



Committee Report

Planning Committee North - 12 December 2023

Application no DC/23/1674/FUL

Location

Hamilton Docks
Hamilton Road
Lowestoft
Suffolk
NR32 1XF

Expiry date 6 October 2023

Application type Full Application

Applicant Sembmarine SLP Ltd

Parish Lowestoft

Proposal Demolition and development of warehousing and offices to store parts for off-shore renewable infrastructure.

Case Officer Matthew Gee
01502 523021
matthew.gee@east Suffolk.gov.uk

1. Summary

- 1.1. Planning permission is sought for the demolition and development of warehousing and offices to store parts for off-shore renewable infrastructure. The site is situated within the Power Park, where the principle of associated and ancillary uses necessary to support the offshore energy and engineering sectors will be permitted. The proposed building is not considered to adversely impact upon the character and appearance of the Industrial Estate, and there would be no adverse impacts arising on surrounding land users.
- 1.2. The Environment Agency has raised no objections in connection with flooding on the site. The Lead Local Flood Authority (“LLFA”) initially raised concerns regarding the lack of information to allow assessment of the surface water flooding issues. This additional information has been provided to the LLFA, and officers are awaiting a response, which will be provided in the update report published the day before the Committee meeting; however, officers are content that the scheme can be made acceptable in terms of surface water drainage. The Town Council objected to reinforce the Highways Authority objection;

however, following re-consultation on amended plans the Highways Authority no longer object. The Town Council have provided no further comments.

1.3. Therefore, the application is considered to accord to local and national planning policy, and as such it is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions and following the final consultation response from the LLFA.

1.4. The application is presented to committee as the land is owned by East Suffolk Council.

2. Site Description

2.1. The site is situated within the settlement boundary and forms part of the wider industrial estate. The area is designated under Local Plan policy WLP2.2 as the 'PowerPark'.

2.2. The site previously comprised a large steel framed storage building measuring 7.9m tall, 10m wide and 18.8m deep. However, it is understood this was demolished prior to the submission of this application. The site also comprises another large steel framed building to the north of the site, as well as a prefab single storey office building.

2.3. The site is accessed from Hamilton Road, which the site bounds to the south; and the site is bounded by industrial land to the north and west, and by the Sea wall and North Sea to the east.

3. Proposal

3.1. Planning permission is sought for the demolition and development of warehousing and offices to store parts for offshore renewable infrastructure.

3.2. The proposed building would be in a squat 'L' shaped form, measuring (at its further extremities) 45m wide, 58m deep, and 9.5m high. The building will be clad in grey profiled cladding, with a glazed front entrance facing south, large roller shutter on the east elevation, and three roller shutters on the north elevation. The building's roof will also include a PV array.

4. Consultations

Third Party Representations

4.1. No third-party letters of representation have been received.

Parish/Town Council

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Lowestoft Town Council	24 July 2023	15 August 2023
Summary of comments: The Town Council's Planning Committee has considered this application and it was agreed to recommend refusal of the application due to the serious concerns raised by Suffolk Highways and the number of statutory consultee objections.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Lowestoft Town Council	16 November 2023	No response
Summary of comments: No comments received at the date of writing.		

Statutory consultees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Highways Department	24 July 2023	2 August 2023
Summary of comments: Holding objection raised.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Environment Agency - Drainage	24 July 2023	9 August 2023
Summary of comments: Holding Objection raised until further information in regards to flood risk is provided.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Natural England	24 July 2023	1 August 2023
Summary of comments: No objections.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Flooding Authority	24 July 2023	15 August 2023
Summary of comments: Holding objection raised until further information is provided.		

Non statutory consultees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Environmental Protection	24 July 2023	16 August 2023
Summary of comments: No objections.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Ecology	24 July 2023	9 August 2023
Summary of comments:		

No objections subject to conditions.

