

Design and Access Statement

For planning application on land south of Blackburn Road, Hothersall, Longridge, Lancashire PR3 2YY.

Outline consent including access was approved by application 3/2019/0666 : to site buildings and infrastructure to provide business units (B1 a,b,c) to the east of existing access and existing depot buildings. This proposal includes equivalent uses classes under more recent legislation (Class E(g)) being 792 sq m starter units including light industrial together with integrated offices, staff facilities, car parking and turning areas.

This site lies adjacent to an existing successful employment site which in turn adjoins neighbouring land which is zoned in the Core Strategy and identified as EAL3 of the HED DPD dated 2019 which runs to 2028 for employment land uses.

Design summary

The current updated proposal to create starter business units in buildings on a relatively small site (shown as B on Location Plan 1) complements the existing group of buildings. These are shown as D on Location Plan 1 and the Depot on Site Plan 2 (which is on land in a different ownership). The existing Depot is on land of a similar area which provides both premises and storage for a local business. The proposed site and buildings are going to be set well off the road and will be well screened from it being less imposing than the largest and closest of the existing buildings. The proposal will not affect the overall visual impact of the existing site as it provides clean modern structures which will be partially obscured by existing buildings and natural features.

In generating the new site there are proposed three new commercial buildings together with appropriate access, turning heads, car parking, disabled parking, bike stands, 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 has a ridge height lower than the existing building. A layout and design selection process has taken place considering the existing landscape, buildings, services and access. These constraints have been balanced to take into account existing and previously approved schemes.

Each building comprises two units with the option of incorporating a proportion of office space from the outset. The size will enable both new start-ups and existing small businesses 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 new premises. The businesses are likely to employ around 20 staff and which is predicted to increase. The applicants intend to build and let out the premises on this compact site as a genuine farm diversification enterprise.

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 a modern and best practice working environment. The proposal is limited in size and number of employees so retains the appearance of the small scale development adjacent. The existing established depot comprises separate business premises from earlier projects built up over a decade ago on adjoining land.

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 ecology report, arboricultural plan and landscaping plan are submitted.

Transport, site access and access for the proposal

Access was approved as part of the outline planning approval. This proposal does not seek to alter the access nor the use of it. The floor space and traffic type remain unaltered so that element of the approval stands. Road access to the site is very good (shown as point A on Location Plan 1), with generous sightlines (shown on P19091-005) and good local links from other local towns. The existing road network is good to the location. The proposal includes 20 cycle stands which are to be provided on site for employees and visitors. Further comments are provided in Statement 130522.

As with similar approved sites the nature and layout of traffic flows within the site are set out in order to avoid conflict between the various types of trade vehicle, employees and visitors to the site. For ease of access parking spaces will be reserved adjacent to each building for employees and visitors (shown on Site Plan 2). It is likely a number of trade vehicles will be taken off site each night. Other trade vehicles when not on the road may be locked in the units.

Access doors are located predominantly on the north and south elevations, together with fire exits as required. Each building will have two secure full height roller shutter doors.

Parking is provided adjacent to each building thus providing safe access to the entrance doors and minimal interaction with the designated internal traffic flows from point C on Plan 1.

Access to and around the buildings is to be disability friendly, with designated disabled parking spaces near to each office access door.

Appearance

The materials for the buildings are going to be similar to existing units on the adjacent site. Due to the size of the existing adjacent building and the existing tree/hedge screening the proposed units will not be dominant from most angles including the road frontage. The nearest building to the road is 175 m minimum distance.

Appraising the Context

The building of the proposed premises will complement the other businesses on the adjacent site to create a compact business area for businesses serving Longridge the adjacent urban area, local communities, and rural areas with both high tech, and rural trades. For the Ribble Valley connections to the M6 corridor are good. Suitable tenants have provided substantiated intention to rent the premises on a long term basis commencing occupation immediately on 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 tenants' business plans that both existing jobs be retained and a number of new jobs will be generated.

Summary

This outline application comprises a modest farm diversification proposal to create modern commercial units including some integral office space, utilising high speed fibre optic broadband, sustainable use of the existing site and excellent transport links.