

ROLFE JUDD
/ PLANNING

**/ Former SGN
Gasholders Site,
Gravesend**

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS
STATEMENT

/ Former SGN Gasholders Site, Gravesend

Land on the east side of Canal Road,
Gravesend, Kent, DA12 2RS

P09250
18th October 2024

On behalf of JH (Milton) Ltd and SGN Property Holdings Ltd

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01. INTRODUCTION

01.1 SUMMARY

01.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Rolfe Judd Planning (RJP) on behalf of JH (Milton) Ltd and SGN Property Holdings Ltd ('the Applicant'), a subsidiary of Joseph Homes. It is submitted in support of a planning application to Gravesham Borough Council ('the Council') for the permanent use of the Former SGN Gasholders Site, Land on the east side of Canal Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 2RS ('the Site') as open storage (Use Class B8).

01.1.2 This application seeks planning permission for the following description of development ('the Application Scheme'):

"Change of use to open storage (Use Class B8) with associated works, cycle and car parking".

01.1.3 Planning application reference 20240292 approved the temporary change of use of the Site from decommissioned gasholders to open air storage until 31st July 2027. Attached to this temporary consent were a number of planning conditions relating to contamination, construction environmental management, pollution management and lighting which were required to be discharged prior to the use of the Site for open storage purposes.

01.1.4 Since the grant of this temporary planning permission on 28th March 2024 the Applicant has sought to secure a tenant for the Site. However, the temporary nature of the consent has been a key deterrent with interested parties unwilling to invest the significant sums required to implement the consent for a use which must cease by July 2027. This application therefore seeks the permanent use of the site as open-air storage owing to the difficulty in securing a tenant for the Site given the temporary nature of the extant permission.

01.1.5 The Application Scheme is in-keeping with the Council's vision for the Gravesend Riverside East and North East Gravesend Opportunity Area, as well as the Canal Road Gasholder Site, as outlined within the Local Plan Core Strategy. Careful consideration has also been given to Joseph Homes transformative regeneration project at Albion Waterside to ensure both the proposed residential and open storage uses can operate successfully.

01.2 SUMMARY OF KEY BENEFITS

01.2.1 A detailed assessment of the Application Scheme in light of adopted and emerging planning policy is set out in the later sections of the Statement. However, by way of summary, the retention of the industrial use at the Site will deliver a number of benefits to the local area. These will include:

- / The provision of social, economic, and environmental benefits and as such, the Application Scheme represents sustainable development as defined within the NPPF; and

- / The continuation of an industrial use within the Gravesend East and North East Opportunity Area, in line with the aims set out within extant planning policy and in keeping with the existing character.
- / Remediation and decontamination of the former gasholder site thus bringing a previously developed brownfield site in a sustainable location back into use.

01.3 PLANNING STATEMENT

The purpose of this statement is to examine the planning issues raised by the Application Scheme for the Application Site. In particular this statement identifies and describes the key opportunities presented by the permanent use of the Application Site as open storage (Use Class B8).

01.3.1 The statement also provides a comprehensive analysis of the relevant planning policy framework at national, strategic and local levels. As such, this Planning Statement is structured as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: The Application Site and Surrounding Area – sets the context the current proposal and provides a detailed description of the Application Site and its previous uses;
- Section 3: The Proposal – describes the proposed development;
- Section 4: Planning Considerations – reviews the proposal in terms of the relevant policy context and other material considerations; and
- Section 5: Conclusion

01.4 SUPPORTING APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

01.4.1 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the following additional documents, which accompany the application:

- / Application Forms (*including CIL Form 1*) – prepared by Rolfe Judd Planning;
- / Site Location Plan – prepared by JTP Studios;
- / Pre-Existing and Existing Drawings – prepared by JTP Studios;
- / Planning, Design and Access Statement (*this document*) – prepared by Rolfe Judd Planning;
- / Transport Statement – prepared by SLR Consulting;
- / Air Quality Technical Note – prepared by PES;
- / Flood Risk Assessment and SUDs Strategy – prepared by PES; and
- / Ground Condition Desk Top Study – prepared by GCC.

as Albion Waterside, will have a transformative impact on the wider area, giving extensive access to the waterside, with a new Riverside Walk, a greener environment with energy efficient buildings and promoting sustainable modes of transport to and from the site.

