

Donaldsons

Donaldsons
Development LLP
10 Westgate House
22 Park Square South
Leeds
LS1 2NR
Telephone: 0113 246 1167
Facsimile: 0113 246 1677

Donaldsons

JUNE 2006

AWG PROPERTY LIMITED

Lowfields Road, Bolton
upon Dearne

PLANNING SUPPORT STATEMENT

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Donaldsons LLP, Chartered Surveyors, upon the instruction of AWG Property Limited, to assess the quantity of employment land and premises in the region of the subject site – Lowfields Road, Bolton-upon-Dearne – to provide support to a planning application for the change of use of this site from industrial / manufacturing to residential.

2 Location and Site Review

Location

- 2.1 The subject site is located approximately 14 kilometres (9 miles) east of Barnsley, 11 kilometres (7 miles) north of Rotherham and 16 kilometres (10 miles) west of Doncaster. The site is on the south eastern side of the town, which itself is close to the A635 which links the A1(M) at Junction 37 to the centre of Barnsley, and the M1 beyond at Junction 37. The town is located close to the A6195 / A635 Dearne Valley Parkway – the main focus for new development in the area – albeit access is only available through Goldthorpe.
- 2.2 The existing premises are located on Lowfield Road, off the B6098 – the main road running through the centre of the town – and close to Bolton-upon-Dearne railway station. The subject site is bounded by an open field to the north, residential uses (traditional and some modern developments) to the north and east, farmland to the east, a sewage works to the south and a railway line to the west. In addition, there is an electricity sub-station to the north west of the site.



Figure 2.1 – Access to the subject site from Lowfields Road and the Railway Bridge

- 2.3 The site is located across a narrow railway bridge, which also provides access to the various residential developments east of the railway line. The site is accessed directly from a single access point on to Lowfields Road.
- 2.4 The access and servicing arrangements are considered to be poor by modern standards. Units of this type were built in a time when occupiers were able to serve and sustain a truly local market and using much smaller vehicles to a far lesser intensity than those used today. In today's market, those situations are the exception rather than the norm. In reality, the access arrangements would be a major detraction of the site. Industrial occupiers never like to be drawn from major roads through residential areas as this almost certainly leads to neighbourly disputes.
- 2.5 The route on to the site over the narrow and steep railway bridge is impractical for large HGVs and there have been numerous complaints from local residents in the past concerning large vehicles over-sailing residential pavements in order to be able to gain access to the site. Indeed, part of the site (the modern block to the east) has a planning restriction attached to it

restricting its use to ancillary storage only, demonstrating the Local Authority's concerns about the industrial processes on the site disrupting the residential amenity of the neighbouring housing developments.

2.6 A location plan is provided at **Appendix 1**.

Description

2.7 The site was originally used as a clothing manufacturing production plant, however from 1974 to 2005, it was occupied by a flat-pack furniture manufacturer – Addspace, trading as Coltran. Coltran went into receivership in 2004 and the business sold as a going concern, although remaining in occupation of the subject site, but at a very low rent and on a licence. The site was marketed by property agents GVA Grimley from May 2004 onwards, with no significant interest coming from potential industrial / manufacturing occupiers.

2.8 The site extends to approximately 5.3 hectares (13.1 acres)¹ and comprises two blocks of buildings; one a north light roofed block with a more modern extension and a recently constructed warehouse unit to the east of the site. Whilst, for the purposes of producing this report, we have not undertaken detailed measurements of these properties, we understand that the north light block (including the extension) is some 12,108 m² (130,332 sq.ft.) and the modern warehouse block is 2,455 m² (26,432 sq.ft.). The south area of the site is open fields, between the main industrial buildings and the sewage works.

2.9 The various buildings appear to have been extended from the original north light block over a period of time and it is likely that the site evolved to serve the needs of a single individual occupier of the whole site, who had the buildings constructed to form a bespoke working environment over time. The buildings are, however, configured in a way which is not conducive to modern working practices and do not have sufficient eaves height to be of interest to a modern industrial occupier.

2.10 The north light block roofed block is steel framed construction with brick walls and partial profiled aluminium cladding at roof level and asbestos tiled roofs. Although internal inspection was not possible on the date of our site visit, we understand that this building includes primarily warehouse / manufacturing space with some ancillary office accommodation. The block includes a number of steel framed warehouse extensions which appear to have been added over time to provide bespoke premises for a single user. According to the previous property marketing particulars, the production area within this block has eaves height of 3.37 metres (11 feet). (This building was originally used for the manufacturing of clothing although in later years was used as a flat-pack furniture manufacturing factory.)

