



On behalf of Safestore, Planning Potential successfully secured planning permission under delegated powers for a new self-storage facility in Hemel Hempstead, overcoming in-principle concerns raised at pre-application stage.

Planning Potential were instructed to assist Safestore with the delivery of their first self-storage facility in Hemel Hempstead, addressing their longstanding requirement for representation in the area. The proposals involved developing the site to provide a standalone building comprising 2,323 sqm with the potential to install future internal mezzanine floors.

The site, designated within adopted and emerging policy for retail and leisure development, was a prominent plot at the entrance to Jarman Park, a retail and leisure destination to the east of the town centre. The site formed the final parcel of land awaiting development despite approval of various applications over the years in line with Council aspirations.

Planning Potential initiated pre-application discussions with Officers at Dacorum Borough Council. Officers initially raised significant concerns regarding the principle of self-storage in this location, noting that the proposals conflicted with the site's allocation. In response, Planning Potential prepared a robust planning case, demonstrating the complementary nature of self-storage as a use compatible with its surroundings. The case also highlighted the significant benefits the development would deliver for both local residents and businesses, given its accessible location.

We also undertook detailed fieldwork and assessment of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre which demonstrated a need for caution when considering further out of centre retail to ensure future vitality and viability of the town centre, which was also a requirement of policy. The detailed analysis provided enabled the policy team to withdraw previous concerns, recognising the benefits that Safestore would deliver, including delivery of a longstanding prominent vacant site and knock-on benefit of ensuring that designated employment areas remain available for more intensive industrial uses which may be less compatible elsewhere.

Alongside this, Planning Potential submitted representations to the emerging Local Plan on Safestore's behalf to widen the uses sought by the allocation to also include compatible employment uses, reflective of the site's longstanding vacancy and latest on the ground situation. These were positively received and the emerging allocation updated as requested.

Following submission, Planning Potential initiated early discussions with the case officer to ensure a full understanding of the proposals and to address feedback from statutory consultees. Initial concerns were raised regarding drainage. However, by fostering a positive relationship with the officer and efficient coordination of the project team, these concerns were swiftly addressed, enabling all consultees to confirm no objections, subject to conditions.

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This resulted in the application being approved under delegated powers with minimal pre-commencement conditions and no S.106 agreement, allowing Safestore to proceed swiftly.

Summary of achievements:

- Initiating pre-application discussions with the LPA
- Preparation of a robust planning case to overcome in-principle concerns raised by Officers at pre-application stage.
- Project management of the consultant team and coordination of the planning submission
- Liaising with the client, consultant team and Officers, responding to concerns raised
- Securing a delegated decision.