02.3 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

02.3.1 The relevant planning history for the Site, and the land adjacent is outlined within the table below:

APPLICATION SITE:

PLANNING APPLICATION REF.	DESCRIPTION	DECISION	DECISION DATE
20240292	Temporary change of use to open storage (Class B8) with associated parking.	Approved	01.08.2024
20221306	Hazardous Substances Consent Revocation request for Gravesend Gasholder Site.	No Objection	07.12.2022
20170553	Application for determination as to whether prior approval is required for the demolition of non-operational gasholders and associated ancillary above ground structures comprising brick buildings and pre-fabricated GRP units.	Prior approval not required	14.06.2017
20150441	Erection of a standby electricity generation plant in individual sound proof containers.	Refused	03.12.2015
20140226	Erection of a small scale standby electricity generation plant.	Refused	12.12.2014
20090964	Erection of single storey building to house a replacement pressure station, existing station and covers to be removed.	Permitted	21.01.2011
20020581	Application for the continuation of Hazardous Substances Deemed Consent for the storage and distribution of natural gas.	Permitted	05.09.2002
20000891	Application for determination pursuant to Part 24 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as to whether prior approval is required for the erection of a 15m high lattice mast mounted with six sector antennae and two 600mm REFUSED 31.01.2001 dishes, an equipment cabin and ancillary development thereto.	Refused	31.01.2001

ADJOINING SITES:

PLANNING APPLICATION REF.	DESCRIPTION	DECISION	DECISION DATE
20210270	Site: Albion Waterside Canal Basin Gravesend Kent DA12 2RN Hybrid planning application comprising: Part A - Full planning application for demolition of existing buildings and structures, construction of a mixed-use development comprising C3 and C2 Residential Uses and commercial floorspace (Use Class E), a new river wall, works to Swing Bridge, highway junction improvements at Milton Road and Ordnance Road, associated new public open spaces and public realm improvements, car and cycle parking, landscaping, infrastructure and earthworks and ancillary works; and Part B - Outline planning application with all matters reserved (apart from access) for demolition of all existing buildings and structures and the construction of a mixed-use development comprising C3 Uses and commercial floorspace (Use Class E) with associated vehicular access, car parking, landscaping, associated infrastructure and earthworks and ancillary works. The proposed development would consist of up to 1,500 homes and up to 4,500sqm (GIA) of commercial floorspace. DEPARTURE: Application does not fully accord with the provisions of the Development Plan (Core Strategy Policy CS04).	Resolution to Grant from Planning Committee	21.07.2021
20040183	Site: Canal Basin Area, Gravesend Including the Following Sites: - Ordnance Road Junction And Land Adjoining To The North Of Ordnance Road, Gravesend. - Alpha Plant And Former Alcan Chemical Works Site, Albion Terrace, Gravesend. Redevelopment for up to 1,000 residential units, up to 2,000 sq.m. of commercial (B1) floor space, and up to 3,500 sq.m of other non-residential floor space including A3 (food and drink,) D2 (Assembly and leisure), D1 (non-residential institutions) and A1 (retail), together with other associated works.	Approved	28.02.2005
20020666	Site: Canal Basin Albion Parade Gravesend Kent DA12 2RN	Approved	07.05.2003

	Outline planning application for the mixed-use redevelopment of the area to provide: - Up to 1000 residential units - Up to 2000 square metres of commercial (B1) floorspace - Up to 3500 square metres of other non-residential floorspace including A3 (food and drink), D2 (assembly and leisure), D1 (non-residential institutions) and A1 (retail), with A1 retail to be less than 2500 square metres. Together with associated parking and servicing; alterations and improvements to the pedestrian, cycling and highway network (inclusive of construction of a riverside walk and improvements to Ordnance Road junction); hard and soft landscaping; repairs and enhancement works to the Canal Basin and provision of boat storage facilities; and associated surface water attenuation works (including on the site of former Thames and Medway Canal).		
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02.4 THE PROPOSAL

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

02.4.1 This application seeks planning permission for the following description of development:

“Use of the site for open storage (Use Class B8) and associated works, car and cycle parking”

OVERVIEW OF THE APPLICATION

02.4.2 The key aspects of the Proposed Development are outlined below:

- / Change of use to open storage (Use Class B8);
- / On-site cycle and car parking, and HGV Servicing/Lorry Holding Zone.