2.11 The north light block has been extended to the west with various steel framed extensions, which form a series of loading bays at the north elevation and additional warehouse space. Whilst at the north elevation, the eaves height is higher than the north light block, the loading bay doors are narrow and low, which would negate any benefit of the additional

¹ This area has been taken from the GVA Grimley marketing particulars dated May 2004 and does not represent a physical measurement undertaken by Donaldsons

height for potential occupiers. Furthermore, only the front section (perhaps only a few metres) of this block are of a similar eaves height, with the warehousing at the rear reverting back to eaves heights similar to that of the north light block, again damaging its desirability to occupiers. This is illustrated overleaf.



Figure 2.2 – Extension block to west of North Light Block

- 2.12 In addition, because of the shape of the site and its position immediately adjacent to the railway line, these extended blocks taper away with the site boundary creating a highly bespoke, awkward and inflexible space.
- 2.13 The modern block to the east of the site is also of steel framed construction with partial brick and partial profiled aluminium cladding. Internally the building provides two bays of open space accessed by separate (but relatively narrow) roller shutter doors. According to the property marketing particulars, the building has an eaves height of 6.58 metres (21 feet 6 inches). We understand that this building was constructed circa 2000 but has a planning restriction on it because of concern over potential disruption to residential amenity. This restriction dictates that it may only be used as ancillary storage to the main buildings on the site. This severely restricts the usefulness of this property, significantly reduces its value and damages its marketability to potential occupiers. It is unlikely, given this restriction on its use, that this building could be marketed separately from the other buildings on the site.
- 2.14 When the subject property was originally marketed in 2004, it also included a timber framed block which was some 657 m² (7,071 sq.ft.). We understand that this included a kitchen and canteen area and some office accommodation. Since this time however, there has been a fire at the premises and this block has been completely destroyed.



Figure 2.3 – Location of fire damaged / destroyed timber framed building

- 2.15 In addition to the destruction caused by the fire in the timber framed building, part of the north light block has also been severely affected. Indeed, much of the front (north) elevation of the building has been completely destroyed, with the steel frame structure and the security of the building both becoming compromised. The current state of the front elevation of this building is highly detrimental to the environmental quality of the site and the surrounding area.



Figure 2.4 – Fire Damage to front elevation of north light block

- 2.16 Surrounding the buildings on site are various sections of rough tarmacadam, parts of which have become overgrown with vegetation, as have some of the adjoining landscaped areas. The site is generally in a poor condition visually speaking, is strewn with rubbish / litter and debris from the fire / various fires / vandalism. This detracts from the quality of the environment, not only of the subject site, but also of the surrounding residential properties.
- 2.17 A site plan has been provided at **Appendix 2**, whilst various additional photographs of the site have been included at **Appendix 3**.
- 2.18 In summary, the north light block (including extensions) is beyond its useful economic life and the modern warehouse building has restricted use which is severely detrimental in terms of its worth to potential occupiers of the site.
- Potential for Refurbishment**
- 2.19 The buildings are in a poor state of repair with the north light block and various extensions being outmoded and beyond their useful economic life, or requiring substantial refurbishment before becoming capable of occupation. The north light block has suffered from extensive fire damage to the front elevation which would need to be demolished and rebuilt.
- 2.20 The configuration of the buildings and the size and scale of the north light block – which has evolved organically to form bespoke premises for a single occupier – are not conducive to attracting modern industrial occupiers.

