

# Planning Statement

**Masonite, Huddersfield Road,  
Darton**



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# 1. Introduction

## Purpose of Statement

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to accompany a full planning application for the erection of 2 No. B2 / B8 (11,010 sq.m gross) employment units with access works; parking; service yards; pallet store; relocation of security hut; vehicle canopy; hard and soft landscaping and associated works at Masonite, Huddersfield Road, Darton.
- 1.2 The purpose of this statement is to assess the proposals in the context of the adopted Development Plan in force for the area and other material considerations and should be read in conjunction with the following supporting information:

Document	Author
Application Forms & Certificates	ELG Planning
Planning Drawings	Carey Jones Chapman Tolcher
Design & Access Statement	Carey Jones Chapman Tolcher
Air Quality Assessment	Metrica
Archaeological Assessment	Wardell Armstrong
BREEAM Pre-Assessment	FES Group
Drainage Assessment Report & Drainage Scheme	Alan Wood & Partners
Flood Risk Assessment	Avison Young
Heritage Statement	ELG Heritage

Noise Assessment	Metrica
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Biodiversity Enhancement Measures Report	Pennine Ecological
Phase 1 Environmental Report	Avison Young
Transport Assessment	Vectos
Travel Plan	Vectos
Tree Survey & Arboricultural Implications Assessment	Pennine Ecological

## Structure of Statement

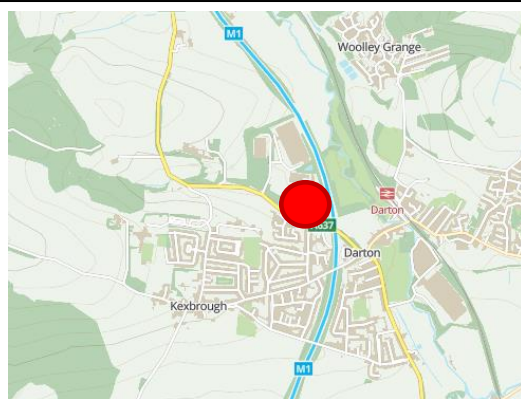
1.3 The Planning Statement is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** provides a description of the site and surrounding area;
- **Section 3** outlines the development proposals;
- **Section 4** sets out the relevant planning policy framework;
- **Section 5** assesses the proposals in the context of the adopted Development Plan and other material considerations;
- **Section 6** draws conclusions on the overall findings of the statement.

## 2. Site Context

### Local Context

- 2.1 The planning application relates to two plots of land flanking the main access road serving the Masonite site, which lies to the north of Huddersfield Road to the northern edge of the settlement of Kexborough.



**Figure 2.1: Location Plan**

- 2.2 The site forms part of the established Birthwaite Business Park with the existing manufacturing and warehouse buildings within the wider Masonite site lying to the immediate north of the application site. The wider business park lies to the east of the site and accommodates a range of industrial and warehousing units, as well as the existing Masonite head office which will be relocated to the buildings proposed as part of the current application to ensure that all operations and administrative functions are consolidated onto a single site.
- 2.3 The western boundary of the site is adjoined by agricultural land beyond which lies the Grade II listed Birthwaite Hall, lying approximately 200m to the west of the application site. The A637 (Huddersfield Road) adjoins the southern boundary of the site beyond which lies housing to the northern edge of Kexborough.

## Site Context

- 2.4 The application site extends to approximately 5.17ha and the main body of the site that will accommodate the proposed buildings comprises of plateaued areas of land with scrub and other self-seeded vegetation coverage. There is a significant change in levels between the application site and Huddersfield Road to the south and the southern boundary of the site is therefore formed by a wooded embankment.



**Figure 2.2: Site Photographs**

- 2.5 The main access road serving the wider Masonite estate lying to the immediate north of the application site bisects the individual development plots and will serve the proposed development facilitated by minor widening works and the relocation of the existing security hut. The western boundary of the site adjoins agricultural fields and is formed by a mature band of tree planting.