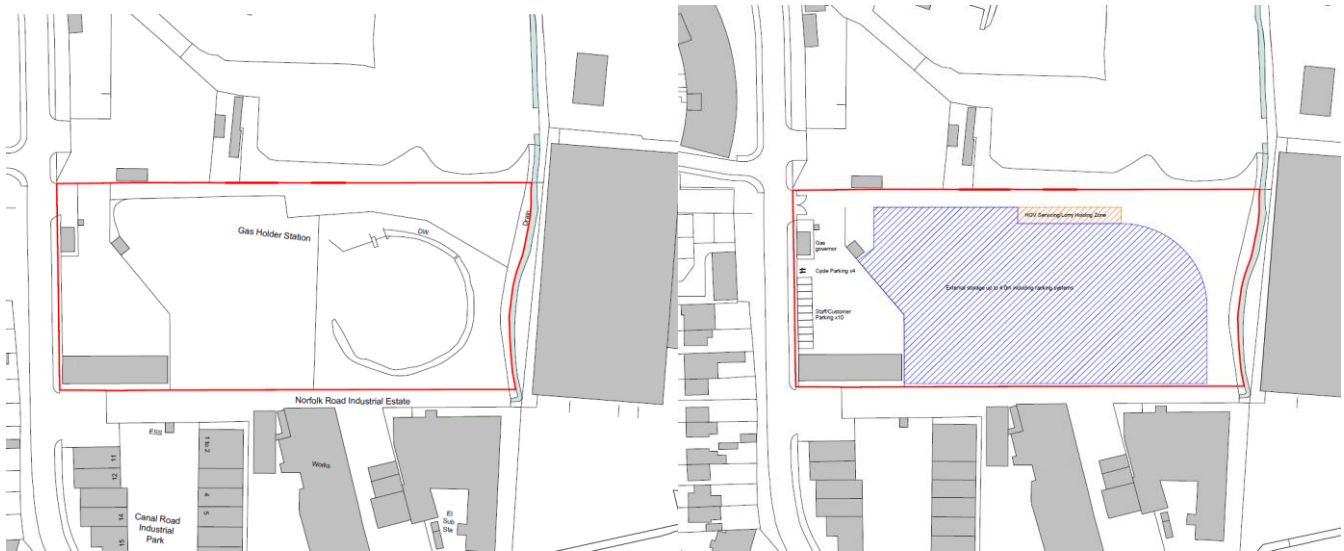


Image 2: The Site - Existing

Image 3: The Site - Proposed

02.4.3 The open storage use will comprise 4m high storage racks (highlighted in hatched blue in Image 3), ten vehicle parking spaces, four cycle parking spaces and a HGV servicing zone. There would be no full-time employees at the Site, and security will be predominantly remote-controlled.

LAYOUT

02.4.4 As shown within the images above, the proposals seek to retain the existing Canal Road access point, and at this stage, the works would not require any reconfiguration or construction at the Site, the Site would comprise storage racks, as well as space for parking and servicing. Notwithstanding, the Site's eventual occupier would confirm the intended site layout.

APPEARANCE

02.4.5 There are no buildings proposed as part of the development. However, the nature of the proposals is in keeping with the industrial nature of the surrounding area.

ACCESS

02.4.6 As stated above, the existing Canal Road access point will be retained.

03. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

03.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration on all planning applications.

03.1.2 The core guidance and planning policy context considered to be directly relevant to the Application Scheme are summarised below. This comprises both national and local planning policy. This Planning Statement refers to policy requirements within each section of the detailed planning considerations where they are relevant.

03.2 THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

03.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has a presumption in favour of sustainable development (Paragraph 11). It requires that, in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means that development which is sustainable and accord with the up-to-date plan should be approved without delay.

03.2.2 The Application Scheme has been conceptualised in accordance with the principles set out within the NPPF and represents sustainable development that develops a currently vacant brownfield site in a sustainable location. The NPPF recognises that sustainable development should support the three overarching objectives of; the economy, society, and the environment.

03.2.3 The NPPF requires that Council's apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development with regards to planning decisions by approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

03.2.4 The relevant NPPF Paragraphs and Policy are referred to within the Planning Considerations Section of this Planning Statement.

03.3 THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

03.3.1 For the purpose of Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Development Plan for the borough comprises:

/ Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and Local Plan Policies Map (2014); and

/ Gravesham Local Plan – First Review (1994) – Saved Policies.

03.3.2 The key policies pertinent to the determination of this application which form the Development Plan are outlined below.

