

Application Number: 24/10861 Full Planning Permission
Site: LAND AT FORMER FAWLEY POWER STATION,
FAWLEY ROAD, FAWLEY, SO45 1TW
Development: Temporary use of land for storage and distribution
(Use Class B8)
Applicant: Fawley Waterside Limited
Agent: Southern Planning Practice
Target Date: 16/01/2025
Case Officer: Ian Rayner
Officer Recommendation: Grant Temporary Permission
Reason for Referral to Committee: Parish Council contrary view

1 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ISSUES

The key issues are:

- 1) The principle of development, having regard to local plan policy and the recent planning history of the site.
- 2) Transportation and highway impacts.
- 3) Noise and amenity impacts.
- 4) Landscape impacts, including impacts on the adjacent New Forest National Park.
- 5) Ecological impacts, including impacts on nearby designated sites.
- 6) Flood Risk

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site extends to 9.05 hectares and comprises parts of the former Fawley Power Station site. Specifically, the application site covers the large basement area of the former power station turbine hall, as well as adjacent areas outside of this basement - particularly those areas to the south and west of the basement, where the application site extends close to the wider site's boundary with the New Forest National Park.

Access to the site would be via the main access road serving the former power station.

Other adjacent parts of the former power station site are currently being used for the storage of wind turbine blades.

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application seeks to use the application site area for storage and distribution uses, falling under Use Class B8. Permission is sought only for a temporary period of time up until 31st December 2025.

Permission is being applied for retrospectively, as the areas in question are already being used for B8 storage purposes.

There are currently 2 separate B8 storage uses taking place, which this application seeks to regularise. The more significant of these 2 storage uses is being carried out by SJG, a local company based in Marchwood, who have a contract importing electric vans from China. It is understood they moved onto the former power station site early in 2024, after losing their storage yard in Marchwood. The vans are brought into the site in shipping containers. The vans are then moved out of the shipping containers and stored on the site until they have been sold, when they are driven away. Some of the empty shipping containers are also retained and stored on the site before being sold on.

The other storage use is operated by Snoozebox, who occupy the north-western corner of the turbine hall basement, who have been renting part of the site since September 2023. They principally store containers that are used as mobile accommodation units for large construction projects and events. It is understood that there were 2 delivery events since they have leased the site, when the containers were delivered. Other than that, it is understood that they just attend once every 6 months to check their kit, such that there are no regular traffic movements associated with this use.

4 PLANNING HISTORY

Previous proposals relating to wind turbine storage use

- 4.1 2 steel portal framed industrial buildings (Use Class B2); mobile portable cabin; use of land for storage of wind turbine blades (B8); temporary permission sought for 10 years (17/10805) - granted temporary permission 8/9/2017
- 4.2 Variation of Condition 2 of planning permission 17/10805 to allow amended plan numbers entailing the addition of buttresses and associated alterations to the approved blade painting facility building (17/11724) - granted temporary permission 19/2/2018
- 4.3 Leading Edge Protection Building; single-storey portable cabins for welfare facilities and offices (18/10583) - granted temporary permission 30/7/18
- 4.4 EIA Screening Opinions in respect of the above 3 proposals (17/10237), (17/11752), (18/10586) - Opinions given in 2017 and 2018 that EIA not required.
- 4.5 Site 1: Temporary storage of wind turbine blades on site of demolished Fawley Power Station Boiler House; Site 2: Temporary storage of wind turbine blades on the site of the Fawley Power Station Control Room and the adjoining car park. (23/10050) - granted temporary planning permission 3/5/23

Proposals for the demolition of the Fawley Power Station Buildings

- 4.6 Dismantling and removal of external structures including tanks, ductwork and bunds (18/11048) (Demolition Prior Notification Application) - details not required to be approved 28/8/18

- 4.7 Dismantling, removal and site clearance of buildings (19/10131) (Demolition Prior Notification Application) - details not required to be approved 31/5/19
- 4.8 Dismantling, removal and site clearance of buildings at Fawley Power Station and remediation of the site (19/10138) (Approval under Regulations 73 and 75 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010) - granted 31/5/19

