


APPLICATION NO:	24/00302/FUL
LOCATION:	Hutchinson Engineering Ltd, Everite Road, Widnes, WA8 8PT
PROPOSAL:	Proposed extension (part retrospective) of existing industrial unit to create new B2/B8 floor space and new three storey office facilities and associated external works.
WARD:	Ditton, Hale Village & Halebank
PARISH:	None
APPLICANT:	Steve Adams, Hutchinson Engineering Ltd.
AGENT:	Jamie Davenport, Davenport Architecture Ltd.
DEVELOPMENT PLAN:	ALLOCATIONS:
Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (2022)	Employment Renewal Area
Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (2013)	
DEPARTURE:	No
REPRESENTATIONS:	None
KEY ISSUES:	Highways consideration, contaminated land, flood risk, design and appearance, amenity and noise.
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve subject to conditions
SITE MAP:	
	

1. APPLICATION SITE

1.1 The Site

The site subject of the application is Hutchinson Engineering Ltd. Located on Everite Road in Widnes. The application site is allocated as an Employment Renewal Area on the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan Policies Map and measures approximately 1.85 hectares. The site is located north of the A562 (Speke Road) and the 'Mersey Multi-Modal Gateway'.

The site is currently occupied by Hutchinson Engineering Ltd which operates from the site and comprises a warehouse building with profile sheet metal clad elevations with associated parking and storage yard.

The applicant also owns and operates from the land to the south of the application site. Located to the north and west of the site are industrial buildings and land uses. There are residential properties located to the north east of the site with the nearest dwelling located 125m from the site boundary.

1.2 Planning History

The site has been subject to a number of planning applications, those of relevance are set out below:

18/00405/FUL – Proposed extension and refurbishment of existing industrial unit to create new unit within use classes B2/B8 together with a new two storey office facility and associated external works. **Approved 05.11.18.**

2. THE APPLICATION

2.1 The Proposal

The application seeks permission for a proposed extension (part retrospective) to the existing industrial unit, to create new B2/B8 floor space and new three storey office facilities and associated external works.

2.2 Documentation

The planning application is supported by the following documents:

- Associated plans (all viewable through the Council's website)
- Design and Access Statement
- Drainage Strategy

- Flood Risk Assessment
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Phase I Desk Study Report

3. POLICY CONTEXT

Members are reminded that planning law requires for development proposals to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.1 Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP) (2022)

The following policies contained within the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan are of relevance:

- CS(R)1 Halton's Spatial Strategy
- CS(R)4 Employment Land
- CS(R)15 Sustainable Transport
- CS(R)18 High Quality Design
- CS(R)19 Sustainable Development and Climate Change
- CS23 Managing Pollution and Risk
- CS24 Waste
- ED2 Employment Development
- C1 Transport Network and Accessibility
- C2 Parking Standards
- HE7 Pollution and Nuisance
- HE8 Land Contamination
- HE9 Water Management and Flood Risk
- GR1 Design of Development
- GR2 Amenity

3.2 Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (2013)

The following policies, contained within the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan are of relevance:

- WM8 Waste Prevention and Resource Management;
- WM9 Sustainable Waste Management Design and Layout for New Development.

3.3 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published in 2012 and updated 19 December 2023 to set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

3.4 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

- Design of New Commercial & Industrial Development Supplementary Planning Document (2006).
- 3MG Mersey Multimodal Gateway Supplementary Planning Document (2009).

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Below are material considerations relevant to the determination of this planning application.

3.5 Equality Duty

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty.

Section 149 states:-

(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers have taken this into account and given due regard to this statutory duty, and the matters specified in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in the determination of this application.

There are no known equality implications arising directly from this development that justify the refusal of planning permission.

3.6 Other Considerations

The application has been considered having regard to Article 1 of the First Protocol of the Human Rights Act 1998, which sets out a persons rights to the peaceful enjoyment of property and Article 8 of the Convention of the same Act which sets out his/her rights in respect for private and family life and for the home. Officers consider that the proposed development would not be contrary to the provisions of the above Articles in respect of the human rights of surrounding residents/occupiers.

4. **CONSULTATIONS**

The application has been advertised via the following methods: A press advert in the Widnes and Runcorn Weekly News, site notices posted near to the site and surrounding residents were also notified by letter on 08.08.24.