- 2.21 We have undertaken a development appraisal which considers the possibility of refurbishment of the subject premises. We have assumed a rental of £37.67 per m² (£3.50 per sq.ft.) on the refurbished accommodation and £16.15 per m² (£1.50 per sq.ft.) on the ancillary storage warehouse, at a yield of 8% based on our experience of the second hand market. Ultimately refurbished property commands lower rentals than new build as it suffers from in-built obsolescence. In this case, the low eaves height and inflexible space / poor configuration are particular restrictions. This produces a gross development value of £6,197,025.
- 2.22 From discussions we have had with Donaldsons' Building and Project Consultancy team, we consider that to fully refurbish the north light building (with associated extensions) would cost in the region of £377 per m² (£35 per sq.ft.), depending upon the full extent of works, plus professional fees. In addition, it is considered that to demolish the fire damaged section would cost in the region of £50,000 and to rebuild it would cost approximately £538 per m² (£50 per sq.ft.). As noted previously, we understand that the floor area of this block is 12,108 m² (130,332 sq.ft.). We have estimated (using ProMap) that the fire damaged area to the front elevation accounts for approximately 465 m² (5,000 sq.ft.), and have costed this separately in terms of demolition and re-build of this section.
- 2.23 Incorporating all other costs such as finance costs, survey and planning costs, site acquisition costs, promotion, external works etc. produces a negative net residual value of - **£1,122,829**.
- 2.24 We have included a site value of £655,000 which is considered to be low (equating to £123,555 per hectare or £50,000 per acre), although it is clear that, even if a land value is excluded, the net residual is still negative (- £347,430). This, of course, ignores the fact that a developer would seek to achieve a minimum return of 15% of the total capital expended (ie. 15% return on costs).
- 2.25 Prevailing rental values in the area versus the costs associated with undertaking refurbishment are simply insufficient to render refurbishment viable.
- Potential for Redevelopment**
- 2.26 Realising that refurbishment of the premises is not viable, we have considered the possibility of redeveloping the site.
- 2.27 Despite the obvious lack of a market for the end product, it is simply the case that rental levels would not underpin the cost of development. We have undertaken a development appraisal allowing a rental of £45.75 per m² (£4.25 per sq.ft.) and a yield of 7.5%. We have assumed a site coverage and floor area similar to the existing buildings although it is assumed that this would be developed as a single, flexible, open warehouse / manufacturing floorplate to a modern specification, with suitable eaves height etc, and that additional space would be provided at the north end of the site for loading, service yard space etc.
- 2.28 Assuming a build cost of £484.39 per m² (£45 per sq.ft.), the development shows a negative net residual of - **£3,028,815**.

2.29 As with the development appraisal for refurbishing the premises, we have assumed a site value of £655,000, although even if this is excluded, the scheme is still not viable with a negative net residual of - £2,240,815. Again, this also ignores a developer's profit which would be required in addition.

2.30 Clearly, therefore, a redevelopment of the site is not feasible either.

Neighbourly Issues

2.31 Access to the Dearne Valley Parkway (A635) is via the town centre and through Goldthorpe along the B6098, which is of a residential size and scale. The road suffers from heavy traffic and car parking to both sides which would restrict manoeuvrability for larger vehicles. There is also a height restricted bridge which would affect the viability of accessing the site with large HGVs from the north.



Figure 2.3 – Congestion along the B6098

2.32 Access to the subject site is possible from the south, also travelling along the B6098 (again through dense residential areas) but connecting to the A6023 at the Manvers Roundabout, and back to the A6195. From this direction however, there are two restricted height railway bridges to pass under which, again, conflicts with the need for large HGV vehicles to gain access to the subject site.

2.33 The areas immediately surrounding the subject premises (indeed, both east and west of the railway line) are residential in nature with evidence of modern housing development along Lowfields Road itself, close to the subject site. Generally speaking, gaining access to premises through dense residential areas is not desirable for industrial occupiers because of the potential conflicts that this can lead to with local residents caused by large vehicles moving in and around dwelling houses. In addition, the subject site is located some distance from the national road network which again detracts from its desirability, especially compared to the abundance of alternative sites / premises available in and around the Manvers area and off the Dearne Valley Parkway.

2.34 In addition, the location of the site is distinct from the main route through the town centre, being located on the east side of Lowfields Road, hidden behind an existing residential estate and separated by the railway line. This reduces the profile and visibility of the site, which is important to potential occupiers.

- 2.35 Furthermore, the site is accessed via a narrow and relatively steep bridge which would limit the type of vehicle that could travel over it. This clearly impacts upon and restricts the type of operation for which the site could be used as occupiers will seek premises which have unrestricted and simple access. Furthermore, there have been serious problems historically with lorries turning on to the site and over-sailing residential pavements because of the extremely tight access from Lowfields Road.



Figure 2.4 – View looking east up to railway bridge

- 2.36 There is evidence in the town of changes of use being granted on sites previously identified by the local authority as employment sites. The former timber yard adjacent to the railway station has been fully developed out as a housing scheme in recent years and this site was formerly a designated employment land site under the Barnsley UDP. A further site on Carr Head Lane, which again was designated for employment uses under the Barnsley UDP, has also been developed by Barratt Homes to form their Pennyfields scheme.
- 2.37 Whilst the modern warehouse building to the east of the site is in reasonably good condition, it was constructed in 2000 subject to strict planning restrictions which limit its use to being that of ancillary storage only to the existing industrial premises. We understand from previous investigations undertaken by Donaldsons on this site, that this is because numerous residents complained that the existing industrial processes forced them to keep their windows closed during summer months because of noise and dust, and that further increased intensification of such processes, or indeed independent use, would worsen the problems. This planning restriction clearly impacts upon the building's usefulness (and value) to potential occupiers. It also demonstrates that the Planning Authority has significant concerns about the industrial operations being carried out on this site.
- 2.38 Because of the historic problems associated with industrial / manufacturing processes on site, this would be likely to rule out occupiers whose operations are noisy or cause vibration as such activity would transmit through to the neighbouring residential properties. This is also likely to reduce further the viability of demolishing the existing buildings and redeveloping the site for employment uses.
- 2.39 We consider that the subject site is very unlikely to be of interest to potential tenants seeking to occupy the whole because of the fact that the building has evolved to form such a bespoke

unit, rather than providing a flexible, open space which would appeal to occupiers. The low eaves height is a particular restriction to many potential occupiers.