Proposal for the redevelopment of Fawley Power Station

- 4.9 Land within the New Forest District Council comprising the demolition of ancillary power station buildings and provision of 1,380 new homes, 95,300 square metres of new commercial, civic and employment space (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, B1, B2, B8, C1, C3, D1 and D2), enlargement of the dock and creation of a canal within part of the turbine hall basement, refurbishment of the remainder of the turbine hall basement to create up to 2,100 space car park, surface car parking, a boat stack, public open space, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, primary access road through the site, flood defences/sea wall, raising site level, hard and soft landscaping, associated infrastructure and engineering works (19/10581) (Outline Application with details only of Access) - withdrawn 12/7/24

Related proposals on other parts of the former Power Station site

- 4.10 Temporary mixed use of land for haulage and B8 storage (Retrospective) (24/11096) - under consideration

5 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework
Planning Practice Guidance

Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One

Policy STR1: Achieving Sustainable Development
Policy STR2: Protection of the countryside, Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the adjoining New Forest National Park
Policy STR3: The strategy for locating new development
Policy STR4: The settlement hierarchy
Policy STR6: Sustainable economic growth
Policy ENV1: Mitigating the impacts of development on International Nature Conservation sites
Policy ENV3: Design quality and local distinctiveness
Policy ENV4: Landscape character and quality
Policy ECON1: Employment land and development
Policy ECON2: Retention of employment sites and consideration of alternative uses
Policy CCC1: Safe and healthy communities
Policy CCC2: Safe and sustainable travel
Strategic Site 4: The former Fawley Power Station

Local Plan Part Two (2014)

DM1: Heritage and Conservation
DM2: Nature conservation, biodiversity and geodiversity
DM5: Contaminated land

6 PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

Fawley Parish Council: We recommend refusal due to the effect on local residents. The location of the site is unsuitable for this type of operation. We raise concern relating to noise impact of the goods vehicles on the village of Fawley and the increase in traffic movements. The Council feels that all work (housing development or commercial use) should cease until the required road improvements are implemented. The storage capacity is not required in this area as ABP has confirmed capacity has been offered at the port.

7 COUNCILLOR COMMENTS

Cllr Alvey: Objects to this application

When the original planning application for Fawley Waterside was approved, it was on the basis that improvements to the roads in the area would be made to reduce the impact of the increased traffic. These improvements were briefed to Councillors in early July by the Planning Heads of NFDC and NPA. These improvements to the local area were funded by the Developer and the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership to the tune of £8.4M. The works were designed and managed by HCC. These works are not yet complete despite the expenditure of all the funding. HCC should be asked to explain this failure.

This latest application, which follows an investigation of a breach of planning conditions, has led to a significant increase in traffic on the adjoining roads and to the major disturbance of local residents. There is no obvious remedy to this other than insisting that these works are stopped until agreed road improvements are completed.

8 CONSULTEE COMMENTS

HCC Highway Authority: No objection, subject to no changes to the operations on the site in its current form and scale.

The highway authority considers that this level of change is not significant and will have no material effect on the operation of the highway network and the fact it is a temporary use.

HCC Rights of Way:

No objection; advice given in respect of Public Rights of Way

Environment Agency:

No objection to the proposed development as submitted subject to a condition relating to the discovery of any previously unidentified contamination; advice given on flood risk.

Natural England

No objection - Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on designated sites.

NFDC Environmental Health (Pollution):

No objection in principle; is satisfied that appropriate guidance has been considered and that the submitted noise report methodology and findings are reliable. Recommends a condition restricting hours of operation and deliveries.

NFDC Ecologist: No objection provided the recommendations of the Peach Ecology Statement are adhered to. A 5 metre buffer should be left between the walls of the site and any stored containers.

National Grid Company

No Objection

New Forest National Park Authority: advise that the potential impacts of the proposal on the New Forest National Park need to be considered.

9 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

25 letters of objection received from local residents and the Waterside Cycling Action Group:

- adverse noise and vibration impacts arising from HGV movements, including at night
- additional HGV movements is damaging road surfaces
- additional HGV movements is causing additional road congestion and dangers to other users of the highway, including cyclists and pedestrians
- The use is not in an appropriate location due the site's distance from the trunk road network
- additional air and dust pollution
- adverse impact on local environment
- the retrospective nature of the proposal shows a disregard for the local community
- The scheme offers no additional employment or benefit to the local economy to offset the scheme's impacts
- ecological concerns
- the proposal, though temporary, would set a precedent for similar longer-term or more permanent uses

