

Application Number: WNS/2021/2221/MAF

Location: Silverstone Fields Farm, Towcester Road, Silverstone, NN12 8FS

Proposal: Erection of a new sui generis use sawmill and storage facility and yard extension.

Applicant: Linnell Brothers Limited

Agent: Mr James Paynter - Sherwill Drake Forbes

Case Officer: Samuel Dix

Ward: Towcester and Roade

Reason for Referral: **Major development**

Committee Date: 7th April 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT PERMISSION SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

Proposal

The proposed development comprises the extension of an existing sawmill premises by way of a new building 3,671sqm in size. The building will be accompanied by new parking and manoeuvring areas and will allow the expansion and reconfiguration of existing activities within the wider site. The building itself will be 8.5m tall and of typical commercial appearance and finished in green composite cladding.

Consultations

The following consultees have raised **objections** to the application:

- None.

The following consultees have raised **no objections** or have **commented** on the application:

- Local Highway Authority;
- National Highways;
- Environmental Health;
- Environment Agency;
- County Archaeologist;
- Towcester Town Council;
- Police Crime Prevention & Design Advisor.

The following consultees are **in support** of the application:

- Economic Development.

No letters of objection have been received and no letters of support have been received.

Conclusion

The application has been assessed against the relevant policies in the NPPF, the adopted Local Plan and other relevant guidance as listed in detail at Section 8 of the report.

The key issues arising from the application details are:

- Principle of development;
- Visual and landscape impact;
- Residential amenity;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Impact on protected species;
- Highway safety.

The report looks into the key planning issues in detail, and Officers conclude that the development is acceptable subject to conditions and subject to there being no objections from outstanding technical consultees.

Members are advised that the above is a summary of the proposals and key issues contained in the main report below which provides full details of all consultation responses, planning policies, the Officer's assessment and recommendations, and Members are advised that this summary should be read in conjunction with the detailed report.

MAIN REPORT

1. APPLICATION SITE AND LOCALITY

- 1.1 The application site presently comprises an open agricultural field that is laid to pasture with no notable features other than its boundary hedgerows. It lies to the immediate north of a collection of buildings and hardstanding that collectively form the Linnell Brothers sawmill and storage-yard, a fourth-generation family business that has been based in Silverstone for 140 years.
- 1.2 The premises themselves are located around a mile to the north-east of Silverstone near the junction of the A43 with the A413. The site sits significantly beneath road level near the bottom of a wide valley formed by Silverstone Brook to the west. There is a relatively historic dwelling on the site occupied by the family owners of the business. In total the facility is around 5Ha in size with six or seven buildings accommodating machinery set within a large open-air storage area with other ancillary development such as car-parking and sawmill equipment. There is an industrial standard access around 150m long that runs directly to the east onto Towcester Road.

2. CONSTRAINTS

- 2.1. The application site is located in open countryside and within 2km of 2no. Local Wildlife Sites. It is also within an area of archaeological interest. There are no other constraints affecting the site.

3. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1. The proposed development comprises the extension of an existing sawmill premises by way of a new building 3,671sqm in size. A total of 600sqm of existing buildings are to be removed to facilitate the extension, meaning a net gain in floorspace of around 3,000sqm. The new building will be accompanied by new parking and manoeuvring areas and will allow the expansion and reconfiguration of existing activities within the wider site. The building itself will be 8.5m tall and of typical commercial appearance and finished in green composite cladding.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1. The following planning history is considered relevant to the current proposal:

