England Lyle Good
Town Planning

PLANNING STATEMENT

The Symphony Group PLC
Pen Hill Estate
Park Spring Road
Barnsley
S72 7EZ



PLANNING STATEMENT

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	Page 2
2.	SITE CONTEXT	Page 3
3.	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	Page 9
4.	PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	Page 19
5.	PLANNING ASSESSMENT	Page 23
6.	CONCLUSION	Page 37

Appendices

Appendix 01 – Pre Application Response from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

REVISION RECORD					
Rev	**Description**	**Date**	**Author**	**Checked**	**Approved**
0	Draft	15/06/20	KE	CM	KE
1	Final	04/09/20	KE	CM	KE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 We act on behalf of The Symphony Group PLC and have been instructed to submit a full planning application for the erection of a new factory/warehouse building (Use Class B2 General Industrial & Use Class B8 Storage & Distribution) with associated parking at their headquarters at Pen Hill Estate, Park Spring Road, Barnsley.

1.2 This supporting statement will provide the planning policy justification for this proposal; clearly demonstrating its compliance with the development plan and key material planning considerations. A fundamental consideration in this respect will be the presumption in favour of sustainable development as enshrined in the National Planning Policy Framework and an assessment of the proposals on that clear basis.

Structure of the Statement

1.3 The structure of this statement is as follows:

Section 2 discusses the context of the site.

Section 3 describes the development proposals.

Section 4 sets out the relevant planning policies and context.

Section 5 assesses the proposals in the context of the relevant policies of the adopted development plan and other material considerations.

Section 6 draws conclusions on the overall findings of this statement.

2. SITE CONTEXT

2.1 The application site is part of the wider site and operation of The Symphony Group PLC whose headquarters are located at Pen Hill Estate, Barnsley. The site is situated within the Grimethorpe area, which is a large village to the north east of Barnsley. The basis of Grimethorpe economy historically was rooted in coal mining until the early to mid 1990s. Pen Hill Estate and the surrounding area is now characterised by warehouses and industrial units following the colliery closure in 1993 and subsequent redevelopment since the late 1990s.

2.2 The Symphony Group's entire site extends to 32 Ha and currently consists of the main factory/warehouse with associated offices and staff facilities. There is a second building which is a separate dedicated marketing suite with a helipad to the immediate east. There is associated parking and circulation space for articulated lorries, cars, motorbikes, bicycles and pedestrians throughout the site.



Figure 2.1: Aerial Map Extract from Google Maps (N.B red line added by ELG Planning to show the indicative application site).

2.3 The headquarters of The Symphony Group PLC benefits from two points of private access (vehicle and pedestrian) which are controlled by the existing gatehouses. There is a third point of privately controlled pedestrian access between the two access drives from Park Spring Road.

2.4 The boundaries of the site are enclosed by a palisade fencing with a modest tree belt to the north west boundary. Access to the buildings and parking on site are currently provided by a central access road that runs north to south internally within the site, which is accessed via the two gatehouses.

Planning History

2.5 The planning history for the site dates back to 1999 following the closure of the former colliery;

- B/99/0579/HR Extract coal by opencast mining, reclaim colliery site by restoration to agriculture, amenity uses and future development land (Environmental Statement) - approved 11 August 1999.
- B/05/1331/HR Development of regenerated site for B1 (light industry) B2 (general industry) and B8 (warehouse/distribution) Use Classes (Outline) – approved 16 September 2005.
- B/05/1334/HR Development of regenerated site - erection of general industrial building (B2 Use Class) – approved 16 September 2005.
- 2005/2012 Removal of condition 8, modify conditions 9 and 11 of planning consent B/05/1334/HR – approved 15 December 2005.
- 2007/1509 Display of two illuminated entrance signs and one non illuminated flag pole – approved 16 October 2007.
- 2009/0588 Erection of a single storey industrial unit – approved 30 September 2009.
- 2010/1238 Erection of an 80m Anemometer mast and associated equipment (Temporary for a 24 month period) - approved 17 December 2010.
- 2014/0456 Creation of hardstanding (Certificate of Lawfulness) – granted 19 June 2014.
- 2015/0670 Proposed creation of two areas of hardstanding (Certificate of lawfulness) - of proposed use Creation of two areas of hardstanding – granted 24 July 2015.

- 2018/1147 Proposed creation of hardstanding (Certificate of Lawfulness) – granted 31 October 2018.

2.6 After the approval in 1999 the remaining planning history illustrates the gradual expansion on site by The Symphony Group PLC.

Background information

2.7 The Symphony Group PLC originally relocated its headquarters from Leeds to Pen Hill Estate Barnsley in 2008. The Symphony Group are manufacturers and suppliers of fitted kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms. The company supplies housebuilders, building merchants and retailers throughout the UK. The company moved into new purpose-built premises to suit the needs of the business which is primarily concerned with the provision of onsite manufacturing and storage and distribution of its products.

2.8 The Symphony Group have always had a long term strategy and masterplan for their entire 32 Ha site, dating back to 2007. The below location plan illustrates the wider masterplan for the site, albeit buildings "B" and "C" have never been built.

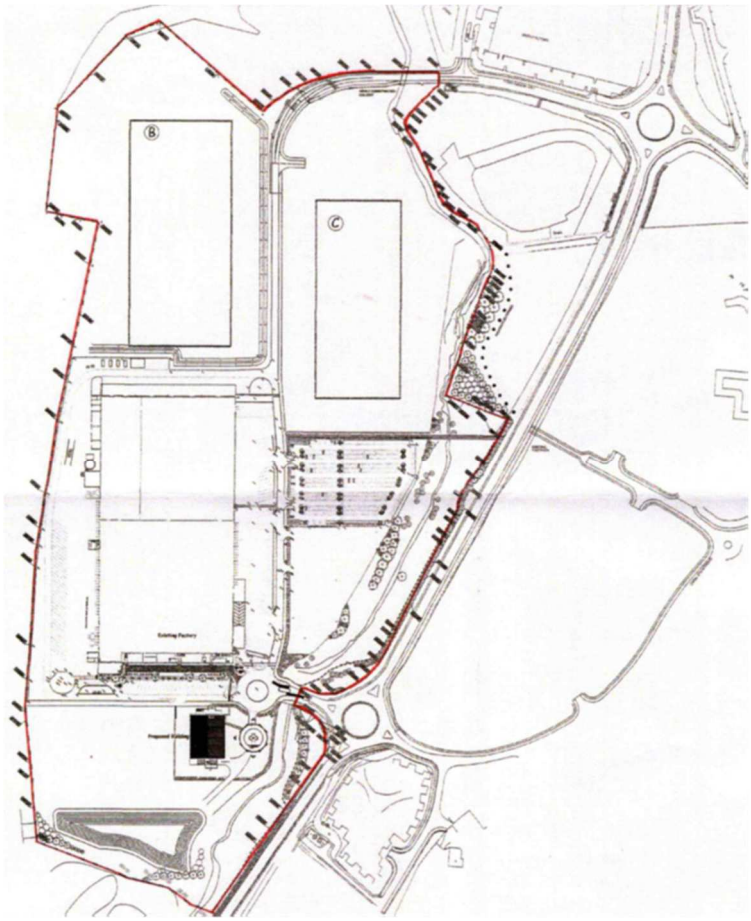


Figure 2.2: Location Plan 2009



Figure 2.3: Phases of development on site

2.9 The pursuit of planning permission for a new factory/warehouse on site will involve a substantial investment by The Symphony Group PLC of £40 million. This will lead to an increase of 60% of the existing footprint at their headquarters and as a business lead to an increase in the cumulative footprint of the entire business premises by 30%. Ultimately the new investment is expected to increase the production capacity at the Barnsley headquarters by 25% to 30% with an overall increase in employment levels by a further 20% which equates to around 150 people. The economic benefits of the development are substantial and will positively impact upon the applicant (The Symphony Group) and the wider economy through job creation and associated boost to the supply chain.