10 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 10.1 The application site forms part of an allocated site - where Policy Strategic Site 4 applies.
- 10.2 Policy Strategic Site 4 seeks a comprehensive redevelopment of the former Fawley Power Station site for a residential-led mixed use scheme and public open space - comprising around 1380 new homes, up to 10,000 square metres of ancillary community, retail, leisure and service uses, some office uses and a marina within the central and southern parts of the site, and around 10 hectares of business and industrial uses on the northern part of the site. The policy is accompanied by a Concept Masterplan which indicates that the areas affected by this application should be developed primarily for residential purposes.
- 10.3 The proposed B8 storage use is not considered to be in accordance with the requirements and expectations of Policy Strategic Site 4. Indeed, a permanent B8 storage use would be clearly contrary to policy and would not be a proposal that could be supported at the current time.
- 10.4 However, the application does not seek a permanent planning permission. Instead, only a temporary planning permission is sought until the end of December 2025. As such, it needs to be considered whether a relatively

short-term temporary planning permission (of no more than a year) would be justified in the light of planning policy, the site's recent planning history and the scheme's environmental impacts. On this point, it is of note that Planning Practice Guidance states:

"A temporary planning permission may also be appropriate to enable the temporary use of vacant land or buildings prior to any longer-term proposals coming forward (a 'meanwhile use')."

Planning History

- 10.5 There are already significant parts of the former Fawley Power Station site that are being used for the storage of wind turbine blades. Different parts of the wider site are subject to different temporary planning permissions. The first temporary planning permission (Ref: 17/10805) was granted in September 2017, permitting the storage of wind turbines on 12.78 hectares of the former power station site for a period of 10 years, expiring on 31st December 2027. Under this temporary planning permission, approval was also given for a couple of temporary buildings, including one where the turbines are painted.
- 10.6 More recently, in May 2023, temporary planning permission (Ref: 23/10050) was given for a further 6.22 hectares of land at the former Fawley Power Station to be used for the storage of wind turbine blades. Temporary planning permission was granted for most of the application site area until 31st December 2025. However, a shorter temporary planning permission, expiring on 31st December 2024, was granted for part of the storage area closest to the southern boundary of the site. The shorter temporary planning permission here reflected the build out time of the wider Fawley Waterside development that was anticipated at that time (see details below).
- 10.7 In May 2019, an outline planning application was submitted for the redevelopment of the power station site with 1380 dwellings and significant new areas of employment / commercial floorspace. A related outline planning application for 120 dwellings and infrastructure was submitted to the New Forest National Park Authority. The applications (collectively relating to a development known as Fawley Waterside) were considered by the respective planning committees in July 2020, and there was a resolution to approve both applications subject to the prior completion of a Section 106 legal agreement. However, the legal agreement was never completed, and both applications were withdrawn in July 2024.
- 10.8 The withdrawal of the main redevelopment proposals for the site means that there is no realistic prospect of a more permanent, policy compliant development being delivered on the application site within the timeframe of the current application for temporary planning permission - i.e. before 31st December 2025. What will come forward on the former power station site by way of a more permanent development is not currently clear. What is clear, though, is that the proposed temporary use would not be prejudicial to the delivery of a policy compliant or alternative development in the longer term. As such, it is considered to be an acceptable proposal in principle.
- 10.9 It needs to be noted that there is some overlap between the application site area and the application site area for temporary planning permission 23/10050. Accordingly, nearly all of the area where wind turbine storage was permitted only until 31st December 2024 falls within the current application site area. Additionally, most of the remaining land within the current

application site that is outside of the turbine hall basement on its southern and western sides was also subject to temporary planning permission 23/10050 - where storage of wind turbines can take place until the end of 2025. However, wind turbine storage is actually no longer taking place on any part of the current application site - with the areas of overlap now being used instead for the storage of vans associated with SJG's operations.

Economic and Employment considerations

- 10.10 The active use of the application site for the proposed storage use supports 2 existing businesses and 8 full-time employees. As an application for temporary planning permission, the proposal will provide short term benefits to the local economy, supporting economic growth and productivity. This would be consistent with the objectives of Policy STR6 of the Local Plan.

