Design and Access Statement.

Erection of Grain Storage Building, Goldthorpes (Corn Millers) Ltd , Lee Lane Mill, Lee Lane, Millhouse Green

CONTEXT

Physical context

The Surrounding Area

The site lies within a rural area, with open fields on three sides, and a small group of dwellings to the south. In the field to the east is a ménage area and a large agricultural building 12m x 9m x 5.4m high, constructed in brown sheeting. Directly to the south, adjoining the boundary and also attached to an existing building on the site, is a small two storey building with living accommodation on the first floor . This was originally a barn lying within the curtailage of Myrefield House It was granted approval for conversion to a granny flat in 1997 (B/97/0938/PU) with a condition that the use remain ancillary to the main house. This building has one window on the boundary wall facing the site. The approve drawings show that this opening is split in two internally, half lighting a bathroom, the other half providing secondary lighting to bedroom 2. There are also two velux windows in the roof of the building. Myrefield House has windows facing the site at a distance of 12m from the boundary. The combination of mature trees within the curtilages and the properties themselves to the south obscure the view of the application site from the southerly approach along Lee Lane.

The Site

This is a long established industrial site, the business moving here in 1981 from Bullhouse Mill, at twhich time the main building was erected. An extension was added in 1989. The site thus contains a large block of modern buildings with extensive manoeuvring and parking areas, together with two smaller, old buildings, to the south on a part of the site which is now partly overgrown . On the boundary with Lee Lane is a row of mature trees which provide screening from the west. On the norther boundary is a further row of mature trees. On the western boundary are leylandii and some small trees.

The modern buildings are linked, but set at two differing levels, each with their own surfaced yard and wide vehicular access onto Lee Lane. The site falls 2m from the northern yard to the southern yard. The older buildings, which are to be demolished to provide the new building, are a further 1m below this level.

The old buildings were originally used to manufacture tiles, and the site bought in 1992 to provide for expansion space for Goldthorpes. The larger building is used for storage, but is in a poor condition. The main part of this building is 5m to the ridge, with a small, lower extension attached to the Myrefield House building, its ridge reaching the cill of the side window in that property. It is 24m wide, and has a floor area of 290m^2. The walls are constructed in a mix of brick, blockwork, render and, facing Lee Lane, rusting sheeting. The roof is in similar sheeting.

The smaller building, to the back of the site, is 4m to the ridge, having a floor area of 40m^2, and with the remains of a building of similar size to the front. This building is constructed in brick and render, with a tiled roof.

Economic context

The firm at present employs 12, and serves the local agricultural industry, providing feedstuffs and fertilizers. The proposed development will allow for the retention and possible expansion of this local employer. The legal requirements for the storage for fertilizers and feed are becoming stricter as the Government pushes for higher standards of food safety. Currently bulk crops such as barley and wheat are stored in the lower shed. Fertilizers are stored in the same shed, separated only by a space. The food safety standards now requires that fertilizer and feed are stored in completely separate buildings, leaving the business with a shortfall of space. The proposed building will provide a designated space for storing grain. This will also enable the firm to take advantage of the market ebbs and flows to buy and store grain and fertilizers when it is economically viable to do so.

If the firm cannot extend and provide a separate building they will be obliged to stop selling fertilizer, which makes up about 25% of the overall turnover. This will add extra pressure on maintaining existing jobs. It is hoped that the new store will lead to a larger turnover and additional employment.

Planning policies

The following policies have been taken into account in the submission of this application.

National policies

PPG2 Green Belts.

Para 3.1 there is a general presumption against inappropriate development within them. Such development should not be approved, except in very special circumstances.

In this case the very special circumstances are primarily the need to preserve local jobs by allowing the business to modernise, as required by developing legislation. The existing business is located here, and it would be unreasonable to expect it now to re-locate to a site outside the Green Belt given the significant financial investment in buildings and equipment that has already been made. In addition, the development can be carried out within the existing curtilage, on a brownfield site, and will result in the removal of two unsightly buildings.

Para 3.15 visual amenity should be protected

PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas. – the development is in accord with the statement of Government's objectives, in particular by promoting sustainable economic growth and diversification. It is also in accord with the Key principles of maintaining stable levels of economic growth and employment in the countryside, and giving priority to the re-use of previously-developed ('brownfield') sites.

