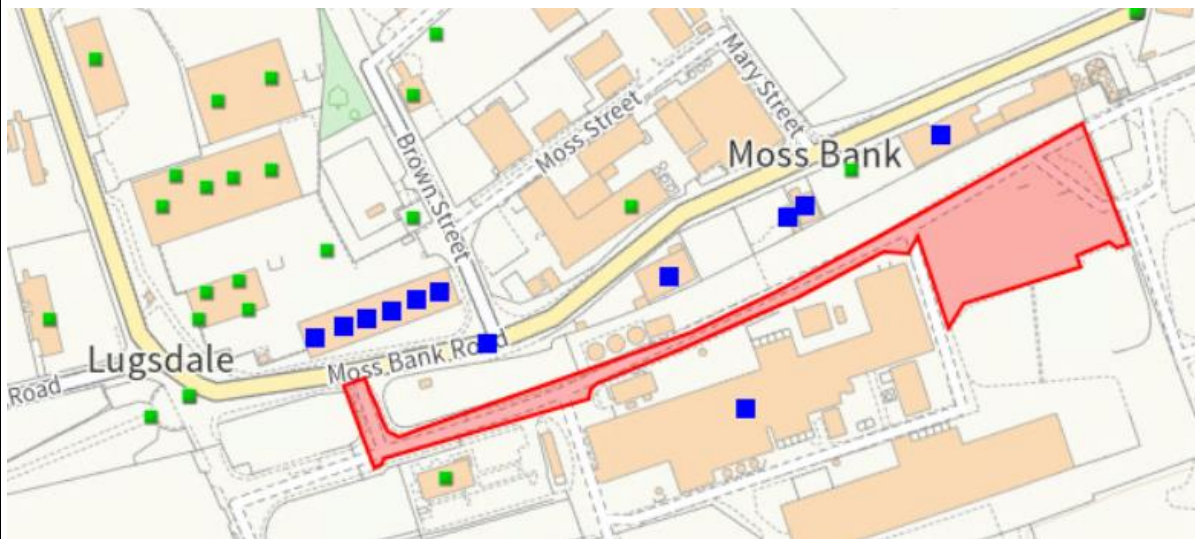


<b>APPLICATION NO:</b>	25/00094/FUL
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Saffil Ltd, Sullivan Road, Widnes, WA8 0US
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Proposed erection of an ancillary surface-mounted storage building anchored to existing hardstanding
<b>WARD:</b>	Halton View
<b>PARISH:</b>	None
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Saffil Ltd
<b>AGENT:</b>	Alex McLaren, Mosaic Town Planning
<b>DEVELOPMENT PLAN:</b>  Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (2022)	<b>ALLOCATIONS:</b>  Primarily Employment
<b>DEPARTURE</b>	No
<b>REPRESENTATIONS</b> :	None
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b> :	Approve, subject to conditions

#### SITE MAP



## **1. APPLICATION SITE**

### **1.1 The Site**

The site is located within the Tan House Lane Industrial estate, approximately 1.5km south east of Widnes town centre. The site is located to the North West of the St. Helens Canal and the Mersey Estuary.

The location of the application site in the context of the wider surroundings is accurately depicted in the location map above. The existing site covers an area of approximately 4.5 ha, which was formally part of the ICI Pilkington Sullivan Works, which has a long history of chemical processing from the mid-19th Century through to the end of the 20th Century.

Vehicular access is gained via an existing private road off Tan house Lane/Moss Bank Road.

### **Planning History**

The following planning history details concern planning approvals on the proposed application site or earlier phase of development by the same Applicant.

**03/00185/EIA** - Proposed extension (2940sq.m.) to existing production building and associated external structures, including a 40m stack to proposed effluent treatment works and extension to existing substation.

**11/00396/FULEIA** - Proposed new building to house a third alumina fibre production line, electrical switch, room and process plant.

**17/00376/FULEIA** - Retrospective application for rebuilding of facility to house a third alumina fibre production line with associated electrical switch room and process plant.

**21/00510/FUL-** Proposed erection of a new substation building and the recladding of existing warehouse.

**22/00369/FULEIA** - Proposed installation of an additional production line, involving an extension to an existing building and the installation of associated plant and machinery.

## **2. THE APPLICATION**

### **2.1 Proposal**

The planning application was submitted with the following description of development:

*Proposed erection of an ancillary surface-mounted storage building anchored to existing hardstanding.*

This structure will provide sheltered storage space for finished goods. Currently, once the goods are made they are transported to the warehouse in Holywell in Wales for storage before being distributed onwards.