Highway safety, access and parking

- 10.11 The transportation impacts of the proposed development need to be assessed in the light of Paragraph 116 of the NPPF, which indicates 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, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios. Policy ENV3 of the Local Plan, meanwhile, requires development to be laid out in a way that is safe to access.
- 10.12 In this case, the application is accompanied by a detailed Transport Statement, which assesses the combined transportation impacts of this proposal and the separate proposed temporary storage and haulage use that is the subject of Planning Application 24/11096.
- 10.13 In order to understand how much traffic the proposed storage uses are generating, automated traffic count surveys were undertaken during June 2024 on both the access road serving the former power station and on a section of the B3053 close to the north of the site. These surveys found that there were 121 inbound vehicle movements and 138 outbound vehicle movements on the average weekday, of which 10-14% were HGV movements, equating to an average of 31 HGV movements over a whole weekday. Vehicle movements on Saturdays and Sundays were materially less than this. As a proportion of vehicular movements on the adjacent section of the B3053, the former power station site is therefore responsible for about 8% of traffic on a typical weekday (10% of the morning peak hour traffic and 6% of evening peak hour traffic).
- 10.14 It is important to recognise that only a proportion of traffic movements using the former power station site are associated with the unauthorised uses that are the subject of the current applications for temporary planning permission. The applicant's Transport Statement concludes that the percentage change in traffic flows resulting from the unauthorised uses is low, amounting to not more than 3% in terms of overall traffic volumes. The predicted change in HGV movements is higher in percentage terms, but the actual number of movements remains low overall.
- 10.15 The Transport Statement concludes that the sites which are the subject of the retrospective planning applications do not generate large volumes of trips and will have no material effect on the operation of the network. The Highway Authority have assessed the applicant's Transport Statement, its

methodology and conclusions, and are satisfied that the proposed uses do not result in a significant level of change to traffic on adjacent roads. They are satisfied that the proposals, in combination, do not have a material effect on the operations of the highway. It is not considered there is any reason to disagree with the Highway Authority's conclusions.

- 10.16 The submitted Transport Statement is based on the current storage and haulage use operations, and it should be recognised that an alternative storage user might potentially use the site in a more intensive manner than the existing users. However, given the proposal is seeking only a temporary planning permission until the end of 2025, it is considered reasonable to assess transportation impacts based on the impact of the existing unauthorised uses.
- 10.17 Concerns have been raised that there need to be further road improvements to the A326 / B3053 to offset the transportation impact of the additional traffic generated by this development. It is noted that some junctions to the A326 have been recently improved as a result of funding that has been secured by Hampshire County Council. However, having regard to the comments of the Highway Authority, this proposed development, neither in itself or in combination with the other application for temporary planning permission, does not generate a level of additional traffic on local roads that impacts harmfully on the safety and capacity of the local highway network. The transportation impact of this proposed temporary use is not in any sense comparable to the transportation impact of the redevelopment proposals that were withdrawn last year and which did require mitigation. Accordingly, there is considered no justification for requiring the development to secure similar or indeed any transportation mitigation measures. Any such mitigation would, moreover, be disproportionate, given the application only seeks temporary planning permission until the end of this year.
- 10.18 It is recognised that the proposed development does not provide any additional infrastructure or facilities for cyclists or pedestrians. Given the nature of the proposed use and the fact that only a short-term temporary planning permission is being sought, the lack of any such provision is considered reasonable and justified.
- 10.19 Overall, based on the conclusions above and the advice of Paragraph 116 of the NPPF, it is considered that the proposal is consistent with planning policies that relate to highway safety.

Noise and amenity impacts

- 10.20 Noise and amenity impacts must be considered in the light of Policy ENV3 of the Local Plan, which requires development to avoid unacceptable effects by reason of noise pollution or other adverse impacts on local character or residential amenity.
- 10.21 The nearest residential properties to the proposed storage area are in Ower Lane. The nearest property is approximately 100 metres away from the area where the B8 storage use is proposed. Visually, it is not considered the proposed storage use would have any adverse visual impact upon residential amenities in view of this degree of separation. The proposed storage use does generate some noise and so this is potentially a greater concern. However, the most significant on-site noise is from movements of containers / vehicles within the turbine hall basement, which due to its depth, is a very effective noise buffer.