Places, Streets and Movement, A companion guide to Design Bulletin 32 – this sets out sight line requirements for junctions and access points. For an access onto a main road, with a 60 mph speed limit, the requirement is 2.4 x 215m.

Local policies

Policy GS8
Within the green belt, the construction of new buildings will not be permitted, except in very special circumstances.

Policy GS9 - development within the green belt, or conspicuous from it, should not by reason of its siting, materials or design result in significant harm to the visual amenity of the green belt.

Policy ED10 Growth of Existing Firms
The expansion of existing firms will normally be permitted subject to satisfactory standards of design, the amenity of neighbouring uses, and adequate car parking, loading and vehicle manoeuvring facilities.

Policy ES1
The council will resist development which is likely to result in housing, schools, hospitals or other sensitive land uses being subjected to excessive levels of air, noise or other pollution.

While the adjoining residents have benefited from the fact that the adjoining land has been put to a relatively limited use in the recent past, nevertheless it is an established industrial site, and some noise and disturbance is inevitable with such uses. The physical separation of the building from the granny flat will remove the potential for noise transference from building to building. Vehicular movements are currently taking place on the site, and while the new development will bring some vehicular activity closer to the dwelling, this will only be on an intermitted basis. The storage activities within the proposed new building are unlikely to generate undue noise levels.

Policy BE6
The council will seek to achieve good design standards for all types of development.

Policy T2A - A) all roads, footways, private drives, vehicle manoeuvring areas and points of access serving development must be designed and constructed in accordance with the appropriate standards of the Borough Council. – appropriate visibility standards will be achieved.

Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 3 – this sets a standard of 12m separation distances between habitable room windows and a blank elevation, to prevent overshadowing and overbearing problems for residents. However, this does not apply to windows on side boundaries, as in the present case, it only applies to principle elevations. Moreover, the one small window in the side elevation overlooking the application site lights a bathroom, not a habitable room, and also provides a secondary source of lighting to a bedroom. Again the separation distance is not applied to secondary windows. The main window for that bedroom room faces east.

DESIGN OF THE SCHEME

Use
Is this justified in terms of:

Site and surroundings – This is an existing industrial operation on a long established site. It will develop an infill site located within a substantial grouping of buildings in the countryside.

Land use – this maintains the existing use of the site.

Amount
is there justification for:

How much development is proposed - a building of similar size ($625m^2$) to the previous extension is necessary to meet the future requirements of the business. In terms of floor space this is slightly less than an doubling of the existing floorspace within the two old buildings on site.

Layout

Gradients and topography – the new building is to be set down at the existing ground level, rather than being constructed with the same floor level as the adjoining building which is 1m higher. This will marginally reduce its impact.

Scale

Are the following justified:

The size of the building in relation to its surroundings - the building is of a similar scale to the existing modern buildings on this site. The size relates to the functional requirements of a grain storage use.

Size of entrances / facades in relation to human scale – high door openings are provided to allow for the tipping movements of lorries positioned in the doorways. This enables the maximum use of the storage area within the building. If the lorries had to tip within the building that would sterilize part of the building. Two doors are proposed to allow for anticipated regulations that could require the separation of GM from non GM grain, or organic from non organic. The building could then be physically divided internally.

Landscaping

Landscape principles and details – The site is screened by mature trees to the frontage with Lee Lane, and these will be retained. In addition a landscaped strip will be retained and reinforced adjacent to the boundary with Myrecroft to screen the hardstanding area and activity thereon from the dwelling.

Appearance

With respect to the architecture /style, design / detail - the building has been designed to match the existing modern buildings on site, and is also similar in style to the large agricultural building directly to the south east.

Materials / colours/ textures – the brown cladding and roofs will match those of the existing modern buildings on site, and the agricultural building.

The appearance of the site will be improved by the removal of the existing older buildings which are in poor condition and constructed in an unsightly mix of materials.

Access

Sight line requirements for an access onto a main road, with a 60 mph speed limit, are 2.4 x 215m. The existing access that will serve the new building achieves this to the north, but not to the south. However, this is an existing access which is currently used by vehicles servicing the lower of the existing modern buildings and the larger of the older buildings.