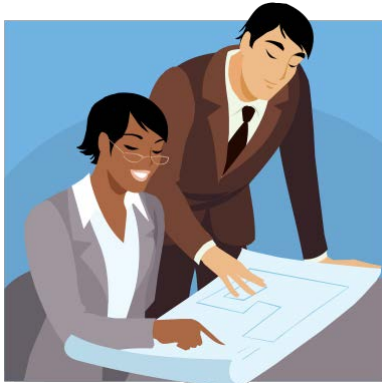


What's in a Planning Application –
Things you should know

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Introduction

This advice note is intended to help you understand a planning application the first time it is presented to you. Failure to understand what is proposed may affect and ultimately weaken any response to it that you wish to make. This information is equally useful if you need to make your own application.

The note includes advice on who can make an application, the different types of application, what information is submitted and how to read plans.

Who can make an application?

Any person or group may make a planning application. The applicant does not have to own the land or property at the time of the application. If the applicant is not the owner of the whole site, he/she must however inform the owner that they are applying for planning permission on the land.

The application should be on the national standard application form provided by the District Council. It will be submitted with a site plan and any other plans or drawings,

which are necessary to describe the proposal. A fee will normally be required.

Sets of application forms are available to download from the Council's website www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk or from the [Planning Portal](#) where applications can be made electronically. Forms are also available from the planning department or the Customer Services Centre. These come with guidance notes and a checklist to help an applicant provide the required information.

The applicant can make more than one application at the same time. The Council has to consider each application on its own merits and cannot choose between them. Presently the applicant can also submit a duplicate application. Thus, if there is a delay in determining the proposal, he can take one to appeal if necessary.

What types of planning application are there?

A planning application may be submitted in different ways. These are:

- o *Full* planning permission.

This is where permission is sought for all of the details of the development. It may, however, be granted subject to conditions considered necessary to control some aspect of it (e.g. use of materials, opening hours). Applications for a use of land or buildings with no associated building works must be made as a full application.

An application for full permission must be accompanied by a location plan, site or block plan, floor plans and elevations and any other plans, drawings and information necessary to describe the development. If the local planning authority requires further

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information, it may ask for this before validating the application.

Full permissions may also include:

- Renewal of an existing temporary permission;
- Removal or variation of a condition of an existing planning permission;
- Permission for development which has already been carried out.

o *Outline* planning permission.

An outline application is usually made to agree the principle of development. It can only apply to new buildings.

The application may be submitted with few details. Where details are not received, the application will be approved subject to conditions requiring the later approval of one or more "reserved matters". These reserved matters are explained below.

It is, however, still necessary to provide enough information to allow a proposal to be properly assessed. It is a legal requirement to provide details of the proposed use(s); amount of development; indicative layout and access; and the upper and lower scale parameters. The Council can therefore ask that more details be submitted at this stage if it is felt this is necessary before a decision can be made. On occasion, and if it is felt necessary to enable proper consideration of the application, the Council may request more formal plans, for example when a proposal affects the setting of a Conservation Area.

o Approval of *Reserved Matters*.

An application for the approval of reserved matters will need to follow an

outline permission before development can commence. The reserved matters are the details which were not approved as part of an outline application. In the past this has meant details of the siting, design and external appearance of buildings, the means of access to the site and landscaping, but from August 2006 reserved matters are defined as:

- access;
- appearance;
- landscaping;
- layout; and
- scale

In seeking approval of reserved matters, the applicant is not obliged to provide details of everything at the same time. As such, more than one application may be submitted before all the details are finally approved.

What other types of application are there?

Details of types of applications, other than planning applications, are described in Advice Note 7.

Application reference numbers

Applications can be identified by their reference number. The format is typically 0801920FUL. 08 is the last two digits of the year the application was made, 01920 is the number given to the application, and FUL is the type of application (e.g. FUL for full, OUT for outline, REM for reserved matters, LB for listed building, S73 for variation of a condition and CAC for conservation area consent).

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What information is submitted with an application?

There are six basic sources of information which may be submitted, all of which should be considered. These are:

o **The application form**

This gives the basic information, including the type of application and what it involves. There are several types of form and different questions to be answered depending upon the application type.

o **An ownership certificate and an agricultural holdings certificate**

These are required by law and confirm whether the applicant owns all the land concerned and, if not, when and where notice was served on the owner. It also confirms whether the land is or is not subject to an agricultural tenancy.

o **A covering letter or statement**

This may contain information which is not required on the application form, but on which the applicant seeks to rely. The applicant may wish to set out factors which support the proposal. This may include government advice and guidance or the Council's own planning policies.

