



JUDITH DOUGLAS TOWN PLANNING LIMITED

Harrisons Engineering, Judge Walmesley Mill, Longworth Road, Billington, Clitheroe. BB7 9TP

Proposed new car park and storage yard.



Source: Google Earth

Planning Statement

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JDTPL0437

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This planning application has been prepared by Judith Douglas Town Planning Ltd on behalf of the applicants in support of a full planning application to create a car park and storage yard on land adjacent to the existing industrial site of Harrison's Engineering at Longworth Road, Billington.
- 1.2 This Statement will describe the application site and surroundings and the development being proposed. The relevant planning policies will then be discussed. We will demonstrate that the application complies with the development plan and other material considerations and conclude that planning permission should be granted.
- 1.3 This application should be read in conjunction with drawings:
- 001 Rev D Existing site plan
  - 002 Rev E Proposed site plan
  - 003 Rev B Location plan
  - Flood Risk Assessment (including surface water management) PSA Design August 2023
  - Transport Statement PSA Design April 2023
  - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Environtech July 2023

## **2.0 THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA**

- 2.1 Harrisons Engineering was first established in Clitheroe in 1970 and moved to Judge Walmesley Mill in 1980 and has occupied the site since that time. It specialises in metal fabrication and welding and produces large scale structures for steel framed buildings, gantries, fire escapes, access platforms, pedestrian/bridleway/road/rail bridges and industrial chimneys. It also produces materials handling plant and equipment such as conveyors, chutes, valves, and overhead travelling crane gantries. They also carry out precision engineering and machining. The company website contains more information see <https://harrisons-engineering.co.uk/> The structures which are manufactured on site are often large scale and need to be stored on site before dispatch to the customer.
- 2.2 The existing site comprises a range of industrial buildings surrounded by hard surfacing which is used for outdoor storage areas, vehicle parking and vehicle and pedestrian circulation. To the north of the site is the River Calder, to the east is a public footpath which links Longworth Road to Broad Lane and The Sands and is parallel to the railway viaduct which is a grade 2 listed building. To the south is a row of terraced houses. The rear of the houses faces towards

the site and are separated from the site by a conifer hedge and a rear accessway to the houses. To the west is the proposed development site which is part of an agricultural field. The field (but not the site) extends up to the A59.

- 2.3 The majority of the existing site is within the settlement boundary of Billington. The eastern corner of the existing site is outside but close to the Whalley Conservation Area and the Whalley settlement boundary. The proposed development site is outside the settlement boundary in an area designated as open countryside and a mineral safeguarding area on the Housing and Economic Development, Development Plan Document Proposals Map (HEDDPD). The whole of the existing and proposed site is shown to be within a flood risk area, and to the south and west of the terraced houses is a committed housing site on the HEDDPD Proposals Map.
- 2.4 The Lancashire County Council mapping service mario maps shows that a public footpath 3-6FP43 passes along the eastern boundary of the site. A public footpath runs along Riddings Lane between the viaduct and the A59 on the north side of the River Calder. Longworth Road is an adopted road as far as the viaduct after which is unadopted.
- 2.5 The existing site extends to 2.2 hectares and the proposed extension to the site is 0.99 hectares. The site on which it is proposed to develop, is currently separated from the existing site by a mature hedgerow. There is another hedgerow to the south. The field currently extends to the river-bank to the north.
- 2.6 The existing and proposed sites are entirely within flood zone 2 and 3 as shown on the GOV.UK Flood maps for planning.





1. View south towards existing access from Longworth Road. Car park to left behind hedge, vehicle circulation area, outdoors storage of materials, fire damaged hedge to rear of terraced houses.



2. View north across the existing storage yard and circulation space on the west side of the site. Large, manufactured structures stored, fork-lift movements and HGV circulation.



### **3 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.1 The proposal is to extend the existing site onto the adjacent field to create 101 car parking spaces and a storage yard. The majority of the area will be used a storage yard for materials and assembly of products and storage of completed work prior to collection. Currently the site has parking for 90 cars, 9 vans, 4 cycles and not designated areas for HGV's.
- 3.2 Moving the staff car parking onto the proposed site will enable the route for HGV around the site to be formalised and separate out a traffic route from areas use for storage. Two HGV loading bays and an HGV holding area will be provided. A designated area for parking vans is relocated adjacent to the proposed parking area. Visitor parking is retained adjacent to the reception area along with cycle parking.
- 3.3 The existing hedgerow on the northwestern side of the site is retained except for access. The field access is to be widened to facilitate access to the proposed car park and a link is to be created between the existing and proposed storage areas. New native tree planting is proposed along the north-western boundary and along the south-western boundary to supplement the existing hedge.