## Planning History

2.6 A summary of the planning history of the wider site is set out below:

LPA Ref.	Description of Development
B/91/0286/DT	Erection of industrial and warehousing units, with associated offices
B/92/0210/DT	Re-positioning of unit 1 and extension to industrial curtilage
B/92/0376/DT	Display of illuminated sign
B/92/0380/DT	Erection of a 25m high chimney
B/92/0782/DT	Erection of boundary wall and railings
B/92/1189/DT	Erection of link between units 2 and 4 and re-arrangement of parking / servicing layout
B/92/1345/DT	Illuminated signs to Unit 3 (Regent Doors PLC)
B/93/1500/DT	Two signboards
B/97/0565/DT	Display of electricity sub-station and single storey compressor house
2019/0200	Proposed Canopy
2019/0541	Installation of new extract and filtration plant and associated work
2022/1161	Extension to existing pallet store

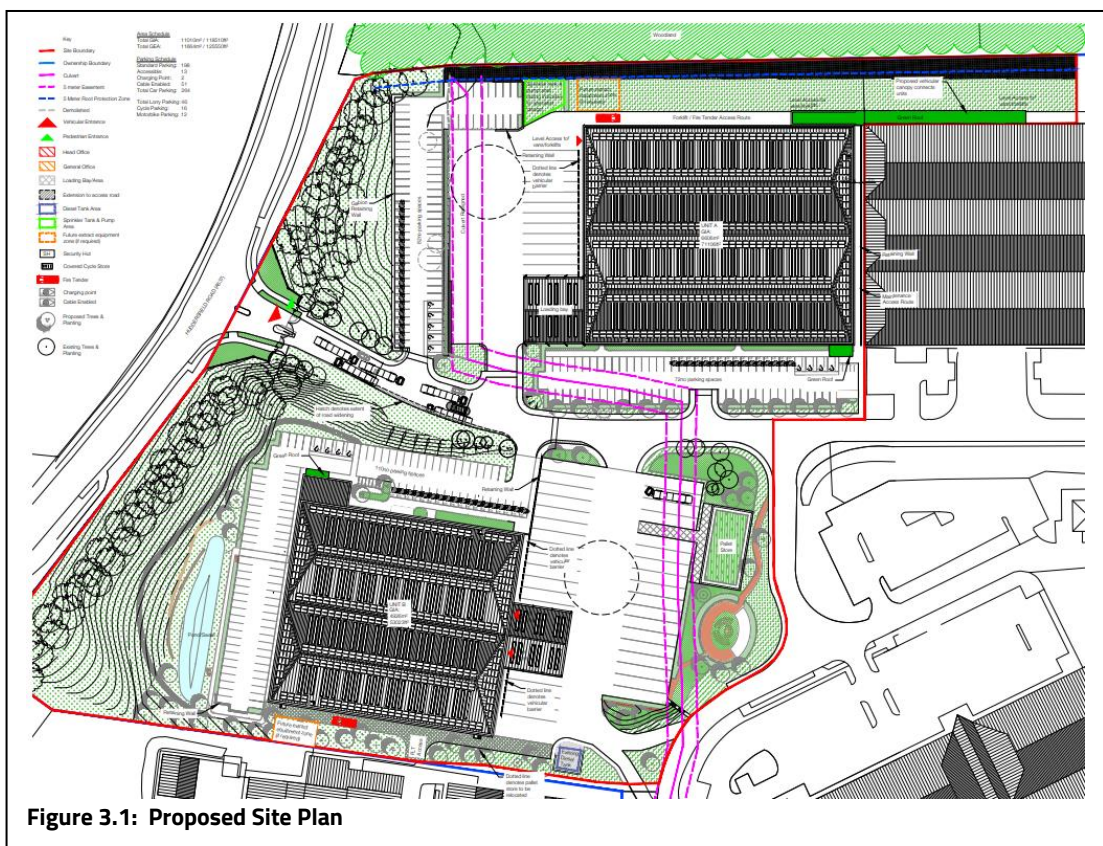
## Pre-Application Discussions

- 2.7 Paragraph 39 of the NPPF recognises that early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.
- 2.8 A pre-application enquiry was therefore submitted to the LPA on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2023 and the response received on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2023 (LPA Ref. 2023/ENQ/00167) confirmed that the principle of development in this location is acceptable and also provided comments on the layout and visual impact of the scheme, which are addressed within this statement (Paragraphs 5.19-5.28) and the submitted Design & Access Statement.
- 2.9 The response also provided guidance on a number of key technical considerations, including highways; coal mining legacy; biodiversity; tree; drainage; noise; air quality and contaminated land. These matters are fully addressed within the suite of supporting documentation that forms the planning application submission.