Pre Application enquiry

2.10 A detailed pre application enquiry was submitted to Barnsley Council in December 2019. Prior to the response being issued by the Council a site meeting took place, which included a tour of Symphony's

current operation with Hannah Andrews (Senior Planning Officer) Sarah Sharp and Wayne Lake (Highways Officers) and Shaun Higginbottom (Enterprising Barnsley).

2.11 A positive response was received from the Council for the proposed scheme which confirmed that;

> *"In terms of planning policy, the proposed is an extension of an existing use and located on a site allocated for employment. Therefore there is an accepted principle in favour"*

2.12 The response from officers also encouraged further discussions to take place in particular with Highways and Ecology officers at the Council. Ongoing discussions have also taken place with officers to address details required as part of the planning application submission to reduce the number of necessary planning conditions. A copy of the pre application response is attached to appendix 01.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The proposals seek full planning permission for the erection of a new factory/warehouse building (use class B2 General Industrial & use class B8 Storage and Distribution) with associated parking and circulation space. The new building will be used for the production of worktops and associated storage and distribution of products.

3.2 The location of the new factory/warehouse is to the north west of the current factory. The proposed new building is of the same orientation and falls within the existing building lines of the current factory/warehouse building. The parking and circulation of vehicles surrounds the new building and extends to the boundaries aligned with the existing building with a similar overall outline of parking and circulation space that follows the building footprint. The parking and circulation space extends to the boundary to the north of the site. The service yards and access route within this site will be surfaced in concrete.



Figure 3.1: Proposed site layout

3.3 To the east of the building is the service yard with two proposed new accesses to join the current road which serves the entirety of the Symphony site. The service yard will be used by the HGVs with circulation space, parking space and access to 20 dock levellers on this side of the building. In the corner of the service yard is an area which will house backup generators.

3.4 Between the application site and the existing building there is a retaining wall due to the change in levels on site. There will also be an access ramp down the side of the building (the maximum gradient being 1 in 20) which will be adjacent to a pallet storage area to the south and a canopy attached to the new building to the north. This elevation also includes 5 further loading areas, with a retaining wall abutting the corner of the boiler house.

3.5 To the rear of the building the existing on site HGV traffic will join the proposed traffic routes as part of the proposed scheme. The access route follows the boundary of the site whereby the existing fence will be retained with a gravel strip to visually tie in with the rest of the site. Between the rear access route and the building itself there is a proposed boiler house, two silos and a maintenance workshop with an additional loading door. As the access route continues and the site opens up to the north west there is an additional 12 dock levellers on this elevation of the building with additional box parking immediately opposite at the other side of the access route. The existing boundary fence will be retained albeit there will be a new retaining wall to the perimeter of the box planting which means the landscaping buffer along this part of the boundary will be both retained and protected with no development proposed within the root protection zones.



Figure 3.3: CGI Image of the proposed scheme

3.6 To the north west of the building (front elevation) is the car parking area associated with the site. The existing fencing in this area will be retained along with the existing landscape buffer in the form of trees. The layout of this area of the site will provide the main form of pedestrian access into the building with two formal pedestrian crossings. Three quarters of the front of the building is glazed and occupied by offices and associated facilities. The final quarter of the building provides direct access, both pedestrian and vehicular, into the factory/warehouse element, and benefits from sheltered loading and unloading of vehicles with a proposed canopy over this part of the building. To access the loading area is a 1 in 80 ramp and a 1.8 m high metal screen around the smoking area to the west. Immediately adjacent are two sprinkler tanks and a pump house with access being provided to access the bank for maintenance purposes.

3.7 The car park will be zoned with different surfaces whilst also accommodating the main access route exit onto the service road that runs centrally throughout the site. There will be 2 no. cycle stores in this

area which can accommodate 20 bicycles each. The main car park will accommodate 292 no. car parking spaces which includes 15 no. disabled, 15 no. car sharing spaces and 30 no. electric vehicles. The surface for this area will be black tarmacadam with denoted car parking bays. To the south east there will be a planting scheme that borders the parking area and that of the access road. Between the access road and the front elevation of the building is a row of parking with 2 formal crossing points. This area immediately to the front of the building (both pedestrian and vehicle) will be surfaced with 80mm thick tegula block paving to match factory 1.

3.8 Additional pedestrian footpaths will be provided and will be surfaced black tarmacadam footpaths to adoptable paving standards with an area of turf and soft landscaping.

