Planning and Design & Access Statement

COMMERCIAL EXTENSION TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL STORAGE SPACE

SPRINGVALE ROAD, PARK SPRINGS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, GRIMETHORPE, BARNSLEY, S72 7GH

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared to support the submission of an application for full planning permission for an extension to an existing commercial unit to provide additional storage space. The site is occupied by Ultima Furniture Systems Ltd, a well-established and successful local business that makes and distributes rigid kitchen units. The existing buildings at the site are in use for this purpose. The application seeks an extension of one of the existing buildings onto the adjoining area of unused and overgrown land, within the boundary of the industrial estate.

The extension would provide vital additional storage space for the business. As is discussed further below, the extension is essential to allow this successful local employer to grow without having to consider relocation. The site is allocated for Employment Use and commercial development to extend the existing business within the industrial estate clearly represents a sensible, sustainable and beneficial use for the land that will provide additional jobs and safeguard the significant-number of existing jobs that the business already provides. The proposal also presents an opportunity to visually enhance this vacant area of land that makes little contribution to the character or vitality of the area at the moment.

The statement incorporates a Design and Access Statement, provided to satisfy the statutory requirements imposed under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

It is a fundamental principle of the NPPF that all requirements for supporting documentation should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed. This document sets out the design justification for the proposed development and demonstrates that the scheme is in full compliance with relevant planning policy and guidance.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the supporting plans supplied by NYP Architectural Services and the comprehensive suite of supporting technical documents which demonstrate the credentials of the scheme in more detail.

It is anticipated that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) will adopt a progressive approach to this sustainable scheme.

This statement now proceeds to give details of the site and the existing use. The details of the proposal are then set out. The planning merits of the scheme are then discussed in relation to relevant planning policies contained in the statutory development plan, together with Government guidance principally set out in the NPPF. In particular, it will be demonstrated that the proposal would result in a sustainable form of development that would make a positive contribution to the local economy, whilst having no harmful impacts including in respect of highways safety and amenity.

2.0 THE SITE

The site lies to the south of Long Royd and to the west of Springvale Road at Park Springs Industrial Estate in Grimethorpe:



The site contains three existing buildings as follows:

Unit 1 – western side of the site, existing factory building including first floor offices providing 5500m2 of floor space.
Unit 2 – northernmost of the two buildings to the eastern side of the site, storage and workshop providing 1870m2 of floor space. This is the building to be extended.
Unit 3 – southernmost of the two buildings to the eastern side of the site. 990m2 of floor space.

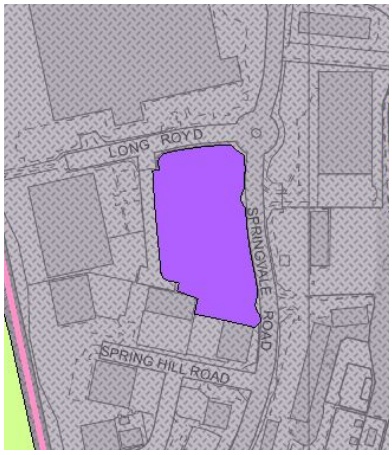
In addition to the existing buildings, there are two parking areas totalling arrangements 112 spaces and 9 disabled spaces. There are also existing servicing spaces, including HGV turning provision.

As can be seen from the aerial image above, the area to the north of the existing buildings on the eastern side of the site is vacant. This area of the site makes no positive contribution to the visual amenity of the wider site, and is in no beneficial use.

Being within the heart of the industrial estate, the site is surrounded by existing buildings, all of which are in commercial use of varying types. Whilst there is some variation in the exact appearance and size of the existing buildings in the locality, there is also a consistency in terms of building form and materials throughout the estate. This gives a cohesive, but not uniform, appearance and character to the industrial estate.

The site is in a highly-sustainable location to the western side of Grimethorpe, within the Cudworth Principal Town area, and a short distance to the east of Barnsley town centre. The site is easily accessible by road (including public transport), cycling and walking.