S/2019/0905/AGD	Determination as to whether prior approval is required (under Class A of Part 6 of the above Order) for the erection of an agricultural building in respect of the siting, design and external appearance of the building.	Prior Approval not required
S/2019/0148/AGD	Determination as to whether prior approval is required (under Class A of Part 6 of the above Order) for the erection of an agricultural building in respect of the siting, design and external appearance of the building.	Planning Permission Required
S/2018/2373/AGD	Determination as to whether prior approval is required (under Class A of Part 6 of the above Order) for the erection of an agricultural building in respect of: the siting, design and external appearance of the building.	Withdrawn
S/2017/1218/MAO	Outline planning application with all matters reserved for 10 no. commercial units (Use class B1) covering approximately 3650 sq metres, and associated car parking. Solar Park, Attenuation pond, Landscape works and Site access	Decline to Determine Application
S/2017/0018/MAO	Outline planning application with all matters reserved for 10 no. commercial units (Use class B1) covering approximately 3650 sq metres, and associated car parking. Solar Park, Attenuation pond, Landscape works and Site access	Appeal Dismissed (Against Refusal)
S/2013/1154/AGD	Replace existing dilapidated shed with new standard agricultural barn for the storage of materials and feed	Prior Approval not required
S/2011/0996/EN	Use of part of the first floor of the building for retail purposes	Appeal Allowed (Against Enforcement)
S/2011/0450/LDE	Lawful existing use certificate to use part of building for retail sales.	Appeal Allowed (Against Refusal)
S/2011/0261/NMA	Non material amendment to planning permission S/2009/0881/MAF to include solar panels to the front elevation and a fire escape staircase to the rear elevation.	Approval

S/2009/0881/MAF	Building to house trade and specialist suppliers unit with office for timber yard and increased parking.	Approval
S/2008/1504/P	Building to house specialist supplies unit and extension to car park.	Refusal
S/2007/1123/P	New storage building	Approval
S/2006/0489/P	Extension to site and erection of new storage building.	Appeal Allowed (Against Refusal)
S/2005/0360/P	Removal of condition 9 of planning permission S/2003/0476/P to allow use of the site without the erection of an acoustic fence.	Appeal Allowed (Against Refusal)
S/2004/1747/A	Three free standing non-illuminated signs & one fascia sign on south east elevation - Retrospective	Split decision
S/2003/0476/P	Change of use and alterations to existing buildings and erection of new building to form timber yard for B2/B8 use	Approval
S/2003/0844/P	Erection of a general purpose agricultural building	Appeal Allowed (Against Refusal)
S/2002/1439/P	Demolition of farm buildings and dutch barns. Change of use of livestock building to machine shop/dry store and attached new building for machine shop/office/shop. Change of use of existing barn to residential outhouse (amendment to buildings)	Approval
S/2002/0821/P	Demolition of farm buildings and dutch barns. Change of use of livestock building to machine shop/ dry store and attached new building for machine shop/office/shop. Change of use of existing barn/hovel to outhouse/hovef within curtilage of existing dwelling.	Approval
S/2001/1512/P	Change of use of agricultural buildings to form timber yard and erection of associated buildings	Approval

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Statutory Duty

- 5.1. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan

- 5.2. The Development Plan comprises the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) which was formally adopted by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee on 15th December 2014 and which provides the strategic planning policy framework for the

District to 2029, the adopted South Northamptonshire Local Plan (Part 2) and adopted Neighbourhood Plans. The relevant planning policies of the statutory Development Plan are set out below:

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (LPP1)

5.3. The relevant policies of the LPP1 are:

- SA – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- S1 – Distribution of Development
- S7 – Provision of Jobs
- S8 – Distribution of Jobs
- S10 – Sustainable Development Principles
- E1 – Existing Employment Areas

South Northamptonshire Local Plan (Part 2) (LPP2)

5.4. The relevant policies of the LPP2 are:

- SS1 – The Settlement Hierarchy
- SS2 – General Development and Design Principles
- EMP2 – Existing Commercial Sites
- EMP3 – New Employment Development

Material Considerations

5.5. Below is a list of the relevant Material Planning Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Supplementary Planning Guidance
- South Northamptonshire Design Guide

6. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Below is a summary of the consultation responses received at the time of writing this report. Responses are available to view in full on the Council’s website, via the online Planning Register.

Consultee Name	Position	Comment
Local Highway Authority	No objection	Following receipt of revised transport assessment with updated number of movements, the LHA has no objection.
National Highways	No objection	
Environmental Health	Comment	Requested clarification on noise and contamination matters (<i>Officer note: these are addressed in the relevant sections of the report below</i>)
Environment Agency	No objection	

County Archaeologist	No objection	Subject to conditions concerning further archaeological investigation
Towcester Town Council	Comment	Support the introduction of EV charging points.
Police Crime Prevention & Design Advisor	Comment	Comments regarding the specification of roller shutter doors etc.
Economic Development	Support	

7. RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY

Below is a summary of the third party and neighbour responses received at the time of writing this report.