3 Looking due north across the proposed site.

## 4 PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 There is a very long history of manufacturing at the site. The ordnance survey (OS) plan circa 1850 shows Longworth Road providing access to a building to the west of viaduct in the location of the older stone mill buildings on the site. The OS map of 1892 shows the building named Judge Walmesley Mill and the two rows of terraced housing to the south. The OS 1910 refers to Judge Walmesley Mill (Cotton). On the 1930 OS map the building is still marked Judge Walmesley Mill (Cotton) and there is an additional row of houses at Sunnyside Avenue.

4.2 The planning applications below are listed on the Council's website.

3/1990/0279 Judge Walmesley Mill, Longworth Road, Billington, BB6 9TP. Alterations and re-roofing to existing industrial workshop Approved: 30/05/1990

3/1994/0651 Harrison's Engineering, Judge Walmesley Mill, Longworth Road Billington.

Erection of free-standing tubular telecom mast 15m high, 2 omni-directional antennae and 1 dish antenna (prior notification) permitted development. Date: 02/11/1994

## 5 DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

5.1 The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (adopted 2014) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) is relevant.

### *Core Strategy (2014)*

5.2 The following policies are of relevance to the proposal:

### Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

- Key Statement DS1 (Development Strategy) sets out the development strategy for the Borough.
- Key Statement DS2 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development) – the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- Key Statement EN2 (Landscape) development will be expected to be in keeping with the character of the landscape.
- Key Statement EN4 (Biodiversity and geodiversity – The Council will seek wherever possible to conserve and enhance the area's biodiversity and geodiversity.
- Key Statement EC1: Business and employment development-employment development will be directed towards the main settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge, Whalley and location well related to the A59 corridor as preferred locations to accommodate employment growth.

- Key Statement DMI2 (Transport Considerations) aims to promote sustainable patterns of travel.
- Policy DMG1 (General Considerations) – sets out various criteria to be considered in assessing planning applications, including a high standard of building design, proposed development being sympathetic to existing land uses, highway safety and not adversely affecting the amenities of the area.
- Policy DMG2 (Strategic Considerations) – Strategic considerations-development should be in accordance with the Core Strategy development strategy and should support the spatial vision.
- Policy DMG3 (Transport and mobility) consider the development in relation to the primary route network, the provision made for access by pedestrian, cyclists and those with reduced mobility.
- Policy DME1 (Protecting trees and woodlands) requires development proposal that may impact on tree cover to be accompanied by an arboricultural survey with the aim of protecting trees.
- Policy DME2 (Landscape & townscape protection) development should enhance local landscapes.
- Policy DME3 (Site and Species protection and conservation) -seeks to protect wildlife species protected by law and their habitats.
- Policy DME6: Water management-development will not be permitted where it will it lead to flooding.
- Policy DMB1: Supporting business growth and the local economy- proposals that are intended to support business growth and the local economy will be supported in principle.

#### Other relevant Council documents

#### 5.3 Documents produced by RVBC relevant to the proposal:

Ribble Valley Economic and Employment Land Needs Study 17 December 2021.

At section 9 Demand Supply Balance of this report, it is stated:

#### ***"The Need for Additional Land***

9.52 *As outlined above, there is an identified under-supply of between 10.5 and 14.5 ha of employment land based on the site assessments over the plan period to 2038.*

9.53 *As a consequence, it is suggested that the Council gives consideration to identifying and allocating additional sites that are considered to be suitable and deliverable for office / industrial / warehousing uses. Any new sites should be sustainable and, ideally, located within areas of strong market demand. Agents confirmed that the areas of Clitheroe, Whalley, Longridge and the A59 corridor should be the primary locations for new development.*



9.54 *There are clear shortages in the larger towns of the Ribble Valley, notably Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley where fresh supply is very much at a premium. Overall, it is suggested that efforts to identify new employment allocations could be focussed in these areas."*

- 5.4 The Employment Land Needs Study was presented to the Planning and Development Committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February 2022. The minutes to the meeting state *"A key finding of the study is that the Council is in a position where there is a relatively significant shortfall of suitable and readily available sites to meet economic growth aspirations and future demands, and should therefore, give consideration to identifying and allocating additional sites that are considered suitable and deliverable"*