The site is the remaining undeveloped part of a larger land parcel that was allocated for employment uses (site ref ES9) under the Local Plan:



The southern part of the allocated site has already been developed and contains existing buildings 2 and 3.

The site is also identified as being within a Nature Improvement Area and within the Cudworth settlement boundary. The site is not within a Conservation Area and there are no listed buildings in close proximity to the site.

3.0 THE PROPOSAL – INCLUDING DESIGN AND ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

Full planning permission is sought for an extension to existing unit 2 to provide additional storage space. More information about the proposal can be found in the accompanying plans by NYP Architectural Services and the supporting technical documents. The key elements of the proposal are as follows:

- The extension will provide 4667 square metres of additional floorspace.
- All of the new floor space is to be additional warehousing provision for the storage of goods prior to distribution to customers around the country. This is a B8 use.
- The extension makes use of the existing vacant land within the industrial estate that is allocated for employment uses.
- The extension would create 10 additional jobs at the existing business and would help to safeguard the existing 40 jobs that the business already provides.

- The site already has a significant over-provision of parking. As such, no additional parking spaces are necessary.
- The design, form and materials of the building are entirely in-keeping with the existing host building and the other existing commercial buildings in the locality.
- The belt of woodland planting to the eastern side of the site is to be retained.

USE

The site is currently in a mix of B2 and B8 uses. The site is occupied by Ultima Furniture Systems Ltd, a local Barnsley based kitchen manufacturer that was established over 30 years ago. The company manufacture rigid kitchen units and distribute them to customers across the UK.

There is a pressing need for additional warehousing space for the storage of products prior to distribution. The use of the new space created by the extension would therefore be entirely B8 – storage and distribution.

The principle of B8 development at this Employment allocation site is wholly acceptable as is discussed further below.

AMOUNT

The proposal seeks full permission for 4667 square metres of internal floor space for storage and distribution use. The amount of space proposed responds directly to the needs of the business and also maximises the use of the allocated site.

LAYOUT

The proposed site layout is shown below alongside the red shading that shows the development site in relation to the three existing buildings and parking and servicing areas:





The proposed extension would project northwards from the existing until 2, filling most of the remaining available land within the allocated site. Great care has been taken, however, to retain the belt of young woodland planting to the eastern boundary of the site. These trees would be totally unaffected by the development.

The northern wall of the existing building would be removed to create one continuous building.

As can be seen in the image below, there is a large variation in sizes of buildings within the industrial estate and there is also variation in how the buildings are orientated:

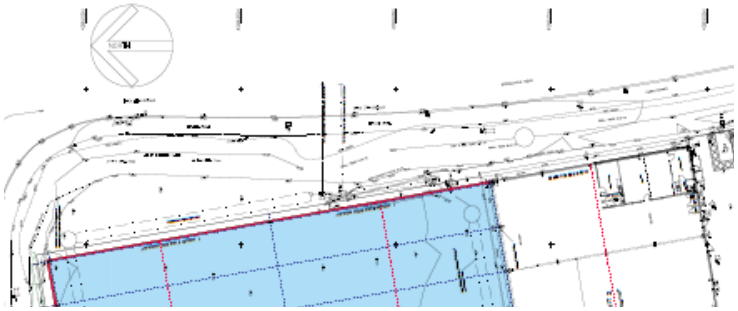


As such, whilst the proposed extension is of significant size in terms of its footprint, it would be in no way out of keeping with the existing grain and pattern of development in the locality. Indeed, it would sit entirely comfortably amongst the existing buildings. The resultant building as extended would still be smaller than the largest buildings within the industrial estate and its size would therefore appear in no way dominant, incongruous or discordant.

The extension would be entirely in keeping with the existing character of built form in and around the application site.