- 7.1. There have been 0 objections/letters of support.

8. APPRAISAL

Principle of development

Policy context

- 8.1. Policy S7 of LPP1 supports an uplift of 28,500 jobs across West Northants in the period to 2029. To achieve this, Policy S8 states that employment provision in South Northamptonshire will comprise, inter alia, renewal and regeneration of existing employment sites as set out in Policy E1. In turn, Policy E1 says that the detailed implementation of employment policy will be set out in Part 2 Local Plans.
- 8.2. Policy R2 of LPP1 covers the rural economy and specifically supports the expansion of businesses in their existing locations (dependent upon the nature of the activities involved, the character of the site, and its accessibility).
- 8.3. LPP2 duly expands upon the above policies and explains in Policy EMP2 that on existing employment sites, employment-generating development including intensification will normally be permitted within the existing curtilage or through appropriate extensions. Policy EMP3 refers back to EMP2 in stating that employment development outside of settlement confines will be acceptable where the site is allocated for employment use, or; the development comprises a conversion of a suitable building (where this would not result in the need for a new building elsewhere); is on brownfield land; the development can only operate in an open countryside location, or; the development is an extension to an existing site in accordance with EMP2.
- 8.4. Policy SS2(1H) of LPP2 requires developments to not result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

Assessment

- 8.5. The proposed development is an extension to an existing and well-established business in order to facilitate its future growth. More specifically, the applicant has advised that the new building will allow operations within the sawmill that are currently undertaken off-site (such as assemblage of timber products after processing).
- 8.6. In this respect the proposal stands in contrast to an appeal five years ago for development of a much larger area of the site for new units that were mostly intended

for other businesses. The application site is not strictly speaking within the curtilage of the existing sawmill facility, as it is an area of presently open field that is adjacent to, but not associated with, the wider commercial activities. However, Policy EMP2 is clear that in respect of existing employment sites, development will be acceptable where it is within the existing curtilage or is an appropriate extension. Given the proposed development will directly serve the expansion of the existing business, will not comprise new units (a matter that can be secured by condition), and has no other adverse effects, it is considered to be an appropriate extension in principle. The application is therefore also in accordance with Policy R2 of LPP1 and Policy EMP3 of LPP2, as the latter is clear that consistency with Policy EMP2 is a circumstance where employment development in the open countryside is acceptable.

- 8.7. Even if the proposed development was not regarded as an 'appropriate extension' in the terms of Policy EMP2, Officers are of the view that it still nevertheless complies with Policy EMP3 due to the need for an open countryside location. Sawmill activities are naturally a somewhat unneighbourly use and could be disruptive or inappropriate even within a more sustainably located industrial estate. As outlined in the residential amenity section below, the existing site operates without any noted complaints or issues and therefore is clearly an appropriate location for the uses involved in the proposed development.
- 8.8. There are also material considerations weighing in favour of the principle of development. Firstly, the applicant is an extremely well-established and historic business that has been associated with Silverstone for well over a century. In this context it is not considered reasonable to expect the business to relocate in order to grow. Secondly, there are direct economic benefits associated with the proposed development in terms of job growth (7no. new jobs created according to the applicant) and construction/supply chain investment. Each of these considerations is given moderate weight in the planning balance below.
- 8.9. In terms of Policy SS2(1H) and best and most versatile agricultural land, the applicant has submitted a land quality survey that identifies that the site is of Grade 3b quality, i.e. not best and most versatile. Officers have no reason to doubt this conclusion and the site is nevertheless of a sufficiently small size that the development would not undermine the purpose of protecting high-quality agricultural land. Notably it is simply used currently for grazing and not for arable production.

Conclusion

- 8.10. The proposed development is acceptable in principle as it is considered to comply with Policies R2 and E1 of LPP1 and Policies EMP2 and EMP3 of LPP2. The economic benefits of the proposed development also weigh in favour of the development in principle.