### 3. Development Proposals

- 3.1 The proposals relate to the erection of new manufacturing / warehousing space on the land to the south of the existing Masonite site located within Birthwaite Business Park. Masonite are one the UK's leading door manufacturers and the current proposals will deliver additional manufacturing and warehousing space, as well as the relocation of Masonite UK's existing headquarters office accommodation from a nearby location on Huddersfield Road to support the continued expansion of the business, which is an important employer in the local area.



- 3.2 The proposed development will deliver a total of 11,010 sq.m of industrial / warehousing space with associated parking; yard areas; HGV parking and extensive soft landscaped areas. Unit A will be sited within the western development plot providing a large

manufacturing / warehousing area with ancillary office and welfare space. The building will be served by a large number of rooflights and PV panels to reduce energy consumption and green roofs will be incorporated to the entrance canopy and the fork lift truck (FLT) canopy to enhance biodiversity and create habitat.

- 3.3 Unit B will be sited within the eastern plot and will again provide a large, open and flexible warehousing / manufacturing floor and will also accommodate the relocated head office function. Unit B, in common with Unit A, will also incorporate rooflights and PVs to reduce energy consumption.
- 3.4 The proposed units will be approximately 16m in height to the eaves and the industrial function of the proposed development has driven the design approach adopted. The industrial and corporate functions of different parts of the building are however clearly delineated within the elevations, with the public facing components formed with ribbon windows, curtain walling and PPC cladding. The lower elements of the warehousing / industrial areas have a more robust, industrial aesthetic of profile metal cladding eluding the use contained within, although, given the size and scale of the units, PPC cladding is provided to the upper elements of the elevation to break them up visually.
- 3.5 The proposals are also accompanied by a detailed landscaping scheme illustrating the provision of extensive areas of soft landscaping throughout the site, which will include informal wooded walkways; formalised active green routes; social spaces; waterbodies and appropriate species rich planting to deliver useable green spaces and havens for wildlife.

## 4. Planning Policy Context

### General Principles

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that the statutory Development Plan will continue to be the starting point for the consideration of planning applications for the development or use of land, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The Development Plan therefore provides the essential framework for planning decisions. When conflicts between Local Plan policies arise, decisions should be taken in the light of all material considerations, including local priorities and needs, guided by relevant national policy.

### Development Plan

#### Barnsley Local Plan (2019)

- 4.3 The application site is identified as an employment land allocation (Site ES1 – Birthwaite Business Park) within the adopted Local Plan.
- 4.4 The current application proposal relate to the erection of 2 No. employment units (Use Class B2 / B8) across the site and the following policies of the adopted Local Plan are considered to be of relevance to the assessment of the proposals:

- Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development;
- Policy GD1: General Development;
- Policy E1: Providing Strategic Employment Locations;
- Policy E2: The Distribution of New Employment Sites;
- Site ES1: Birthwaite Business Park;
- Policy E3: Uses on Employment Land;
- Policy E4: Protecting Existing Employment Land;
- Policy T3: New Development and Sustainable Travel;
- Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety;
- Policy D1: High Quality Design and Place Making;
- Policy CC1: Climate Change;
- Policy CC2: Sustainable Design & Construction;
- Policy CC3: Flood Risk;
- Policy CC4: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);
- Policy RE1: Low Carbon & Renewable Energy;
- Policy BIO1: Biodiversity & Geodiversity;
- Policy HE1: The Historic Environment;
- Policy HE6: Archaeology;
- Policy CL1: Contaminated and Unstable Land;
- Policy Poll1: Pollution Control and Protection.

## Material Considerations

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.5 The revised version of the NPPF was published in September 2023 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 4.6 The NPPF confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and, in order to achieve this purpose, the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are independent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- a. **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - b. **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - c. **an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

- 4.7 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF confirms that planning decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of an area.
- 4.8 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and Paragraph 11 confirms that, for decision-taking, this means:
- Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Development Plan without delay; or
  - Where there are no relevant Development Plan policies, or the policies that are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:
    - the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
    - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole.
- 4.9 Paragraph 12 of the NPPF reiterates that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

- 4.10 Paragraph 38 of the NPPF confirms that LPAs should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available and work proactively with applicants to secure development that will improve the social, environmental and economic conditions of the area. Decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development wherever possible.
- 4.11 The relevant areas of the NPPF will be referred to throughout this Planning Statement, as appropriate.

