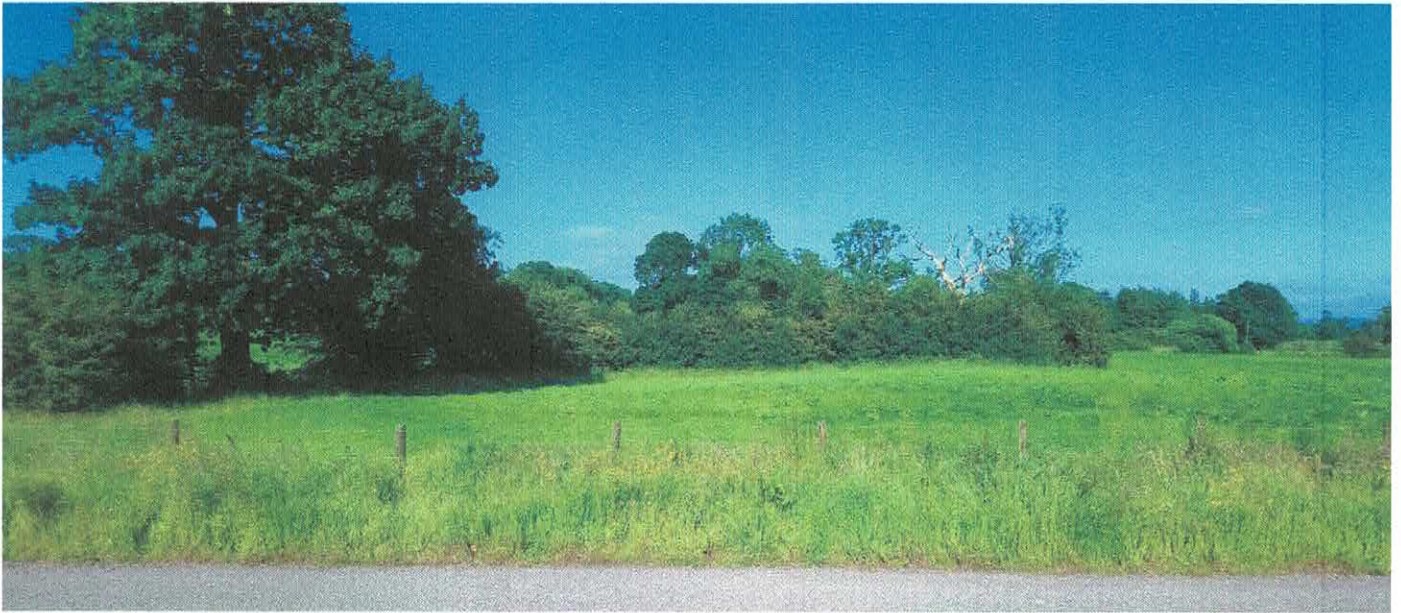


Landscaping Statement

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

The planning application is to erect buildings and infrastructure to provide low impact business units Class E(g) to the east of the existing access and existing depot. The proposal includes integrated offices, staff facilities, car parking, storage areas and turning areas. This report is to be read in conjunction with Landscaping Plan 6.

There are no individual trees or woodland on the land comprising this proposal and none within a distance which might be affected by the proposed works. To the north a single Oak (*Quercus robor*) T1 stands in the field boundary some 18m clear from any works. This distance is double the safe working distance identified in the RPA guidance. This good safe margin has been identified in the arboricultural survey and assessment.



At the north east corner of the site the proposed parking spaces are positioned 5m from H1 existing hedgerow. This distance is four times the safe working distance identified in the RPA guidance. This section of hedge H1 shown both above/below is particularly high and dense providing substantial screening where most required.



The proposed building to be set 5m from the south boundary of the site does not affect an existing hedgerow H2 shown below with the working distance being more than four times the RPA guidance.



The existing east section of hedge H2 is in good condition, shown above, this part is to be retained. The existing access to the land is to be improved and a new section of hedgerow south H2a of the proposed access will be planted to provide additional screening. This will replace part of a separate short section of gappy hedge to be removed (west end of H2), not shown in the image above. This is also referred to in the arboricultural survey/assessment report and ecology report as being in poor condition. Two new sections of hedge will provide much more enhanced habitat and enhanced mitigation screening of internal site access.

The existing west boundary and proposed east boundary of the site are to be maintained with a secure fencing boundary with a clear strip for services and maintenance. The existing field hedgerow boundaries and trees beyond such boundaries provide a good level of existing screening to the north, east and south. The existing hedge adjoining to the north of the site provides good screening. None of the hedgerows are classified as important under the hedgerow regulations. Both H1 and H3 are to be gapped up with native species hedge plants and trees which are to be protected with livestock fencing and guards. Details are set out in the planting plan below which aims to provide comprehensive planting for mitigation of any remaining visual impact.

Higher College Farm has diversified since 1991 to convert some of the original buildings and now has a large distribution building constructed post approval in 2003. For this current application the suggested cladding is Juniper Green many approved farm/commercial buildings in the Ribble Valley and similar to the gable ends of the neighbouring distribution unit. It should be noted that the site is on land lower than the road so there is already a 4.4m fall in ground level to the proposed floor level of Building 3. When combined with existing intervening hedgerows and trees the ridgeline of building 3 will not be discernible when travelling past the site on the road. When viewed, if at all partially possible, from the road the precise use is indefinable and the proposed buildings together with the existing do not present an incongruous or uncommon grouping to provide for a farm diversification enterprise. Not dissimilar if they were agricultural to service an existing agricultural land holding. It should be noted that building 1 appears relatively 1.15m lower in the landscape when compared with building 3. Building 2 is completely obscured by Building 1 and is relatively 0.65m lower in the landscape when compared with Building 3.