Visual and landscape impact

Policy context

- 8.11. Policy SS2 of the LPP2 requires development maintains the individuality of towns and villages and not result in the loss of locally important views of particular significance to the form and character of a settlement, as well as using a design-led approach to demonstrate compatibility and integration with surroundings and distinctive local character in terms of type, scale, massing, siting, form, design, materials, and detail.
- 8.12. Policy S11 of LPP1 requires all commercial developments over 500sqm in size to achieve at least a BREEAM 'very good' rating in terms of their sustainability.

- 8.13. The District Design Guide contains various elements of guidance relating to commercial buildings in chapter 6, the relevant parts of which the proposed development is assessed against below.

Assessment

- 8.14. The proposed development would result in the expansion of existing industrial buildings into open countryside. The prevailing landscape character is particularly open with the site occupying a location near the bottom of the valley formed by Silverstone Brook, which offers particularly wide and open views from various vantage points.
- 8.15. The development will therefore be visible within the surrounding landscape although this in itself does not mean it is harmful. The application is supported by an LVIA (landscape and visual impact assessment) that concludes on general visual matters that: “...*whilst there would be some adverse visual effects, these would not be notable and would not affect the public’s enjoyment or appreciation of the wider landscape setting and would not harm the appearance of the sites landscape setting*”. In terms of formal landscape character, the LVIA concludes: “...*while there would be a perceived change within the context of the site, this would be highly localised and the proposals could be integrated into the receiving landscape without any notable adverse effects upon the character of the “Yardley Whittlewood Ridge” NCA, “Tove Catchment” LCA or the landscape setting of the site.*”
- 8.16. Officers agree with the judgements in the LVIA. Having considered the site from multiple perspectives it is evident that the proposed development would be read within the context of the existing sawmill. In particular, the manner in which the proposed extension would not be any taller than existing buildings, as well as the fact it is angled so as to respect existing field boundaries means it will be integrated sensitively into its surroundings. The application is further supported by a landscaping scheme that shows a well-planted new boundary to the north as well as an enhanced hedgerow to the east.
- 8.17. The finish of the building, being green composite cladding will further assist in helping in blend into the surrounding open countryside and further conditions restricting lighting, the height of any new open-air storage, and further extensions that could otherwise be carried out under permitted development, will all be attached. Subject to these conditions, the application is also consistent with the District Design Guide.
- 8.18. Two groups of trees are to be removed to facilitate the development. These have been surveyed and identified as being of low or moderate quality and therefore their loss is not harmful, particularly in the context of additional planting being secured as landscaping for the proposed development. A tree protection plan in respect of other trees to be retained will also be secured by condition to prevent the inadvertent loss of other trees during construction.
- 8.19. The applicant has provided an Energy & Sustainability Statement that includes a BREEAM pre-assessment, which concludes a ‘very good’ standard may be met by the development. This will be secured by condition in order to ensure compliance with Policy S11 of LPP1.

Conclusion

- 8.20. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its visual impact and effect on local landscape character, as well as its overall design. It is therefore consistent with the policies outlined in the policy context above.

Residential amenity

Policy context

- 8.21. Policy SS2(1F) of LPP2 requires development to result in a good standard of amenity and not unacceptably harm the amenity of users of neighbouring properties and area through noise, odour, vibration, overshadowing, or result in the loss of privacy, sunlight/daylight or outlook.

