

**Calder Vale Business Park,
Simonstone Lane,
Simonstone, BB12 7ND**

**Outline Planning
Applicatonfor the
Regeneration of former
Mullards/LG Philips site as
Business Park. Associated
Access and Highways Works
(all other matters reserved)**



Client:
Fort Wilson Properties

Planning

Support

Statement

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement is intended to support an outline planning application for the redevelopment of the residential part of the former Mullard's/LG Philips works site at Simonstone Lane, Simonstone, Burnley. The land in question is currently cleared (save for the expanse of hardstanding) but was until recently the site of 'Building R' – a multi-storey building used for the manufacturing of cathode ray tubes for television sets. Whilst Fort Vale Engineering retain one linear storage and testing building on this site, the remainder is vacant urban land – which is a significantly under-used resource. This application seeks to regenerate this site in order to develop out a high quality business park providing Class B1, B2 and B8 floorspace totalling no more than 19,250m².
- 1.2 Whilst the application is submitted in outline form, full details of 3 buildings are submitted for consideration and approval in full. Paragraph 24 of Circular 04/2008 makes provision for local planning authorities to consider such 'hybrid' applications and the planning fee has been calculated accordingly. Such an approach will allow for the applicants to phase the development over time.
- 1.3 The local planning authority has recently granted planning permission for the construction of an Investment Casting Foundry (Application 3/2010/0564) which is currently subject to a revised application currently under consideration (Application 3/2011/0537) and also an extension to the rear of 'Building S' along with the construction of an 'Ancillary Facilities Building' located on a yard to the south of 'Building S' (Application 3/2011/0222). The construction of the later will facilitate the relocation of the existing test building which is located to the north of the site adjacent to the open-sided storage buildings which are proposed to be removed to facilitate the comprehensive redevelopment of this part of the site.
- 1.4 The construction of the foundry, extension to 'Building S' and the ancillary facilities building represents Phase 1 of a 3 phase programme for the development of this site. Phase 2 of the development will be the erection of the Fort Vale Special Projects manufacturing building and Units 1-4 of the proposed Business Park. These elements are subject to fully detailed drawings as part of this application in order that they can be implemented in the short term. Phase 3 will encompass the remainder of the site (Units 5-13) and will be built out as and when tenants are secured for them.

- 1.5 Whilst Fort Vale Engineering Ltd is keen to commence Phase 1 and is committed to the construction of a 'Special Projects' building on the site, it sees the remainder of the proposed business park as being built and available for other businesses. They are encouraged by the model being developed at Samlesbury by BAE, where a number of suppliers and associated businesses have relocated or expanded at the Samlesbury site in order to benefit from the natural synergies and efficiencies with BAE Systems. Strong interest has already been shown by a number of associated businesses, keen to relocate to a modern, high specification business park within easy reach of the M65 motorway.
- 1.6 Following the acquisition of the Simonstone Lane site in 2004, Fort Vale Engineering has systematically and significantly improved the site. Planning permission for the creation of a new frontage to 'Building S', along with the reconfiguring of the car parking, access and landscaping on site was granted in 2006 and subsequently implemented in order to improve the environment and appearance of the building, commensurate with the head office of a world-leading manufacturing company.
- 1.7 In parallel to this planning application, the applicants are also applying to Lancashire County Council for consent to relocate a volume of soil and inert material from this application site to land on the western side of Simonstone Brook (also owned by the applicants). This will facilitate both the construction of the proposed industrial/commercial buildings on site (including the 'arising' from the construction of footings etc) and create landscaped mounds which will act as a screen when the site is viewed from the open land to the west.