2.40 It is possible that the buildings on-site could be sub-divided into smaller units and let or sold to individual businesses as workshop / starter units, with limited individual yard space / loading areas, shared access. It is highly unlikely, however, that this would be a long-term, sustainable solution as most businesses of this type prefer to have self contained (preferably freehold) units with their own yard space and service areas rather than poor quality, refurbished space with shared facilities / amenities. Furthermore, the planning condition imposed on the modern warehouse would create additional difficulties.

2.41 We consider that demand for this type of space would be low, with a high turnover of tenants and relatively low rents also leading to lack of interest from investors. Furthermore, we have already identified that refurbishing the property as a single unit is not financially viable in terms of the likely returns available, and to sub-divide the buildings would simply increase build costs further.

Live-work accommodation

2.42 We have specifically been asked to comment on demand for live/work space/mixed use development. We believe that the market for live/work space is extremely limited. It is also difficult to define in terms of what actually constitutes live/work accommodation. It can be viewed as anything from a standard house with a larger room capable of office use through bigger units with B1/B2 space integrated.

2.43 The purpose of this type of accommodation is to promote business start-ups and growth of new businesses. It is however our opinion that such accommodation is better suited to areas where access to other complimentary services and business support exists. Accommodation of this nature is been delivered elsewhere in the Country particularly in London and generally attracts businesses in the arts, media and culture industries.

2.44 It is our opinion that this area would be unlikely to receive any demand for this type of accommodation.

3 Quantitative Analysis of Available Employment Premises

- 3.1 In order to assess the amount and type of vacant and available premises on the market in Bolton-upon-Dearne and the surrounding area, we have spoken with local and national property agents and obtained details of all properties on the market as at March 2006. We have also cross-referenced this with Local Authority published property register data (Barnsley and Rotherham) to identify all available premises within the drive to work catchment. **(At the time of producing this report, Doncaster MBC is currently updating its Property Register. Once this has been received, we will update our analysis accordingly).** This, by its very nature, cannot be a totally comprehensive list of all the properties on the market at this date, however provides an indicative snapshot of the market at this time, from which we can draw conclusions.
- 3.2 As at March 2006, the key property agents and Local Authorities listed a total number of 247 industrial premises available to let or for sale on the market in and around Bolton-upon-Dearne. This represents some 904,218 m² (9,711,376 sq.ft.) of vacant and available floorspace within the drive to work catchment.

Size Band (sq.ft)	Size Band (sq.m)	Total no. of properties	Total Floorspace (sq.ft)	Total Floorspace (sq.m)	Percentage of Total Floorspace	Percentage of Total properties
0 - 2,499 sq.ft	0 - 232	73	79,183	7,356	0.82%	29.55%
2,500 - 4,999 sq.ft	232 - 464	30	107,399	9,978	1.11%	12.15%
5,000 - 9,999 sq.ft	464 - 929	56	389,080	36,147	4.01%	22.67%
10,000 - 19,999 sq.ft	929 - 1,858	21	283,757	26,362	2.92%	8.50%
Over 20,000 sq.ft	Over 1,858	67	8,853,984	822,563	91.15%	27.13%
Total		247	9,713,403	902,406	100.00%	100.00%

Analysis by Band

- 3.3 When analysing the available premises, it is possible to split these into size bands in order to assess the availability (and hence supply) of varied sizes of industrial premises in the area.
- 3.4 For the purposes of this analysis, the available premises have been split into the following five size bands: 0 – 2,499 sq.ft., 2,500 – 4,999 sq.ft., 5,000 – 9,999 sq.ft., 10,000 – 19,999 sq.ft and Over 20,000 sq.ft. In order to comply with RICS metrification regulations however, we have provided this information converted into metres squared and used the following adapted size bands: 0 – 232m², 232 – 64 m², 464 – 929 m², 929 – 1,859m² and Over 1,859m².
- 0 – 2,499 sq.ft.**
- 3.5 In this size band there are currently 73 properties on the market, representing approximately 29.6% of the total properties available. As one would expect, given the small size of the units in this size band (and indeed in the 2,500 – 4,999) relative to larger stock in the market,

vacant floorspace in this size band represents less than 1% of the total vacant floorspace in the area.