Assessment

- 8.22. The application site accommodates a use that is entirely incompatible with residential development, with sawmill activities inevitably resulting in some degree of noise, vibration, dust and other disturbance. For this reason Officers consider that an open countryside location is effectively essential for the business in accordance with Policy EMP3 of LPP2, as even within an industrial estate the proposed activities could be disruptive to amenity.
- 8.23. There is nevertheless one dwelling located within application site which, due to its age, does not actually appear to be tied by way of an occupancy condition to the existing business. It is therefore technically possible for this dwelling to be occupied by a member of public who could duly raise justifiable concerns about the disruption from the sawmill. However, the dwelling is in fact owned and occupied by the applicant family, a matter that is highly unlikely to change in the future and would, in any event, not be materially altered by the proposed extension.
- 8.24. The other nearest dwellings are located around 1km to the south at Pitts Farm, and 400m to the east, on the other side of the A43, at Shacks Barn Farm.
- 8.25. The application is supported by a noise assessment that concludes that the proposed development would not result in any noise disturbance over and above the existing situation. In particular, traffic noise from the nearby A43 is already the predominant source of background noise.
- 8.26. The Council's Environmental Health team have reviewed the application and suggested that conditions are required to restrict the hours of operation of the sawmill and also to secure a noise management plan. In terms of hours of operation, the original permissions for the wider site twenty years ago specified a restriction of operation to 07:30 until 18:00 on weekdays, 07:30 to 12:30 on Saturdays, and no operations on Sundays or public holidays. It is therefore reasonable to apply these to the new extension too. In terms of a noise management plan, this too would be reasonable as it is feasible that operations on the wider site could be consolidated and reconfigured as a result of the new building. Therefore in the event it is used for particularly noisy plant or machinery, a noise management plan to ensure appropriate mitigation is a sensible precaution, notwithstanding the fact there is no known history of complaints at the site. It should also be noted that the operations will be covered by an environmental permit outside of the planning system should the output of the facility exceed certain thresholds.

Conclusion

- 8.27. Subject to conditions restricting hours of operation and further details of how noise emanating from the new building will be managed, there is no evidence that the proposed development will cause an unacceptable impact to residential amenity. It is therefore consistent with Policy SS2 of LPP2.

Flood risk & drainage

Policy context

- 8.28. Policy BN7 of LPP1 requires a sequential approach to be applied to all proposals for development in order to direct it areas at the lowest probability of flooding. This is consistent with paragraphs 159 to 169 of the NPPF, which addresses the sequential and exception tests. This is summarised by paragraph 162 that states that the aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source. Development should not be allocated or permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding.
- 8.29. Policy SS2(1L) of LPP2 requires developments to be adequate serviced with utility infrastructure appropriate to the development including surface water drainage and incorporates mitigation identified through an assessment of flood risk (incorporating climate change allowances).

Assessment

- 8.30. The proposed development is located in Flood Zone 1 although there are areas within Flood Zones 2 and 3 to the immediate west, associated with Silverstone Brook. The proposed building will be located well away from these areas and therefore in Flood Risk terms a sequential test is not required and the development is acceptable.
- 8.31. In terms of drainage, it is proposed to direct surface water from the new development into both existing and proposed balancing ponds. As the proposed development constitutes major development, the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) are a statutory consultee. They have not made any response to the application at the time of writing and, although there is no evidence that the proposed drainage strategy will be unacceptable, the recommendation below is subject to confirmation of this from the LLFA. It is likely that any amendments they seek will be of a technical nature and relate to the detailed specification of the proposed drainage solution, which would not otherwise undermine the wider acceptability of the development.

Conclusion

- 8.32. The development is acceptable in Flood Risk terms. Subject to confirmation from the LLFA and any conditions they request, the proposed development is also considered to be acceptable in drainage terms.

Impact on protected species

Legislative context

- 8.33. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 provide for the designation and protection of 'European sites' and 'European protected species' (EPS). Under the Regulations, competent authorities such as the Council have a general duty to have regard to the EC Habitats Directive and Wild Birds Directive.
- 8.34. In terms of EPS, the Regulations make it an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade in the animals listed in the Regulations, or pick, collect, cut, uproot, destroy, or trade in the plants listed therein. However, these actions can be made lawful through the granting of licenses by the appropriate authorities by meeting the requirements of 3 strict legal derogation tests:
- a. Is the development needed to preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment?

- b. That there is no satisfactory alternative.
- c. That the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Policy Context

