



RAUNDS TOWN COUNCIL

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Town Mayor: Cllr Nick Beck

Town Clerk: Kate Houlihan

Planning
East Northamptonshire Council
Cedar Drive
Thrapston
NN14 4Lz

22 January 2018

Dear Sirs,

17/00266/FUL | Proposed Distribution Centre (B8 Use Class) together with ancillary offices, parking, servicing and site landscaping. |West End Land North of Brick Kiln Road Raunds Northamptonshire

I am writing on behalf of Raunds Town Council in response to the amended application 17/0266/FUL received by the Town Council on 20th December 2017.

The Town Council have noted the revised road layout and acknowledge that this alleviates some of the safety concerns voiced by so many local residents, who were worried about HGV traffic passing through a residential area.

However having fully considered all the submitted material and in consideration of the entire application, the Town Council have voted to object to this application for the reasons detailed in this letter.

The Town Council believe that the revised road access will cause additional problems. A fifth exit from the A45 roundabout will undoubtedly cause congestion at the roundabout and impact traffic on the A45. Councillors have noted a recommendation from Northamptonshire Highways that as “the main impact will be on the A45 then Highways England should be consulted on the impacts of this revised access on their network”. Could you confirm that their comments have been received and have been taken into account?

In addition the access road is currently used as a parking area by a number of vehicles including HGV's, as can be seen from the photograph below.



The submitted plans do not demonstrate how parked vehicles on the access road will be managed in the future to ensure that there is always room for 2 HGV's to pass.

Once within the site boundary, the access road passes in front of the distribution centre, this will have the greatest detrimental impact on neighbouring properties.

As well as concerns regarding the revised access road, objections raised by our planning consultant, Chris Akrill, in relation to the previous layout of this application are still relevant and are repeated here for completeness.

The current planning application draws heavily on the previous, outline approval on the site, which was granted permission in 2012. The previous application showed the employment site having five buildings laid out in two rows and separated by an access road and parking / loading area. The idea was that the units would be flexible, on the indicative layout the buildings are shown as being split into smaller units, giving a total of 15 small-medium units.

Clearly, there was an expectation that the development would deliver a range of employment opportunities, including office spaces and smaller industrial units that would provide opportunities for smaller businesses to bring jobs to Raunds. Without these smaller units the many home workers and start-up businesses within Raunds are being denied the opportunity to expand into premises within the Town.

The extant permission shows the maximum height of the commercial buildings as 12 metres." The officer's report noted that at 12 metres the height of the units was not significantly greater than a "typical 10m three storey dwelling" and would therefore not have a significant visual impact on the wider landscape". The proposed warehouse building at 18 metres will have a detrimental impact on the neighbouring residential area and the wider community.

This latest planning application seeks permission for a substantial expansion of the B8 floorspace on the site, increasing from 11,613 m² to 21,135 m², an addition of almost 10,000 m². It has been claimed by the applicants that the increase is less

significant, as there was no restriction on the B1 and B2 space being converted to B8 use, although we would argue that the Officers report signalled the intention to control the form, scale and mix of development on the site to reflect that promoted by the 2011 application.

The Town Council are concerned that this intensification of B8 use on the site does not reflect the original planning application and would have adverse traffic and amenity impacts for the adjoining neighbours.

The development moves to 24-hour operation, rather than standard business hours typically seen in B1 and B2 uses. We note that the EHO has expressed concerns that the proposed development would harm the amenity of the neighbouring residents, generating noise levels that cannot be mitigated with screening. The Town Council share these concerns and believe that 24-hour operation of this site cannot be acceptable in any circumstances. Paragraphs 120 and 123 of the NPPF seek to protect health and quality of life from the impacts of development. The feedback from the local community is clear, that they are very concerned that this development will significantly impact upon the quality of life of those in the surrounding area.

Finally, the Town Council are concerned that the provision of a further large warehouse on the edge of Raunds will contribute to further erosion of the character and appearance of the area. Raising the height of the building by 33% compared to the approved scheme will not respect the height of the neighbouring residential development.

Paragraph 64 of the NPPF requires development that does not improve the character or quality of an area and the way it functions should be refused. Paragraph 66 stipulates that applicants will be expected to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. We are of the view that this proposal does not meet these basic requirements.

For these reasons the Town Council strongly opposes this development. The creation of new employment opportunities within the Borough are welcomed, and have been established on this site by the 2011 planning application. It was clear that when recommending that scheme for approval, there was a clear intent to agree a design code for the development that reflected the parameters suggested by the outline application.

This scheme seeks to intensify the distribution use of the site; increase the amount of developed floorspace; increase the height of the buildings; increase the number of HGV movements; allow HGV traffic closer to residential properties neighbouring the site; and allow 24-hour operation. The Town Council do not support this overdevelopment of the site, which will lead to unacceptable living conditions for the neighbouring residents.

We respectfully request that these comments are taken account when determining this application.

Yours sincerely

Kate Houlihan

Town Clerk