The applicant states that this arrangement has decreased the operational efficiency of the company, as well as increasing the company's carbon footprint through additional vehicle mileage. The proposed building will allow the company to meet this need on site.

The application states that the proposed building is needed for a temporary period of ten years. This will provide a flexible and cost-effective solution allowing the company to meet its current operational needs without prejudicing any prospective development plans for this area of the site.

The area of hardstanding where the building will be sited previously housed a permanent warehouse building. This building was demolished in 2022 due to it being condemned for safety reasons by the company's insurer. Since this point, the land has been clear and used for the external storage of wooden pallets and engineering parts but has not been suitable for storing finished goods.

## **2.2 Documentation**

- Application Form
- Set of proposed plans
- Design and Access Statement
- Phase One Contaminated Land Desk Study

## **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 Delivery and Allocations Local Plan ('DALP') (adopted March 2022)**

CS(R)1 Halton's Spatial Strategy

CS(R)4 Employment Land Supply

CS(R)15 Sustainable Transport

CS(R)18 High Quality Design

CS(R)19 Sustainable Development and Climate Change

CS(R)23 Managing Pollution and Risk

CS(R)24 Waste

C1 Transport Network and Accessibility

HE7 Pollution and Nuisance

HE8 Land Contamination

HE9 Water Management and Flood Risk

GR1 Design of Development

GR2 Amenity

### 3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents ('SPD')

Design of New Commercial Development SPD

Widnes Waterfront SPD

### 3.3 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.

## **MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

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

### 3.4 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) to set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

### 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 was advertised via the following methods:

Site notice posted near to the site, press notice, and Council website. Surrounding properties were notified by letter. The following organisations have been consulted and any comments received have been summarised below and in the assessment section of the report where appropriate:

### HBC Highways

No Objection.

### HBC Contaminated Land

No Objections, subject to conditions being added.

### HBC Major Projects

No comments.

### Ward Councillors

No comments.

### TransPennine Trail

No Objection

### United Utilities

No objection.

## **5. REPRESENTATIONS**

This application has been publicised by 12 neighbour notification letters sent on 06/03/25. From this publicity, no representations were received.

## **6. ASSESSMENT**

### **6.1 Principle of development**

The application site is allocated as 'primarily employment land' by the Delivery and Allocation Plan (DALP) allocation map. It is therefore considered that the development proposal is consistent with this land use allocation.

The DALP planning policies identified above set out a framework of requirements for the consideration of development proposals on existing employment sites. These are considered further in the assessment section of the report below.

### **6.2 Design, layout and visual impact**

The proposed new building will be located on an area of land that has been previously developed, and is currently used as open air storage.

The proposed building is considerably smaller than the company's existing building on the site. As such, the building will not materially change the character of the site and will result in a minimal visual impact. The impact is further minimised by the buildings location within the wider site away from the boundary. The building may be viewable from the Trans Pennine Trail on the opposite side of the St Helens Canal. Notwithstanding, the view of the Saffil site will be consistent with its surroundings and to be expected given the DALP employment allocation.

The building will be constructed from light-grey 40mm steel panel walls and a translucent-white PVC-coated polyester thermo roof. The building will reflect the materials, colour palette and style of existing buildings on the site, as well as those used in surrounding premises in the area.

In terms of scale and appearance, the proposed building is considered to be consistent with the existing main production buildings and plant on site, and are therefore considered to be in character with the wider waterfront area.

### **6.3 Ground contamination**

DALP Policy CS23 'Managing Pollution and Risk' sets out the local planning objectives in relation to pollution including ground contamination. It is incumbent upon the Applicant to demonstrate compliance with the Local Plan requirements and national guidance in relation to ground contamination.

A phase 1 ground investigation study has been submitted in support of the planning application, which had been prepared to support a previous application. This report has been reviewed by the Council's contaminated land officer who has raised no objection to the development proposal subject to a condition being attached that secures additional testing and reporting prior to development taking place. The opinion of the Council's contaminated land officer is set out below.

*The phase 1 desk study submitted was produced in 2022 in support of a previous application for the extension of an existing building to the SW of site, the report itself supported by an earlier (2017) intrusive site investigations undertaken by CC Geotechnical Ltd. (Geoenvironmental report for land at Saffil 3. Ref:11/6352. Date: July 2017). Based on the findings of the previous investigation the conceptual site model identified a number of significant risks to receptors - contractors, final site user, principal aquifer and surface waters – originating from previous site use, depth of made ground (to 4.2mbgl), ground gas risk – classified as CS2 and confirmed elevated groundwater levels of As, Cr, Cu, Pb, Se, Chloroform, Hexachlorobenzene, Di, Tri & mono-chlorobenzenes and exceedances of As in soils alongside the presence of asbestos. The report recommends undertaking a Phase 2 intrusive site investigation.*