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site forms part of a much wider area in the control of Fort Wilson Properties; of which Fort Vale Engineering Ltd are the principal tenant. In total the land extends to 29.5 hectares which consists of both the operational land and buildings of FVE and the former Mullards/LG Philips site as well as the undeveloped open agricultural land to the west of Simonstone Brook.
- 2.2 To the north, the boundary of this ownership is demarcated by the embankment of the former Blackburn, Burnley, Accrington and Colne Extension Railway (Great Harwood loop closed in 1964). Beyond that lies the village of Simonstone. Open countryside lies to the south along with the Altham Pumping Station and the River Calder. Altham industrial estate lies beyond this. Land to the west of the application site lies agricultural land and Gooselead Woods, which are also in the ownership of Fort Wilson Properties. The eastern boundary of the site is demarcated Simonstone Lane and beyond this a collection of industrial buildings, former part of the wider Mullards/LG Philips and now is separate ownership and marketed as 'Simonstone Business Park' (formerly Time Technology Park). These buildings are of varying quality and scale, many having been sub-divided from ageing factory buildings.
- 2.3 On the opposite site of Simonstone Lane to the site lies a short terrace of two-storey stone cottages – Railway Terrace. The western gable end of the terrace is unusual in that it accommodates two houses (Numbers 1 and 3) which face onto Simonstone Lane. These houses are served by a 'back lane' and front footpath which accesses front gardens (south facing). Habitable room windows face the application site, with Simonstone Lane in between.
- 2.4 Access to the existing FVE site is from Simonstone Lane where traffic is controlled by a manned gatehouse set back from the highway. There is some visitor parking outwith the boundary fence/wall but all servicing and parking facilities lie within the site. Simonstone Lane is a single carriageway road controlled by a 30 miles per hour speed limit. It is relatively wide by modern standards and accommodates on street parking along part of its length. The north - eastern boundary of the application site is demarcated by a brick wall with fencing above (to a height of 2.4m) whilst the southern part of the site which has been subject to the improvements scheme is delineated by a similar brick wall with stone copings, about which attractive metal railings are affixed.

- 2.5 Together with the nearby Altham Business Park, the Simonstone/Altham area has become one of the major employment locations for the sub-region, taking advantage of the close relationship to the M65 and M66 motorways.
- 2.6 The application site has a history of heavy industrial processes – primarily associated with the cathode ray production facility – Building 'R'. This was a multi-storey structure with several large chimney stacks which dominated the skyline in the area. Ancillary facilities and structures were located between Buildings 'R' and 'S' whilst there were several lagoons located to the western edge of the site. The site can be seen in context on the images below:

