

**St. Leonard's Farm
New Years Green Lane
Harefield
UB9 6LX**



**Retention of hardstanding and replacement of gravelled area
with hardstanding.**

PLANNING STATEMENT

NOVEMBER 2019

1. Introduction

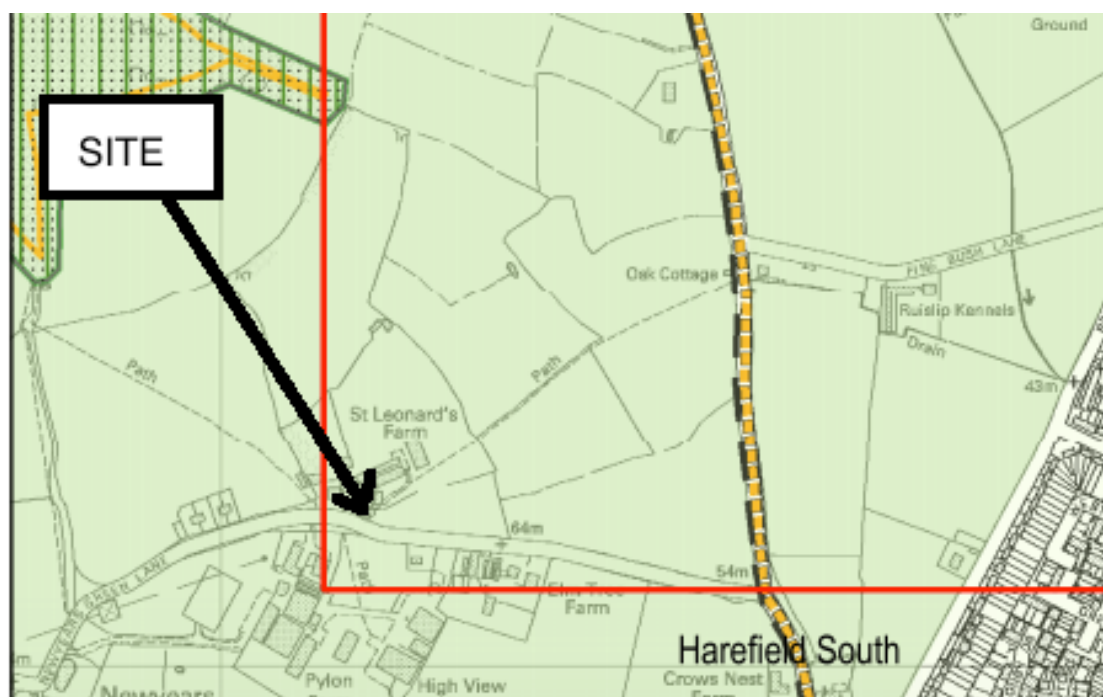
- 1.1** Following a planning enforcement investigation and subsequent letter issued on the 10th October informing the applicant of a 28 day informal compliance period, this application seeks to regularise the unauthorised installation of an area of hardstanding.
- 1.2** In addition to regularising the area of hardstanding, it is proposed to extend this area to include a gravelled section of land adjacent to the existing unauthorised hardstanding.
- 1.3** This planning statement explains how the proposed development does not harm the openness of the Green Belt and should be granted planning permission.

2. Impact on the Green Belt

Planning policy

2.1 The site is situated within the Green Belt, as depicted by the excerpt of the Council's UDP Proposals map below.

Fig.1 – UDP proposals map excerpt showing the site's land use planning designations.



2.2 The Council's Local Plan Part 2, which comprises the 'Development Management Policies (Revised Proposed Submission Version, October, 2015) was submitted to the Secretary of State on 18th May 2018 to begin the examination in public phase. The Inspector's Report was provided on 22nd October 2019. The adoption of the Local Plan Part 2 is to be discussed by Cabinet on 12th December 2019.

2.3 The Local Plan policy most relevant to the consideration of this development is Development Management Policies policy DMEI 4 'Development in the Green Belt or on Metropolitan Open Land'.