The following organisations have been consulted and, where relevant, any comments received have been summarised below in the assessment section of the report:

- **United utilities**
No objection, informative wording to be provided
- **Lead Local Flood Authority**
No comments provided to date
- **HBC Environmental Protection**
No objection
- **HBC Contaminated Land**
No objection, suggested condition
- **HBC Highways**
No objection
- **Ditton, Hale Village & Halebank Councillors**
No comments received

5. REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been advertised by 90 neighbour notification letters sent on the 8th August 2024. No representations have been received.

6. ASSESSMENT

6.1 Principle of Development

The application site is located within an established employment area and forms part of the Employment Renewal Area, as designated in the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan Policies Map.

Policy ED2 of the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan states that within Primarily Employment Areas, development for office, research and development, light industrial, factory or storage and distribution uses will normally be acceptable.

Redevelopment and regeneration within existing employment areas and Employment Renewal Areas will be supported where they make an improvement in the use of the site for employment purposes, having regard to:

- a. The quality and type of employment floorspace provided;

- b. The quality, type, number and density of jobs to be accommodated; and
- c. The environmental quality of the site.

Paragraph 4 of policy ED2 highlights that all proposals for new employment development, including extensions to existing properties, must where appropriate:

- a. Be compatible with existing and proposed surrounding uses;
- b. Not have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the locality in terms of its size, scale, materials, design and siting;
- c. Be designed to allow for future flexibility for a range of uses, including future subdivision and/or amalgamation for a range of business accommodation;
- d. Have adequate access that would not create a traffic hazard or have an undue environmental impact;
- e. Be served by public transport and provide pedestrian and cycle links to adjacent residential areas;
- f. Design storage areas to minimise visual intrusion;
- g. Make adequate provision of space for on-site servicing and, where appropriate, waiting goods vehicles;
- h. Provide adequate screening, if the layout and design cannot be amended in other ways, to obscure and conceal any unsightly feature of the development;
- i. Locate security fencing, where required, to the internal edge of any perimeter landscaping; and
- j. Provide substantial peripheral landscaping where sites and join residential areas, open countryside or Green Belt areas.

It is considered that the proposed development complies with the guidance set out above in Policy ED2. The provision of this additional employment floorspace would contribute to the employment land supply targets set out in Policy CS(R)4 of the DALP. The principle of development is acceptable in accordance with policies CS(R)1, CS(R)4 and ED2 of the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan.

Previous planning consents for the site have authorised Class B2, B8 and office Uses, therefore the proposed use is considered to be appropriate and in keeping with the history of the site. The principle of the development type has been established on site and also within the immediate surrounding area and therefore the proposed development would be sympathetic to the surrounding area.

6.2 Layout

The proposed layout follows that of the original site and the 2018 approval. As stated above, the applicant owns the adjoining site to the

south and so the parking provision for both sites has been consolidated. As a result of this, the main access has been improved to create clearly defined access for delivery vehicle and car parking.

The main parking area to the front of the building has been re-planned as a one way system so as to avoid impact on the existing landscaped areas. A separate visitors car park is located immediately in front of the proposed office building, to allow for additional security for the site. The existing northern entrance will be used for HGV movements only, entering and exiting the main rear yard. An internal control point is proposed, set well within the site, to allow any waiting vehicles to be clear of the main road.

The original factory unit was extended its full length along the back line of the carpark under the 2018 planning permission. The new proposals adapt the previously approved office block to create a larger footprint. The front corner of the building now proposes three stories of office accommodation. The rear proposed extension will provide improved workshop and fabrication space with greater ceiling heights to facilitate productivity.

The majority of the ground floor will be used for fabrication, with the smaller element containing the main reception, office space and meeting rooms along with changing and welfare facilities. The tree line and landscaped buffer will be maintained and enhanced as part of the scheme. There will be no change to the main yard to the rear, which is used for the storage of various components. This is not visible from the street scene.

The layout of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policies ED2 and GR1 of the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan.

6.3 Scale

The original frame building, prior to the 2018 extension, measured 1900m². This application includes extensions that have been built in addition to the 2018 extension. The proposed development would provide a total of 4337m² of B2 General Industrial floor space and 898m² of E(g) Office floor space. This will allow for an increase in employment opportunities from the current 66 full time jobs to 85.

