

Ref 13/L/04

25 February 2013

John Macholc
Planning Manager
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Civic Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
BB7 2RA

Dear Mr Macholc

Manor Court, Salesbury Hall. Former gravel works engineering workshop.

Further to the recent discussion and meeting with Diane Cafferty (and to her helpful pre application written advice), I now enclose a planning application for the regeneration of the existing building and its site for a B1 business venture. The proposal is intended as Phase 3 of the highly successful Manor Court development and, as its predecessor, would deliver a high standard of office and training accommodation contained within a sensitively designed new building.

Although "new", the building will largely replicate the existing former engineering and plant works although the proportions have been modestly increased to make full use of the building volume. However, the footprint of development remains the same and we are confident that the substantial adjacent landscaping which was planted by the applicants several years ago provides an effective screen which will help to contain any modest increase in height.

In our discussions with Diane, Duncan Isherwood and I explained the background to the scheme. You will possibly recall that over the years Mr and Mrs Mustoe have tabled possible uses for the existing building which still retains its Class B2 use (the remnants of the former gravel extraction business). You may also recall that as part of the Manor Court phase 1 scheme, Mr and Mrs Mustoe agreed to surrender their right to resume the long-standing ability to extract and export gravel from the River Ribble (although it was agreed with the Council that the historic engineering use - and brownfield status - would remain extant in the case of the gravel works building itself).

As the supporting Planning Statement explains, this is a significant structure which could be used for business purposes (especially having regard to present government intentions to extend permitted development rights for surplus buildings within the countryside) but it would seem more logical to replicate the business facilities to be found nearby, at Manor Court.

Our clients have considered both the options of either adapting and extending the existing building or alternatively demolishing and rebuilding to achieve similar floorspace . After careful consideration it seems most logical to follow the rebuild option since that delivers the highest standard of construction at the most cost-effective price.

Retention of the existing building would still require a completely new external stone skin (to the new dimensions) and new roof so both alternatives would effectively look exactly the same externally and would deliver exactly the same internal floorspace, capable of being occupied by exactly the same businesses.

We have to bear in mind the need to raise the ground floor level to respond to possible flooding considerations so, again, rebuilding appears the most logical course to take. Certainly this would enable a high standard of sustainable building construction to be achieved throughout which would marry well with the intended sustainable energy system which is proposed.

I have spoken to Niamh O'Sullivan at Lancashire County Council, following her pre-application consultation response to Diane in order to clarify her suggestion that whilst the County Council would not oppose the conversion and extension option, it would require detailed justification of a totally rebuild option, under policy CS1 of the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy, as well as emerging policy M2 from the Lancashire Minerals and Waste Site Allocation and Development Management Policies Local Plan.

From my discussion it would appear that the Minerals Plan still seeks to protect the historic gravel extraction permission but only because the County Council was never informed of the Agreement by the present owners to relinquish the extraction rights several years ago. Niamh therefore asked that any new planning application explain the recent site history and also clarified the reason for rebuilding. She did not see any objection in principle to what is now intended but simply needed a clear explanation. There was not seen to be any need for further justification against the criteria set out in emerging policy M2.

The application is supported by my Planning Statement, by a Design and Access Statement, by a Flood Risk Assessment and also by a Stage One Ecological Survey. Should there be a need for any further details I would be grateful if I could be contacted and I will do my best to supply those promptly.

Yours sincerely

John Willcock