2.4 Policy DMEI 4 states the following:

A) Inappropriate development in the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land will not be permitted unless there are very exceptional circumstances.

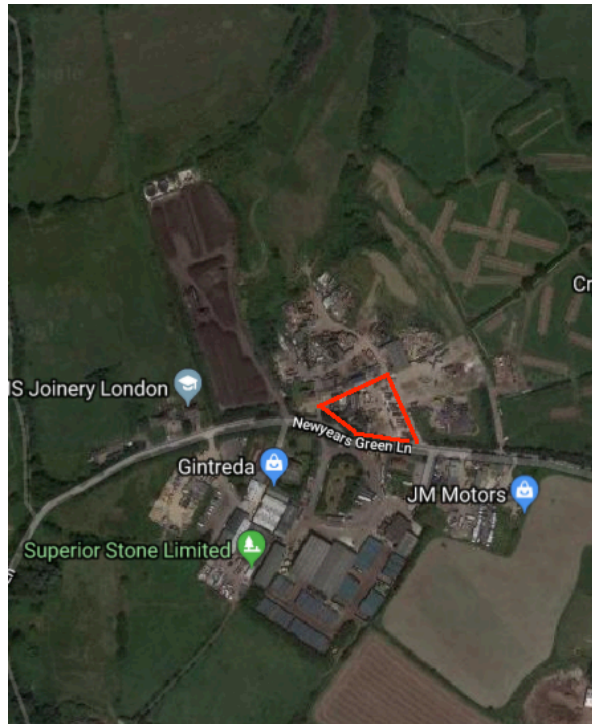
B) Extensions and redevelopment on sites in the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land will be permitted only where the proposal would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land, and the purposes of including land within it, than the existing development, having regard to:

- (i.) the height and bulk of the existing building on the site;*
- (ii.) the proportion of the site that is already developed;*
- (iii.) the footprint, distribution and character of the existing buildings on the site;*
- (iv.) the relationship of the proposal with any development on the site that is to be retained; and*
- (v.) the visual amenity and character of the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land.*

The site & the argument for the proposed hardstanding

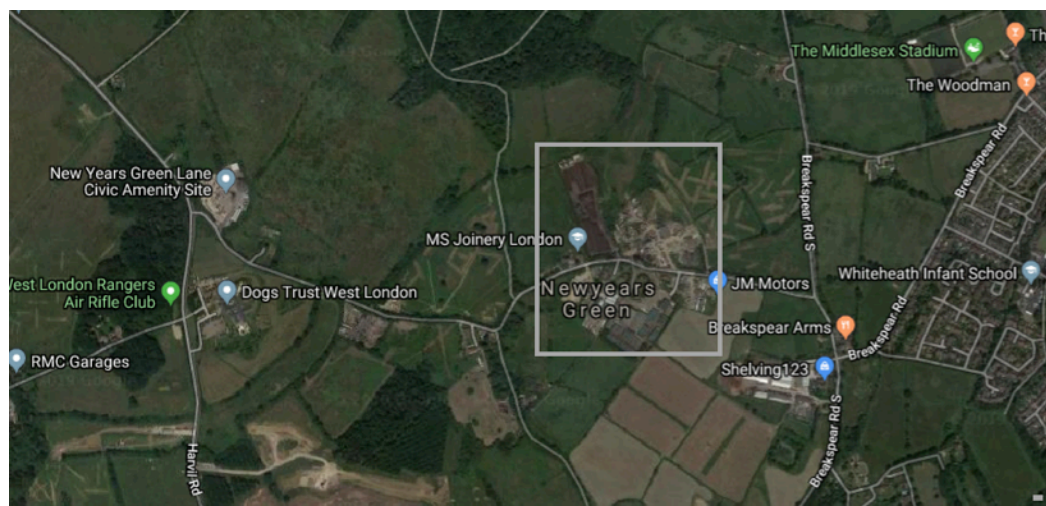
2.5 The site is located on the north side of New Years Green Lane and has the character of a developed site. The aerial images in Fig.2 & Fig.3 below shows how the hardstanding relates to a site that is of a completely different character to the surrounding Green Belt.