- 10.22 The application is supported by a detailed noise assessment report, which has considered noise impacts on the nearest noise sensitive receptors (including those in Ower Lane). Based on national guidance, the noise assessment report concludes that noise levels in and around the nearest noise sensitive properties fall within the criteria for acceptable noise levels. Furthermore, the report anticipates that the proposal will not increase typical maximum nighttime noise levels as experienced by the nearest noise sensitive receptors. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has reviewed the submitted noise assessment and is satisfied that it follows appropriate guidance and that its findings are reliable. As such, in terms of operational noise, whilst there may be some additional impact on nearby properties in Ower Lane, this would not be significant and would be within established guidelines.
- 10.23 The Council's Environmental Health Officer has suggested that hours of use be restricted to protect residential amenities. The agent has confirmed that the hours of use for SJG and Snoozebox are 7am to 5pm Monday to Friday and that the applicants would be happy to accept a condition to this effect. Accordingly, it is considered reasonable and appropriate to impose a condition along these lines, given that operational noise outside of these hours has the potential to have a greater negative impact on the nearest noise sensitive receptors.
- 10.24 One of the main concerns that has been raised by local residents is that the proposed use has given rise to additional HGV vehicle movements on the wider highway network, including outside of normal daytime working hours, causing noise and disturbance. Whilst a number of residents living close to the B3053 consider there to be an issue, there is no substantive evidence to demonstrate that either SJG or Snoozebox's operations on the application site are resulting in significant vehicular movements beyond the application site outside of daytime working hours, noting that the companies do not typically operate before 7am on weekdays or at all at weekends. The agent has advised that it is rare that SJG have any traffic movements outside these hours.
- 10.25 The noise assessment submitted with the application calculates that increases in traffic flows as a result of the proposed temporary uses will result in changes of noise levels of less than 1dB (when measured at sensitive roadside receptors), which is judged to have a negligible impact. Whilst this figure is not disputed, it does not paint the full picture, and it is recognised that even a small number of very early morning HGV movements can potentially have a more significant impact on residential amenities. However, as set out in the preceding paragraphs, restricting the operational hours of the proposed use should ensure any significant adverse effects arising from traffic noise are avoided.
- 10.26 Overall, provided that operational hours are restricted to current operational hours, it is considered the development's impact on residential amenities would be in accordance with the provisions of Policy ENV3 of the Local Plan.

Landscape and visual impact

- 10.27 Policy ENV3 of the Local Plan requires development to be sympathetic to its environment and context, respecting and enhancing local distinctiveness, character and identity; and to avoid unacceptable effects by reason of visual

intrusion. Policy ENV4, meanwhile, seeks to successfully integrate new development into the local landscape context.

- 10.28 In terms of its visual impact, the proposed storage area can be split into those areas inside the former turbine hall basement and those areas outside. The turbine hall basement is quite deep, extending significantly below adjacent ground levels. This means that the storage of containers by Snoozebox is not visible away from the rim of the basement. Currently, all containers associated with SJG's activities are also stored within the basement. These are being stacked up to 5 containers high. In any stack, the bottom 3 containers are set wholly below the outer rim of the basement, the fourth container does protrude above the rim in places, whilst the fifth container does extend more visibly above the rim. As such, other than from those areas within the basement and around its outer rim, only 1-2 storeys of container are visible. These containers are set well away from the boundaries of the power station and are largely screened by other storage items from any longer distant views. Therefore, their visual impact is quite limited.
- 10.29 Outside of the basement, the proposed storage use is mainly comprised of white vans that are being stored in long parallel rows. These are not tall vehicles, so given the context of other storage activities and the relic power station paraphernalia, it is not considered they have a significant visual impact. The applicant's agent has also suggested that the applicant would like the flexibility to be able to store single height containers in some areas outside of the turbine hall basement.
- 10.30 The proposed storage of vans can be seen from adjacent areas within the New Forest National Park, most notably from the public footpath that runs close to the southern boundary of the former power station. However, due to their height, the vans are not visually dominant and assimilate into the existing industrialised landscape of the former power station site without adversely affecting the special qualities of the New Forest National Park. This is particularly the case in view of the fact that the proposed storage use is only temporary. Were a more permanent use proposed, then one might reasonably expect some landscape screening to be introduced, but as the use is only proposed until the end of 2025, such landscape screening would be a disproportionate requirement.
- 10.31 Overall, in view of the temporary nature of the proposal and the location and type of storage being undertaken, it is considered the proposed uses have an acceptable visual and landscape impact that is consistent with policies ENV3 and ENV4 of the Local Plan. However, were a B8 storage use to operate other than is currently the case, then the impact may not be so acceptable. In particular, if containers were to be stored outside of the former turbine hall basement, close to the site's boundary with the National Park, then they would potentially have a much more significant impact than the existing van storage activities. Likewise, if (shipping) container storage were to exceed 5 stacked containers in height within the former turbine hall, then again there would start to be a more significant impact, which would potentially be harmful given the proximity of the New Forest National Park. Therefore, even on a temporary basis, it is considered the visual impact of the development is only acceptable if conditions are imposed that limit where containers / non-vehicles are stored, as well as restricting the height of any container storage within the basement. In response to this concern, a plan has been submitted, which enables the location and height of container storage to be suitably controlled.