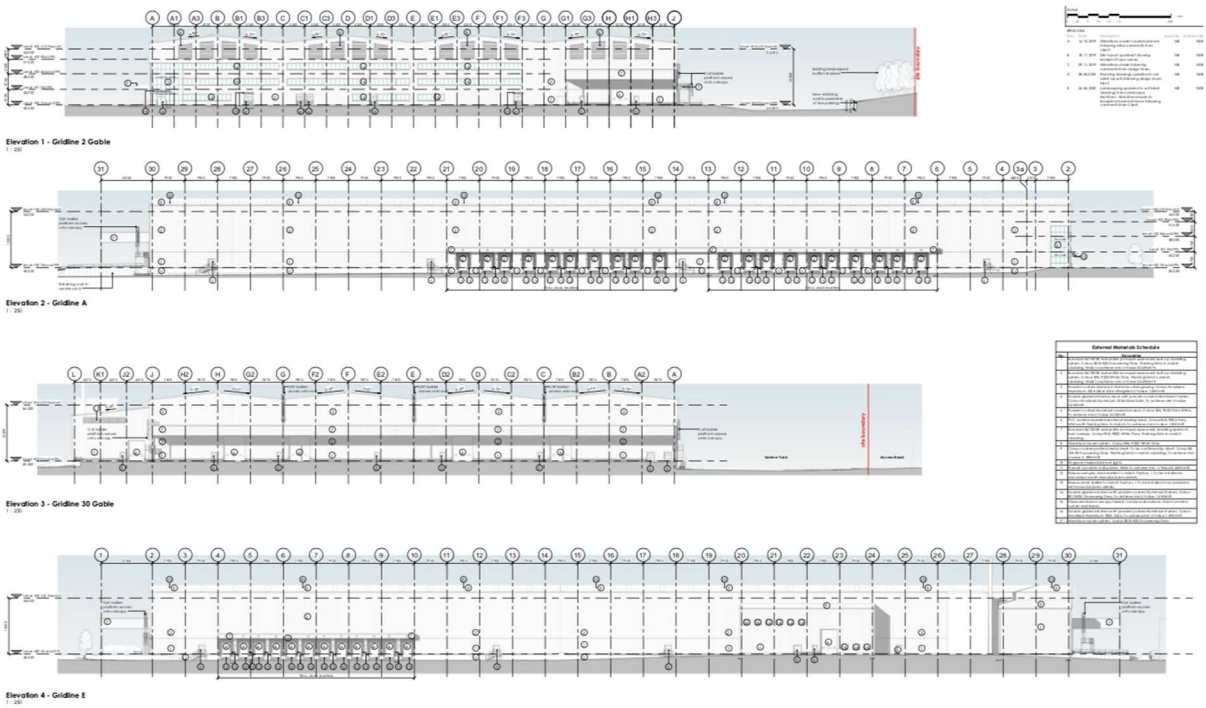


Figure 3.4: Proposed Elevations

3.9 Elevation 1 will be the front elevation of the building where the majority of pedestrian access will be obtained. The external walls will be clad in with Euroclad 32/1000 R wall profile which will be a mixture of Goosewing Grey and White Grey as indicated on the submitted plans. Three quarters of this elevation will be glazed to serve the offices and associated store rooms, canteen and changing rooms which are spread over the ground, first and second floor at this part of the building. At the third floor level are the louvres that serve the plant deck. The aluminum louvred system will be powder coated White Grey to match the external walls of the building.



Figure 3.5: CGI of Elevation 1

3.10 The glazing that serves the reception and lobby area at ground floor and offices above at first and second floor will be powder coated aluminum framed curtain glazing - the colour proposed is Anodised Aluminum 100 A Silver Satin. The remaining windows will be double glazed which will be powder coated in Anodised Aluminum 100A Satin, whilst the pedestrian doors at ground floor level will be double glazed with powder coated aluminum frames which will also be powder coated Anodised Aluminium 100A Silver Satin.

3.11 The fourth quarter of this elevation provides loading access into the building and therefore is solid in its appearance as opposed to being fenestrated in line with the rest of this elevation of the building. There will be a loading door for use by HGVs for loading items such as worktops. This area will be covered by a canopy which will be clad the same as the building and will be grey white in colour with matching trims. The loading door will be a sectional PVC coated insulated sectional door which will be colour coated white grey. Either side of the loading door will be a personnel door which will be powder coated aluminium in white grey.

3.12 Elevation 2 is simple in appearance given the operation and activity that is proposed on site. The external walls will be covered in Euroclad 32/1000R which will be white grey. There are 4 personnel doors, which are powder coated aluminium in Grey White each at ground floor level but due to the land levels and loading heights for the dock levellers the personnel doors will be accessed by aluminum staircases. This elevation accommodates two sets of ten dock levellers which will be Nassau swing lips and will match the existing factory - they will also each have a Nassau dock shelter again to match the existing building. A retaining wall is required due to the changing site levels with a cat ladder platform providing access onto the canopy.

3.13 Elevation 3 is adjacent to the existing building and only has openings at ground floor level, the external walls will be clad again in Euroclad 32/1000R which will be white grey, albeit the lower wall sections will be the same cladding but Goosewing Grey. A canopy runs the full length of the new building, excluding the boiler house, to cover the loading areas and this will be constructed out of Euroclad 32/1000R to be white grey to match the building. The only openings are at the ground floor - namely 5 loading doors, 4 of which are located in the main building and one serving the two storey lean to extension that forms the boiler house. The loading doors will be PVC coated insulated sectional doors which will be powder coated grey white to match the building. The boiler house continues this elevation with a simple appearance with a lean to roof attached to the new factory/warehouse and an aluminium louvre system which is to be goosewing grey.

3.14 Elevation 4 has very few openings but again this is due to the operation that takes place inside the building. The external walls will be clad in Euroclad 32/1000R profile with the lower section being Goosewing Grey and upper walls being white Grey. The section of wall which falls lower than the ground finish floor level will consist of pre-cast concrete wall panels. There are 6 personnel doors, 2 of which are within the maintenance storage and workshop element, these will match those on the other elevations and will be finished in Grey White. There will be 12 dock levellers all of which will have the same Nassau swing lip dock leveller and associated dock shelter to match those on the other elevations.

3.15 This rear elevation will also accommodate the maintenance workshop and store and the gable end of the boiler house. The maintenance workshop will have 9 windows, with 3 of them being at ground floor level with an insulation sectional loading door, which is proposed to be Grey White.

3.16 The roof of the proposed factory/warehouse comprises a low 4 pitched roof of 6 degrees. The roof will be constructed using a colour coated metal sheet that is proposed to be Goosewing Grey with the flashing to be colour coated to match the roof covering. The roof will accommodate a number of Kingspan Trapezoidal roof lights.