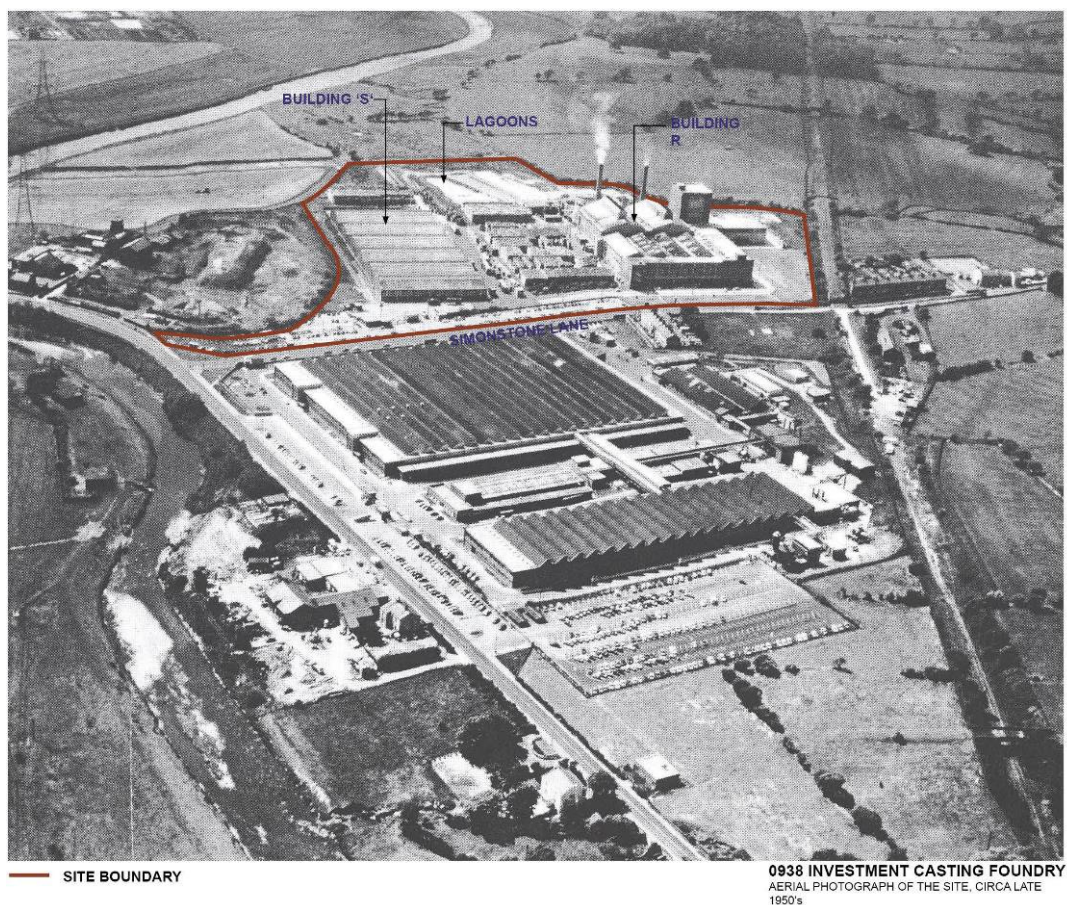


*Fig 1: Former Mullards/LG Philips Simonstone works with 'Fort Vale operational site' edged red
The substantial building scale and height can be clearly seen. With the exception of
Building 'S' all the former buildings on the Fort Vale site have recently been demolished*

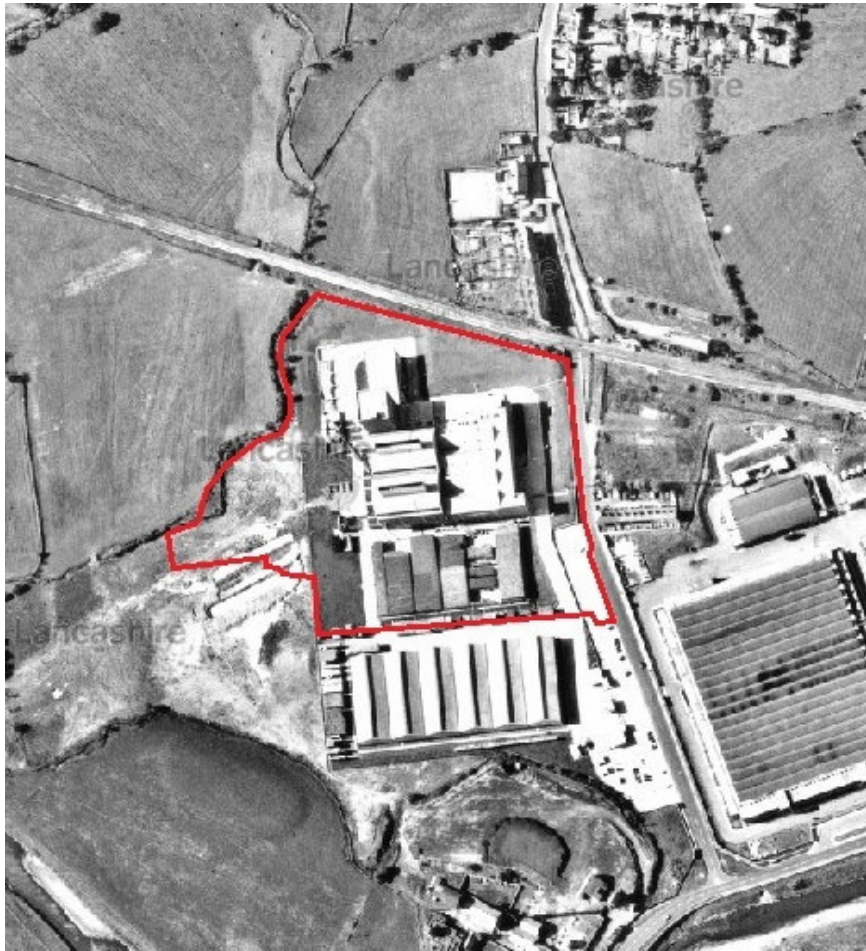


Fig 2: Aerial photograph of application site taken in 1960's. Note presence of lagoons to west of 'Building R' and extent of operational land

- 2.7 Following the acquisition of the site by the applicants in October 2004, an application was made to Ribble Valley Borough Council for a Certificate of Lawfulness (Application 3/2006/0340) under Section 192 of the 1990 Act. This is described as:

'Manufacturing development with ancillary storage use class B2 (Town & Country Planning Use Classes Order 1987) in accordance with outline planning permission ref: 7/7/1528 dated 5th February 1958.'

- 2.8 That application remains undetermined today and there is little prospect of a consensus and therefore a decision being reached in the short term. The applicants firmly believe that planning permission 7/7/1528 remain extant given that it has been partly implemented. There does remain uncertainty as to what the above planning permission actually consented as the principal purpose was to secure consent for the *'erection of buildings for storage purposes. Remainder of site to be left as grazing land until further extension is contemplated'*. Given that the permission related to the expansion of an existing industrial

site which encompassed elements of light and heavy industrial processing and ancillary uses such as offices, canteens, stores etc, this remains unclear. Nonetheless, that outline consent allowed for the construction of 288,000ft sq of floor space to be built to the west of Simonstone Lane – subject to conditions. Condition 3 in particular is of relevant to this current application at it limited the extent to which this 288,000ft sq of floorspace could be laid out. It states that '*no buildings shall be erected west of the line marked A-B on attached plan DEV200*'.