LANDSCAPING

The Local Plan notes that the young woodland plating on the site's eastern boundary should be retained when the site is developed. The scheme has been carefully designed to achieve this, as shown on the proposed site plan:



Retention of the trees will ensure that an appropriate balance is struck between the opportunities for landscaping and the need to ensure that the use valuable land resource, which is allocated for employment use and is therefore expected to be developed out, is maximised.

APPEARANCE

The extension has been designed to carefully reflect the appearance of the host building and the other existing buildings that surround the site.

The extension would create two additional bays to the existing building, thereby creating a triple-span roof arrangement. The significant benefits of this approach are that the height of the extension remains consistent with the existing building, and the required floor space is delivered whilst keeping the height of the building to a minimum.

All of the external materials have been selected to match the host building and the surrounding units. The lower part of the external walls is to be vertical cladding, with horizontal cladding above. This matches the existing arrangement on the existing building. The walls and roof would all be colour matched to the host building.

The result is a building that clearly reflects the appearance of the host building and the surrounding buildings. It would appear entirely comfortable in its surroundings and would cause no harm to the character or visual amenity of the area. Indeed, developing the vacant and overgrown land in a manner that is so clearly in keeping with its surroundings would enhance the visual appearance of the site.

ACCESS

The site is located in a highly sustainable location with excellent transport links. A Transport Statement has been prepared by Optima Highways and is submitted separately.

As is the case now, the site would continue to be accessed from Long Royd to the north, with access into the site directly from the private road to the south of Long Royd. The access roads and local highway infrastructure are modern and designed to accommodate HGVs, and are in regular use for such purposes.

The proposed extension would generate 10 additional employees at the site, giving a total of 50 employees. The LPA's standards advise that the existing business and new extension

combined would generate a requirement for 17 car parking spaces in total. The site already has 112 car parking spaces plus 9 disabled spaces. The extension will result in a slight reduction in the existing level of parking to 90 spaces plus 9 disabled spaces. This is clearly still well-above the LPA's recommended parking standard, and is more than adequate to meet the needs of the business as extended.

Indeed, as discussed in the transport assessment, the existing car park represents a large over-provision of parking. The car park is typically only used to about 25% of its capacity on a normal working day. The business currently has 40 employees. With the additional 10 employees that the extension would create, the reduced car park would still provide parking for almost double the number of employees. In the highly-unlikely event that every employee of the business travelled to the site on the same day by separate private car, there would still be some 40 unused spaces. It is clear that the slightly reduced level of parking is more than sufficient to meet the needs of the business after the extension is implemented.

In order to encourage more sustainable modes of transport, the proposed development includes the provision of new cycle storage. Lockers and changing facilities are provided for employees in order to help facilitate travel to and from work by bicycle. The scale of development is below the threshold at which the requirement for a Travel Plan is triggered. Nevertheless, the submitted Transport Statement still sets out how opportunities to maximise the most sustainable modes of transport will be realised.

The nature of the business does not generate significant visits from members of the public (there is no showroom at the site, for example) so the demand for parking from visits by people who are not employees is also very low.

The submitted Transport Statement also sets out the likely trip generation and servicing arrangements for the site. There is an existing HGV turning circle and the layout of the local roads and servicing arrangements within the site are sufficient to accommodate the small increase in traffic movements that the development would generate.

The development will be provided with a safe and suitable access and that the proposed development would not result in any harm to highways safety or efficiency.

The location of the site and the development itself therefore both comply with national and local objectives of creating sustainable patterns of development. The proposed development will fully comply with all DDA access requirements as set out in current building regulations.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 2007/1445 - Erection of extension to factory to create additional warehousing, service yard and car parking – approved 2007.
- B/04/2240/HR - Erection of B1, B2 and B8 industrial units – approved 2005.

5.0 PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

Given the resource pressures facing the LPA, and because the principle of commercial development here is clearly acceptable, we have not requested pre-application advice on this occasion. The applicant has, however, enlisted the services of JR Planning and NYP Architecture and a team of technical consultants to advise on the development of the scheme.