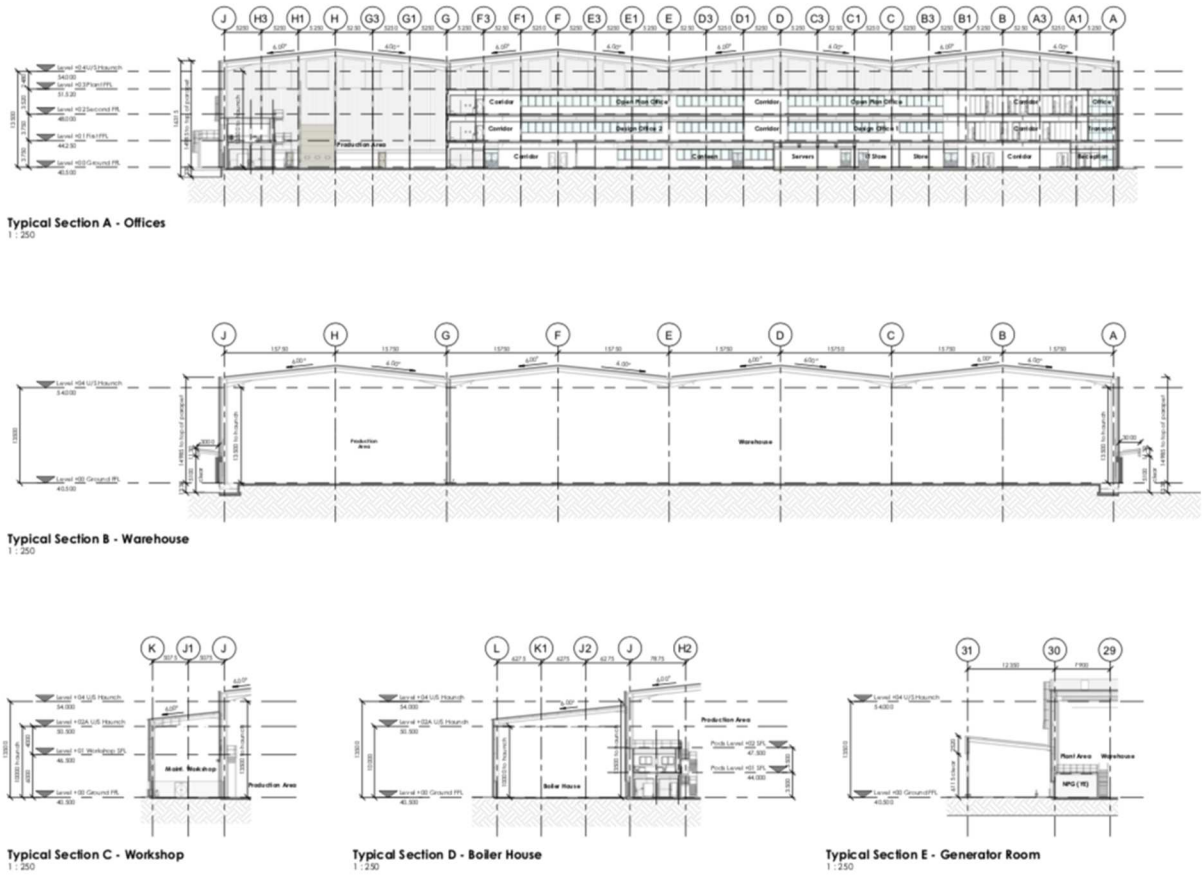


Figure 3.6: Sections of the proposed development

3.17 Overall, the new factory will be taller than the existing factory ranging from 14.8m to 16.01m from eaves to ridge height, this is necessary for operational needs and will not dominate the existing factory when viewed in context. The proposed footprint is smaller than that of the existing factory/warehouse.

3.18 The internal layout is generally open plan to meet the needs of our clients and the demands of their business. At ground floor level the building is split into two main areas within the factory/storage element, the first for the production of worktops and the second for the storage of finished products, all of which are readily accessed by loading doors and docking levellers. Whilst the area is split into two areas, the configuration is extremely flexible should future demand or need require a shift in the change in floor areas. The remainder of the ground floor is split into the reception/offices/meeting rooms/stores/ canteen and toilets and changing room with associated circulation space. Throughout the main factory warehouse area there are 4 pods which will accommodate additional enclosed working areas, these are distributed throughout the building for ease of access for members of staff. To the rear of the building is the attached boiler house, and maintenance workshop and store and two silos.

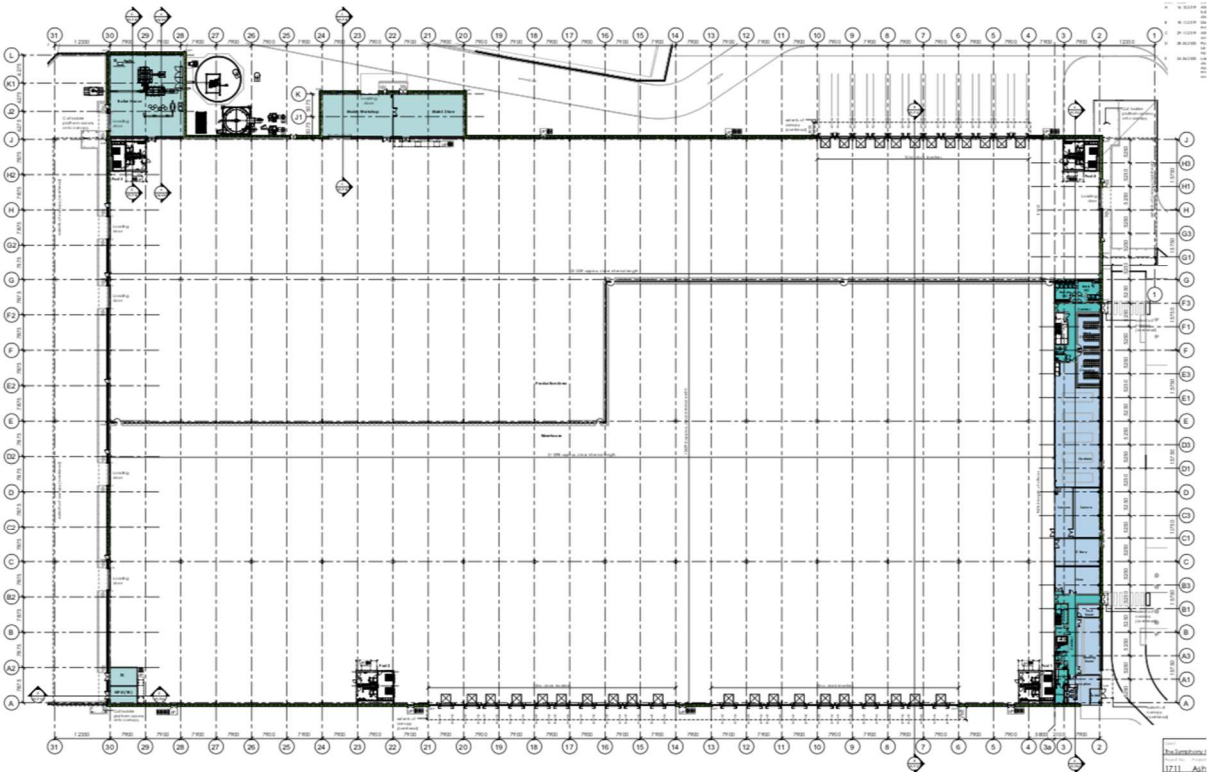


Figure 3.7: Proposed Floor Plan

3.19 In terms of the four levels of accommodation to the front of the building this is split between the reception, lobby area, storage and meeting rooms and associated staff facilities such as changing rooms, toilets and a canteen at ground floor level. Offices, meeting rooms, toilets, storerooms and a staff kitchens will be located on the first and second floors. A plant deck will be housed on the third floor. The various floors within this area of the proposed factory/warehouse will be linked by internal staircases and a lift.

