

## **Design and Access Statement**

*For outline planning application on land south of Lower Road (Blackburn Road), Hothersall, Longridge, Lancashire PR3 2YY.*

Outline application: to site buildings and infrastructure to provide business units (B1 b,c), business units (B2) and storage (B8) to the east of the access and north east of existing depot buildings. This proposal is to include a total of 3888 sq m light industrial units, general business units and storage together with integrated offices, staff facilities, car parking and turning areas. The land forms part of a previously approved outline scheme (by a different applicant). This application now offers a lower density proceedable development and the benefits of utilising and improving an existing access.

### **Design summary**

Proposal to create light, industrial and storage buildings on land (shown as B on Plan 2) together with improvements to the existing access (shown as A on Plan 2). This proposal complements an existing group of buildings (Depot) and allows future progression of startup/small businesses from recent approval for the site to the south. The existing Depot is shown on Location Plan 1 (which is on land in a different ownership). The recent consent is on land to the south of a similar type which will soon provide premises for existing local businesses and startups. The proposed site and buildings are going to be set well off the road and will be partially screened from it by the existing hedgerows and the natural fall of the land. The proposal will reduce the overall visual impact of the existing and approved sites as it provides clean modern structures which will be of a lower density and better obscured, partially by natural features.

In generating the new site there are proposed three of the commercial building use classes together with appropriate access, turning heads, car parking, disabled parking, and provision of secure compounds. Given the rising contours of the site, the proposed development is tiered with buildings each of a similar height, so the overall visual impact is reduced.

Each building comprises a unit or units with the option of incorporating a proportion of office space from the outset. The size will enable both existing businesses and those which are growing/relocating, which have been established in the Ribble Valley, to move onto the site and grow within the new premises more suitable to their needs. There have been a number of enquiries to date from a variety of local businesses keen to occupy a new site or premises. The businesses are likely to employ around 54 staff and which may increase.

The introduction of high speed fibre optic broadband to the site will provide an added stimulus for each business to remain on site and expand markets using this high tech service provision. The businesses are predicted to thrive using the good road links available to reach existing and new customers in the borough and in the wider region.

The new business space and quality staff facilities will create modern premises and can incorporate the new best practice in a post-covid working environment. The proposal is limited in size and number of employees so retains the appearance of the approved small scale development adjacent. The existing established depot comprises separate business premises from earlier projects built up over a decade ago on adjoining land by the enterprising and dedicated directors.

The proposed development does not unduly affect the landscape beyond the immediate setting, it does not affect trees nor does it affect protected species. A separate ecological report is submitted to confirm the contents of a report carried out three years ago which included the subject land. No protected species were found and no habitats or trees were found to be adversely affected.

### **Transport, site access and access for the proposal**

Road access to the site is very good (shown as point A on Location Plan 2), with generous sightlines and good local bus links from other local towns. With such good links the site will be able to promote the use of public transport. The existing road network is exceptionally good to the location; this development will generate less road traffic than a previously approved scheme. A total of 25 cycle stands are to be provided on site for employees and visitors. It is proposed the on-site parking could include 2 electric car charging points.

The applicant's agent has discussed this entrance previously with the highways officer. Improvements were not required for the last application using this entrance as it was demonstrated to be adequate. However with this new proposal, in light of previous positive comments made, this application seeks to make improvements. The applicant and site occupiers will utilise an agreed access over the private drive to enter the proposed site (shown as point C on Site Plan 2).

Proposed combined movements at point A have been calculated to be acceptable forms of use by both light and heavy goods vehicles. As with similar approved sites the nature and layout of traffic flows within the site will be later set out at reserved matters in order to avoid conflict between the various types of trade vehicle, employees and visitors within the site. For ease of access parking spaces will be reserved adjacent to each building for employees and visitors. It is likely a number of trade vehicles will be taken off site each night. Further trade vehicles when not on the road will be locked within the units.

Access doors will be located predominantly on the north and south elevations, together with fire exits as required. It is likely each building will have secure full height roller shutter doors. Parking will be provided adjacent to each building thus providing safe access to the entrance doors and minimal interaction with the designated internal traffic flows. Access to and around the buildings is to be disability friendly, with 6 designated disabled parking spaces near to each office access door.

### **Appearance**

The materials for the buildings are going to be similar to existing unit on the adjacent site. Due to the size of the existing adjacent building the proposed units will create a similar impression from most angles including the road frontage. The nearest building to the road is 55 m minimum distance.

### **Appraising the Context**

The building of the proposed premises will complement the other businesses on the adjacent sites to create a compact business area for businesses serving Longridge the adjacent urban area, local communities, and rural areas with high tech businesses, some storage and rural trades. For the Ribble Valley connections to the M6 corridor are good. Suitable prospective parties have provided substantiated intention to buy or rent the premises on a long term basis commencing occupation immediately on approval or completion of the works. In the future these businesses are likely to create a number of new trainee jobs in the Ribble Valley. It is anticipated in the prospective owners/tenants' business plans that both existing jobs be retained and a number of new jobs will be generated.

## **Summary**

This outline application comprises a suitable proposal to create modern commercial units including positive improvements to an existing road access, some integral office space, utilising high speed fibre optic broadband, sustainable use of the existing site and excellent transport links. This application is not considered to be a duplication but is in effect a new scheme which clearly shows a reduction in the intensity of a previously consented land use.