- 3.6 Within this size band, there are two units on the market at Goldthorpe Industrial Estate (one of 186 m² or 2,002 sq.ft and the other of 93m² or 1,001 sq.ft.) at rents of around £48 to £59 per m² (£4.50 to £5.50 per sq.ft). There are also 3 units on the market within this size band at Thurnscoe Industrial Estate. Other small workshop units are available in Wath upon Dearne (managed by Rotherham Enterprise Agency) of circa 28 m² (300 sq.ft.) are available at rents of around £56 per m² (£5.20 per sq.ft.). There are two available units at Manvers, one at Express Park and one at Fairfield Park. Rents in this location are in the region of £48 to £54 per m² (£4.50 to £5.00 per sq.ft.)
- 3.7 Other vacant space is available at a number of established industrial estates around the region at locations such as Monk Bretton, Stairfoot, Brampton, Swinton, in addition to vacant space in more central locations with Rotherham and Barnsley, in particular.

2,500 – 4,999 sq.ft.

- 3.8 30 units (accounting for around 12.2% of the total stock of properties) are vacant and available in the 2,500 – 4,999 sq.ft. size band. Similarly to the 0 – 2,499 sq.ft. size band, the total floorspace represents a low proportion of the total – just over 1%.
- 3.9 One unit is on the market at Wath West Industrial Estate in Wath-upon-Deerne at an asking rent equating to £32.75 per m² (£3.04 per sq.ft.). Several units in this size band are available at Maple Park in Tankersley, a location which benefits from far superior access to the national road network than the subject site. Available units here range in size from 232 to 395 m² (2,500 to 4,250 sq.ft.) Units at Wharncliffe Business Park are available, all at asking rents of £53 per m² (£4.95 per sq.ft.).
- 3.10 Space is also available at Denaby Lane Industrial Estate, Todwick Road Industrial Estate in Dinnington, Adwick Park in the Dearne Valley Enterprise Zone, Swinton Bridge Industrial Estate and Aven Industrial Estate in Maltby. Rents range from around £32.30 to £48.45 per m² (£3.00 to £4.50 per sq.ft.).

5,000 – 9,999 sq.ft.

- 3.11 There are currently 56 units (or 22.7% of the total number of properties) vacant and available in the 5,000 – 9,999 sq.ft. size band which account for some 36,147 m² (389,080 sq.ft.) of floorspace or 4% of the total floorspace in the area.
- 3.12 There are several units within this size band available at Shortwood Business Park, just off the Dearne Valley Parkway and close to the M1 at Junction 36. Properties here (which are of a modern specification and form hybrid units) are available at rents of approximately £69.50 per m² (£6.46 per sq.ft.). Further modern space is also available at Wharncliffe Business Park with several new industrial units available at rents equating to £51 per m² (£4.75 per sq.ft.).
- 3.13 There are numerous units available on established industrial estates in and around the Rotherham area. Space is available on Eastwood Trading Estate and around the Parkgate area

at rents equating to around £43 per m² (£4.00 per sq.ft.), whilst other space at Barbot Hall Industrial Estate is available at rents equating to around £53.80 to £64.50 per m² (£5.00 to £6.00 per sq.ft.). Several other units are available around the Wheatley Hall Road area of Doncaster whilst space in Maltby is available at rents equating to around £32.30 per m² (£3.00 per sq.ft.)

10,000 – 19,999 sq.ft.

- 3.14 21 units (or 8.5% of the total stock) are vacant and available in the 10,000 – 19,999 sq.ft. size band. This accounts for some 26,362 m² (283,757 sq.ft.) of floorspace within the area or 2.9% of the total available floorspace.
- 3.15 One unit is available in this size band at Goldthorpe Industrial Estate at a rent equating to £43 per m² (£4.00 per sq.ft.) whilst a further 1,512 m² (16,280 sq.ft.) warehouse is currently on the market in Wombwell. Three new, high specification units at Houndhill Park in the Manvers area are currently being marketed at rents equating to around £48.45 to £53.80 per m² (£4.50 to £5.00 per sq.ft.). Also in the Dearne Valley, plot 5 at Ashroyd Park is also being marketed which will provide a unit of 929 m² (10,000 sq.ft.).
- 3.16 Units 1&2, Mangham Way at Barbot Hall Industrial Estate in Rotherham – a 1,843 m² (19,837 sq.ft.) industrial unit – is currently up for sale, whilst space is also available at various units in and around Barnsley, in particular at Monk Bretton and on Claycliffe Road.
- 3.17 Various units are on the market at Wharnccliffe Business Park whilst additional space within this size band is also currently being marketed at Grange Lane Industrial Estate and at Houghton Main. One unit at Shortwood Business Park is also available at a rent equating to £53.80 per m² (£5.00 per sq.ft.).