- 2.9 Irrespective of the legal interpretation of these facts, it is an unequivocal fact and a material planning consideration that the local planning authority, at that time, sanctioned the expansion of the existing Mullards site on a large scale, and onto previously undeveloped land to the west of their current premises. The weight to be attached to this 1958 planning permission is a judgement that can only be made following further investigation and contemplation of the current CLEUD application documents, but given that it has remained undetermined for over 5 years implies that the Council considers that the submission is not without merit.
- 2.10 Notwithstanding this, the entire business park proposal which is subject of this outline consent falls within the operational curtilage of the former Mullards/LG Philips site and will allow for its remediation and consolidation.

3. Application Proposal

- 3.1 Following significant investment within the existing Fort Vale Engineering site, this application represents the next stage in the transition of the former Mullards /LG Philips site at Simonstone Lane. FVE plan to underpin its initial work to improve the facilities and appearance of 'Building S' by constructing an Investment Casting Foundry and other buildings. This can be described as Phase 1 of the development of the site and which already benefits from planning permission. Commencement of these works will begin shortly once the necessary conditions and other regulatory consents have been secured.
- 3.2 This application proposal can be described as Phases 2 and 3 of the wider planning of the site to accommodate the expansion plans of Fort vale Engineering Ltd. The proposal can be described as follows:

Phase 2

Fort Vale Special Projects

Following a number of successful tenders and the further growth of Fort Vale internationally (FVE export 85% of its products made in Lancashire), FVE continue to consolidate and expand its facilities at Calder Business Vale Park. Following the development of a new investment casting foundry on the western side of the site, FVE wish to construct an additional manufacturing facility 'Fort Vale Special Projects'. This will establish a new production facility for FVE as they seek to diversify from their core business to other sectors such as the power industry. It will have a gross internal area of 2073m².

Units 1-4

The applicants have already saw keen interest in the wider Calder Vale Business Park site and one company which supplies FVE is keen to relocate to this site. It is therefore necessary to provide full details of these four units set around a central courtyard/service yard with car parking to the rear of each. Units 1 and 4 will together provide a total gross external floor area of 2328m². This will accommodate Class B2 uses with ancillary B1 and B8 elements.

Phase 3

Units 5-13

The remainder of the Calder Vale Business Park will be developed out as a final phase following completion of the Special Projects building and Units 1-4. This outline planning application will secure consent for the quantum of development proposed (subject to a maximum floor area of 19,250m² across Phases 2 and 3) and the matter of access is subject to determination at this stage. This will allow for the loose layout of the masterplan to be agreed – through the approval of the access point into the site and the internal circulation roads. However, the matter of 'layout' is not submitted for consideration and the applicants wish to retain a degree of flexibility in terms of the final positions and sizes of the proposed buildings. Nonetheless, in accordance with the Regulations, an indicative layout has been provided which will act as a guide for future development. Further details of the parameters within which the buildings will be constructed are provided in the Design and Access Statement (Masterplan) which accompanies this application.

4. Planning Policy

- 4.1 The policy background against which the application will be considered comprises national planning policy (in the form of Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance), and to a lesser degree the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Whilst this is in at the initial consultation stage, it carried material weight in the determination of planning application. Conversely, the policies of the North West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS12) which will be revoked once the Localism Act is passed, remain a material consideration. Finally, the saved policies of the Adopted Ribble Valley Local Plan are material. These saved policies will, in due course, be replaced by the Local Development Framework for Ribble Valley which will comprise a number of separate documents of which the most relevant will be the Core Strategy DPD and the Employment Land DPD. A consultation draft of the Core Strategy has been published for consultation purposes in mid-2010. FVE has made representations on a number of points.