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Anglian Water	24 July 2023	28 July 2023
Summary of comments: No objections.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Economic Development	24 July 2023	No response
Summary of comments: No comments received.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Design And Conservation	24 July 2023	24 July 2023
Summary of comments: No comment.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Disability Forum	24 July 2023	No response
Summary of comments: No comments received.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Fire And Rescue Service	24 July 2023	25 July 2023
Summary of comments: No objections.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC County Archaeological Unit	24 July 2023	27 July 2023
Summary of comments: No objections.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Network Rail Property (Eastern Region - Anglia)	24 July 2023	No response
Summary of comments: No comments received.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Suffolk Police Design Out Crime Officer	24 July 2023	No response
Summary of comments: No comments received.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SUSTRANS	24 July 2023	No response
Summary of comments: No comments received.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Suffolk Wildlife Trust	24 July 2023	31 July 2023
Summary of comments: No objections, subject to CEMP and mitigation taking place.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
East Suffolk Building Control	24 July 2023	25 July 2023
Summary of comments: No objections.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Waste Management Services - East Suffolk Norse	24 July 2023	No response
Summary of comments: No comments received.		

Reconsultation consultees

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Highways Department	29 September 2023	4 October 2023
Summary of comments: Following the submission of the additional information no objections raised.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
Environment Agency - Drainage	29 September 2023	20 October 2023
Summary of comments: Following the submission of the additional information no objections raised.		

Consultee	Date consulted	Date reply received
SCC Flooding Authority	16 November 2023	No response
Summary of comments: No comments received at the date of writing.		

5. Publicity

The application has been the subject of the following press advertisement:

Category	Published	Expiry	Publication
Major Application	28 July 2023	18 August 2023	Lowestoft Journal
Category	Published	Expiry	Publication
Major Application	28 July 2023	18 August 2023	Beccles and Bungay Journal

6. Site notices

General Site Notice	Reason for site notice: Major Application
	Date posted: 3 August 2023
	Expiry date: 24 August 2023

7. Planning policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)
WLP1.1 - Scale and Location of Growth (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)
WLP1.2 - Settlement Boundaries (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)
WLP2.2 - PowerPark (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)
WLP8.24 - Flood Risk (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)
WLP8.29 - Design (East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan, Adopted March 2019)

8. Planning Considerations

Principle

- 8.1. The site is situated within the settlement boundary and forms part of the wider industrial estate. The area is designated under WLP2.2 as the 'PowerPark'. The policy sets out that "Land comprising the PowerPark (23.37 hectares) as defined on the Policies Map is allocated for employment development (use classes B1, B2 and B8) and port related development. Associated and ancillary uses necessary to support the offshore energy and engineering sectors will also be permitted."
- 8.2. The submitted planning statement sets out that "Seatrium ORS will be one of the largest offshore marine groups in the world.

Seatrium has been awarded the contract to supply 3 2GW offshore platforms from TenneT for the Dutch sector totalling €6bn. As part of this award, Sembmarine have been awarded

the Hookup and Commissioning, Logistics Marine Spread and Warranty (maintenance) on all 3 platforms providing an extensive order book over the next 15 years.

Seatrium ORS plans to operate from bases in the Netherland and UK, with Lowestoft being the main UK operational base and Head Office for the renewable offshore services group. Currently 16 people are employed in its Lowestoft office and there are plans for this to grow to 21 by the end of 2023.

There are currently a further 35 sub-contract and contract workers managed from the Lowestoft base. It is anticipated that employee numbers will increase to 35 personnel in 2024 with the number of subcontract and contract works increasing to more than 150 bringing the total number of staff close to 200 in Suffolk and East Anglia.

The current building proposal allows for 60 to 80 full time office-based staff at the Lowestoft HQ, with the structure allowing for future expansion by utilizing more of the warehouse space for offices and wider site for further development should it be required."

- 8.3. As such the proposal is development that supports the offshore energy sector, and therefore complies with the aims of the Power Park policy.

Design

- 8.4. Policy WLP8.29 sets out that development proposals should respond to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The site is situated on the south-east corner of the industrial estate, which has a mixed character of both older and more modern large steel framed buildings. The proposal will be a large steel clad building, which is considered characteristic of the area. The overall scale of the building, whilst large, is also not at odds with the visual appearance of the wider industrial estate, and as such the proposal is considered respectful of the area.