The proposed scale reflects the site context and is considered to be appropriate in this location, consistent with the requirements of policies CS(R)18 and GR1 of the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan.

6.4 Appearance

The proposed warehouse extension would be constructed as a portal frame building clad with vertically laid trapezoidal coated aluminium cladding, with flat panel cladding installed on the proposed office element.

The materials proposed would sit comfortably within the site location whilst contributing to a modern and contemporary addition to the area.

A simple pallet of colours are proposed with a number of grey tones used to define the gutters, doors, walls and roof. The main walls propose a mid-grey with features being finished in a darker Anthracite grey and the company corporate colours adopted in certain areas.

The proposed elevations show that the building would be of an appropriate appearance with some variety in materials and texture to add interest to the overall external appearance. The scheme proposes an attractive modern unit which maximises opportunities to improve the frontage onto Everite Road, through incorporating a feature corner to the building elevation and enhanced landscaping.

The subsequent implementation of the external facing materials should be secured by condition. This would ensure compliance with Policies GR1 and CS(R)18 of the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan.

6.5 Landscaping & Trees

There are no trees afforded Statutory Protection at this location and the site does not fall within a designated Conservation Area. The existing landscape buffer to Everite Road has a line of well established trees and hedges. There is no tree removal proposed as part of the application. Small elements of soft landscaping are proposed within the site to soften the entrance and visitor areas.

The proposal is exempt from the Biodiversity Net Gain requirements as the part of the site that would have any association with biodiversity is a retrospective element of the development.

6.6 Highway, Transport & Accessibility

The south entrance is to be shared between the application site and the existing Hutchinson Engineering site to the south. All staff and visitor vehicles will enter the new carpark from the southern entrance.

The northern entrance is already designed to cater for large HGV vehicles and so its width and kerb radii are deemed to be appropriate for the proposed uses. The existing yard is significant in size and will accommodate all vehicle movements as well as the external storage requirements for the operator.

The site layout has been amended in line with comments from the Highways Officer who had initial concerns about the parking layout for the site. These concerns have all now been addressed and the site layout is considered to be acceptable in terms of highway safety, parking standards and accessibility. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in accordance with policies ED2, CS(R)15, C1, C2 and GR1 of the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan.

6.7 Ground Contamination

The following document has been submitted in support of the application:

- Phase I Desk Study Report. Ref: 129-003233. July 2024

The Council's Contaminated Land Officer has advised that pre-war historic maps show the site as agricultural/farmland. Postwar, a cement works was constructed and present on site from 1967 - 1985 after which the works were demolished and the site was occupied by a smaller steel engineering facility with hardstanding. The facility was part demolished and rebuilt in 2012 and extended further between 2020-2022.

The submitted phase 1 desk study identified potential SPR linkages from the presence of asbestos fibres in made ground as high risk. Ground gas and groundwater hazards were deemed low risk. The report referenced documentation produced by the consultant (Mayer) itself for the previous site operator and consisted of a Phase 1 Desk study & Ground Investigation. The previous desk study undertaken in 2011 identified a range of potential contaminants from previous and current site use; Metals, Asbestos, PAHs Hydrocarbons, PCBs & solvents. A resultant ground investigation indicated there were no significant sources of contamination in site soil, groundwater or ground gas found. Asbestos fibres were identified in 3 of the 10 samples but in quantities up to 0.01%. The risk was classed as low due to the proposed concreting of the site and no existing concrete be broken.

A gas monitoring programme was undertaken on the 8 boreholes on site, however 2 boreholes refused during installation and 1 was flooded. While the unavailable sampling points and limited monitoring visits do not form a robust investigation into potential ground gas risks, the constitution and depth (0.0 – 1.0 mbgl) of the made ground on site reduce the potential risks from ground gases.

The facility was further extended between 2020-2022 with no records or incidents of potentially contaminated land reported. The recent desk top study & previous site reports show that asbestos is present on site. The

removal or breaking of existing concrete poses a high risk to receptors on and off site, however the site end use is low sensitivity.

It is therefore suggested that a condition be attached to any subsequent approval requiring an asbestos management plan be submitted for review prior to commencing any works. This will ensure the development is compliant with policy HE8 of the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan.