6.0 ALLOCATION AND POLICIES

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the Development Plan consists of the Barnsley Local Plan, which was adopted in January 2019.

Material considerations exist in the form of national policy and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as updated in July 2021 and the suite of documents comprising National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

Allocations

The site is within Employment Use allocation site ES9. The site is also within a Nature Improvement Area.

National

The NPPF is reflective of the guidance contained within the NPPG. The following sections of the revised NPPF are considered of direct relevance to the current proposal:

- Section 2 - Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 - Decision-making
- Section 6 - Building a strong, competitive economy
- Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places

The overarching message of the NPPF is that LPAs should adopt a positive and pro-active approach to planning proposals, particularly those that result in sustainable development. LPAs should not place unnecessary burdens on developers and should look to support appropriate schemes such as this.

Barnsley Local Plan

The following policies are considered of relevance:

SD1 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
GD1 – General Development
LG2 – The Location of Growth
E1 – Providing Strategic Employment Locations
E2 – The distribution of New Employment Sites
E3 – Uses on Employment Land
T1 – Accessibility Priorities

T3 – New Development and Sustainable Travel
T4 – New Development and Transport Safety
D1 – High Quality Design and Place Making
BIO1 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
CC1 – Climate Change
CC2 – Sustainable Design and Construction

7.0 ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

The site is allocated as Employment Land under the provision of the Local Plan. Policy E3 confirms that general industrial and storage and distribution uses will be allowed on allocated Employment Land.

As set out further above, the existing business comprises of a mix of industrial (in this case manufacturing of kitchen units) and storage and distribution (the warehousing of products prior to delivery around the UK). This is therefore a use that is entirely compliant with policy E3.

The proposed extension would be used entirely for storage and distribution purposes, so again is entirely compliant with policy E3.

The new extension would directly create 10 new jobs at the site. Furthermore, it would ensure that the existing 40 jobs are also retained for many years to come. The need for the additional warehouse space is a pressing one and is essential to support the growth of the business. With 50 jobs, the business is a very important local employer and helps to support numerous other commercial enterprises in the area such as shops and food outlets. Without the extension, the business may have to consider relocation, which would have a detrimental impact on the local economy. Conversely, the extension going ahead would have a very positive impact on the local economy.

Grimethorpe falls within the larger Cudworth settlement area under the Local Plan. The Cudworth settlement is one of the Principal Towns in the Barnsley borough and new development for employment generating uses is expected here (as clearly confirmed by the Employment Land allocation). This is an appropriate and sustainable location for the scale and type of development that is proposed.

The principle of development is clearly acceptable and fully in accordance with the Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF.

Drainage/ Flood Risk

The application site is within flood zone 1 as identified by the Environment Agency so is not at undue risk of flooding. Whilst the wider site is over 1 hectare, the development area is below the 1 hectare threshold at which a flood risk assessment would be required for development not in zone 2 or 3.

The development will include the provision of appropriate drainage. A Drainage Assessment for the development has been prepared by EWE Associates and is submitted separately. This sets out the proposed drainage strategy and includes detailed drainage design for 1-hectare both foul and surface water. The requirements of the drainage scheme are also shown on the submitted plans.

The application demonstrates that the development can be delivered with adequate drainage provision. The scheme accords with local and national policy in this respect.

Transport and Accessibility

As previously discussed, the location of the site is in a sustainable location with excellent accessibility. The location of the site therefore complies with national and local objectives of creating sustainable patterns of development.