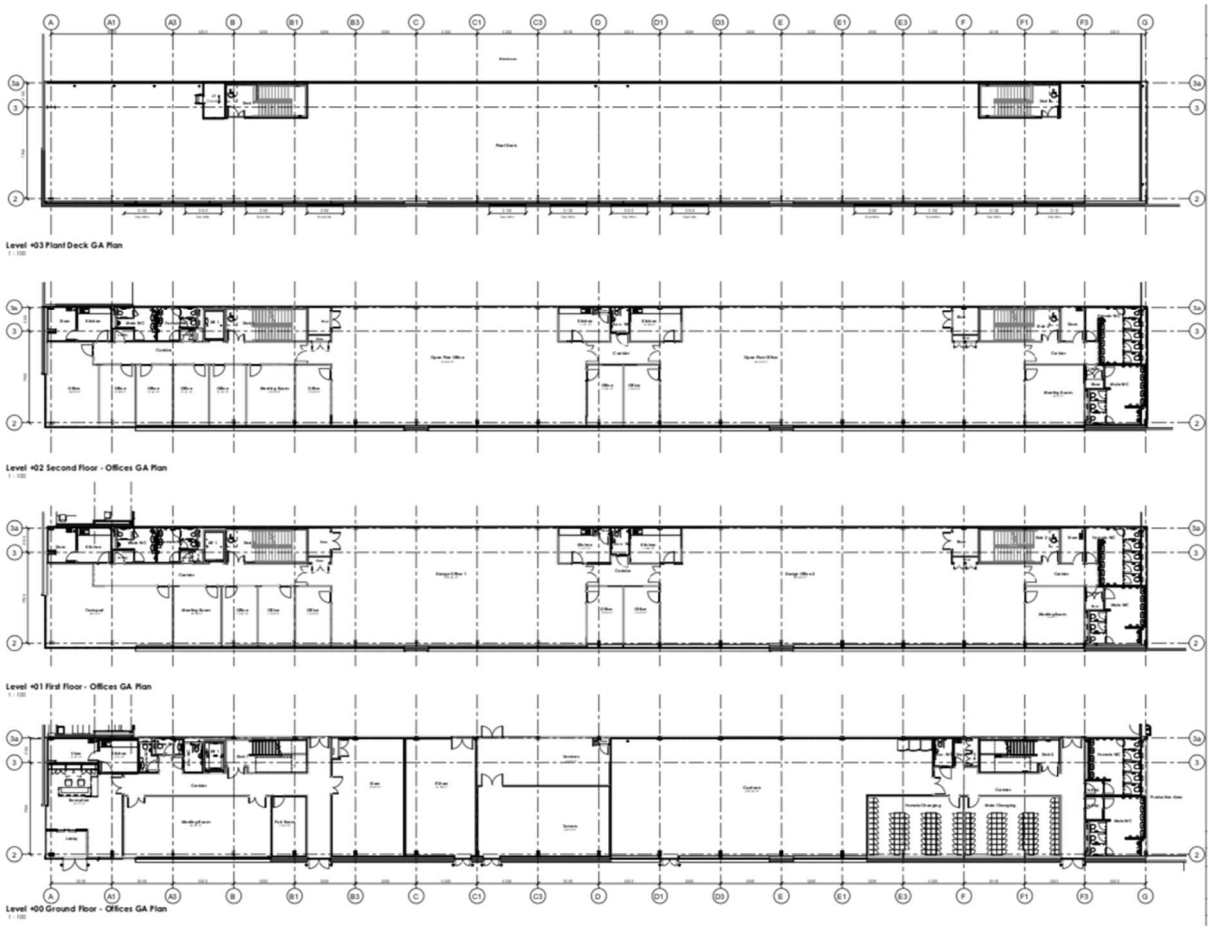


Figure 3.8: Proposed Office Floor Plans

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 Section S.38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that if regard is to be had to the Development Plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Adopted Development Plan

4.2 The Barnsley Local Plan and Policies Map (Adopted 2019) makes up the Development Plan for the area together with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)

4.3 As shown in Figure 4.1 the application site (broadly indicated by the red circle) is part of ES8, which is a large site allocated for employment use (as indicated by the purple shaded area). The site is also situated within the development limit boundary (depicted by the dark blue line). The site is also located within the Dearne Valley Green Heart Nature Improvement Area.



Figure 4.1: **Barnsley Borough Council Policies Map. (N.B Red circle highlights the location of the site).**

4.4 Therefore, considering the above, the following development plan policies are deemed relevant to this occasion:

Local Plan

- Policy SD1 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy GD1 – General Development
- Policy LG2 – The Location of Growth

- Policy E1 – Providing Strategic Employment Locations
- Policy E2 – The Distribution of New Employment Sites
- Policy E3 – Uses on Employment Land
- Policy T1 – Accessibility Priorities
- Policy T3 – New Development and Sustainable Travel
- Policy T4 – New Development and Transport Safety
- Policy D1 – High Quality Design and Place Making
- Policy LC1 – Landscape Character
- Policy HE6 – Archaeology
- Policy GI1- Green Infrastructure
- Policy BIO1- Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy CC1 – Climate Change
- Policy CC2 – Sustainable Design and Construction
- Policy CC3 – Flood Risk
- Policy CC4 – Sustainable Drainage System
- Policy RE1 – Low Carbon and Renewable Energy
- Policy I1 – Infrastructure and Planning Obligations

National Planning Policy Framework

4.5 The revised NPPF was published in February 2019 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The NPPF must be taken into account as it 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 interdependent and need to be supported in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- **An economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and co-ordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- **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 a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being;
- **An environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve 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 10 of the NPPF confirms a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at its heart, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision taking.

4.8 Paragraph 80 of the NPPF states that the both planning policies and decisions should help create 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.

4.9 Paragraph 175 refers to Habitats and Biodiversity, in particular section d) states that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Supplementary Planning Documents

4.10 Following the adoption of the Local Plan on the 3 January 2019 the Council adopted eighteen new Supplementary Planning Documents on the 18 May 2019, the below documents are considered relevant to the proposals which are;

- Biodiversity & Geodiversity
- Sustainable Travel
- Parking

5. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Taking into account the proposed development, and site context, the main planning considerations in relation to the development proposals are considered to be:

- The Principle of Development
- Design & Amenity
- Ecology
- Highways
- Contaminated Land & Coal Mining Risk Assessment
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Archaeology
- Sustainability Statement
- Landscaping & Trees
- BREEAM
- Broadband

The Principle of Development

5.2 The application site is located within the development limits for Cudworth (including Grimethorpe and Shafton), a principal town. The site is also located within the curtilage of the existing Symphony Group Plc Headquarters at Pen Hill Estate, Barnsley.

5.3 The site is identified as an employment allocation (ES8: Land off Ferrymoor Way) within the Council's adopted Local Plan (January 2019) as illustrated below. This allocation is supportive of employment uses within the use classes B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Storage and Distribution) as outlined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, as amended.

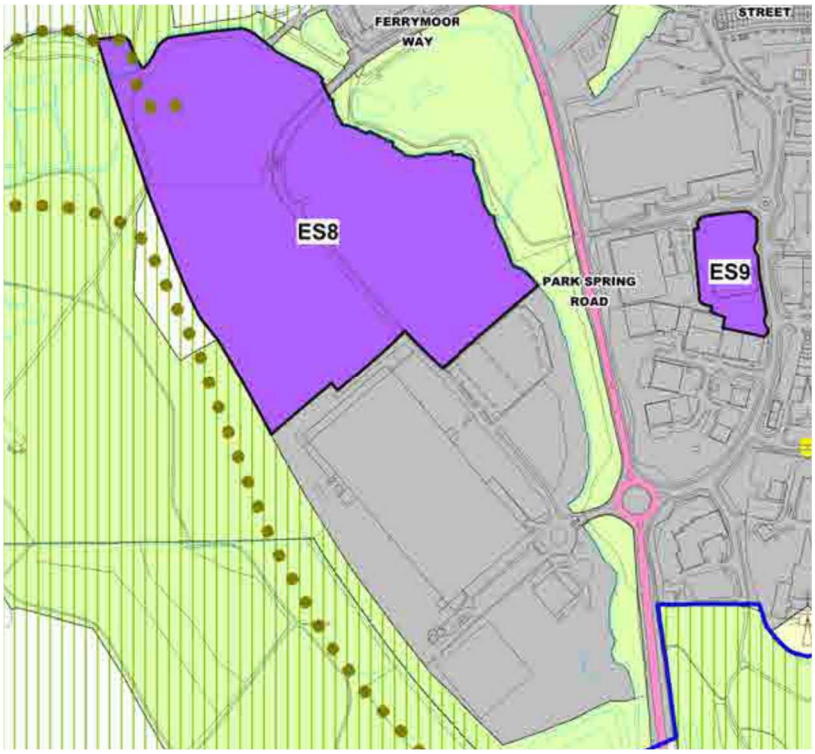


Figure 5.1: Extract from Barnsleys Proposals Map

5.4 The application represents an extension to an existing use on site and replicates the existing use classes of B2 General Industrial and use class B8 Storage and Distribution, with the combination of a proposed warehouse and factory, satisfying policy GD1.