6.8 Flood Risk & Drainage

The application is supported by the following documents:

- Flood Risk Assessment, Ref: 9316-ADS-00-XX-RP-C-501 dated July 2024
- Drainage Strategy, Ref: 9332-ADS-00-XX-RP-S-550 P1, DATED July 2024

The application site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is of the lowest probability of flooding. It has been established that there are no watercourses within the vicinity of the site, and the majority of the site is current hardstanding. Surface water drainage from the site would need to be disposed of in accordance with the drainage hierarchy.

United Utilities have no objection to the proposed development subject to their advice being passed on to the applicant by way of an informative.

Final comments from the Lead Local Flood Authority are awaited, however their advice from the previous application is considered to still be relevant and a material consideration. The LLFA recommended a number of conditions to be attached to ensure compliance with policy CS23 and HE9 of the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan.

6.9 Noise

The following document submitted with the application has been reviewed:

- Hutchinson Engineering Industrial Noise Impact Assessment Report 25424/INIA1, 16th July 2024, Hann Tucker Associates

Whilst the application site is approximately 200m from the nearest residential property, it is surrounded by commercial land uses. The noise report adequately demonstrates that there should be no adverse impact on residents' amenity in accordance with Policy HE7 of the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan. Environmental Health would have no objections to this application.

6.10 Sustainable Development & Climate Change

Policy CS(R)19 of the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan outlines some principles which will be used to guide future development.

The supporting text for policy CS(R)19 states that new development will be encouraged to incorporate current best practice in sustainable design and construction. In achieving this, development proposals must offer an integrated approach to sustainable development incorporating climate change resilience and carbon management measures.

Policy GR1 also states that all major development proposals involving the construction of new buildings must demonstrate how sustainable design and construction methods will be incorporated to achieve resource efficiency and resilience to climate change in accordance with policy CS(R)19 taking into account the site specific viability of the development, where appropriate.

The attachment of a condition securing the submission of a scheme detailing such matters along with their subsequent implementation will ensure compliance with Policy CS(R)19 and GR1 of the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan.

6.11 Waste Management

Policies WM8 and WM9 of the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan are applicable to this application along with policy CS24 of the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan.

In terms of waste prevention, construction management by the applicant will deal with issues of this nature and the developer would be required to produce a Site Waste Management Plan. The submission of a waste audit should be secured by condition. In terms of on-going waste management, there is sufficient space within the development to deal with this as demonstrated by the proposed site layout.

The proposal is considered to be compliant with policies WM8 and WM9 of the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan and policy CS24 of the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan.

7. CONCLUSIONS

It is considered that the proposed development complies with the guidance set out in Policy ED2 of the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan. The provision of additional employment floorspace would contribute to the employment land supply targets set out in Policy CS(R)4 of the DALP.

The proposed development would provide a total of 4337m² of B2 General Industrial floor space and 898m² of E(g) Office floor space. This will allow

for an increase in employment opportunities from the current 66 full time jobs to 85.

Previous planning consents for the site have authorised Class B2 and Class B8 Uses, therefore the proposed use is considered to be appropriate and in keeping with the history of the site. The principle of the development type has been established on site and also within the immediate surrounding area and therefore the proposed development would be sympathetic to the surrounding area.

The proposed elevations show that the building would be of an appropriate appearance with some variety in materials and texture to add interest to the overall external appearance. The scheme proposes an attractive modern unit which maximises opportunities to improve the frontage onto Everite Road, through incorporating a feature corner to the building elevation and enhanced landscaping.

The development is considered to be acceptable in accordance with the relevant policies contained within the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan.

8. RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission is approved subject to the attachment of suitably worded conditions.

9. CONDITIONS

1. Time limit
2. Approved plans
3. Materials
4. Asbestos management plan
5. Drainage strategy
6. Foul and surface water drainage
7. Implementation and retention of parking layout
8. SWWMP
9. Sustainable development and climate change
10. Hours of construction

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The submitted planning applications are background papers to the report. Other background papers specifically mentioned and listed within the report are open to inspection at the Council's premises at Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes, WA8 7QF in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

11. SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

As required by:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (2023);
- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015; and
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2015.

This statement confirms that the local planning authority has worked proactively with the applicant to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of Halton.