#### National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.5 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 6 Building a Strong Competitive Economy paragraph 81 States *"planning policies, and decision should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. **Significant weight** should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development."* Paragraph 85 states *"planning policies and decision should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements....The use of previously developed land , and site that area physically well-related to existing settlement, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist."*

## **6 PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE**

- 6.1 Planning pre-application advice reference RV/2022/ENQ/00053 was received in October 2022. This confirmed that the principle of the development for the extension of an existing well-established manufacturing enterprise onto land adjacent to provide increased levels of capacity for car parking and storage of materials is justifiable and considered essential to maintain and existing source of employment. It was noted that the site is in flood zone 2 and 3. The advice concluded that the principle of the development could be supported should matters pertaining to flood risk be resolved.
- 6.2 Pre-application advice was sought from the Local Highway Authority in January 2023 for the relocation of the employee's car park with a new 101 space car park, the creation of a storage yard and the formalisation of the circulation route around the site for HGV's using the existing

access arrangements on Longworth Road. On completion of the development there would be 101 spaces plus 4 visitors' spaces and 9 van spaces proposed totalling 114 spaces across the whole site. The pre-application advice raised no concerns as it was not anticipated that the development would generate a significant difference to traffic movement on the surrounding network.

## **7 EVALUATION**

7.1 The main planning issues to be considered in the determination of this planning application are:

- The principle of the development
- Supporting the local economy
- Visual impact-the impact of the proposals on the quality of the landscape.
- Residential amenity.
- Ecology
- Trees and hedges
- Highways access and transport
- Flood Risk

### Principle of the development

7.2 The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning decisions should create the conditions in which businesses can expand and adapt and significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth. It is acknowledged that in rural areas to meet this need sites may need to be found adjacent to rather than within settlements.

7.3 The recent Employment Land Needs Study 2021 commissioned by the Council shows that there is currently a shortfall in land for economic development within the Borough. It recommends that land should be brought forward for development which relates well to the three main settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley and sites well-related to the A59 corridor. Land has not yet been identified and released to meet the identified need for new economic development sites.

7.4 The company has around 100 employees based at the Billington site. Employees comes from the local area and within Lancashire. The company also owns sites in Great Harwood (Rishton Welding) and Barnoldswick (Harrisons Engineering). Judge Walmesley Mill is the headquarters of the company and the largest site in the group. Turnover at the Billington site has increased from £2.5 million to £21.9 million over the last 15 years. The proposed creation

of the car park and storage area will provide operational efficiencies, create a better and safer working environment and enhance the vitality and viability of the business overall.

- 7.5 The existing site is within the settlement boundary of Billington close to the settlement boundary of Whalley and well related to the A59 corridor. The land onto which the company wishes to expand is immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary. Key Statement EC1 Business and Employment Development, states that *"the expansion of existing businesses will, wherever appropriate, be considered favourably"*. Also, development that contributes to the strengthening of the wider rural and village economies will be supported in principle.

- 7.6 Policy DMB1 Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy. States *"proposals that are intended to support business growth and the local economy will be supported in principle"*. Clearly these policies support the proposals in principle. In terms of location Policy DMB1 goes on to state ***"the expansion of firms on land outside settlements will be allowed provided it is essential to maintain the existing source of employment and can be assimilated within the local landscape"***.

- 7.7 Harrisons Engineering is a successful business which is expanding. The main operational site is in Billington and the company wishes to stay within the Ribble Valley. In order to sustain the business, the site at Billington needs to expand to work more efficiently, effectively and safely. The relocation of the employees' car park, the creation of a storage yard and the formalisation of the circulation route around the site for HGV's will improve working efficiency, handle HGV movement more effectively and separate out activities which will improve site safety.

#### Design

- 7.8 The site is reasonably level and can be screened by native species tree planting. The height of the existing storage racks used at the site is 4.8m. See photograph 4. Similar racking will be used in the storage area. The storage area will also be used for the temporary storage of fabrication assemblies prior to dispatch to the customer. These vary in height dependant on the type of structure being created. An example is shown in photograph 5. The proposal complies with the requirements of policy DMG1 General Considerations.