5.5 The employment allocation within the Council's Local Plan also states that development will be expected to;

- Avoid locating any built development in Flood Zone 2 and 3;
- Plant a strip of native shrubs and trees along the western boundary to allow for the corridor formed by the adjacent dismantled railway line to continue;
- As Skylarks are breeding on site, the timing of development is critical, and should begin outside of the breeding season to prevent disturbance to breeding birds; and
- Retain, enhance and manage a buffer strip of existing vegetation along the north and eastern boundaries of the site including the stream corridor.

- Archaeological remains may be present on this site therefore proposals must be accompanied by an appropriate archaeological assessment (including a field evaluation if necessary) that must include the following;

    - Information identifying the likely location and extent of 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.

5.6 The proposed development satisfies each element of the details of the allocation (ES8) and is discussed in more detail within the following sections of the report.

5.7 The site is allocated for employment use and within an area identified as a principal town. The scheme proposes an extension of the existing use on site. The development is therefore acceptable in principle and this has been previously confirmed by officers in the detailed pre application submission earlier this year, satisfying policies SD1, GD1, LG2, E1, E2, E3 and employment allocation ES8.

Design & Amenity

5.8 The scheme is very much akin to the existing factory/warehouse and the location. form and scale of which is dictated by the proposed use of the building with its associated equipment and the scale required to meet the needs of the business.

5.9 Overall the footprint of the new factory/warehouse is smaller than the existing building 327,397 sq ft compared to the existing building of 500,000 sq ft located to the south of the application site. The height of the new building is slightly higher but only marginally with the eaves to ridge height ranging from 14.8 m (eaves) and 16.01 (ridge), compared to the existing building whose eaves height is 13.5 m and a ridge height of 15.3 m. Whilst the new building will be taller the smaller floor area means that

this will not dominate the existing buildings on site and will in any event be read against the backdrop of the existing development onsite.

5.10 The proposed materials and finish of the building match that of the existing so visually are entirely appropriate and complimentary to the site. The layout of the proposed site aligns itself with the layout and vehicle circulation routes connecting the two buildings, parallel to one another.

5.11 The site is set within the existing Symphony Group Plc complex comprised of existing B2 and B8 use class, with the proposed scheme complimentary to this. Outside the Symphony sites boundaries surrounding wider area is characterised by commercial uses and therefore the scheme is congruous with this and no amenity issues will arise as part of the proposals.

5.12 Given the developed context of the wider site and its location, the creation of a new factory/warehouse within this location would clearly remain consistent with the provisions of the Development Plan, namely policies D1, the employment allocation and the NPPF.

Ecology

5.13 The site falls within the Dearne Valley Green Heart Nature Improvement Area (NIA). The aim of the NIA partnership is to help restore and enhance the ecological networks of the area, its floodplain and its links to habitats on surrounding slopes and hills.

5.14 There are no locally designated sites within the application site, the closest Local Nature Reserve is West Haigh Wood 1.7 km to the east.

5.15 The Local Plan Ecology Report (2013) for allocation ES8 identifies the application site as a semi improved neutral grassland and records a strip of planted broadleaved woodland. Elsewhere on the Symphony site, but outside the application site habitats are recorded, a more semi improved neutral grassland, another strip of broadleaved woodlands, a flowing water course and along the stream

corridor, scrub, standing water tall ruderals and scattered shrubs. Land outside The Symphony Group Plc site includes habitats classified as standing water, bareground, marsh and marshy grasslands.

5.16 The Ecology report by the Council states that if ES8 was developed without adequate mitigation there would be a risk that Ferrymoor Pond would be isolated from the surrounding countryside. The report also states that development of the site would result in some adverse local ecological impact but there is scope for mitigation.

5.17 As part of early detailed discussions, prior to the submission of the pre application enquiry a Preliminary Ecological Assessment Report was produced by Grays Ecology. This report identified a number of breeding birds that were present on site and the need to commission Great Crested Newt Surveys for Spring 2020. The report also identifies the need to responsibly remove New Zealand pygmy weed on site and deliver mitigation and biodiversity enhancement.

5.18 Subsequently Grays ecology have produced a Breeding Bird Survey, a DEFRA Biodiversity Matric 2.0 assessment and an Ecological Impact Assessment. Haycock and Jay were the sub consultants and undertook the Great Crested Newt Surveys.

Great Crested Newts

5.19 A total of 7 ponds were surveyed within 500m of the application site. The findings identified a small population of Great Crested Newts at 5 ponds, namely ponds 2, 4, 5, 6 and the pylon ditch as referenced within the submitted report by Haycock and Jay. Great Crested Newt eggs or lavae were also identified in ponds 4, 5 and 6 confirming the presence of breeding at these water bodies. Therefore it was concluded that ponds 2, 4, 5, 6 and the pylon ditch form a metapopulation of Great Crested Newts in the area.

Nesting & Breeding Birds

5.20 A breeding bird survey was undertaken of The Symphony Group site and included the application site and the land opposite also within the curtilage of the applicants premises. Overall the findings indicated

that area B (the application site) supports more ground nesting birds than the area A (land opposite the application site). The report confirms that suitable areas within the wider curtilage are limited to one location near the SUDS, where one pair of lapwings nested. The detailed findings and number of breeding birds recorded are detailed within the submitted reports by Grays Ecology.

Ecological Impact Assessment

5.21 The Ecological Impact Assessment confirms that as the site is an employment allocation development is permitted, so long as appropriate measures are agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

5.22 The entirety of wider site occupied by The Symphony Group Plc was assessed for potential habitat enhancement. The submitted report by Grays Ecology describes the existing greenspace as being relatively biodiverse and provides high recreational value space which is enjoyed by the workforce. Much of the green habitat is appropriately managed. Habitats include neutral grasslands, a well vegetated stream, copses and a small SUDS area which includes a swamp and a reedbed. Five potential areas were investigated in more detail;

1. The 4.02 Ha of open land east of the red line boundary – this area of land is sparse and less used by birds in comparison to the application site. This area is allocated in the Local Plan for Employment use and Symphony therefore wish to retain the land in its current condition and has consequently been discounted.
2. A 0.76 Ha of open mosaic habitat at the southern end of the Marketing Suite – this area was found to accommodate a pair of lapwings and this remained the case for all the bird surveys it was deemed to be too small an area to attract a greater number of ground nesting birds through biodiversity uplift measures and was therefore discounted.
3. Recreational area with picnic tables by a stream and a pedestrian footpath – Whilst copses have been planted to screen the car and trailer parks to visually improve the area it is an area which is well used by employees and highly disturbed. Consequently this area is not suitable for biodiversity uplift.