- 8.35. Paragraph 179 of the NPPF states that Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (amongst others): a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils; and d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. Paragraph 180 states that planning authorities should refuse planning permission if significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for and should support development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity. Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- 8.36. National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that Local Planning Authorities should only require ecological surveys where clearly justified, for example if there is a reasonable likelihood of a protected species being present and affected by development. Assessments should be proportionate to the nature and scale of development proposed and the likely impact on biodiversity.
- 8.37. Policy NE3 of LPP2 seeks to conserve and wherever possible enhance green infrastructure . Policy NE4 seeks to protect and integrate existing trees and hedgerows wherever possible and requires new planting schemes to use native or similar species and varieties to maximise benefits to the local landscape and wildlife. Policy NE5 requires that proposals aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity in order to provide measurable net gains. Development proposals will not be permitted where they would result in significant harm to biodiversity or geodiversity, including protected species and sites of international, national and local significance, ancient woodland, and species and habitats of principal importance identified in the United Kingdom Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.
- 8.38. Policy BN2 of the JCS 2014 states that development that will maintain and enhance existing designations and assets or deliver a net gain in biodiversity will be supported. Development that has the potential to harm sites of ecological importance will be subject to an ecological assessment and required to demonstrate: 1) the methods used to conserve biodiversity in its design and construction and operation 2) how habitat conservation, enhancement and creation can be achieved through linking habitats 3) how designated sites, protected species and priority habitats will be safeguarded. In cases where it can be shown that there is no reasonable alternative to development that is likely to prejudice the integrity of an existing wildlife site or protected habitat appropriate mitigation measures including compensation will be expected in proportion to the asset that will be lost. Where mitigation or compensation cannot be agreed with the relevant authority development will not be permitted.

Assessment

- 8.39. Natural England's Standing Advice states that an LPA only needs to ask an applicant to carry out a survey if it's likely that protected species are present on or near the proposed site. , The Standing Advice sets out habitats that may have the potential for protected species, and in this regard the site comprises undeveloped land in a rural location in close proximity to woodland and watercourses. The development also involves the

demolition of an older stone barn structure that is potentially suitable for bat roosting. The site therefore has the potential to be suitable habitat for a variety of species.

- 8.40. In order to discharge its legal duty under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 the LPA must firstly assess whether an offence under the Regulations is likely to be committed. If so, the LPA should then consider whether Natural England would be likely to grant a licence for the development. In so doing the authority has to consider itself whether the development meets the 3 derogation tests listed above.
- 8.41. In respect of planning applications and the Council discharging of its legal duties, case law has shown that if it is clear/ very likely that Natural England will not grant a licence then the Council should refuse planning permission; if it is likely or unclear whether Natural England will grant the licence then the Council may grant planning permission.
- 8.42. The application is supported by a detailed protected species survey which concluded that the stone farm building that is to be demolished has a moderate potential for bat roosting. The survey also concludes that habitats adjacent to and within the proposed development area provide potential habitat for reptiles and amphibians.
- 8.43. Comments from the Council's ecologist on the survey that has been submitted are awaited and, as such, the recommendation is subject to confirmation that further surveys are either not required, or the satisfactory completion of said surveys. In respect of bats in particular, it should be noted that emergence surveys cannot be carried out during winter months. Therefore, should the committee resolve to grant permission then the presence of bats may be confirmed or ruled out within the coming weeks. Thereafter, mitigation and/or licensing from Natural England could be controlled by further conditions.

Conclusion

- 8.44. Comments from the Council's ecologist are awaited. The recommendation is subject to these comments, which are likely to confirm either that no further surveys are necessary or that additional surveys and subsequent mitigation should be undertaken prior to the decision being issued. Subject to the detailed resolution of these matters and any resulting conditions, the proposed development would not have any adverse impact on protected species.

Highway safety

Policy context

- 8.45. Policy SS2 (1J) of the LPP2 requires developments to include a safe and suitable means of access for all people, including pedestrians, cyclists, and those using vehicles.
- 8.46. Paragraph 111 of the NPPF advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Assessment

- 8.47. The application is supported by a Transport Statement and Travel Plan that detail the impacts of the proposed development on the local highway network. No new access is proposed to serve the development, which will instead utilise the existing access onto Towcester Road that is around 150m long, hard-surfaced and of sufficient width for two heavy goods vehicles to pass one another.

8.48. The proposed development is anticipated to generate 17 additional vehicle trips in the morning peak, and 13 additional vehicle trips in the evening peak. Having sought clarification on how these increases were calculated, neither the Local Highway Authority nor National Highways (who have oversight of the nearby A43 trunk road) raise any objection to the proposed development.