Over 20,000 sq.ft.

- 3.18 There are 67 available properties in the Over 20,000 sq.ft. size band (which directly compete with subject site). This represents around 27% of the total number of vacant premises in the area but, however, accounts for over 91% of the total floorspace available.
- 3.19 One unit within this size band is currently being marketed at Goldthorpe Industrial Estate. The unit, which is 3,947 m² (42,484 sq.ft.) is available at an asking rent equating to £43 per m² (£4.00 per sq.ft.).
- 3.20 In close proximity to the subject site, however benefiting from far superior access, is the Midas development at Fields End Business Park at Goldthorpe. This 6,223 m² (67,091 sq.ft.) production unit is currently on the market at a rent equating to £48.45 per m² (£4.50 per sq.ft.). A further 3,716 m² (40,000 sq.ft.) unit is also being marketed at Fields End Business Park at similar rental levels. A 16,351 m² (176,000 sq.ft.) production unit is currently being marketed at Brookfield Park in the Manvers area. This unit is on the market for a rent equating to £53.80 per m² (£5.00 per sq.ft.) Space is currently being marketed at Houndhill Park, also in the Manvers area, at similar rental levels, and several units are being marketed at Adwick Park at £48.45 per m² (£4.50 per sq.ft.). Units are being marketed at Ashroyd Business Park, is located immediately adjacent to the Dearne Valley Parkway.

3.21 Clearly there has been (and continues to be) significant development in the immediate vicinity of the subject premises, in particular within this size band which is in direct competition. As noted previously however, it is not financially viable to refurbish the subject premises, a fact which is compounded by its inferior location to the vast quantity of competing sites / premises.

3.22 Other space available in this size band includes space at Tankersley (Wentworth Business Park) which is on the market at rents in the region of £37.70 per m² (£3.50 per sq.ft.), various units in Wombwell and Swinton, vacant space to the north of Rotherham town centre available at rents of circa £43 per m² (£4.00 per sq.ft.) and units around Doncaster at rents ranging from around £43 to £48.45 per m² (£4.00 to £4.50 per sq.ft.).

Conclusion

The Dearne Valley has experienced significant investment in recent years, largely due to its Enterprise Zone status from 1995 to 2005. This has led to significant infrastructure improvements, such as the Dearne Valley Parkway, and has, through financial incentives to developers, encouraged the development of large scale developments along the Parkway and in the Manvers area. Previous incentives for occupiers, such as being free from Business Rates, have encouraged occupiers to the area, however this has been focussed upon those sites / areas which have the best access to the national transport networks. Clearly, the subject site, which is not within the Dearne Valley Enterprise Zone, is far inferior to these development in terms of its location, hidden within a predominantly residential area and remote from the national road network, and also its poor and outmoded specification. Indeed, this has been reflected in the lack of demand to occupy the space in the period within which it has been marketed in the recent past.

3.23 From our discussions with local agents, it is apparent that local demand for premises in the area is predominantly for units far smaller than the subject premises. Demand of this kind is largely satisfied by the existing employment sites at Goldthorpe, Thurnscoe, Wath, Mexborough etc, whilst it is considered that there is also considerable vacant space in the Barnsley / Rotherham / Doncaster town and peripheral town centre industrial estates. Larger occupiers seeking bigger premises in the area are highly unlikely to consider the subject premises given the vast quantity of new, more modern specification and highly accessible property that has been, or is being, constructed along the Dearne Valley Parkway and in the Manvers area. Again, there is also a high quantity of vacant space in and around Barnsley and Rotherham, which have vastly superior access in terms of their proximity to the M1, and Doncaster, which is strategically positioned between the A1 and the M18.

3.24 In summary, there is a considerable amount of vacant industrial space within a short distance of the subject premises which has superior access to the national road networks, is remote from residential areas, is far less bespoke in terms of configuration and is of a specification and state of repair which is far more attractive to potential occupiers. Ultimately, the subject premises are beyond their useful economic life and are highly unattractive to occupiers relative to other premises available in both the immediate vicinity and the wider district.