Heritage Impact

- 10.32 Parts of the proposed storage areas are visible from the Grade II Listed Building at Ower Farm (within the National Park). The impact of the proposal on the setting of this building and other nearby heritage assets at Badminton Farm and Calshot Spit is assessed within a Heritage Statement that has been submitted in support of the application. The proposed storage use would be a reasonably generous distance away from Ower Farm (about 250 metres away), and even further from other heritage assets. Given this degree of separation, the existing industrial context and the limited height of the proposed storage, the Heritage Statement concludes that there would be no adverse impact on the setting of heritage assets. This conclusion is fully accepted, and the proposal is therefore considered to comply with heritage related provisions in the NPPF, as well as policy DM1 of the Local Plan.

Ecology

- 10.33 Policy STR1 of the Local Plan expects all new development to avoid wherever possible (and mitigate where necessary) direct and indirect impacts of development on the New Forest and Solent International Nature Conservation sites.
- 10.34 In this case, the site is relatively close to protected coastal habitats (less than 200 metres away at the closest point) including the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area and Ramar Site, the Solent Maritime Special Area for Conservation, as well as the Hythe to Calshot Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest. However, Natural England are satisfied that the proposed use would have no significant adverse impact (or likely significant effects) on these designated sites. It is of note that the proposed use is separated from the protected areas by existing wind turbine storage activities. The temporary nature of the proposed use would also naturally limit any potential impacts.
- 10.35 Whilst the area of land where storage is proposed is generally of low ecological interest, the ecological report submitted with the application identifies that some of the holes and crevices in the turbine hall basement have the potential to support roosting bats, although no direct evidence of roosting bats was found. As an interim measure, the ecology report suggests that there be a 5 metre buffer between the walls of the basement and any stored containers so that any stored items do not obstruct access to potential roosting holes. This recommendation is supported by the Council's own ecologist. At present, however, this recommendation is not being complied with, and containers are, in places, being stored close to the walls of the turbine hall basement.
- 10.36 Were the application seeking temporary planning permission for a longer period of time, then it would be appropriate to require the applicant to undertake more detailed ecological surveys to determine any bat presence within the turbine hall basement. However, given the short term temporary nature of the proposal, it is considered that a condition requiring the provision of the suggested 5 metre buffer from the edges of the turbine hall basement would suffice and should be a requirement of any temporary planning permission (unless otherwise justified with additional ecological evidence). With such a condition, it is considered the proposal would have an acceptable impact on protected species in accordance with policies STR1, ENV1 and DM2 of the Local Plan.

Flood Risk

- 10.37 The majority of the application site is in Flood Zone 1, so is at low risk of flooding. However, very small parts of the site, close to the southern boundary of the site or to the north of the turbine hall basement, fall within either Flood Zones 2 or 3. The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), which was the subject of consultation with the Environment Agency. They have advised that the FRA is inadequate. Due, however, to the low risk associated with the proposed use and the fact that temporary planning permission is only sought until the end of 2025, they are willing to overlook the FRA's inadequacies. They have raised no objection to the proposal in terms of flood risk. As such, whilst the proposal may not be fully in accordance with flood risk policies as set out in the NPPF, the flood risk impact associated with the development is sufficiently low as to be acceptable.
- 10.38 The Environment Agency have highlighted that because the turbine hall basement is below ground level, this area is a potential concern in an extreme flood risk event. They advise the applicant to consider an emergency plan. The application is actually accompanied by a Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan, which is considered to set out appropriate measures (taking into account the nature of the development). It is considered a condition should be imposed to ensure adherence to this plan.