8.49. The existing access is suitable and safe enough for the existing uses on the site, offering good visibility onto Towcester Road. There will only be a marginal increase in traffic from the proposed development, which will also incorporate electric vehicle charging and cycle storage. There is therefore no reason for permission to be withheld on highway safety grounds and the development is acceptable in this respect.

Conclusion

8.50. The application complies with the policies outlined above in respect of highway safety and is acceptable.

9. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

9.1. CIL is not applicable to the proposed development as it does not comprise new residential or retail floorspace.

9.2. The economic development team have requested a contribution towards the West Northants Employment Support Service, which would be secured under a section 106 obligation. However, there is no policy basis for seeking this contribution and the matter could just as easily be addressed by requiring a local labour strategy to be provided by condition, which would specify how new jobs created by the development would be filled in order to maximise the economic benefits of the development locally. In this instance though, the proposed development comprises the extension of an extremely well-established local business whose benefit to the local economy is already assured. The development itself would create seven jobs, which is a benefit but is not a level of new employment that justifies a labour strategy in its own right. Therefore it is not proposed that this condition is attached

10. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

10.1. Matters weighing in favour of the proposed development may be summarised as:

- The proposed development is considered an appropriate extension to an existing commercial site, notwithstanding the fact the application site is located in open countryside. It is therefore consistent with Policies R2 and E1 of LPP1, and Policies EMP2 and EMP3 of LPP2, a matter that is given very significant weight.
- The proposed development would enable the retention and growth of a business that has been associated with Silverstone for well over a century and allow operations to take place on the site that currently require timbers products to be transported away. This is given moderate weight.
- The proposed development would have economic benefits in its own right by creating 7no. jobs as well as construction and supply-chain benefits. This is also given moderate weight.

10.2. Matters weighing against the proposed development may be summarised as:

- The development would be visible from certain vantage points within the local landscape. It would nevertheless be no higher than existing buildings and would read as a logical and complementary extension. It would also be finished in a sensitive fashion with other matters such as lighting and landscaping capable of being controlled through condition. This matter is therefore given limited weight in the planning balance.

10.3. In conclusion, Officers consider that the matters weighing in favour of the proposed development decisively outweigh those against it. The proposal is fundamentally consistent with the Development Plan when taken as whole and therefore permission should be granted according to paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

11. RECOMMENDATION / CONDITIONS AND REASONS

RECOMMENDATION – DELEGATE TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR PLANNING AND ECONOMY TO GRANT PERMISSION SUBJECT TO:

- 1. NO OBJECTION BEING RAISED BY THE LEAD LOCAL FLOOD AUTHORITY**
- 2. CONFIRMATION FROM THE COUNCIL'S ECOLOGIST THAT FURTHER SURVEYS ARE EITHER NOT REQUIRED, OR THE SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF SUCH SURVEYS AND ANY MITIGATION THAT MAY BE RECOMMENDED (TO BE SECURED BY CONDITION)**
- 3. THE CONDITIONS SET OUT BELOW (AND ANY AMENDMENTS TO THOSE CONDITIONS AS DEEMED NECESSARY)**

CONDITIONS

Time limit and approved plans

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason : To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans and details unless a non-material or minor material amendment is approved by the Local Planning Authority under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). The approved plans and details are:

Site Location Plan (drawing ref: 2801/ME/SL/P1)
 Site Plan As Proposed (drawing ref: 2801/ME/SP/P rev P4)
 Elevations – Sheet One (drawing ref: 2801/ME/E/1 rev P5)
 Elevations – Sheet Two (drawing ref: 2801/ME/E/2 rev P5)
 Elevations – Sheet Three (drawing ref: 2801/ME/E/3 rev P5)

Floor Plan (drawing ref: 2801/ME/P/1 rev P5)
Landscape Strategy Plan (drawing ref: 10248L.LSP.001 rev D)

All received by the Local Planning Authority on 29th December 2021.

Reason : To clarify the permission and for the avoidance of doubt.