Amenity

- 8.5. Policy WLP8.29 sets out that development proposals should have consideration for the amenity of the surrounding area. The immediate area comprises of several industrial plots of land and/or building, with the nearest residential development located approximately 300m west of the application site. None of the immediate surrounding industrial units, have windows that face towards the application site, and it is not considered that any overshadowing that may result from the development would adversely impact upon the use of surrounding plots.
- 8.6. Furthermore, given its location within an industrial estate, and the distance to the nearest sensitive receptor there is not considered to be any adverse impacts arising from the noise or vibration from the site. Environmental Protection have reviewed the application and raised no objections subject to a condition requiring a construction management plan being submitted to protect the wider area.

Highways

- 8.7. The application does not propose to amend the existing site access and would provide allocated parking for 37 Vehicles (including 8 EV Space and 2 Disabled), 10 Bikes, and an area for motorcycles. The proposal also includes the addition of two dropped kerbs for pedestrians, to aid presentation movements to and from the site. The application is deemed to provide sufficient onsite parking spaces, and SCC Highways have raised no

objections to the application. Therefore, the proposal is not deemed to result in any adverse impacts upon highway safety or result in inconsiderate parking within the highway.

Ecology

- 8.8. The Councils Ecologist has reviewed the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and are satisfied with the conclusions of the consultant. Ness Point County Wildlife Site (CWS) is located immediately east of the application site, the CWS provides habitat for over-wintering purple sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*), due to the sensitive habitats and species in the vicinity of the site it is recommended that a Construction Environmental Management (CEMP) Plan is produced and followed to ensure that demolition and construction of the proposed development does not result in any impact on these habitats or species.
- 8.9. Natural England have also been consulted and raised no objections to the application

Flooding and Drainage

- 8.10. The site lies within tidal Flood Zone 3a defined by the 'Planning Practice Guidance: Flood Risk and Coastal Change' as having a high probability of flooding. The proposal is for Demolition and development of warehousing and offices to store parts for off-shore renewable infrastructure, which is classified as a 'less vulnerable' development, as defined in Annex 3:Flood Vulnerability classification of the Planning Practice Guidance. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted during the course of the application, which the Environment Agency have reviewed and raised no objections too.
- 8.11. The Lead Local Flood Authority have been consulted on the application, following their initial consultation they raised a holding objection as certain information required for them to provide full consideration of the surface water flooding impacts from the site had not been provided. This information has subsequently been provided to the Local Planning Authority, the LLFA have subsequently been reconsulted on this information; however, at the time of writing this report a response has not been provided. Any update on this will be provided in the update report to members. Therefore, any recommendation would be subject to receiving the response back from the LLFA. That being said, officers are satisfied that this scheme can be made acceptable in terms of drainage matters and accordingly the application can be presented to the Committee with a recommendation of approval subject to this matter being resolved.

Heritage

- 8.12. The nearest designated heritage assets to the site are the South Lowestoft Conservation Area, and Grade II Listed United Reformed Church on London Road North, both of which are approximately 350m west of the application site. Views of the development from within the Conservation Area may be possible, however, given the separation distance and surrounding development it is not considered by officers that the development would adversely harm the setting of any designated Heritage Asset.
- 8.13. Suffolk County Councils Archaeological Service have reviewed the application and consider them to be no significant impact on known archaeological sites or areas with archaeological potential.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1. In conclusion, the principle and detail of the development is considered to be acceptable and in compliance with relevant development plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework.

10. Recommendation

- 10.1. Authority to approve with conditions, as listed below; and subject to any further conditions following final consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).

11. Conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within a period of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be completed in all respects strictly in accordance with:

- Site Location Plan, 22.08 PL1, received 24/04/2023;
- Proposed Block Plan, 22.08.PL3 Rev D, received 15/08/2023;
- Tracking Plan, 22.08.PL10, received 15/08/2023;
- Trip Generation Technical Note (Transport Statement), MA/VL/P23-2958/01TN, received 15/08/2023;
- Preliminary Geo-Environmental Risk Assessment, 91249.578989, received 10/07/2023;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Sembmarine SLP 2023-001, received 07/07/2023;
- Proposed Ground Floor Layout Plan, 22.08.PL7, received 07/07/2023;
- Proposed First Floor Layout Plan, 22.08.PL8, received 07/07/2023;
- Proposed Elevations, 22.08.PL9 Rev A, received 15/11/2023;
- Proposed Roof Plan, 22.08.PL10, received 15/11/2023;
- Flood Risk Assessment, 6885-AEA-ZZ-XX-RP-Z-2500, received 28/04/2023;
- Flood Risk Assessment - Addendum, 6885_Hall_Lowestoft, received 23/08/2023;
- Archaeological Evaluation, SU0559, received 21/05/2023;

for which permission is hereby granted or which are subsequently submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and in compliance with any conditions imposed by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to what has been considered and approved.

3. The materials and finishes shall be as indicated within the submitted application and thereafter retained as such, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development in the interests of visual amenity

4. Development must be undertaken in accordance with the ecological avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures identified within the Preliminary Ecological

Appraisal (360 Ecology, June 2023) as submitted with the planning application and agreed in principle with the local planning authority prior to determination.

Reason: To ensure that ecological receptors are adequately protected and enhanced as part of the development.

5. No development shall take place (including demolition, ground works, vegetation clearance) until a construction environmental management plan (CEMP:Biodiversity) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP (Biodiversity) shall include the following:
 - a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.
 - b) Identification of "biodiversity protection zones".
 - c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements).
 - d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.
 - e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.
 - f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.
 - g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.
 - h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that ecological receptors are adequately protected as part of the development.

6. Prior to works above ground level an Ecological Enhancement Strategy, addressing how ecological enhancements will be achieved on site, will be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Ecological enhancement measures will be delivered and retained in accordance with the approved Strategy.

Reason: To ensure that the development delivers ecological enhancements.

7. A Demolition and Construction Management Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to work commencing on site. The strategy shall include:
 - Access and parking arrangements for contractors vehicles and delivery vehicles, including locations and times
 - A methodology for avoiding soil from the site tracking onto the highway together with a strategy for remedy of this should it occur.
 - Measures to contain dust from the site
 - Measure to limit noise and light from the site.

The development shall only take place in accordance with the approved strategy.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety to avoid the hazard caused by mud on the highway and to ensure minimal adverse impact on the public highway during the construction phase,

and to limit impact upon the amenity of the area. This is a pre-commencement condition because an approved Management Strategy must be in place at the outset of the development.

8. The use shall not commence until the area(s) within the site shown in Drawing No. 22.08.PL3 Rev. C for the purposes of manoeuvring and parking of vehicles, including electric vehicle charging infrastructure, has been provided, and thereafter, that area(s) shall be retained and used for no other purposes.

Reason: To ensure that sufficient space for the on-site parking of vehicles is provided and maintained to ensure the provision of adequate on-site space for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles where on-street parking and manoeuvring would be detrimental to highway safety to users of the highway and promote sustainable modes of travel.

9. The use shall not commence until the area(s) within the site shown in Drawing No. 22.08.PL3 Rev. C for the purposes of secure cycle storage has been provided, and thereafter, the area(s) shall be retained, maintained, and used for no other purposes.

Reason: To ensure that sufficient areas for secure cycle storage are provided in accordance with Suffolk Guidance for Parking (2019) to promote sustainable travel.

10. No part of the development shall be commenced until details of the proposed off-site highway improvements indicatively shown on Drawing No. 22.08.PL3 Rev. C have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be laid out and constructed in its entirety prior to first use of the building.

Reason: To ensure that the necessary highway improvements are designed and constructed to an appropriate specification and made available for use at an appropriate time in the interests of highway safety and sustainable travel. This is a pre-commencement condition because the required details relate to off site works that need to be agreed before the development can be said to be acceptable in terms of highway capacity/safety.