## 5. Planning Assessment

### Key Planning Considerations

5.1 Having regard to the adopted Development Plan in force for the area and other material considerations, namely the NPPF, the key planning considerations in relation to the current application proposals are as follows:

- Principle of Development & Supporting a Strong, Competitive Economy;
- Highways;
- Design;
- Climate Change and Flood Risk;
- Conserving & Enhancing the Natural Environment;
- Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment

### Principle of Development & Supporting a Strong, Competitive Economy

5.2 The current proposals will deliver 2 No. manufacturing / warehousing units (Use Class B2 / B8) with ancillary offices within the existing Masonite site located within Birthwaite Business Park to the northern edge of the settlement of Kexborough.

5.3 Policy E1 of the adopted Local Plan confirms that 297ha of land in sustainable locations is allocated to meet the development needs of existing and future industry and business up



to 2033. The parcels of land within the Masonite site subject to the current proposals form part of a 3.5ha employment land allocation (Site ES1 - Birthwaite Business Park) within the adopted Local Plan and Policy E3 states that, on allocated employment sites, the following uses will be permitted, as well as other ancillary uses that are appropriate in scale:

- Research and development, and light industry;
- General industrial; or
- Storage or distribution.

5.4 The NPPF is also clear that planning decisions 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.

5.5 Masonite are a California based construction material manufacturing business with UK subsidiaries, including Premdor and Solidor. The UK based operation is headquartered in Darton and is one of the UK's leading manufacturers of timber doors. The application proposals will deliver 2 No. employment units across the site (Use Class B2 / B8) with a total gross floor area of 11,010 sq.m in order to expand ongoing operations on the existing Birthwaite Business Park site. The proposals will also enable the relocation of Masonite UK's existing headquarters office accommodation from a nearby location on Huddersfield Road with the new head office space contained within Unit B on the eastern plot of land.

5.6 The existing site at Birthwaite Business Park employs approximately 450 staff and is an important local employer within this part of the Borough. Barnsley College and Masonite have also recently launched the Masonite Academy providing local young people with the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge within engineering and manufacturing and address the skills shortage.

- 5.7 The new Masonite Academy is based at Barnsley College's Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Centre on Old Mill Lane, where students study engineering and manufacturing courses which have been specifically designed by both Barnsley College and Masonite in order to meet the development needs of the business. The aim of the Academy is to attract young people from the local area and develop their knowledge and experience in order to prepare them for a successful career with Masonite UK.
- 5.8 The current proposals represent significant capital investment in the site underlining Masonite UK's continued commitment to the area and will deliver a number of additional job opportunities for local people across a range of roles, including young people that have come through the Masonite Academy in association with Barnsley College.
- 5.9 The application proposals will deliver new warehousing and manufacturing space (Use Class B2/ B8) to support the continued expansion of an important local employer on a site specifically allocated for such uses within the adopted Barnsley Local Plan, which will deliver significant capital investment in the site and a number of high quality and skilled job opportunities for local people.
- 5.10 The proposals therefore represent an entirely acceptable form of development in this location in principle having regard to the relevant policies of the adopted Barnsley Local Plan and guidance within the NPPF, which is clear that the planning system should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt and that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity. This conclusion is supported by the pre-application response received from the LPA, which confirmed that the proposals represent an acceptable form of development on this location in principle.

## Highways

- 5.11 Policy T3 of the adopted Local Plan sets out a number of principles that new development will be expected to adhere to in order to promote sustainable travel relating to the location of new development, parking requirements and the need for Transport Assessments and Travel Plans to support certain forms of development. Policy T4 of the Local Plan confirms that new development will be expected to be designed and built to provide all transport users within and surrounding the development with safe, secure and convenient access and movement.
- 5.12 The planning application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan prepared by Vectos. The submitted Transport Assessment demonstrates that the site is accessible via modes other than the private car and will be supported by a site wide Travel Plan. The proposals will also deliver a large number of cable enabled EV parking spaces (including two active charging points) and cycle parking facilities, which will further help encourage travel via these more sustainable modes.
- 5.13 The Transport Assessment also provides an overview of the collision history of the local highway network, which identifies that there are no pre-existing highway safety issues and that it is highly unlikely that the level of traffic associated with the new development would alter this present situation. The proposed development has been designed in accordance with the LPA's parking guidance and will provide a total of 264 car parking spaces (including 13 accessible spaces) across both units. The two units will also provide a total of 16 cycle parking spaces (with additional internal long stay provision) and 12 motorcycle spaces.