BREEAM

3. The development hereby permitted shall be constructed to at least a BREEAM 'very good' standard.

Reason : To ensure energy and resource efficiency practices are incorporated into the development in accordance with Policy S11 of West Northamptonshire3 Joint Core Strategy and Government's aim to achieve sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Materials

4. A schedule of materials and finishes to be used in the external walls and roof(s) of the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of those works. The development shall thereafter be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason : To ensure that the materials are appropriate to the appearance of the locality and to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the completed development in accordance with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan Policy and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Archaeology

5. No development shall take place within the area of archaeological interest until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. This written scheme will include the following components, completion of each of which will trigger the phased discharging of the condition:

(i) Approval of a Written Scheme of Investigation;

(ii) Fieldwork in accordance with the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation;

(iii) Completion of a Post-Excavation Assessment report and approval of an approved Updated Project Design: to be submitted within six months of the completion of fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Planning Authority;

(iv) Completion of analysis, preparation of site archive ready for deposition at a store (Northamptonshire ARC) approved by the Planning Authority, production of an archive report, and submission of a publication report: to be completed within two years of the completion of fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Planning Authority.

Reason : To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded and the results made available, in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 205

Noise

6. No development above slab level shall take place until a Noise Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, which specifies the provisions to be made for the control of noise emanating from the site.

Reason : In the interest of safeguarding residential amenity and reducing pollution in accordance with Policy BN9 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

External lighting and storage

7. No external lights/floodlights shall be erected on the land or building unless details of the lighting are first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter any lighting shall be installed and retained in accordance with the details so approved.

Reason : In order to safeguard the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan and Government advice in The National Planning Policy Framework.

8. No open-air storage shall take place within the new yard area unless and until details are first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority regarding the exact areas to be used for additional open air storage, the type of product to be stored in the open-air, and the maximum height of any such product or stack of products. Any open-air storage within the new yard area shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the details so approved.

Reason : In order to safeguard the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan.

Landscaping

9. No trees shall be removed until a Tree Protection Plan is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority detailing how those trees

that are identified for retention in the Arboricultural Survey Report and Impact Assessment, prepared by Landscape Science Consultancy (received by the Local Planning Authority on 29th December 2021), are to be protected. The trees shall thereafter be protected during construction in accordance with the details so approved.

Reason : In the interests of identifying and retaining important trees on the site in accordance with Policies SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework. This information is required prior to commencement of the development as it is fundamental to the acceptability of the scheme.

10. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved landscape strategy plan (drawing ref: 10248L.LSP.001 rev D) shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s) and shall be maintained for a period of 10 years from the completion of the development. Any trees and/or shrubs which within a period of 10 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent for any variation.

Reason : To ensure that the agreed landscaping scheme is maintained over a reasonable period that will permit its establishment in the interests of visual amenity and to accord with Policies SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Parking

11. The proposed parking (including 5no. Electric Vehicle charging points), turning, loading and unloading facilities shall be provided in accordance with the approved plans before first occupation of the development hereby permitted. The parking, turning, loading and unloading facilities shall thereafter be retained for use in connection with the development for those purposes only.

Reason : In the interests of highway safety, to ensure the provision of adequate off-street car parking and turning/loading/unloading to comply with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan and Government guidance in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Hours

12. The operational use of the premises hereby permitted shall be restricted to the following times:-

Monday - Friday : 7:30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

Saturdays : 7.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Sundays, Bank and Public Holidays : No time.

Reason : To protect the amenities of the surrounding area and to comply with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan.

Permitted development and use

13. Notwithstanding the provisions of Part 7 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking or re-enacting or amending that order) no enlargement, alteration or improvement of the building hereby permitted shall be undertaken at any time without the prior planning permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason : Taking into account the sensitivity of the site it is considered to be in the public interest to ensure the merits of future proposals can be assessed by the Local Planning Authority so that visual amenity is conserved and to accord with Policy SS2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

14. The development hereby permitted shall be used only in conjunction with the existing timberyard/sawmill use on the adjoining site and shall not at any time accommodate a separate business or use unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason : To ensure effective planning control, prevent the subdivision of the site and ensure the development remains an appropriate extension in accordance with Policies SS2 and EMP2 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan (Part 2).

15. No retail sales shall take place from within the extension hereby permitted unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason : For the avoidance of doubt and to prevent the establishment of uses that would be unsustainable within the open countryside.