The Transport Assessment and Travel Plan that have been prepared by Optima Highways demonstrate the following key points:

- The proposed extension would be used entirely for warehousing. The existing parking provision is well-above the recommended standard for the number of employees at the site.
- The development is likely to generate a maximum of 22 trips in the peak hours. This is a low level of additional traffic that would have very little material impact.
- The additional traffic can easily be accommodated by the existing highways infrastructure and servicing arrangements within the site itself.
- Whilst the development is below the scale at which a travel plan is required, consideration has still been given to promoting sustainable modes of transport, including bicycle, walking and public transport.
- It is therefore concluded that there are no highway or transport related issues that prevent the proposed commercial development from being granted full planning consent.

The scheme fully accords with local and national policy in this respect.

Design and Amenity

As set out further above, the extension has been carefully designed to respect and reflect the established character of the area in terms of its form, scale and appearance. The development would improve the appearance of the existing site. There would be no harmful impacts on visual amenity.

Given that the site is set within an industrial estate, and all the existing buildings in the locality are in commercial use, the proposal is entirely compatible with the established use of the area and there would be no harmful impacts on amenity of users of nearby existing buildings. The nearest residential dwellings are over 250m from the site.

The scheme accords with local plan policy and national policy and guidance in this respect.

Ecology and Trees

The site lies within a Nature Improvement Area as identified under the Local Plan. The Nature Improvement Area designation washes over a very large area of the Dearne Valley, so it is not specific to the application site or its immediate environs. Given that the site is allocated for employment use and is within a well-established industrial estate, a balance needs to be struck between the aims of the Nature Improvement Area designation and the intended use of the land to provide additional jobs.

The scheme achieves this balance successfully by making provision for the retention of the young woodland planting that runs along the eastern boundary of the site. This is something that is identified as being desirable in the Local Plan.

Aside from the existing trees that are to be retained, the site has very low ecological value. There are no other trees or buildings that could support roosting bats or nesting birds that would be affected by the development.

Overall, the scheme would not harm protected species or ecology interest. The scheme accords with local policy and the requirements of the NPPF in this respect.

Land Stability

Part of the site lies within a Coal Authority High Risk Area. As such, a Coal Mining Risk Assessment has been undertaken by RB Geotechnical and is submitted separately.

The report notes that a former mine entry lies within the site, but this has been backfilled and capped to a suitable specification, and therefore poses no risk to development.

The report also notes that a second mine entry point could pose a risk to a new multi-storey car park that was initially considered as part of the proposal. Please note that the new parking facility was discounted following the review of the existing car parking arrangements

by the Highways Consultant which found the additional parking to be wholly unnecessary. The car park referred to in the Coal Mining Risk Assessment has therefore been omitted from the proposal and does not form part of the application.

The application therefore demonstrates that the site is capable of being developed safely and land stability issues would not prohibit the granting of planning permission. The proposal accords with local and national policy in this respect.

Renewable Energy and Carbon Reduction

An Energy Statement has been prepared by ARB Consulting and is submitted separately. The statement sets out how the extension will be designed to reduce energy demand, how it will use energy efficiently and how it will draw on low and zero carbon energy sources where possible.

The statement concludes that the energy strategy for the proposed development has the following characteristics:

- A BREEAM-led, fabric first strategy, which aims to achieve long term reductions in CO2 emissions.

- An approach to energy based on the Energy Hierarchy, which seeks to minimise demand, utilise energy efficiently, and incorporate low carbon energy sources, where feasible, to reduce CO2 emissions.

The extension has been designed to respond positively to the challenge of climate change mitigation and employs sustainable construction techniques and carbon reduction measures. The proposal accords with policies CC1 and CC2.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed scheme represents a sustainable form of development that would not have any unacceptable impact for the reasons set out above. The development would see the vacant land resource put to beneficial employment-generating use in line with its allocated purpose in the Local Plan.

It has been demonstrated above that there would be no adverse impacts in terms of visual and residential amenity, highways safety and ecology. The proposal fully accords with adopted planning policy and guidance and the LPA are respectfully urged to grant permission for the scheme.

The Applicant is willing to discuss any issues that may arise during the consideration of the proposal with the LPA.

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