4. SUDS - Due to the amphibian interest on site the possibility to deepen the 0.6 Ha SUDS area in order to create 0.1 Ha of permanent waterbody was considered. However the applicants engineer confirmed that the SUDS is lined with an impervious membrane so it is not practicable to puncture the liner to deepen the feature and was consequently discounted.
5. A greenroof for the new factory/warehouse was considered however the building has been designed as a large span warehouse /production facility and as such would not therefore be able to accept the loadings of a green roof construction, this had to be discounted.

5.23 With the option of onsite mitigation having to be discounted for biodiversity enhancement, the DEFRA Biodiversity Matric 2.0 has been used to gauge the loss of biodiversity caused by the development. The findings of such state that

"The red line boundary equates to 145.0 habitat units (covering 6.5 Ha). None of this habitat will be retained. The biodiversity of the remaining Symphony site has been calculated as 51.65 habitat units (covering 9.8 Ha). All of this habitat will be retained and none will be enhanced. For the Symphony site as a whole, the baseline is 196.65 habitat units before the development and will be 51.65 habitat units after. This overall loss of 145.0 habitat units is a 100% loss of biodiversity. The outcome of this is that compensation and enhancement measures need to be delivered off-site".

5.24 Therefore, compensation will be in the form of a financial contribution for nature conservation projects elsewhere within the NIA. There are a number of conservation projects in the surrounding area however following discussions with relevant agencies it was considered that The Garganey Trust has been assessed as the best option. It is therefore suggested that a financial contribution is secured via a legal agreement.

5.25 The findings of this report concluded that the applicant needs to undertake the following;

- Apply for a Great Crested Newt mitigation license and undertake prescribed measures
- Responsibly removed New Zealand Pygmy Weed – these works have already been completed by the applicant and confirmation has been sent to the Councils Ecologist.

- Timetable to avoid bird nesting season
- Deliver compensation for habitat loss and breeding losses and provide biodiversity enhancement through a financial contribution to off site habitat improvements opportunities elsewhere within the Nature Improvement Area.

Highways

5.26 Detailed discussions have taken place as part of the pre application enquiry where a Scoping Study was prepared in December 2019 and a meeting was held at the site with officer's from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) including those representing the local highway authority. The scope of the Transport Assessment was subsequently agreed with the highway case officer.

5.27 A Transport Assessment has been commissioned by SCP Transport and included as part of the submitted application. The proposed development fronts Symphonys private access road which is gated to the north and south of the existing unit. Outside the Symphony site boundaries Park Spring Road connects Grimethorpe Colliery Roundabout and Ferry Moor Roundabout. The Scoping Study applied a preliminary study area including the following junctions in order to identify the existing traffic flows/distribution at the site and subsequently the offsite junction capacity modelling to be undertaken as part of the Transport Assessment.

- Grimethorpe Colliery Roundabout;
- Ferry Moor Roundabout;
- Symphony Roundabout

5.28 Following the Scoping Study it was agreed with the local highway authority that the study area for this Transport Assessment would additionally include the following junctions:

- Engine Lane Roundabout
- Shafton Roundabout
- Rotherham Road Roundabout

- Cathill Roundabout

5.29 A traffic count was undertaken in October 2019 and further counts were undertaken by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council at the Houghton Main Colliery Roundabout and the traffic flows at Cathill Roundabout from the Houghton main energy centre Traffic Assessment have been obtained. It has not been possible to obtain representative traffic flows at the Engine Lane and Shafton Roundabouts as existing data is not available and new counts are not possible due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.30 In terms of road safety the report states that there are a total of 21 'slight' severity accidents occurred the entire study area and only 3 'serious' severity accidents occurred across the whole network over the five-year period. This equates to approximately 5 accidents a year over a five year period which is considered to be a relatively low number of accidents to what would typically be expected at junctions of this nature and given the scale of the study area.

5.31 The scheme proposed 292 car parking spaces in total, the split being

- Standard Spaces – 232
- Electrical Vehicle Spaces – 30
- Car Share - 15
- Disabled Spaces – 15

5.32 The proposed car parking provision therefore satisfies the requirements by the Councils newly adopted Supplementary Planning Document - Parking.

5.33 The report confirms that the development is accessible by sustainable transport modes. However, policies to encourage travel by sustainable modes are developed further within the Full Travel Plan that accompanies this application, including those to meet BREEAM requirements.

5.34 The junction capacity assessments show that that the junctions within the study area will continue to operate within capacity without significant queuing, with the exception of the Doncaster Road West approach to the Catill Roundabout junction, where although queuing would increase along the Doncaster Road West arm, this would not represent a severe impact on the operation of the local highway network.

5.35 The report states that the long term effects of the COVID – 19 pandemic are likely to result in reduced traffic levels, which would improve the operation of the local highway network when compared to the assessment based on previous traffic levels and is likely to more than off-set the impact of the application proposals.

5.36 The report concludes that the proposed development is therefore considered acceptable with regard to transport.

5.37 In addition to the Transport Assessment a Travel Plan has been submitted by SCP Transport this identifies vehicle and pedestrian access from 3 access points along the front of the application site (red line). The report confirms that the site is within acceptable walking distance of nearby facilities such as convenience stores, as well as being within walking distance of surrounding residential areas. Generally, the pedestrian facilities within the area are described as good with footways provided along both sides of Park Spring Road and High Street with dropped kerbs provided at most of junctions and street lighting. There are a range of facilities within a short walk, which will be useful for staff members during lunchtimes and breaks and for visitors.

5.38 The application site is within an acceptable distance of a range of areas and associated facilities, cycling is therefore considered to be a viable alternative to the private car use for prospective employees and visitors to the site. In addition, there are a number of designated cycle routes around the site. In particular the cycle-footway to the east of the site. Park Spring Road is considered to provide safe access for cyclists travelling northbound and southbound.

5.39 In terms of public transport several services operate from within a short distance from the site. There are bus stops located on Engine Lane which is 600m to the north of the site and on Park Spring Road which is 750m to the east of the site both of which are viable options for employees to travel by bus from several destinations, including Pontefract and Barnsley Town Centre due to the reasonable frequency.

5.40 The report concludes that the site is well located to be accessed by sustainable modes of transport, namely walking, cycling and public transport. The site is located within walking distance of several residential areas providing opportunities for staff to be recruited locally. The Highways details comply with the relevant criteria of policies T1, T3, T4 and the Councils SPDs Sustainable Travel and Parking.

Contaminated Land & Coal Mining Risk Assessment

5.41 A Geoenvironmental Desk Study Report has been produced by JPG. This report concludes that based on the potential pollutant linkages present on the site, the site is considered to be a low to moderate risk with respect to contamination.