National Planning Policy Framework (draft July 2011)

- 4.2 The draft National Planning Policy Framework seeks to consolidate and revise the existing PPGs and PPSs into a single Statement. Until this document is finally approved, it can only have limited weight and the existing PPGs and PPSs remain important material planning considerations. Like its predecessors, the NPPF has at its core the message to support sustainable development. However, the Framework goes further by making clear that Councils should be '*positive and proactive*' in encouraging sustainable growth and addressing barriers to investment. They should set a clear economic vision and strategy for their area based on understanding of business needs across their areas.
- 4.3 Paragraph 73 makes it clear that the planning should not be seen as a hurdle to investment: '*investment in business should not be over-burdened by the combined requirements of planning policy*'. In considering applications for economic development proposals, local planning authorities should:

'...apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development and seek to find solutions to overcome any substantial planning objections where practical and consistent with the Framework'. (Para 74).

- 4.4 In terms of Green Belt, the Framework seeks to maintain Green Belt protection but states that designation of new Green Belt '*should not be necessary*'. Paragraph 144 reaffirms that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for one of the exceptional purposes. Very special circumstances can exist and may outweigh the harm caused by inappropriateness and any other harm to the Green Belt. It is for an applicant to demonstrate 'very special circumstances' exist.

PPS4 - Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth

- 4.5 The Government's Policy Document – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (PPS4) is themed by an overarching objective to promote sustainable economic growth by building prosperous communities and by improving the economic performance of cities, towns, regions, sub-regions and local areas, both urban and rural. The objectives also confirm the need to deliver more sustainable patterns of development by reducing the need to travel, especially by car, and to respond to climate change.
- 4.6 Importantly, the PPS provides specific guidance to assist the determination of planning applications for economic development. Included with this is guidance on determining planning applications which are not in accordance with an up-to-date development plan. Here, Local Planning Authorities are advised to:
- a) weigh market and other economic information alongside environmental and social information;
 - b) take full account of any longer term benefits, as well as the costs, of development, such as job creation or improved productivity including any wider benefits to national, regional or local economies; and
 - c) consider whether those proposals help to meet the wider objectives of the Development Plan.
- 4.7 Policy EC2 of the PPS also required planning authorities to seek to make the most efficient and effective use of land, prioritising previously-developed land and buildings but also reflecting '*the different location requirements of business*'. As PDL within a settlement boundary, but close to the centres of population and the motorway network, the application site is ideally suited to additional economic development.

Regional Spatial Strategy

- 4.8 Following the decision of the Coalition Government to revoke Regional Policy, a number of High Court challenges have resulted in a decision that it is lawful for the Government to indicate its intention to revoke RSS's and this in itself is a material planning consideration (although this has yet to formally take place). In this instance, matters are of a site specific and local interest and there is no need to explore RSS policy here.

Ribble Valley Local Plan

- 4.9 At District level, the broad thrust of the Local Plan (saved policies) is to promote sustainable development, whilst at the same time providing for the needs of the local population, in line with previous regional aims. Economic development is an important plank of planning policy.
- 4.10 Saved Policy G1 confirms that all development proposals will be expected to provide a high standard of building design and landscape quality. Development which does so will be permitted, unless it adversely affects the amenities of the surrounding area. Impact upon surroundings and also compatibility with existing and proposed land uses are other important considerations. Development should also be efficient in terms of land use and must safeguard safety on the highway network.
- 4.11 Settlement Policy G3 confirms that within the villages of Mellor Brook, Read and Simonstone planning permission will be granted for the development and redevelopment of land wholly within the settlement boundary, together with the rehabilitation and re-use of existing buildings. We believe that more contemporary (& emerging) planning policies for both Ribble Valley and for adjacent Hyndburn District) will recognise the combined Major Employment Area at Simonstone/Altham as of major importance to the local (if not sub-regional) economy. This expanding employment area (radiating out from the original Mullard's site) makes a major contribution to addressing the employment requirements of not only Ribble Valley but also Burnley and Hyndburn Districts. Vitality of these areas is an important factor which will undoubtedly be reflected in future Local Development Frameworks. FVE have already made representations to the draft RVBC Core Strategy to this end.

- 4.12 Saved Policy EMP7 confirms that *"the expansion of existing firms within the main settlement will be allowed on land within or adjacent to their existing sites, providing no significant environmental problems are caused and the extension conforms to the other policies of the plan"*. The explanatory text confirms that *"the maintenance of existing sources of employment is essential to the continued economic viability of the area. Firms will benefit from the ability to expand their operations without necessitating their relocation"*.