Fig.2 – Aerial image showing the site's location and previously developed land character in relation to the open Green Belt around it.



2.6 There are long-established employment uses along this part of New Years Green Lane and this area does not have the 'open' characteristics associated with Green Belt land. The aerial image below shows how the area around the site (in the grey box) is developed for employment and is of a different character to the open countryside around it.

Fig.3 – Aerial image showing how the area around the application site (in the grey box) does not have open the countryside character of the wider area.



2.7 On the opposite side of New Years Green Lane to the application site is the entrance to one of the long-established employment sites in the vicinity of the application site (see Fig.4 below).

Fig.4 – Image showing site on the opposite side of New Years Green Lane, close to the entrance of St. Leonards Farm.



2.8 The employment sites on the opposite side of New Years Green Lane to the application site have numerous areas of hardstanding for the parking of vehicles (see Fig.5 below). These areas of hardstanding are well contained within the existing, previously developed land of the employment sites and do not harm the openness of the Green Belt as they are subsumed within the wider site.

Fig.5 – Image showing area of hardstanding and parking on the employment sites on the opposite side of New Years Green Lane.



2.8 The area of hardstanding and parking can be seen from the entrance to the site on New Years Green Lane (see Fig.6 below) but it is clear from this image that the parking blends in with the employment use and character of the site.

Fig.6 – Google Streetview of the site showing the part of the application site being used parking in April 2019.



2.9 The nature of this site is that it is largely enclosed by trees and hedgerow – particularly the area where the hardstanding is proposed (see Figs. 7 & 8 below) and therefore this part of the Green Belt is not really open.

2.10 The use of this part of the site for hardstanding and the parking of vehicles makes no discernible difference to the openness of the Green Belt because this part of the site is entirely screened by high trees and hedge on the road boundary and is bounded by the wider employment use and its buildings to which it relates.

2.11 The development relates to an enclosed area of land within a wider employment site (see Fig.2 above) and for this reason, even if the land were returned to grass, it would not have an impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The part of the wider employment site to which the proposed hardstanding relates is very enclosed and is not a site that can be characterised as ‘open’ – whether it is grassed or covered in hardstanding.

Fig.7 – Image looking west along New Years Green Lane showing boundary hedgerow.



Fig.8 – Image looking east along New Years Green Lane showing boundary hedgerow.



2.12 This existing employment site (haulage business) is a long-established use dating back to at least 1997. The haulage business necessitates the parking of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and requires these vehicles to enter the road network from the site. The hardstanding and gravelled area were created in order to prevent mud being deposited on the roads around the site. There is clear and significant highway safety benefit to the proposed hardstanding.

2.13 The hardstanding and gravelled area where it is proposed to extend the hardstanding to, do not harm the openness of the Green Belt because the even if the area is returned to grass, HGVs can still be parked there and the impact on the Green Belt will not change.

2.14 Painting the proposed area of hardstanding green will ensure that when view aerially, the site will appear greener and effectively returned to its previous state. However, as the site is mostly enclosed by trees and hedgerow and the wider site is an employment use with associated buildings, it has no discernible impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

2.15 In summary, the site and the wider, long-established employment site to which it relates, has the character of a developed site and is of a completely different character to the surrounding Green Belt. Also, the position of the proposed area of hardstanding, located well within the wider employment site and far away from the boundary with the open countryside, is such that it really does have little to no impact on the openness of the Green Belt. For these reasons, the site does not contribute to the openness of the Green Belt. Notwithstanding this, very special circumstances exist because the improvement to highway safety outweighs any perceived harm to the Green Belt in this instance – a harm that is very debatable considering the developed character of the wider site