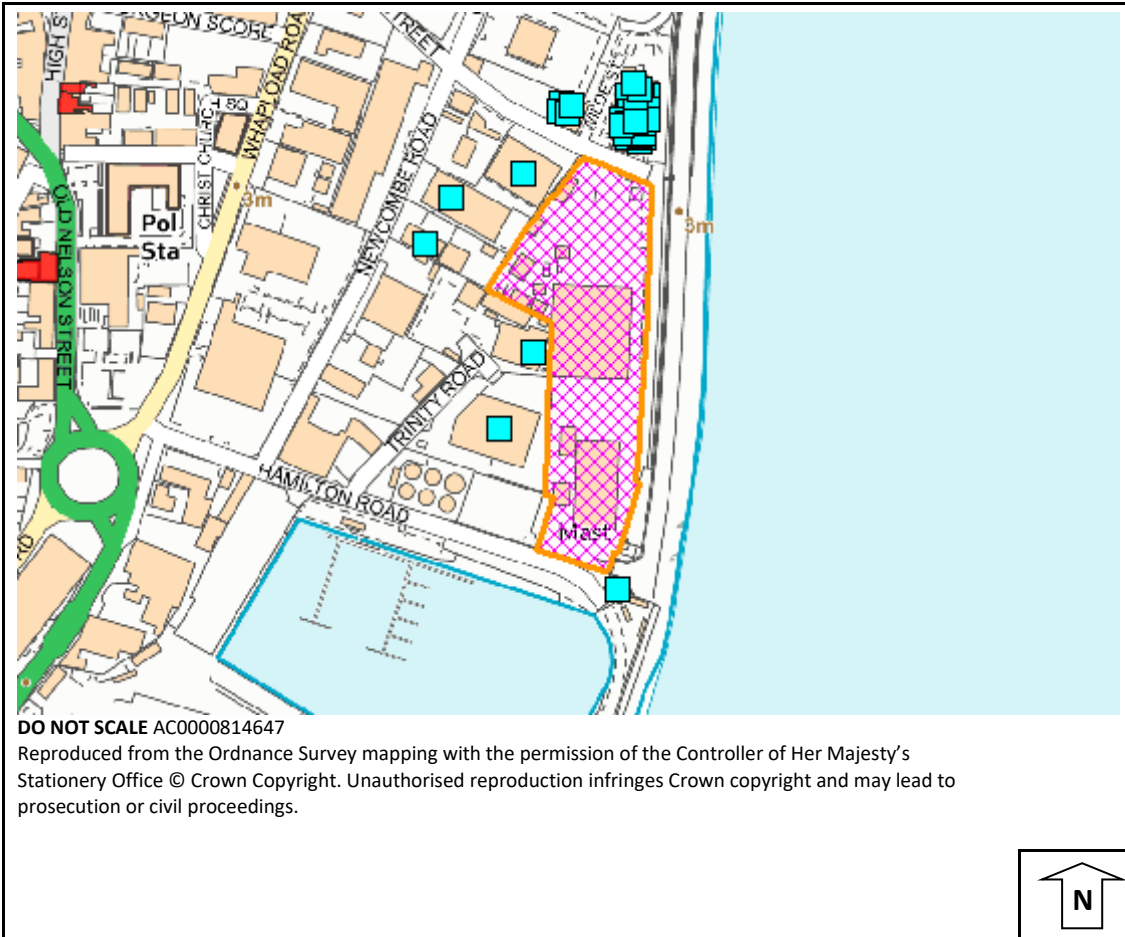
11. Before the development is commenced, details of the areas to be provided for the storage and presentation for collection/emptying of refuse and recycling bins shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be carried out in its entirety before the development is brought into use and shall be retained thereafter for no other purpose.

Reason: To ensure that space is provided for refuse and recycling bins to be stored and presented for emptying and left by operatives after emptying clear of the highway and access to avoid causing obstruction and dangers for the public using the highway.

Background information

See application reference DC/23/1674/FUL on [Public Access](#)

Map



Key



Notified, no comments received



Objection



Representation



Support