Ribble Valley Local Development Framework

- 4.13 The RVBC Core Strategy document is presently at draft stage and a 'Regulation 25' consultation took place in Autumn of 2010. Comments received by the Council led to the redrafting of the Core Strategy and the inclusion of additional Development Strategy Options. It was indicated that an alternative option was the preferred strategy in terms of number of respondents. The new document therefore proposes five further options. Given that the document appears no near to hearing and adoption, it would be premature to attach any significant weight to the Policies within the Core Strategy. Planning applications continue to fall to be determined in accordance with saved policies of the adopted Ribble Valley Local Plan

Ribble Valley Employment Land Position Statement (June 2011)

- 4.14 The Employment Land Position Statement is an updated document that seeks to provide details that will be taken forward in the Core Strategy. The document seeks to inform future strategic and employment land requirements for the Borough. It recognises in its assumptions that the British Aerospace site at Samlesbury is a regionally important site and therefore, technically, not part of any Ribble Valley calculation of future employment need.
- 4.15 The document does not deliver any statements regarding the land at Simonstone and it would appear that no consideration has been given to the future potential development that could be delivered at this location. It identifies a need to provide 6 Hectares of employment land in the Ribble Valley from 2010 to 2020 in order to *'facilitate and maintain levels of economic development over the next 10 years'*. Submissions will be made in response to this consultation that confirm the availability to deliver a considerable proportion of the districts employment land needs at this site within the next 10 years.

5. Planning Considerations

- 5.1 It is unusual for a predominantly rural planning authority such as Ribble Valley to benefit from a major industrial site such as the Simonstone works. It is perhaps even more unusual that the Simonstone Lane site is not protected or allocated for any specific purpose within the development plan. One legacy of the 1974 local authority reorganisation is the unique position of the site to the south-eastern edge of Ribble Valley. In this context it relates to the adjacent industrial areas of Shuttleworth Mead Business Park and the Altham Industrial Estate far more than it does any comparable employment site within the Ribble Valley. The site lies close to the confluence of three local authority boundaries: Ribble Valley, Hyndburn and Burnley Boroughs and lies close to the settlements of Padiham, Great Harwood and Clayton le Moors (as well as Read/Simonstone and Whalley for example). Indeed, prior to 1974 the site was within the jurisdiction of Burnley County Borough Council. Setting aside local authority boundaries, the site is ideally suited to benefit from the critical mass of employment land and buildings which accommodate a number of Class B1, B2 and B8 uses in this area, close to centres of population and the M65 motorway.
- 5.2 Since the 1950's the application site has witnessed significant heavy industrial processes. The site was used primarily for a glassworks in order to produce glass tubes for televisions in association with the main Mullards site to the east of Simonstone Lane. Although ancillary Class B8 storage and Class B1 office space was present, the principle use was clearly heavy industry (Class B4 at that time). The buildings which occupied the site can be seen in Figures 1 and 2 in Chapter 2. They clearly had a presence within the wider landscape and an overbearing relationship with adjacent residential properties. Their height and mass contributed to this sense of dominance, as well as their continued heavy industrial use over a 24 hour period. Whilst the buildings were cleared from the site some years ago now, the use of the land for Class B1, B2 and B8 purposes remains. Indeed, part of the land is used for the storage of materials and to accommodate a test facility building owned and operated by Fort Vale Engineering.
- 5.3 In a planning policy context, the site is 'white land', being an inset within the Green Belt but adjacent to the Read/Simonstone settlement. As such there are no development plan policies that address how sites such as this should be assessed when development proposals are submitted. Nonetheless, given the site's relationship to Read and Simonstone it is sensible to assess the proposal against Policy G3 of the Local Plan. This permits the

redevelopment of land '*wholly within the settlement boundary*'. Given the Previously-Developed Land status of the application site and the fact that the majority of it lies within land outside the Green Belt and associated with other industrial sites adjacent, the redevelopment for a high quality Business Park would appear to be compliant with the spirit, if not the wording of Development Plan policy.