03.4 GRAVESHAM LOCAL PLAN CORE STRATEGY (2014)

03.4.1 The relevant Core Strategy policies are outlined below:

- / Policy CS01: Sustainable Development;
- / Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development;
- / Policy CS04: Gravesend Riverside East and North East Gravesend Opportunity Area;
- / Policy CS07: Economy, Employment and Skills;
- / Policy CS11: Transport; and
- / Policy CS18: Climate Change.

03.5 GRAVESHAM LOCAL PLAN – FIRST REVIEW (1991)

03.5.1 The relevant saved local plan policies from the Gravesham Local Plan – First Review (1991) are outlined below:

- / Policy E2: Improvement of Industrial Areas;
- / Policy T1: Impact on Highways;
- / Policy T3: Access To Highways; and
- / Policy P3: Vehicular Parking.

04. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

04.1.1 This section assesses the key planning considerations relating to the development proposals, taking into account the planning policies as well as the relevant material considerations.

04.1.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) states the following:

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”

04.1.3 In considering the merits of the Application Scheme, this Planning Statement will consider the following key considerations relating to the development proposals:

- / Principle of Development and Land-Use;
- / Impact on Neighbouring Amenity;
- / Transport; and
- / Environmental Considerations.

04.2 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT AND LAND-USE

04.2.1 Strategic Objective SO1 of the Core Strategy seeks for proposals to make the most efficient use of land by concentrating development on underused, derelict, and previously developed land, particularly sites that were formerly industrial in nature. In-line with this, Policy CS02 (Scale and Distribution of Development) promotes regeneration through the redevelopment of brownfield land, principally through the redevelopment of industrial sites in the opportunity areas; including the Gravesend Riverside East and North East Gravesend Opportunity Area (GRE&NEGOA).

04.2.2 Paragraph 4.5.8 of the Core Strategy states that “the Council’s approach to this area [GRE&NEGOA] is that mixed use regeneration that complements the development which has already taken place to the south of the Canal Basin will continue to be supported. This will comprise a mix of residential and business uses that have regard to the constraints imposed by its location in a flood risk area and the proximity of gasholders at Canal Road.”

04.2.3 Policy CS04 of the Core Strategy relates specifically to the Gravesend Riverside East and North East Gravesend Opportunity Area. The policy reiterates the sentiments outlined above, stating that the Opportunity Area “will be the subject of riverside regeneration complemented by additional development to the south of the railway which improve the poor urban environment and make the most efficient use of vacant, derelict and underused land in the area”. Part 4.5.34 of the policy seeks the retention of the Canal Road Gasholders (the

Application Site) in employment use, stating that the Council will support proposals which improve the operation of the Site, and the quality of its environment.

04.2.4 Policy CS07 (Economy, Employment and Skills) states that the Council will seek the delivery of new employment floorspace, focusing on *“office, industrial and warehousing development on Key Sites in the Gravesend Riverside East and North East Gravesend Opportunity Area.”*

04.2.5 The principle for the use of the site for open storage, albeit on a temporary basis, was established under planning permission ref: 20240292. The Officer’s Report for application ref. 20240292, which approved the temporary use of the Site as industrial (Class B8) states that:

“Although the proposed development does not deliver housing and would not create jobs, based on no full-time employment, the LPCS states that Class B8 uses for warehouse and distribution falls under employment land. Nevertheless, the adjacent land to the north has been granted a hybrid planning permission (ref. 20210270) for a development comprising of 1,500 new homes, elderly accommodation, 4,500m² of commercial space and associated infrastructure.

Therefore, based on the proposed use falling under the umbrella of employment land, the gas holders already being removed with some remediation works required (as discussed later in this report) and the existing approval for a mixed-use development adjacent to the site (being brought forward by the same applicant), this development accords with the wider objectives of Policies CS02 and CS04 (LPCS).”

04.2.6 As previously outlined, following the grant of planning permission in March 2024 the Applicant sought to secure a tenant for the Site. However, interested parties were unwilling to commit to the considerable financial expenditure required, particularly in terms of site remediation and decontamination, for a temporary use that was required to cease in July 2027. As such permission is now sought for the permanent use of the Site for open storage (Class B8) which is considered to fully accord with the development plan by making efficient use of previously developed brownfield land for an employment use.

04.2.7 The principle of the development and proposed land-use are considered to fully accord with the extant planning policy for Gravesend. The development will retain the former gasholder site in an employment use, aligning with the vision for the Site and the Opportunity Area as set out by the Council within the policies outlined above.

