

Planning Department
Eastleigh District Council
Eastleigh House
Upper Market Street
Eastleigh
SO50 9YN

29 June 2023

Your Ref: PP-12267046

Dear Sir / Madam,

Planning Application: Mercury Yacht Harbour, Satchell Lane, Hamble, Southampton, SO31 4HQ

Use of existing hard standing for the siting of shipping containers and use for offices and storage in association with marina related business. (Retrospective Application).

On behalf of MDL Ltd, owners of Mercury Yacht Harbour, this planning application relates to retrospective planning permission for the change of use from existing hard standing to the siting of shipping containers for use as offices and storage in relation to the marina business. The containers are located to the north of the site, within a well screened and discrete location in the existing car park and do not remove any existing car parking spaces.

Planning Assessment

Principle of development

Strategic Policies S1 and S4 of Eastleigh Local Plan (2022) support and encourage the delivery of new employment floor space where the development comprises sustainable development. The new unit is set within an area of hard standing to the north of the existing car park and is in a close proximity to similar single storey units on the marina, demonstrating this location for buildings associated with the established marina are well accepted. The proposal does not impact on the loss of any existing car parking spaces and provides much needed space for the growth of on-site operations, maximising the efficiency of land in accordance with Section 11 of the NPPF and Policy S1(g) and DM1(b) of the Local Plan which supports opportunities to optimise density of new development.

Paragraph 81 of the NPPF confirms that planning decisions should help create conditions where businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. It also explains that significant weight should be given on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account local business needs. The principle of development for an office and storage unit for economic growth of the business is be afforded significant weight.

A number of planning applications for similar developments have also been approved at Mercury Yacht Marina, including F/15/76445 which received planning permission for:

“Siting of storage and office accommodation (portable units) for temporary 3-year period.”

The officer report stated:

“The proposal facility will be used for servicing boats which contributes to the range of facilities available at the marina and the marina’s viability. As such the principle of the development is considered acceptable in accordance with Policy 124.E”.

Furthermore, the flat roof office building immediately to the east of this site, which provides floorspace for marine-based operations, has received temporary planning permission (planning reference F/19/84769) for:

“Continued siting of 1no.portable office building for a further period of three years.”

The planning officer stated in their report that as the building was to be used for marine related purposes, the principle was acceptable.

Overall, with officer support on similar schemes for this type of development and with the development allowing for much needed space to grow the business, the principle of development is entirely acceptable and is in accordance with Policy S1 and S4 of the Local Plan and the provisions of the NPPF.

Design

The proposal includes the provision of shipping containers and decking to the northernmost part of the car park in an area of existing hard standing. These are well screened from prominent view of the surroundings with the addition of a cladded wall across the entire front width of the units, allowing this to appear as one single unit that fits comfortably within the character of the marina. This ensures a well-designed and integrated unit, whereby the proposal will not cause any harm or intrusion into the wider area. Furthermore, mature trees and hedging to the north of the site, and boundary treatment to the west of the site provide effective screening and restrict surrounding views of the containers.

A similar single-storey unit for an office building at Mercury Marina (planning reference F/19/84769), which is located directly adjacent this unit, was found to be acceptable with regards to its scale and location. As this site is within an immediate proximity, this is considered materially relevant. The case officer stated:

“The building is sited within the central boat storage area where it is not unduly prominent within its surroundings and is not easily visible from outside of the site or from the waterfront”.

The new unit is also appropriately sited as it sits within an area of underutilised land which is closely located to existing buildings of a similar design, and is set well away from the site curtilage, further reducing any impact of the proposal on the wider area. The proposal comprises a modest footprint with a total GIA of 53.84sqm at single-storey level only, which is a suitable scale for its location and relates well in scale to the existing flat roof buildings in the surrounding area of the marina.

The scheme is therefore in accordance with DM1 of the Local Plan which seeks for development to be compatible with adjoining uses in terms of mass, scale, materials, layout, density, design and siting, as well as the aims of the NPPF.

Flood Risk

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 as shown on Environment Agency Map below, therefore no Flood Risk Assessment is required. The building is positioned back from the water's edge, and it is more protected than many of the surrounding buildings. The scheme is therefore in accordance with DM3 and DM5 of the Local Plan.



EA Flood Risk Map showing site highlighted in red is within Flood Zone 1.

Biodiversity

Policy DM1 of the Local Plan requires development to not have a significant adverse impact on biodiversity. As the proposal is within an existing car park which has no ecological value, no harm to biodiversity will arise. Furthermore, there are no TPOs within the area, and trees and hedging to the north of the site are set well separated from the proposals to not cause any material harm. The proposal is thus in accordance with Policy DM1 of the Local Plan.

Parking

The proposed unit will not remove any existing vehicle parking spaces from the car park. The site has sufficient car parking provision for five additional five employees and therefore there is no harm to existing parking arrangements, in accordance with DM14 of the Local Plan.

Summary

The additional storage and office are required to support the Marina business and have been appropriately designed to preserve the character of the area. As the NPPF attaches significant weight to the economic growth of business, the applicant seeks retrospective planning permission to permit the use of the shipping containers for related marine activities.

Please do not hesitate to contact myself if you have any queries.

Yours Sincerely



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