In agreement with the ecology report submitted there is no evidence of any specifically protected species occurring on the site or the surrounding areas. There is no conclusive evidence that any nesting birds, bats, reptiles or amphibians would be negatively affected either on site or beyond in the local area. However a number of bird and bat boxes will be provided in the north boundary in both H1 and T1. These are shown as red dots on the Landscaping Plan 6.

Planting Plan

- The Lancashire Hedgerow (livestock type-no blackthorn) mix for gapping up includes selected species being 50% Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), 20% Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), 20% Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and 10% Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus catharticus*). These will be planted in a double staggered row with 5 plants per metre run, 40cm between rows and 33cm between plants.
- Appropriate weed control both before and ten years after planting will take place to protect the young plants from smothering in the rabbit guards to be used as recommended.
- The 10 year Maintenance Plan includes gapping up for any plant losses with species of a similar size to those originally planted if required.
- In addition standard trees are proposed 1 Silver Birch (*Betula penula*), 1 Common Oak (*Quercus robor*), 1 Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) and 1 Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) will be planted in the gaps of H3. If space and ground conditions allow then additional species have been considered including Crab Apple and Field Maple which will be added within the hedgerow fencing. Possibly 3 Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) beyond. Additional new trees including 2 Bird Cherries (*Prunus padus*), 1 Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and 1 Rowan (*Sorbus acuparia*) will be planted as standards in the gaps of H1. If space and ground conditions allow then additional species have been considered including Crab Apple and Field Maple which will be added within the hedgerow fencing.
- The single tree species mentioned above being Sycamore are to be planted no closer than 16 metre spacing from each other and/or other mature trees. Care will be taken not to over-group the larger trees but equally not to measure precisely giving the appearance of a regimented parkland or man-made planting layout. Each will be securely staked, rabbit/deer guarded and with livestock fencing.
- A secure stock proof fence of sheep netting and double strand barbed wire will be erected (single or double run as required) accounting for livestock grazing and maintained for ten years as protection from sheep and cattle to any open side of the newly planted hedge. Please refer to the Landscaping Plan 6.
- The species listed above have been recommended as suitable both for the soil type and to complement the existing hedgerows/ mature hedgerow trees. The applicant is happy to swap any species to an alternative suggestion if the Countryside officer feels this would be more appropriate. There are many additional options for the lower percentages in the hedgerow mix.
- All planting is to be undertaken during the appropriate winter planting season. Where planting/fencing can be undertaken, undisturbed by laying of services/drainage, this can commence early in the development scheme. Where space is required for the laying of services then planting will take place later. All planting shall be completed and securely fenced in the season following first occupation.
- The aim of the planting as suggested is to add further density and interest to the existing H1 and H3 and in so doing soften the impact of the proposed development when viewed from the north and east. There is a road with high hedgerow to north (approx 160m to the N of the site). There is property to the east already screened by a number of existing mature trees (approximately 180m E of the site). Additionally there are benefits to any limited views from properties which already have a high hedge and a large number of mature trees (180m NE of the site).

Summary

The proposed development does not unduly affect the landscape beyond the immediate setting and it does not affect existing trees. A separate arboricultural survey and assessment submitted together with Plan 7 confirms this. The existing trees and hedgerows both on and off the site provide a good degree of screening and with careful management will continue to do so. Any new hedge plants required for gapping up will be protected with guards for the first ten years and permanently with a stock proof fence on the farmed field side. In particular the east boundary of the field beyond the site will have the existing hedge gapped up with plants from the Lancashire Hedgerows mix and a number of addition standard native trees to complement those already in place. The suggested species including Latin names are set out in the Planting plan above.

The planting plan includes 510 new hedgerow plants and 10 new standard trees and hedgerow trees to complement and enhance the existing screening hedgerows while adding to the species mix and biodiversity of the natural field boundaries. The planting plan provides a comprehensive mitigation of the limited visual and environmental impacts.

During the construction period a temporary protection fence will be set out 2m outside the RPA of T1, temporary hedgerow protection fences will be erected at two metres from the base of hedges at the north east and south east sections of the site boundaries which contractors will be expected to keep clear of.

This reserved matters application comprises a modest proposal to create three modern commercial units and associated infrastructure. Site survey, appraisals and impact assessments were carried out on the land, boundaries and nearby land. There are no undue effects on trees which are situated well clear of the submitted site. No protected species were found on the site or on adjoining land. This landscaping plan provides to enhance the existing natural native foliar features in the landscape to enhance and protect the good screening effects already provided by existing boundaries. Both the gapping up of H1 and H3 and replanting of a short section to extend the retained part of H2 at the south east end can be conditioned to achieve this no later than the planting season following first occupation of any unit.

To draw to a conclusion the applicant puts forward this proposed landscaping scheme, together with Plan 6, for this full application to be both reasonable and proportionate to maintain existing natural features. In addition the proposed planting scheme enhances the existing to further soften the impact of both the proposed low impact development and the existing development with larger buildings adjacent which are all distant from the road and sensitive properties. The works proposed can be suitably conditioned to follow the recommendations of this report and refer to Landscaping Plan 6.

Land off Blackburn Road, Longridge – Landscaping Plan 6

Scale 1 : 1250

KEY

Hedges retained and gapped up



New section replacement hedge to plant