- 5.4 This view is supported by officers of the local planning authority. In the pre-application consultation response it states: '*..it is brownfield and a previously-developed site. There would be no objections to the redevelopment of this land for employment purposes*'.
- 5.5 The site extends to a total of 4.8 hectares of which only 0.55 Hectares falls within the Green Belt. Of the application site area within the Green Belt some 0.11 Hectares can be described as a proposed landscaped area or open land that would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt in terms of guidance within PPG2. The remaining 0.44 Hectares would accommodate the Fort Vale Special Projects Building and its two service yards. Parking for the factory would fall outside the Green Belt within the white land area.
- 5.6 Given that the application would give rise to 'harm' to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness it is for the applicants to demonstrate that 'very special circumstances' exist, which together outweigh this harm and any other perceived harm to the visual amenities of the Green Belt.
- 5.7 Firstly, the applicants believe that harm to the Green Belt by way of loss of openness and visual amenity will be limited. The proposed building will be seen in the context of a long-established industrial site which has (in the context of the Simonstone Lane area) only be cleared for a short period of time. It has for the past 50 years or so been a significant and prominent industrial facility adjacent to the Green Belt and open agricultural land. The proposed Business Park will, for the most part, fall within the existing hardstanding area of the former Mullards/ LG Philips works site and with a maximum height of the building of 9.3m (to the top of a parapet roof). The Special Projects building (when viewed from the west i.e. Green Belt) would be seen against the backdrop of 9 commercial buildings, of a similar appearance and scale and in the context of the wider and existing Fort Vale Engineering site.

5.8 Moreover, the application proposes a considerable degree of landscaping along the Simonstone Brook corridor – thus improving the setting of the existing site and ameliorating the impact of the proposed buildings on the visual amenities of the Green Belt. In addition, a parallel application for the relocation of soil and inert material from the application site to land to the west will be made to Lancashire County Council. The deposit of such material and 'arising' from the foundation works of the proposed business units will afford the applicants the opportunity to create a series of mounds or bunds which will be subsequently landscaped. This land forming will additionally mitigate against any impact the proposal will have upon the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt. Finally, it is also a material planning consideration that the entire application site was previously operational land utilised by Mullards/LG Philips. The aerial photograph below, taken in the 1960's shows the land which now falls within the Green Belt accommodating a series of lagoons and other workings.



Fig 3: Land to the west of 'Building R' clearly shown as operational in 1960's aerial photo.

5.9 Taking the above into account, the applicants submit that the harm to the Green Belt, other than by virtue of inappropriateness is limited. In contrast, it is submitted that 'very special circumstances' do exist which outweigh this overall level of 'harm'.

5.10 The Special Projects building is a requirement of a current successful occupier of the Calder Vale Park site. Fort Vale Engineering continue to thrive in their market in challenging economic times. With a multi-million pound turnover (internationally) there core business of the company continues to thrive. However, it has identified a need to diversify its product

offer into different commercial sectors. As such a Special Projects building will be largely independent to the existing Building 'S' but will sit alongside common facilities such as the Investment Casting Foundry and the ancillary research and development, design and support facilities that currently exist on site. Successful tenders for contract work in the power industry have led to an acute and immediate need for additional production space at Calder Vale Park and the Special Projects building provides this. Around 25 jobs will be created initially once the building is operational.

5.11 Such a building could in theory be erected within the main Mullards/LG Philips site i.e. within the Green Belt inset and not in the Green Belt itself. However, there are a number of crucial operational reasons why this is not feasible:

- There is a need for the Special Projects Building and all Fort Vale Engineering operations to be physically separated from the proposed business park. The marketability of the site and the health and safety implications make this imperative.
- The building needs to be located close to the Investment Casting Foundry building. Products will be cast in the foundry and transported by fork-lift truck to the Special Projects building (along with 'Building S') for fabrication, machining, finishing etc.
- The Special Projects building also requires servicing by delivery vehicles and the most appropriate route for Fort Vale Engineering drivers/contractors is via the existing service road alongside 'Building S' – thus allowing for the more efficient collection and distribution of goods and materials.
- The site must be laid out and graded in such a way that servicing of the Special Projects Building, the Foundry and the Fort Vale dispatch area (rear of (Building S')) can be carried out by fork-lift trucks. The gradient for such service areas must be a minimum of around 1:20. Given that the site from south to north and this is more prevalent the further east it is measured, then the service yards and internal access roads must be located to the west of the site.

5.12 It is also a material planning consideration that planning permission for the Investment Casting Foundry (which originally fell mainly within the Green Belt and partly within the white land) has been granted. Given the status of the land, the application was referred to the

then Government Office for the North West as a departure. The response from DCLG stated that it did not consider it necessary to intervene i.e. call in the application. The letter noted that the matter related to PPG2 and PPS4 and stated:

'Having carefully considered the relevant planning issues raised by this proposal together with the representations received, and having regard to his policy on call in, the Secretary of State has concluded on balance that intervention would not be justified as there is not significant conflict with national planning policies on the above matters, or any other sufficient reason, to warrant calling in the application for his own determination....'