- 5.14 The junction modelling contained within the Transport Assessment demonstrates that there is significant spare capacity within the junction with both future year and development scenarios and the application proposals will generate minimal peak hour trips. The internal site design has been rationalised to provide a simple, clear and coherent means of navigating the proposed development, with some minor widening and upgrades to the main access spine road.
- 5.15 It is therefore evident that the site is accessible by sustainable modes of transport and will be supported by a Travel Plan that forms part of the application submission. The proposed development will also be served by a safe and suitable means of access and will not undermine the safe operation of the local highway network. The proposals would therefore fully comply with the highways related policies of the adopted Development Plan, as well as national guidance contained within the NPPF in this regard.

## Design

- 5.16 Policy D1 of the adopted Barnsley Local Plan states that development is expected to be of a high quality design and will be expected to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive local character and features of Barnsley. Policy D1 also sets out a number of design principles that new development should adhere to in terms of its layout and design.
- 5.17 Paragraph 130 of the NPPF confirms that planning decisions should ensure that developments:
- a. will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

- b. are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c. are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d. establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e. optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f. create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and
- g. where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

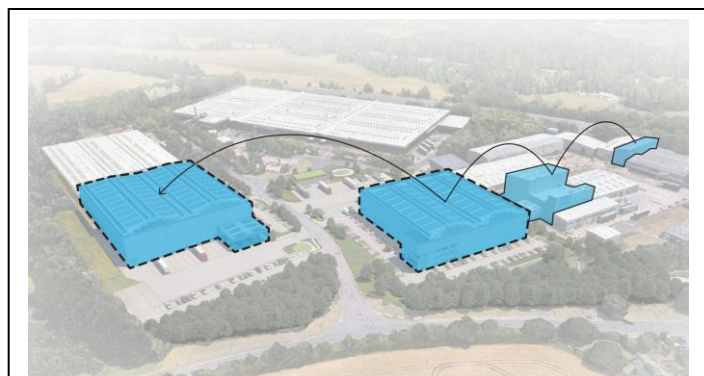
5.18 Paragraph 131 goes onto acknowledge that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.

5.19 The planning application is accompanied by a Design & Access Statement prepared by CJCT, which provides a detailed analysis of the application site and surrounding context and

outlines the design process that has been followed from conceptual design, initial proposals through to the final planning design.

- 5.20 The proposed development will deliver a total of 11,010 sq.m of industrial / warehousing space with associated parking; yard areas; HGV parking and extensive soft landscaped areas. Unit A will be sited within the western development plot providing a large manufacturing / warehousing area with ancillary office and welfare space. The building will be served by a large number of rooflights and PV panels to reduce energy consumption and green roofs will be incorporated to the entrance canopy and the fork lift truck (FLT) canopy to enhance biodiversity and create habitat.
- 5.21 The initial pre-application enquiry presented two potential options for Unit A – an extension of the existing manufacturing building or a standalone new building. A preference for a standalone building was expressed by Officers within the pre-application response, however, as the design process progressed, it became clear that, due to the operational requirements of the business, it is necessary for the existing and proposed building to be linked for interoperability. However, in view of the pre-application advice received, a 3.5m gap will be maintained between the existing and proposed building linked by a vehicular canopy to provide a degree of separation between the existing and proposed buildings.
- 5.22 The proposed layout of the scheme in relation to Unit A will therefore meet the operational requirements of the business, whilst also addressing the comments provided in terms of the bulk and massing of the building as far as practicably possible, particularly in view of the extensive existing and proposed landscaping within the site, which, along with the siting of the proposed development within a natural depression in the landscape, will ensure that there will be limited views available of the unit from beyond the site boundary.