4 Supply of Employment Land

- 4.1 The Barnsley Local Development Framework (LDF) Annual Monitoring Report (November 2005) identifies that by April 2005, 125.9 hectares (311 acres) of land designated as employment development proposal in the UDP had been developed.
- 4.2 Over the period since the Barnsley UDP was first adopted (December 2000), this implies an average annual take-up of employment land over this time of 27.9 hectares (68.9 acres) per annum. Barnsley MBC has stated, however, that some of this take up could pre-date the adoption of the UDP (December 2000), although it is not able to determine precisely how much.
- 4.3 The Annual Monitoring Report also goes on to identify a further 258 hectares (637 acres) of both UDP-designated land and non-UDP-designated land available for development in the region. This is broken down as follows:

Employment Land type	Hectares	Acres	% of total
Development programmed, end user secured / speculative development	3.43	8.48	1%
Housing permission granted	5.51	13.62	2%
Prepared and available	44.29	109.45	17%
Prepared, available and actively marketed	43.03	106.32	17%
Ownership issues (some vacant sites not accessible due to other parcels of land restricting access, other vacant sites held back speculatively by owners or for owner's use)	50.84	125.63	20%
Site preparation programmed and funded	39.97	98.77	16%
Site preparation required but not funded / programmed	51.39	126.99	20%
Development under construction	19.29	47.67	7%
Total Employment Land	257.75	636.92	100%

Source: Barnsley LDF Annual Monitoring Report, November 2005

- 4.4 Discounting 5.51 hectares (13.62 acres) of employment land where planning consent has been granted for a change of use to residential, there is, therefore some 252 hectares (623 acres) of employment land in the region. As previously referred to, the subject site is some 5.3 hectares (13.1 acres), an extremely small percentage of the total employment land available.
- 4.5 Assuming an average annual take-up of 27.9 hectares (68.9 acres) per annum, this implies a supply of land for the district, assuming current rates of take-up, of approximately 9 years (although, this is a worst case scenario as the average annual take up is likely to be lower, given the likelihood that some of the 125.9 hectares were taken up prior to December 2000).

- 4.6 The above, of course, only considers the Barnsley district and fails to take into account of both the Rotherham and Doncaster districts, both of which are in immediate proximity to the subject site. Given that both districts are located well within the travel to work radius of Bolton-upon-Dearne, it would be unrealistic to not consider the supply of employment land in both areas.
- 4.7 Doncaster MBC has a total of 261 hectares (645 acres) of employment land within its boundary and has an average take up of 14 hectares (35.6 acres) per annum from the period 1996 to 2005. This implies a total supply of land in Doncaster of approximately 18.5 years, at current rates of take-up.
- 4.8 According to figures produced in 2005 by Rotherham MBC, the borough had a total of 330.5 hectares (817 acres) of employment land and an identified average take-up of 17.7 hectares (43.7 acres) per annum. Discounting for the assumed take-up which would have occurred in 2005, this implies that Rotherham has a total of 18 years' supply of employment land, at current rates of take-up.

Local Authority	Total remaining Employment Land (ha)	Average Annual take-up (ha)	Total supply (in years)
Barnsley	252	27.9	9.0
Rotherham	331	17.7	18.7
Doncaster	261	14	18.6
TOTAL IN REGION	844	hectares	

- 4.9 Total supply of employment land within the region of the subject site, therefore, is approximately 844 hectares (2,086 acres). Given that the subject site is only 5.3 hectares out of this total, and hence a tiny percentage, changing the use of the subject site will not be of any detriment to the local economy or the objectives of the Barnsley UDP.

5 Conclusion

5.1 In conclusion, in this Planning Support Statement we have demonstrated that:-

- The subject site in its current state of repair is beyond its useful economic life and detracts from the quality of environment of the surrounding residential premises;
- The buildings on site are highly bespoke, inflexible and of poor specification compared to alternative, modern industrial buildings. In particular, the low eaves height is likely to deter many occupiers.
- The location of the site is significantly inferior to other sites in the locality which benefit from enhanced access to the local and national road networks;
- The cost of refurbishment would outweigh the value of the property in its present use and is not economically viable;
- Redevelopment of the site for employment use would not be viable, in terms of cost versus value, the profile of the site and its setting adjacent to other residential uses;
- Demand in the area has come from a number of large-scale occupiers who have taken space in the Manvers area and at the various business parks / locations along the Dearne Valley Parkway. These sites benefit from far superior access to the national road networks and have been developed as large, modern warehouse / manufacturing developments which are eminently more attractive to such occupiers.
- The Barnsley UDP allocates a sufficient supply of land for approximately 11 years, and the removal of this site, which represents a very small percentage of the total employment land available, will not affect this strategy.
- Furthermore, the site is located in immediate proximity to the Rotherham and Doncaster boroughs, both of which have significant supplies of employment land (Rotherham 331 hectares, Doncaster 261 hectares) which must also be considered given the potential drive to work radius from Bolton upon Dearne.