Professional agents acting for the developer often supply supporting statements. Where statements of fact are being made, their accuracy should always be established.

o **Design and Access Statements**

These have been compulsory since August 2006 for most applications that involve building works. The one exception is for development of an existing dwelling house or development within its curtilage, unless the property is in a designated

area, such as a conservation area. It is not required for a change of use of land or buildings.

The statement must explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposal. These should focus on the amount, layout, scale, landscaping and appearance of the development. For applications affecting listed buildings, they should address the special architectural and historic importance of the building, its features of note and its setting.

Access statements should state what consultations have taken place, the outcomes of these and explain why certain access points have been chosen. For outline applications, the statement is meant to form a link between the outline application and any future application for reserved matters.

On larger schemes, considerable detail will be required. The statement should allow others to fully understand why a particular design and access approach is being adopted.

o **The relevant plans and drawings**

The location plan will show the application site outlined in red. Any adjoining land in the applicant's control or ownership should be edged in blue.

This fact may be important if it is felt the application would only be acceptable if the use of other land under the applicant's control should be included as part of the application. For instance, it is possible to grant planning permission only on the basis that adjoining land is used for associated car parking or landscaping.

A site or block plan showing the proposed works in the context of the site and its surroundings with written measurements including those distances to boundaries

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will normally be required. This is generally at a scale of 1:500 or 1:200 depending upon the scheme.

Plans showing the layout and elevations may be drawn to different scales although usually at 1:100 or 1:50. (In general, the greater the scale {i.e. 1:50 and larger}, the more detail that is provided). The Council will sometimes insist that larger scale plans are submitted. This is particularly true for proposals in conservation areas or for listed buildings.

Where necessary, the Council can now ask the applicant to provide specific plans and elevations showing adjoining buildings and sections where there is a change in level or building work is proposed on common boundaries. This helps to ensure the application can be properly considered.

The Council now requires plans that are drawn to scale and show the relevant dimensions on them.

In addition to plans, photographs or even a model may be submitted. This often helps to understand more clearly what is proposed.

o **Supporting Statements**

Many larger applications will be accompanied by a series of statements. The statements necessary will depend on the nature and location of the proposal. A checklist setting out which statements are required for different types of development is available on the 'Planning Forms' page on the Council's website. These may be separate documents or part of one document, and might cover matters such as biodiversity, noise, sustainability and/or traffic.

How do I read plans?

Plans will vary in quality, content and detail. There is no legal requirement that says that they must be produced to a certain standard although they must be of sufficient standard to describe the development and be drawn to an identified metric scale. If not, the Council can seek further plans. Dimensioned plans are now normally required to aid understanding of plans when viewed electronically. A scale rule is useful when measuring paper copies of plans. These plans may be drawn by an architect using sophisticated computer aided design methods - or an untrained applicant using a ballpoint pen.

It is useful to be able to understand what metric scales actually mean. For instance, a scale of 1:50 is roughly the same as the old ¼ inch to a foot. 1:100 is roughly equal to the old ⅛ inch to a foot, and so on. Measurements in feet and inches are no longer used when considering planning applications.

Site areas are often shown in hectares (ha). A hectare is roughly 2.2 acres. An acre is therefore about 0.4 of a hectare.

With applications for building works, applicants should show both the existing and proposed works (which may also be coloured).

All plans should contain a north point. This will help address issues such as overshadowing and loss of light if they are applicable.

Drawings may not always be accurate (e.g. adjoining properties may not be shown correctly, trees may not have been plotted, elevations may be wrongly labelled). These may amount to very important omissions. The planning officer will check for errors, but they should still be brought to his/her attention in case they are not spotted.

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Where mistakes that have a material effect on the scheme have been made, the applicant will be asked to correct them before the application is formally determined.

Ready to respond

The above information should help you understand the details of an application.

Advice on commenting on planning applications and how to make the most effective response is set out in Advice Note 5.

August 2009

Please Note: This advice note is intended as a general guide. It should not be relied upon, or taken to be a full interpretation of the law.