- 5.23 Unit B will be sited within the eastern plot and will again provide a large, open and flexible warehousing / manufacturing floor and will also accommodate the applicant's head office function that will be relocated to the site from nearby premises on Huddersfield Road. Unit B, in common with Unit A, will also incorporate rooflights and PVs to reduce energy consumption.
- 5.24 The proposed units will be approximately 16m in height to the eaves and the industrial function of the proposed development has driven the design approach adopted. The industrial and corporate functions of different parts of the building are however clearly delineated within the elevations, with the public facing components formed with ribbon windows, curtain walling and PPC cladding. The lower elements of the warehousing / industrial areas have a more robust, industrial aesthetic of profile metal cladding eluding the use contained within, although, given the size and scale of the units, PPC cladding is provided to the upper elements of the elevation to break them up visually.
- 5.25 The pre-application response received from the LPA also indicated that the height of the proposed building should be comparable to the existing building, however, the overall height is driven by the operational requirements of the applicant to deliver modern format industrial and warehousing space fit for their operations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century meaning that higher haunch heights need to be provided in comparison to the dated existing manufacturing and warehousing buildings within the wider Masonite site. Notwithstanding this, as illustrated in Figure 5.1 (adjacent) and within the submitted Design & Access



**Figure 5.1: Heights of Comparable Site Structures**

Statement, the height of the buildings will be comparable to other buildings within the wider estate and the site also sits within a natural depression in the landscape which lowers the overall perceived height of the existing and proposed units. The main site boundaries are also lined by bands of mature tree planting, which, coupled with the topography of the landform, ensures that there will be minimal views of the proposed buildings available from surrounding viewpoints.

- 5.26 The proposals are also accompanied by a detailed landscaping scheme illustrating the provision of extensive areas of soft landscaping throughout the site, which will include informal wooded walkways; formalised active green routes; social spaces; waterbodies and appropriate species rich planting to deliver useable green spaces and havens for wildlife.
- 5.27 The submitted Tree Survey & Arboricultural Method Statement prepared by Pennine Ecological identifies that a number of trees will be required to be removed to enable the proposed development to proceed, however, the trees in question are overwhelmingly low quality ('C' category) specimens, many of which are self-seeded. The submitted landscape scheme illustrates that the proposals will deliver extensive new native tree planting across the development site that will offset the loss of the existing low quality trees in both quantitative and qualitative terms and will make an important positive contribution to the quality and character of the proposed development.
- 5.28 It is therefore evident that the proposals will deliver a high quality form of development that would fully accord with the design-related policies of the adopted Development Plan, as well as national guidance contained within the NPPF in this regard.



## Climate Change & Flood Risk

### Climate Change and Sustainable Design & Construction

- 5.29 Policy CC2 of the Barnsley Local Plan outlines that development will be expected to minimise resource and energy consumption through the inclusion of sustainable design and construction features, where this is technically feasible and viable. All non-residential development will be expected, to achieve a minimum standard of BREEAM 'Very Good' (or any future national equivalent) and proposals should be supported by preliminary assessments at planning application stage.
- 5.30 The application is therefore accompanied by a BREEAM Pre-Assessment prepared by FES Group, which indicates that a BREEAM rating of '*Excellent*' could be achieved that would exceed the requirements of Policy CC2.

### Flood Risk & Drainage

- 5.31 The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 and Policy CC3 of the adopted Local Plan confirms that the extent and impact of flooding will be reduced by, *inter alia*, not permitting new development where it would be at an unacceptable risk of flooding from any sources of flooding and expecting proposals over 1,000 sq.m floorspace and 0.4 hectares to demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to reducing or managing flood risk and expecting all development on greenfield sites to maintain or reduce existing run-off rates requiring development proposals to use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in accordance with Policy CC4.

- 5.32 Policy CC4 confirms that all major development will be expected to use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to manage surface water drainage, unless it can be demonstrated that all types of SuDS are inappropriate.
- 5.33 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Avison Young, which identifies that the site lies within Flood Zone 1. The FRA does however identify that there is an ordinary watercourse to the south western boundary of the site and, whilst this watercourse has not been hydraulically modelled, it is considered that the risk of fluvial flooding is low / medium. It is therefore recommended that a hydraulic flood modelling exercise is secured by way of planning condition to ensure that the finished floor level of both buildings is sufficiently elevated. On this basis, subject to the recommended condition, it is not considered that the proposed development will be at unacceptable risk of flooding.
- 5.34 The submitted Drainage Assessment Report and drainage drawings prepared by Alan Wood & Partners confirms that surface water run-off from the proposed development will discharge to appropriately sized underground storage before being discharged to the River Dearne with flow rates controlled in line with the requirements of Policy CC3. The assessment also outlines that foul water will discharge into the public sewer and that the risk of both pollution to groundwater and drainage system failure will be adequately mitigated through the implementation of appropriate design measures in the final design of the scheme.
- 5.35 The submitted flood risk and drainage information clearly identifies that the site is not at risk of flooding and that the proposed development will not result in flood risk being increased elsewhere in line with established policy objectives.

