50 / 50 percent split in the existing and proposed floorspace of B2 and B8. The B8 use requires 1 space per 150 metres square floorspace. The B2 element of floorspace, is 1 space per 30 square metres. The total requirement being 19 spaces. The site has 20 spaces, 17 spaces to the front and a further 3 spaces to the side of the building. The site has the capacity for further parking; however, it is important to point out that it is very rare that all of the parking spaces are used, which is the experience of the Applicants and evidenced in the historic Google Earth images. Further the company also has two electric cargo bikes, so that staff can park at one site and easily move between sites when required. This helps the company carbon footprint and reduces the need for additional temporary parking spaces for internal staff. Access to the site

is directly off the adopted highway along a wide access road to the rear of the site. There are no highway safety implications.

Permitted Development

5.14 It is a relevant material consideration to consider the 'fall back position'. Under Class H of the General Permitted Development Order 2015, it is permitted development to erect, extend or alter an industrial or warehouse building. With a very slight reduction to the floor space, and reduction in the height of the building and positioning, a good proportion of the scale and volume of the building would be permitted development, not requiring planning permission.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The site is situated within a designated employment area and the proposed use accords with the allocated use. The proposal will provide important further additional B8 storage use for the future successful operation of the business. The opportunity also exists to support a local company, provide employment and serve the town of Haverhill and its surrounding settlements meeting the Council's wish to support local businesses. It is concluded in principle the proposal accords with the NPPF 2024 and critical policies within the Development Plan.

6.2 We have considered other issues relating to impact upon local amenities, vehicular movement and vehicular parking, and the level of employment, and we are of the opinion that there are no planning amenity issues nor highway safety concerns.

6.3 The proposed structure is low and fairly well screened. It is considered that the proposal will integrate well with the existing uses within the industrial estate and the form of development will not result in visual harm. The site is a hard surfaced area and has no ecological presence.

6.4 Should Officers require clarification of any of the points above or additional information, then please contact this Practice.

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