Other concerns

- 10.39 A concern has been raised about air and dust pollution. The application is accompanied by an air quality assessment. This report concludes that vehicle movements associated with the development fall below relevant criteria. Therefore, the report concludes that the air quality effects of the development will be 'not significant'. The report concludes, moreover, that the proposal complies with national and local policy for air quality. There is considered no reason to disagree with the report's conclusions. As such, the proposal is considered to be consistent with Policy CCC1, which requires that development should not result in pollution or hazards which prejudice the health and safety of communities and their environments.
- 10.40 The Environment Agency have requested a condition in respect of the reporting of unexpected contamination. However, as the application is retrospective and involves no ground breaking or construction, such a condition is considered unnecessary.
- 10.41 Concerns have been raised as to what will happen at the end of any temporary planning permission period. Ultimately, this proposal can only be assessed on the basis of what has been applied for. Any future proposal to extend the temporary planning permission period would need to be reviewed and reassessed based on the policies and circumstances at that time.

11 OTHER MATTERS

N/A

12 CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

As a permanent use, the proposed B8 Storage use would be contrary to Policy Strategic Site 4 of the Local Plan and would not be justified.

However, a short-term temporary permission until the end of this year would deliver short-term economic benefits and would in principle be justified pending clarity on the long-term intentions and proposals for the wider power station site. The proposed temporary use would also accord, in principle, with Planning Practice Guidance as set out in Paragraph 10.4 above.

The transportation, environmental and amenity impacts of the proposed use have been carefully considered. The proposed use does generate additional HGV and traffic movements on the local road network, but the level of additional traffic generated is not considered to be of a significance that would be harmful to the safety and capacity of the local highway network or to require mitigation. As the proposed use does not operate before 7am or at weekends (and can be controlled as such), the proposed use is not considered to result in traffic movements that would have unacceptable amenity impacts, whilst noise on the site itself arising from the proposed use would be within acceptable limits.

The landscape impact of the proposal would be short term and would be acceptable given the existing context, subject to conditions. Ecological impacts could also be reasonably mitigated through conditions.

As such, based on the fact that permission is only sought until the end of this year, it is considered that the proposal would be in accordance with policies STR1, STR6, ENV3, CCC1 and DM1 of the Local Plan. Accordingly, subject to conditions, it is recommended that temporary planning permission be granted until the end of this year.

13 RECOMMENDATION

Grant Temporary Permission

Proposed Conditions:

1. The use hereby approved shall cease on or before 31st December 2025.

Reason: The application site forms part of a Strategic Site allocation that is expected to be developed in accordance with Policy Strategic Site 4 of the New Forest District Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1. The proposed development would not be in accordance with this policy. However, it is considered that a temporary permission until the end of 2025 would deliver justified economic benefits in the short-term without prejudicing the delivery of a policy compliant scheme in the medium to long term.

2. The development permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
- Site Location Plan. Site B: NFNP-NM-315.01 rev B
Block Plan. Site B: NFNP-NM-315.05
Plan showing Basement and Ground Level Areas: NFNP-NM-315.07 rev A

Reason: To ensure satisfactory provision of the development.

3. No activity shall take place on the site in connection with the approved use other than between the hours of 7am to 5pm Monday to Fridays, not including recognised bank and public holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of nearby residential properties in accordance with Policy CS2 of the Local Plan for the New Forest District outside the National Park (Core Strategy).

4. There shall be no storage of containers on that part of the site that is coloured yellow on Drawing NFNP-NM-315.07 rev A. In addition to this, any containers stored on that part of the site that is coloured beige on Drawing NFNP-NM-315.07 rev A shall be single height only and shall not be stacked, whilst any containers stored within the area coloured green on Drawing NFNP-NM-315.07 rev A shall not be stacked more than 5 containers high.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the special qualities of the nearby New Forest National Park.

5. Storage outside of the former turbine hall basement within the area coloured yellow on Drawing NFNP-NM-315.07 rev A shall be restricted to either the storage of vehicles or wind turbine blades.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the special qualities of the nearby New Forest National Park.

6. All containers and items stored within the turbine hall basement as coloured green on Drawing NFNP-NM-315.07 rev A shall be sited so as to be at least 5 metres away from the edge of the turbine hall basement unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority following the submission of evidence from a professional ecologist to demonstrate that siting within 5 metres of the edge of the turbine hall basement can take place without adversely affecting protected bat species.

Reason: To ensure the approved development does not harm protected bat species.