## Conserving & Enhancing the Natural Environment

### Habitats & Biodiversity

- 5.36 Policy BIO1 of the adopted Local Plan confirms that development will be expected to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geological features of the borough by, *inter alia*, protecting and improving habitats, species and sites of ecological value; maximising biodiversity and geodiversity opportunities in and around new developments; and encouraging provision of biodiversity enhancements.
- 5.37 The submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by Pennine Ecological outlines that the grassland, woodland and ponds within the site offer some good quality habitat for commonly occurring reptiles and the site also provides habitats for breeding bird species. However, no nationally scarce or red data listed species were recorded on site and the remaining habitats are limited ecological value. It is noted that the proposed development will result in a loss of the majority of the recorded habitats across the site, however, it should be acknowledged that the site is allocated for employment development within the adopted Local Plan and, as such, a degree of embedded harm in this respect has been accepted in allocating for the land for such purposes.
- 5.38 Policy BIO1 does however suggest that the LPA will seek to maximise biodiversity and geodiversity opportunities in and around new developments and will also encourage provision of biodiversity enhancements. The application is therefore accompanied by a Biodiversity Enhancement Measures Report prepared by Pennine Ecological, which outlines the habitat creation and targeted species enhancements that will be implemented following the construction of the scheme, which include extensive habitat creation, including extensive grassland creation; woodland planting and enhancement; shrub

planting and the creation of a pond that will support an array of wildlife. In addition, green roofs will be provided to sections of the proposed buildings and a large number of new trees and new species rich hedgerows will be planted across the site. The report also outlines recommendations to be adopted for the management of habitats for bats and the provision of new bat and bird boxes.

- 5.39 It is therefore evident that the application proposals, involving the delivery of new employment development on a site allocated for such uses within the adopted Local Plan, will maximise biodiversity enhancements within the site as far as practicable and will deliver the biodiversity enhancements encouraged under the provisions of Policy BIO1 through the proposed habitat creation and targeted species enhancements. The application proposals are therefore considered to accord with the requirements of Policy BIO1 of the adopted Local Plan.

#### Contaminated Land

- 5.40 Policy CL1 of the adopted Local Plan confirms that, where the future users or occupiers of a development would be affected by contamination or stability issues, or where contamination may present a risk to the water environment, proposals must be accompanied by a report which shows that investigations have been carried out to establish the nature and extent of contamination or stability issues and the possible effects and which sets out detailed measures to allow the development to go ahead safely.
- 5.41 The planning application is accompanied by a Phase 1 Environmental Report prepared by Avison Young, which identifies that there are low / moderate pollutant linkage risks from historical or current contaminants, although it is noted that there could be moderate / high risk to controlled waters. It is therefore recommended that a programme of Phase 2

Ground Investigation works are completed on site and, subject to undertaking these works and any required remediation, which can be secured by way of condition, it is clear that the proposed development will not give rise to unacceptable risks to human health or controlled waters.

#### Noise

- 5.42 Policy GD1 of the adopted Local Plan sets out a number of general development management considerations that will be applied to new development proposals, including ensuring that there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents. Policy Pol1 also confirms that development will be expected to demonstrate that it is not likely to result, directly or indirectly, in, amongst others, noise pollution which would unacceptably affect or cause a nuisance to the natural and built environment or to people.
- 5.43 A Noise Impact Assessment prepared by Metrica accompanies the planning application and provides an assessment of noise impact in accordance with BS 4142. The assessment identifies that regardless of whether the buildings are in general industrial (Use Class B2) or warehousing (Use Class B8) use, rating levels due to noise from the proposed development will not exceed the criteria of no more than 5 dB over the respective background sound levels at any noise-sensitive receptors. The overall level of impact of the proposed development is therefore assessed as being low having regard to BS 4142.
- 5.44 The application proposals will not therefore conflict with the relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan in relation to noise impact.

## Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment

### Archaeology

5.45 Policy HE6 confirms that proposals for development on sites where archaeological remains may be present must be accompanied by an appropriate archaeological assessment (including a field evaluation if necessary). The site allocation within the adopted Local Plan for the application site confirms that archaeological remains may be present on the site and an appropriate archaeological assessment to include the following will be required:

- Information identifying the likely location and extent of the remains, and the nature of the remains;
- An assessment of the significance of the remains; and
- Consideration of how the remains would be affected by the proposed development.

5.46 The application is therefore accompanied by an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment prepared by Wardell Armstrong, which identifies that there is negligible potential for remains from the Pre-Historic and Romano British period; negligible to low potential for Medieval remains; and moderate potential for Post Medieval remains, although any such remains are likely to be of low significance. The assessment also identifies that there is likely to be high potential for modern remains of an agricultural nature, although these are again likely to be of low significance.

5.47 The assessment therefore identifies that there is little potential for archaeological remains of more than low significance to survive, although it is suggested that further archaeological fieldwork, if deemed necessary, could be secured via an appropriately worded planning condition.

### Above Ground Heritage Assets

- 5.48 Policy HE1 '*The Historic Environment*' of the adopted Barnsley Local Plan suggests that the LPA will positively encourage developments which will help in the management, conservation, understanding and enjoyment of Barnsley's historic environment, especially for those assets which are at risk. This will be achieved by, *inter alia*, ensuring that proposals affecting a designated heritage asset conserve those elements which contribute to its significance. Harm to such elements will be permitted only where this is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. Substantial harm or total loss to the significance of a designated heritage asset (or an archaeological site of national importance) will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances where there is a clearly defined public benefit.
- 5.49 The Grade II listed Birthwaite Hall and a number of other listed buildings and structures lying within the grounds of the hall is located approximately 200m to the west of the application site. The planning application is therefore accompanied by a Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by ELG Heritage, which seeks to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the heritage assets affected and to explain how the proposed development works impact upon their significance and setting.
- 5.50 The Heritage Impact Assessment concludes that the proposals will result in neutral effects which do not cause harm to the setting or significance of the identified designated heritage assets at Birthwaite Hall and the proposals therefore comply with both national and local policy in respect of heritage assets.
- 5.51 Whilst the Heritage Impact Assessment does not identify any harm to the heritage assets in question, were the LPA to adjudge that less than substantial harm to the setting of the

listed building would occur, there are nonetheless clear and substantial public benefits which would result from this application, including but not limited to the provision of new industrial / warehousing units with associated economic and employment opportunities to the business and wider local economy that weigh heavily in favour of the proposed development.



## 6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The application proposals relate to the erection of 2 No. B2 / B8 (11,010 sq.m gross) employment units with access works; parking; service yards; pallet store; relocation of security hut; vehicle canopy; hard and soft landscaping and associated works at Masonite, Huddersfield Road, Darton.
- 6.2 Masonite are one of the UK's leading manufacturers of timber doors and the current proposals will enable them to expand their ongoing operations on the existing Birthwaite Business Park site through the delivery of high quality, modern format industrial / warehousing space, as well as facilitating the relocation of Masonite UK's existing headquarters office accommodation from a nearby location on Huddersfield Road. The site is identified as an employment allocation within the adopted Local Plan and the application proposals, which will deliver significant capital investment in the site and a number of high quality and skilled job opportunities for local people, evidently represent an entirely appropriate form of development in this location in principle having regard to the adopted Development Plan and national guidance aimed at supporting a strong, competitive economy.
- 6.3 The proposals will also deliver a high quality form of development that would fully accord with the design-related policies of the adopted Development Plan and the suite of technical documentation that accompanies the application clearly demonstrates that the proposals will not give rise to unacceptable impacts in relation to highway safety; flood risk; noise or heritage, as well as helping to meet the challenge of climate change and delivering biodiversity enhancements.

- 6.4 The proposals therefore represent a sustainable form of development that fully accords with the adopted Development Plan for the area. We would therefore respectfully request the LPA resolves to grant planning permission at the earliest opportunity.