*After reviewing the available information and documentation submitted I am in agreement with the outcome of the phase I study to undertake an intrusive ground investigation. While the report does not relate specifically to the site referred to in the application, the findings of the previous, and broader, intrusive investigation indicates that historic contamination on site poses a significant risk to receptors identified*

The applicant was made aware of this, and questioned the need for the Phase II site investigation, as this proposal does not include piling and foundations. The submitted Design and Access Statement confirms that the “building will be anchored to a concrete slab laid on the existing hardstanding using shallow chemical anchor bolts. As such, no intrusive groundworks or foundations will be required for the erection of the building.” The contaminated land officer has confirmed that the Phase I desk study was for a previous application and, although this application holds less risk, there is no specific information for this proposal therefore it is unclear what risks are present. A phase 1 undertaken specifically for the application submitted may be able to provide the information which removes the requirement for a phase 2 investigation to be undertaken, however, there is no guarantee that intrusive site investigations will not be required.

Having regard to the temporary nature of the structure and the stated method of fixing, sufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the risks

from contamination are low. It is considered that a suggested condition requiring further investigation or justification could not be justified when measured against the 6 tests for planning conditions set out in national policy and guidance.

#### 6.4 Drainage and flood risk

No drainage details had originally been submitted with this application. United Utilities have commented on the application and provided a response of no objection. They have however requested a condition relating to the submission and agreement of a drainage scheme to ensure the site is safe from fluvial and tidal flooding to ensure that the site is appropriately drained so as not to cause runoff rates that are detrimental to local drainage systems that are downstream of the application site. The applicant has responded that there will be no foul water drainage required as the building is for storage purposes only and will not have any toilet facilities or water connection. They have stated that:

The proposed storage building will be located on existing hard standing with existing drainage. It is considered that the proposed building would result in limited additional impact in terms of surface water runoff and the requested condition could not be justified when measured against the 6 tests for planning conditions set out in national policy and guidance.

#### 6.5 Transport and highways

The development is proposed to be erected on land that is currently used as yard space and has been previously developed on. The Highways Officer has been consulted on the application and has provided no objection.

Additional information was requested from the Highways Officer regarding the type of vehicles that will be entering the site following this proposal. It was confirmed from the applicant that the vehicles entering the site would not change following this proposal.

#### 6.6 Climate change

The proposal will result in new storage space for products which will replace the current storage unit which is located off site in North Wales. It is considered that this will make a positive impact onto the environment as it will reduce emissions from the current transportation of goods to North Wales.

As the building is proposed to be a temporary measure for storage for a 10 year period, it is considered that the climate impacts of this building would be small and therefore it would be disproportionate to require a full qualitative climate change impact assessment, particularly when considering the reduction of carbon emissions from vehicles that will result following this proposal.



## 6.7 Residential amenity

The site is located within the former Widnes Waterfront Regeneration Area. The former regeneration policy associated with the historic land use designation resulted in the residential redevelopment of a derelict industrial site (ref: 19/00235/FUL). That redevelopment has brought a residential development boundary near to the application site, and as a result it is important to give due consideration to the impact on residential amenity for nearby residents of existing residential dwellings and future occupiers of those yet to be constructed..

The potential negative impacts on residential amenity include issues such as air quality, noise, traffic movements and outlook. Due to the nature of the proposed use of the building (storage), including the degree of separation and intervening buildings, it is not considered that the proposals raise issues with respect to residential amenity to justify refusal of planning permission.

The proposal may be visible from the residential buildings, however the existing Saffil factory site existed prior to the residential scheme being granted planning permission. There is an expectation as a result of this that a degree of residential outlook will include views of an industrial estate. It is therefore considered that the proposed development is consistent with the existing industrial landscape and would not be considered detrimental to the existing and future residents of planning approval 19/00235/FUL.

## 6.8 Conclusion

The development proposal is considered to comply with national planning policy NPPF and Local Plan policies CSR1, CSR4, CSR15, CSR18, CSR19, CSR23, CSR24, C1, HE7, HE8, HE9, GR1, GR2, WM8 and WM9.

The proposals would not result in a form of development inconsistent with the character of the area or result in other harms relating to such as amenity, environmental or ecological issues to justify refusal. The proposed development would facilitate the retention and efficiency of an existing business in the Borough. It is therefore recommended for approval.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION**

Approved, subject to conditions.

## **8. CONDITIONS**

1. Temporary permission – 10 Years
2. Detailing Approved Plans

## **3. 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.

#### 4. **SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT**

As required by:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (2024);
- 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