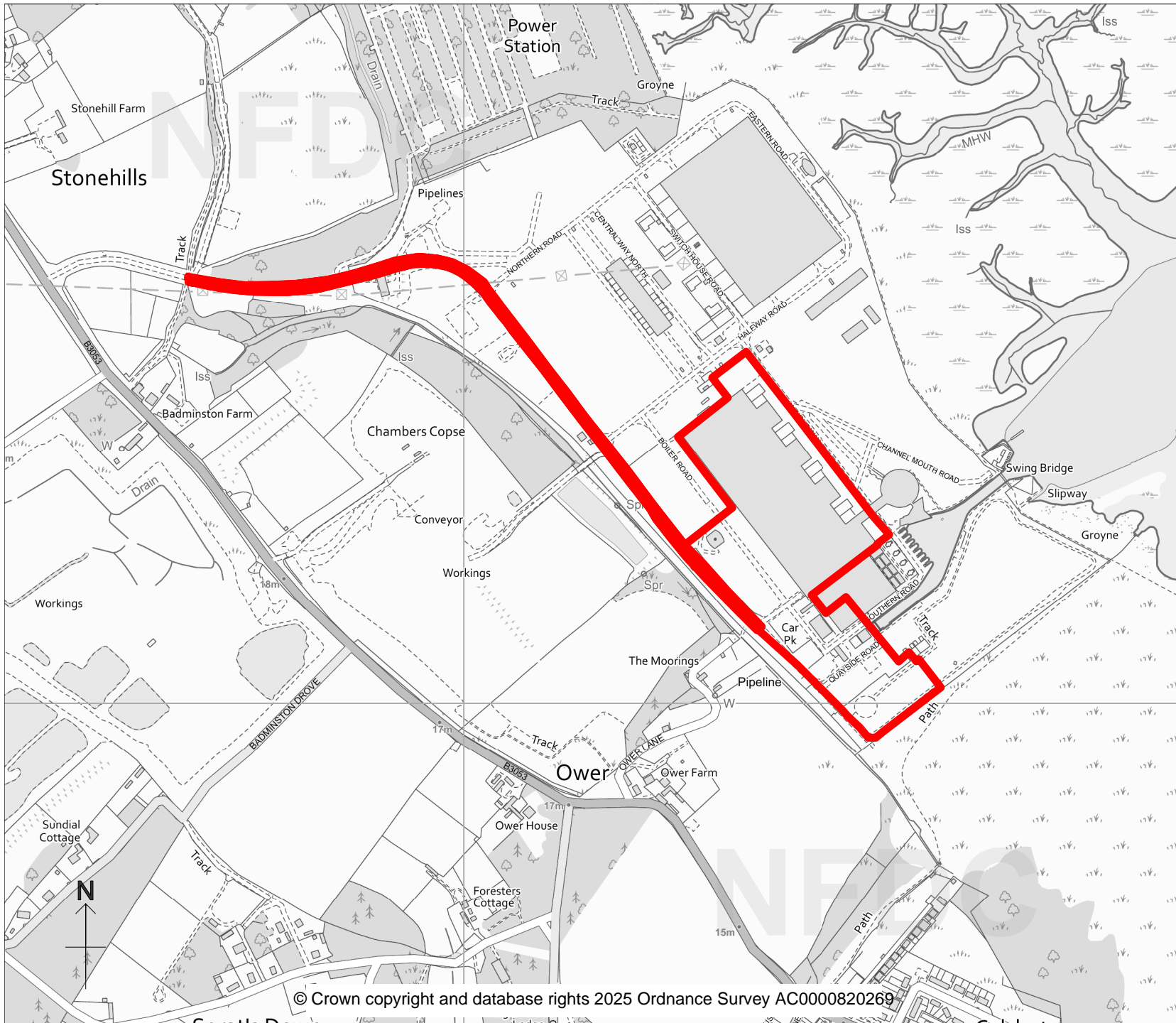
7. The use hereby approved shall only be occupied and take place in accordance with the submitted Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan (Appendix 6 of the Flood Risk Assessment submitted by Southern Planning Practice Ltd, dated September 2024).

Reason: To ensure the flood risk associated with the development is acceptably minimised.

Further Information:

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New Forest DISTRICT COUNCIL

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PLANNING COMMITTEE

February 2025

Land at Former Fawley Power Station
Fawley Road
Fawley
24/10861

Scale 1:7500

N.B. If printing this plan from
the internet, it will not be to
scale.