5.42 Further to the submission of the pre application enquiry ground investigation works have taken place on site. A Geoenvironmental Ground Investigation Report has been produced by JPG and included within the submission. The report concludes that whilst a degree of mitigation is recommended this will not unduly impinge upon the feasibility of the site being developed, subject the recommendations being followed.

5.43 A Coal Mining Risk Assessment has also been produced by JPG. This report has assessed the information available regarding coal mining in the locality, and assess the resulting impact on land stability. The report recommends that the site will be suitable for the construction of the proposed scheme subject to the implementation of the recommended mitigation.

Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage

5.44 This submission is accompanied by a FRA prepared by JPG. The report confirms that the site is in Flood Zone 1 and the risk of flooding from all sources is low. There is a risk of overland flow through the north western part of the site from extreme events. The proposed development layout takes into account the overland flow route and careful design of levels and external works in this area will ensure the route is maintained.

5.45 The drainage system for the original factory development included a SUDS retention pond located to the south of the existing factory which was designed to cater for contributing catchment areas from future development sites. Stub pipes have been provided on the existing surface water drainage system for future development

5.46 Analysis of the existing impermeable areas and the current proposed development including an allowance for climate change has been undertaken. The analysis shows that the existing retention basin has capacity for the existing impermeable areas and the proposed Factory No 2 development. Foul flows will connect into the stub pipes provided on the existing foul gravity drainage system.

5.47 It is therefore concluded that there are no issues with respect to flooding of capacity for the drainage system and therefore the development would not have a significant effect on the environment, complying with policies CC1, CC3 and CC4.

Archaeology

5.48 The employment allocation for the site (ES8: Land off Ferrymoor Way) states that Archaeological remains may be present on the site and therefore a Heritage Assessment has been produced by Philip Abramson MA, FSA, MifA. This report concludes that in the case of the current scheme it is considered

that the redevelopment of the landscape in the late 20th century, particularly by open cast mining and subsequent re-generation in the 21st century, will have had a major adverse impact on any heritage assets that might once have been present on site. Therefore, the report concludes there should be no archaeological constraints on the scheme, satisfying the requirements of policy HE6..

BREEAM Sustainability Statement

5.49 From the conception stages of the project careful consideration has been given to BREEAM and sustainability. A Sustainability Statement was previously submitted as part of the pre application enquiry the report sumarised the key credits that would be obtained as part of the scheme in order to achieve a BREEAM target of 'very good'.

5.50 Further to the pre application enquiry a Pre-Assessment has been commissioned by Hydrock MRB and submitted as part of the planning application. The findings of the pre assessment concludes that the awarded score for the scheme is 61.71% which is 'Very Good' therefore satisfying policy CC2.

Landscaping & Trees

5.51 Within the pre application response officers referenced the need for an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) that would need to be submitted as part of the planning application. Elliott Consultancy have produced the report which surveyed the trees along the western and northern perimeter of the site.

5.52 The surveyed trees the majority of which were found to be of reasonable to good physiological and structural condition with few arboricultural issues. The construction of the proposed layout will lead to the requirement to remove a small part of group 2 trees as referenced within the report.

5.53 Group 2 trees are described as a narrow linear landscape buffer of young trees that were classified as Category C. The small number of losses required are concluded to have a negligible detrimental impact upon both arboricultural and on the immediate landscape.

5.54 Other potential conflicts that are flagged within the report are the presence of utility runs within the root protection areas of the retained trees, damage to trees during the construction phase and damage to the structure of the trees. There are no proposed utility runs within the root protection areas and the other recommendations within the AIA to ensure the protection of the trees will be implemented on site and adhered to.

5.55 Landscaping proposals plan has been produced by Smeeden Foreman which recommends additional planting in the forms of trees, shrubs and hedgerows in particular along the boundaries of the site, but also throughout the parking area and along the frontage of the new factory/warehouse. Recommendations such as rabbit proof fencing are also made within the plan which will be adhered to as part of the proposals.

5.56 Additional native shrubs and trees will be planted along the boundaries of the application site in line with the details of the allocation.

Superfast Broadband Project

5.57 Since the original submission of the pre application enquiry The Symphony Group Plc have confirmed the level of connection and infrastructure that is currently available on site satisfies and meets the requirements of South Yorkshire Super Fast Broadband Project. This confirmation therefore avoids a planning condition being attached to the approval.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 To conclude, it is considered that the proposed development is deemed to be acceptable in all respects, having regard to the relevant development plan policies, and the NPPF. This is because the site is an identified employment allocation and the scheme remains in the spirit of this. The principle of development is therefore acceptable and complies with the provisions of the Development Plan and the NPPF.

6.2 The application is accompanied by various technical reports all of which confirm that the development can be delivered on site subject to a small amount of mitigation measures being implemented and satisfies the relevant planning policies.

6.3 The scheme presents a substantial level of investment by The Symphony Group Plc and one which will meet the needs of the business and give rise to positive economic benefits for the business and wider economy.

6.4 Due to all the above, we respectfully request that the Council resolves to grant planning permission for this demonstrably policy compliant form of development without delay, in line with the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development, subject to any conditions deemed appropriate on this occasion.

Appendix 01

Pre Application Response from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Kim,

Please find attached as discussed. I have everyone' except Highways, who were at the meeting where they discussed their views with your consultant.

I am happy for further discussion to be had between the relevant technical advisors, particularly in relation to ecology and highways. If you could ensure I am kept in the loop however so I can track progress.

In terms of Planning Policy, the proposed is an extension of an existing use and located on a site allocated for employment. Therefore there is an accepted principle in favour.

Policy ES8 expects development to avoid locating in flood zones 2 and 3. The plans appear to achieve this easily, but it would be helpful to provide a layout plan with the flood zones overlaid (possibly as an appendix to the FRA).

As mentioned at the meeting, there is a requirement to retain and enhance a buffer strip of existing vegetation along the north and eastern boundaries (including a stream corridor). However, looking at the plans it appears the proposed scheme will not impact on this buffer, with only lorry park n.2 (which is existing) being close to it.

A strip of native shrubs and trees is required along the western boundary to allow for the corridor formed by the adjacent railway line to continue and looking at the plans, this doesn't appear to be included. Please can you review this as it is important to secure this and agree management of it. It may also help with the ecology mitigation / enhancements.

In design terms I have limited comments, the building design is functional by necessity and takes its ques from the adjacent factory. It is not located close to any residential properties so there are no impacts in terms of residential amenity.

I would like to understand the retaining feature better, shown along the boundary adjacent the Box Park No.2. If you can confirm the height of this and materials.

Similarly, allowing for the desire to limit pre-commencement conditions, I would like to see the following included with the application and / or this enquiry:

- Levels across the site, including hardstanding areas, access roads and finished floor levels;
- Boundary treatments;
- Detailed landscaping plans and management schemes;

If I think of anything else I will let you know.

With regards drainage / flood risk, please note that we don't consult the EA on pre-apps as they just send a standard response and require a fee for any further advice. It is therefore likely you would need to contact them direct to get a response if you feel this would be helpful.

Kind regards

Hannah Andrew
Senior Planning Officer (Outer Team)