4 Existing storage racks



5 Temporary fabrication assembly example.

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Visual Impact

- 7.9 The expanded site will be seen against the backdrop of the existing buildings on the site which are large in scale and three stories in height. It will also be seen against the terraced houses and the committed housing site to the south. The extended site is on the opposite side of the main buildings from the viaduct. The extension of the site will have no adverse impact on the setting of the listed building or the Whalley Conservation Area. The proposed development will be screened by new tree planting along the northwest and southwest boundaries. The applicant has drawn up a woodland planting scheme with the Woodland Trust which includes tree planting on the land on the northern side of the River Calder. This includes an area of tree planting 740m<sup>2</sup> adjacent to the public footpath runs between the footbridge over the River Calder to Ridding Lane and an area of tree planting 2958m<sup>2</sup> between Ridding Lane and the River Calder. See appendix - Woodland planting scheme W001. The planting scheme will be carried out in due course by the River Ribble Trust. Overall, the scheme will have an acceptable impact on the visual amenities of the area so that it is compliant with Key Statement EN2 Landscape, and Policy DME2 Landscape and townscape protection.

Residential amenity

- 7.10 Vehicle movements already take place around the site. The expansion of the site will allow vehicles to enter and leave the site more efficiently. Activities associated with the outdoor storage of structures and loading and unloading of HGV's will be transferred to the northwest of the existing site away from the houses in part. The existing areas will still be utilised, but they will be less congested and safer. This complies with policy DMG1.

Ecology

- 7.11 A preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been carried out. No conclusive evidence was found of any specifically protected species regularly occurring on the site or the surrounding area which would be negatively affected by this site development following the mitigation proposed. The vegetation to be cleared has a low ecological significance in the local area; consisting of improved grassland bound by two species-poor hedgerows. Mitigation has been suggested in the form of compensatory planting and habitat enhancement as well as methods to avoid the spread of invasive species which are close to but not on the site. The proposal fully accords with the requirements of Key Statement EN4 Biodiversity and geodiversity, and policy DME3 Site and species protection and conservation.

### Hedges and Trees

- 7.12 The hedgerow between the existing and proposed site is categorised as species poor and will be retained in the development except for points of access. A new field boundary is to be created through tree planting along the northwestern boundary. The existing hedgerow to the south-west of the site can be improved and will be supplemented with tree planting. Wildflower seeds could be used to plant verges to enhance the ecological value of the site and continuity between the site and the wider area. The proposed tree planting can include species such as rowan to provide food for birds in winter. This will enhance the biodiversity of the site in accordance with Key Statement EN4 Biodiversity and Geodiversity.

### Highways

- 7.13 It is not anticipated that the development will lead to greater numbers of vehicles visiting the site. A full description of the movements of vehicles round the site is provided in the Transport Statement. This clearly describes the difficulties arising which leads to congestion within the site, conflict between HGV's and other vehicles and creates health and safety issues. The congested arrangements are also inefficient.
- 7.14 The improvements to site circulation and parking enables the route for HGV's around the site to be formalised which will remove the majority of potential conflicts between cars and HGV's. This will improve safety and efficiency in the handling of goods. Visitor parking is retained adjacent to the building's reception area along with cycle parking. The proposal ensures that that all visitors to the site, including cycles, cars, vans and HGV can be accommodated within the site and manoeuvre safely. The proposal complies with policy DMG1 and DMG3

### Flood risk

- 7.15 The submitted flood risk assessment confirms that the proposed site is in flood zones 2 and 3. It is outside the functional flood plan (Flood zone 3b). The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) Flood risk vulnerability classification table 2 shows that the proposed *"commerical car park and storage area"* would fall within the *"Less Vulnerable"* category. Table 3 of the PPG indicates that Less Vulnerable development is *"appropriate"* within Flood Zone 3a. There will therefore be no requirement for a Sequential Test or Exception Test to be carried out for this development. An emergency plan, identifying safe access and escape routes is included in the flood risk assessment.
- 7.16 The flood risk assessment also comments on surface water management. The proposal will not increase the amount of impermeable area with surface materials having been chosen for their permeability. As a result, the report states that there will be no increase in surface water run-off from the site. The proposal will not increase flood risk elsewhere. There are no other



areas within the site at a lower risk of flooding which could accommodate the development. The proposal complies with the requirements of the NPPF paragraphs 159, 167 and 168 as well as footnote 55 and policy DME6: Water Management.

## **8 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 This planning Statement has been prepared to accompany an application for full planning permission to create a car park and storage yard on land adjacent to the existing industrial site of Harrison's Engineering at Longworth Road Billington. The proposed development is required to sustain the existing business at the site. It will improve working efficiency, handle HGV movement more effectively and separate out activities which will improve site safety.
- 8.2 The proposal complies with the requirements of the Core Strategy and the NPPF and as such should be supported.
- 8.3 In addition, no environmental or technical matters have been identified which would weigh against the development. In light of all the issues detailed within this Statement, the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied and the application supported.

## **Appendix**

Woodland planting scheme W001A.