5.13 Given that the application for the foundry was subject to departure procedures, the principle of the extension of this industrial site into the Green Belt (albeit a small proportion of the overall site) has already been established. Given that this element of the application is specific to an existing occupier on site and there is a demonstrable need for it, it is clear that it will be delivered. The development of such a building would result in the creation of skilled jobs and underpin an existing Ribble Valley business which employs up to 300 people. This Statement has sought to demonstrate why the specific location for the Special Projects building is the only site which could be feasibly be occupied by this facility. Given that, on its own, the factory would employ upwards of 25 jobs and would contribute immediately to the local economy, this alone is a very special circumstance which outweighs any harm to the Green Belt.

5.14 The final material planning consideration in favour of this application is the pending application for the Certificate of Lawfulness which seeks confirmation that application 7/7/1528 is still extant. Given that the application was submitted in October 2004 and remains undetermined today, it is reasonable to make the assertion that it is possible that that application could be approved and if so, could potentially sanction the further built development of buildings for industrial purposes up to the 'line A-B' which is annotated as being some 360m from Simonstone Lane i.e. well into open countryside and the Green Belt. The reference specifically to build development also allows for ancillary structures and hardstanding beyond that line (subject to Reserved Matters approval). This application and the companion application for the transfer of materials to land to the west of the application site, serve to round off development in this area and render any remaining arguments over the LDC academic. Fort Vale Engineering Ltd will consider the withdrawal of that application

should the necessary consents be secured to facilitate the development of Calder Vale Business Park.

- 5.15 It is also material that a neighbouring planning authority; Hyndburn Borough Council is currently proposing the revision of the Green Belt boundary onto land to the south of Altham Industrial Estate. Within its Core Strategy, Hyndburn is proposing that 5.27 hectares of land is removed from Green Belt to allow for consolidation of What More UK Ltd's manufacturing and distribution operations (see plan below).



Fig 4: Proposed extension of settlement boundary and removal of land from Green Belt at Altham (Hyndburn).

- 5.16 Given that a neighbouring authority is considering a similar development within land currently identified as Green Belt less than 1 mile from this site, this demonstrates that (whether it be through the plan-making process or the development management process) where there are strong economic grounds to do so, such developments should be supported.
- 5.17 When these material considerations are taken together they clearly constitute very special circumstances which outweigh any harm caused to the Green Belt. Aside from harm by reason of inappropriateness, the visual harm is very limited and the incursion into the Green Belt by the Special Projects building would have a very local impact. Taking all facts into consideration, the proposal is compliant with PPG2, Policy ENV4 of the Local Plan and the NPPF.

5.18 Great care has been taken in this submission to ensure that any environment impacts of the proposed business park are mitigated as far as possible. The application is supported by a full Transport Assessment which identifies the likely traffic flows and the impact of these upon the surrounding highway network – it is also accompanied by a Travel Plan at the request of Martyn Nugent (LCC). Within the submitted drawings we have sought to pull units 5 and 13 further away from Simonstone Lane and the accompanying Landscape package demonstrates how the amenity of properties on Railway Terrace will be protected (both visual and in terms of noise) by the planting of a substantial landscaping belt, supplemented by acoustic fencing. The landscaping masterplan and Landscape Framework document provide a benchmark and guide for all future development on the site, whilst mindful of the impact the built development would have on the wider landscape.

6 Summary

- 6.1 This Statement has sought to demonstrate that the application proposal is compliant with national planning policy advice and the Development Plan. Following pre-application discussions with officers of the local planning authority, highways authority, the Environment Agency and others, it is clear that there are no policy objections to the principle of the majority of the development. 89% (4.25 Hectares) of the site area falls within previously-developed 'white land' as defined on the Local Plan proposals map whilst 11% (0.55 Hectares) falls within the Green Belt.
- 6.2 This Statement demonstrates that the harm that would arise as a result of this development within the Green Belt would be outweighed by the 'very special circumstances of this proposal. The history and nature of the site; the locational and operational requirements of Fort Vale Engineering' the topography of the site; the need to have a self contained and defined boundary to FVE operations, the extant planning permissions and undetermined LDC application; and the approach of the neighbouring planning authority to the Green Belt in this area; are all important material planning considerations. Together they constitute very special circumstances which allow the planning authority, if it is so minded, to set aside the presumption of such development in the Green Belt.
- 6.3 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the 2004 Act and the NPPF, there are no material planning considerations that would run against the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The policies of the Development Plan sanction this development and the local planning authority is therefore politely requested to grant outline planning permission.