04.3 IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURING AMENITY

04.3.1 Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Core Strategy states that new development should *“be located, designed, and constructed to:*

- / safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight, and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land;*
- / avoid adverse environmental impacts from pollution, including noise, air, odour and light pollution, and land contamination; and*

not pose an unacceptable risk or harm to the water environment, including the quality and/or quantity of ground waters, surface waters, wetlands and coastal water systems.”

04.3.2 The development proposals have been conceptualised to avoid any adverse impacts on the surrounding area, particularly the sensitive residential uses to the west. Consideration has also been given to the residential uses proposed as part of the Albion Waterside redevelopment (planning application ref: 20210270), with Plots 9 and 10 (within Phase 7) of the outline element of the scheme being closest to the site boundary. Although matters of layout and appearance are reserved and thus unknown, in support of this application a Noise Impact Assessment has been prepared by ALN and an Air Quality Assessment has been prepared by PES.

04.3.3 The Noise Impact Assessment concludes that the noise generated by the development would not exceed the baseline residential noise levels, and that the operational noise levels would not significantly differ from those of the existing nearby industrial sites. As such the development is not anticipated to cause any adverse noise impacts for existing or proposed residential uses.

04.3.4 With regards to air quality, the Air Quality Assessment concludes that the impact of any traffic introduced by the Class B8 use at the Site would have a negligible impact on the air quality of the local micro-environment, and as such, there are no adverse air quality impacts anticipated.

04.3.5 In light of the above, the development fully accords with the guidance set out within Policy CS19.

04.4 TRANSPORT

04.4.1 Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy relates to transport. The policy requires development to mitigate their impact on the highway and public transport networks as required. The policy also requires that development provides the requisite amount of vehicle and cycle parking, in line with the adopted standards.

04.4.2 This application submission is supported by a Transport Statement prepared by SLR Consulting. The Transport Statement confirms that the Site can be accessed by a range of non-car modes of transport, maintains the existing access, facilitates on-site loading and off-loading, and would not negatively impact the local highways network. As such, the development proposals align with planning policy.

04.5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

04.5.1 Policy CS18 (Climate Change) of the Core Strategy states that proposals in areas at risk of flooding must be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment to demonstrate that they are adequately defended and safe over their lifetime. Where Policy CS18 relates to sustainable drainage and surface water run-off, the Policy states that the council will that surface water run-off from all new development has, as a minimum, no greater adverse impact than the existing use, as well as require the use of SuDS on all developments where technically and financially feasible.

04.5.2 The Flood Risk Assessment and SuDS Strategy Report prepared by PES in support of the development proposals outlines the proposed flood mitigation measures, and SuDS design strategy. Considering that these remain unchanged from the approval of application ref. 20240292, it is considered that these measures fully accord with planning policy.

LAND CONTAMINATION

04.5.3 A Desktop Ground Contamination Study has been undertaken by GCC in support of the development. The study concludes that while the risks to site users are not likely to be significant, due to the dilution in outdoor air, a potential risk of ground gas generation and off-site migration remains. The report therefore recommends further investigation into the ground gas general potential. These details can be secured via planning condition.

05. CONCLUSION

05.1.1 This application seeks planning permission for the following description of development ('the Application Scheme'):

"Change of use to open storage (Use Class B8), and the associated works, cycle and car parking".

05.1.2 Following the grant of temporary consent for open storage (planning ref: 20240292) in March 2024, the Applicant has been unable to secure a tenant for the Site. The temporary nature of the consent and onerous planning conditions attached have been a key deterrent with interested parties unwilling to invest the significant sums for a use which must cease by July 2027. As such, this application now seeks permission for the use of the site for open storage on a permanent basis.

05.1.3 To reiterate, the Application Scheme will deliver the following benefits:

- / The provision of social, economic, and environmental benefits and as such, the Application Scheme represents sustainable development as defined within the NPPF; and
- / The continuation of an industrial use within the Gravesend East & North East Opportunity Area, in line with the aims set out within extant planning policy and in keeping with the existing character.
- / Remediation and decontamination of the former gasholder site thus bringing a previously developed brownfield site in a sustainable location back into use.

05.1.4 The development proposals are fully in-keeping with the Council's vision for the Gravesend Riverside East and North East Gravesend Opportunity Area, as well as the Canal Road Gasholder Site, as outlined within the Local Plan Core Strategy. The proposal therefore fully accords with the planning policy for the area and we respectfully request that planning permission be granted.

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