

320190499P

Design and Access Statement

Applicant: R Seed

Re: Kitchen Green Farm, Ribchester

Proposal: Signage to provide clear indication of the existing premises and businesses to assist existing/new site commercial trade visitors and customers in reaching the site safely.

The existing diesel engine fuel system parts business was set up in 2003 and located in buildings converted on the farm. New and reconditioned parts are ordered via the business's website and delivered regionally. Also a separate team can fit new parts to customers' vehicles on site. A new parts store, and office space were approved in 2017. Having had a very successful 15 years of trading and the workforce has grown from a one man band to two specialist teams. The businesses are forecast to continue to grow. The site now has extended car parking approved in 2018.

Following advice of both the planning officer and highways officer the proposed signage has been resized to include brief information only. A suitable text size is proposed so that the address and businesses can be clearly identified. Furthermore, this will allow proper identification of the site entrance for vehicles within reasonable distance for the purposes of indicating and carrying out a safe turning manoeuvre from the highway. It is clear to all who work on and visit the site, that the proposed signage is reasonably required.

Design

It is proposed to erect a double sided horizontal sign which is a painted timber sign, constructed on the applicant's own land. The proposed dimensions are smaller being 40% of the area previously submitted, but not excessive and justified by the reasons set out above. The painted timber will be a clear but tasteful contrast to the existing timber fencing and natural foliage of the adjacent hedgerow. Text size and colouring have been chosen for clarity and simplicity. Size of sign and text size has been assessed in terms of both clear indication and balanced to avoid distraction for highway users.

Transport & Access

The proposed sign at the entrance from the road (B6245) will indicate clearly the site entrance. Set back from the kerb by 2.4m the sign's upright and sign board will not obscure the sight-lines (2m x 160m) previously agreed with the County Highways Officer. The existing access arrangements will be utilised from the road to the existing buildings, farm buildings, yard and land. The entrance is onto a straight section of road with good sight-lines.

There are a number of other business premises both on and off the same stretch of road from Ribchester to Hothersall and Longridge. It would be reasonable to clearly distinguish the subject premises from those other business premises and also private residences.

The aim of clear signage is to avoid the unfortunate occasions where visitors to the area find themselves at the wrong premises and wish to re-enter the highway. Drivers may be unwittingly over reliant on satellite navigation systems. There are 76 separate addresses under the postcode PR3 3XL. Most of these are businesses and the balance residential addresses. The postcode does not direct to these premises. The signage will undoubtedly minimise these situations.

This application does not seek to alter the types of use already approved for the entrance. A highways officer has previously inspected the site and site access with existing sight-lines retained and car parking improvements carried out as part of previously approved applications to his satisfaction.

The applicant confirms as part of this application that the existing sightlines will be maintained and not be obstructed.

Access around the Buildings

Access to and around the existing and approved buildings is to be from the existing yard area which will continue to service all buildings. The signage is within the owned yard area but will not obstruct or interfere with on-site vehicle manoeuvres, including the business premises, approved facilities building and car parking.

Appearance

It is proposed to erect a doubled sided horizontal sign which is painted blue with timber supporting uprights and border. The proposed dimensions are not excessive and justified by the reasons set out above. The timber frame will be complementary to the existing timber fencing and natural foliage of the adjacent hedgerow. Text size and colouring have been chosen for clarity and simplicity. No garish colours or graphics have been included.

Visible aspects are to the north west and south east. The proposed site for the sign is not located in any area of special significance nor is there an adverse effect on such an area.

Appraising the Context

The proposed signage improves highway safety and provides good customer service. The applicant and agent have considered all the factors affecting the current business needs and signage requirements. A number of different options have been ruled out before deciding on the chosen proposal.

There is some existing signage in the parish/adjoining parish and significant levels of signage approved in other areas of the borough to support the principle of signage for both new and well established rural business premises. The processes in considering and arriving at those decisions were much the same albeit that each location is considered on its own merits.

The applicant understands that the council is keen to undertake a business rates valuation. It is likely that the possible future investment in the approved buildings will also be attractive. Local builders and suppliers will benefit. The businesses have generated significant new employment since 2010 and it is hoped that with such investment the number of full and part time workers on site will double in the next eighteen months. The potential for new jobs in engineering will assist in providing a much needed balance to the significant new housing developments in the Ribble Valley.

The considerations for the chosen option have been made whilst having regard for highways users, the policies of both proposed signage and general development policies in rural areas.

Summary

The proposed signage is reasonably required to indicate the address and the approved businesses on site. The proposed size is commensurate the usual decision making processes when considering both old and new policies during the period of transition. Size of sign and text size have been assessed in terms of providing clear/brief indication of premises and avoiding distraction for highway users. The area is not designated as being of special significance.