Signed:



Date: 13 June 2006

Name: JONATHAN TURNER

Position: ASSOCIATE

For and on behalf of Donaldsons LLP

St Paul's House
23 Park Square South
Leeds LS1 2ND

APPENDICES

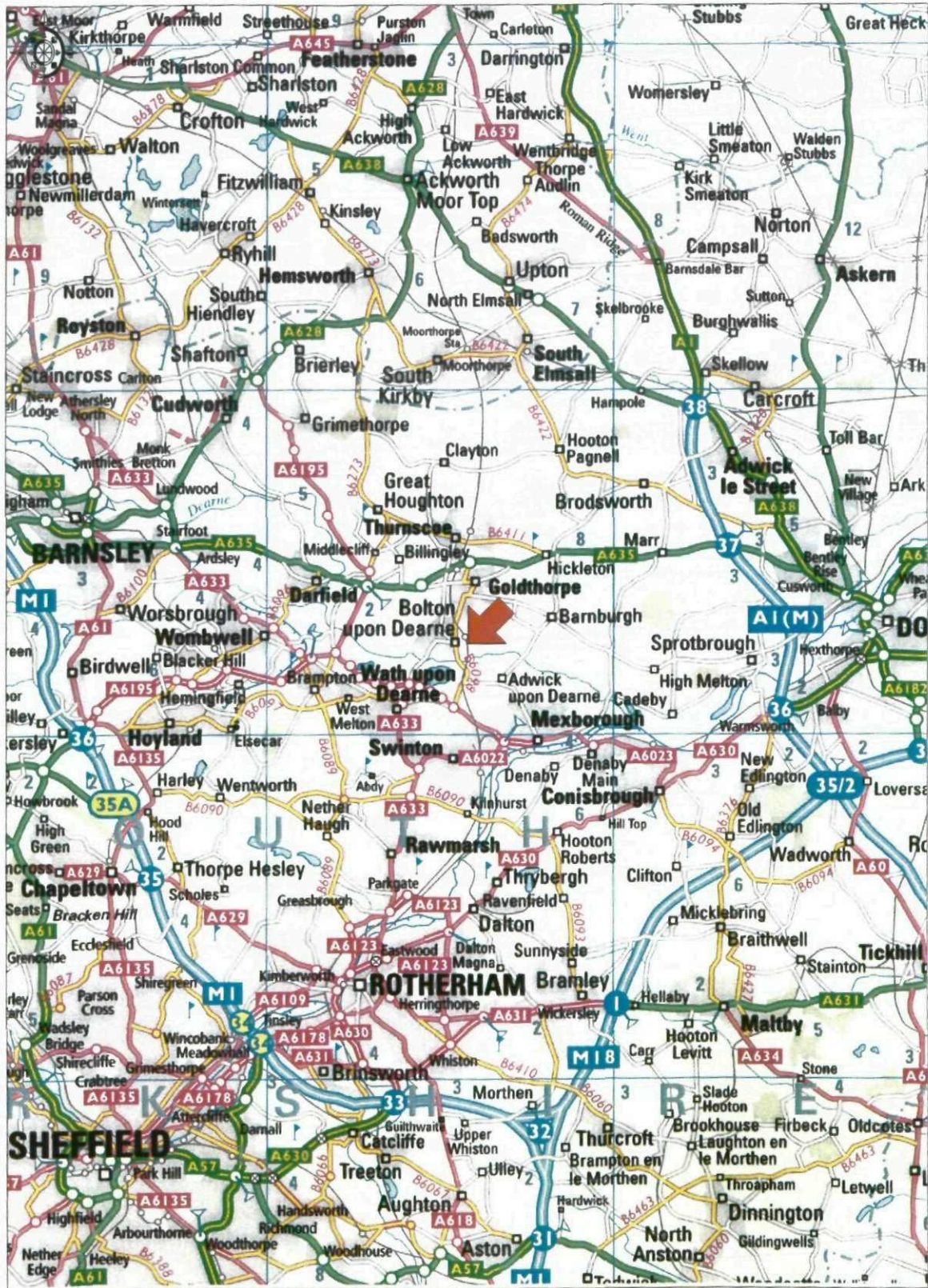
Appendix 1 – Location Plan

Appendix 2 – Site Plan

Appendix 3 – Photographs From Site

Appendix 1 – Location Plan

Lowfields Road, Bolton upon Dearne



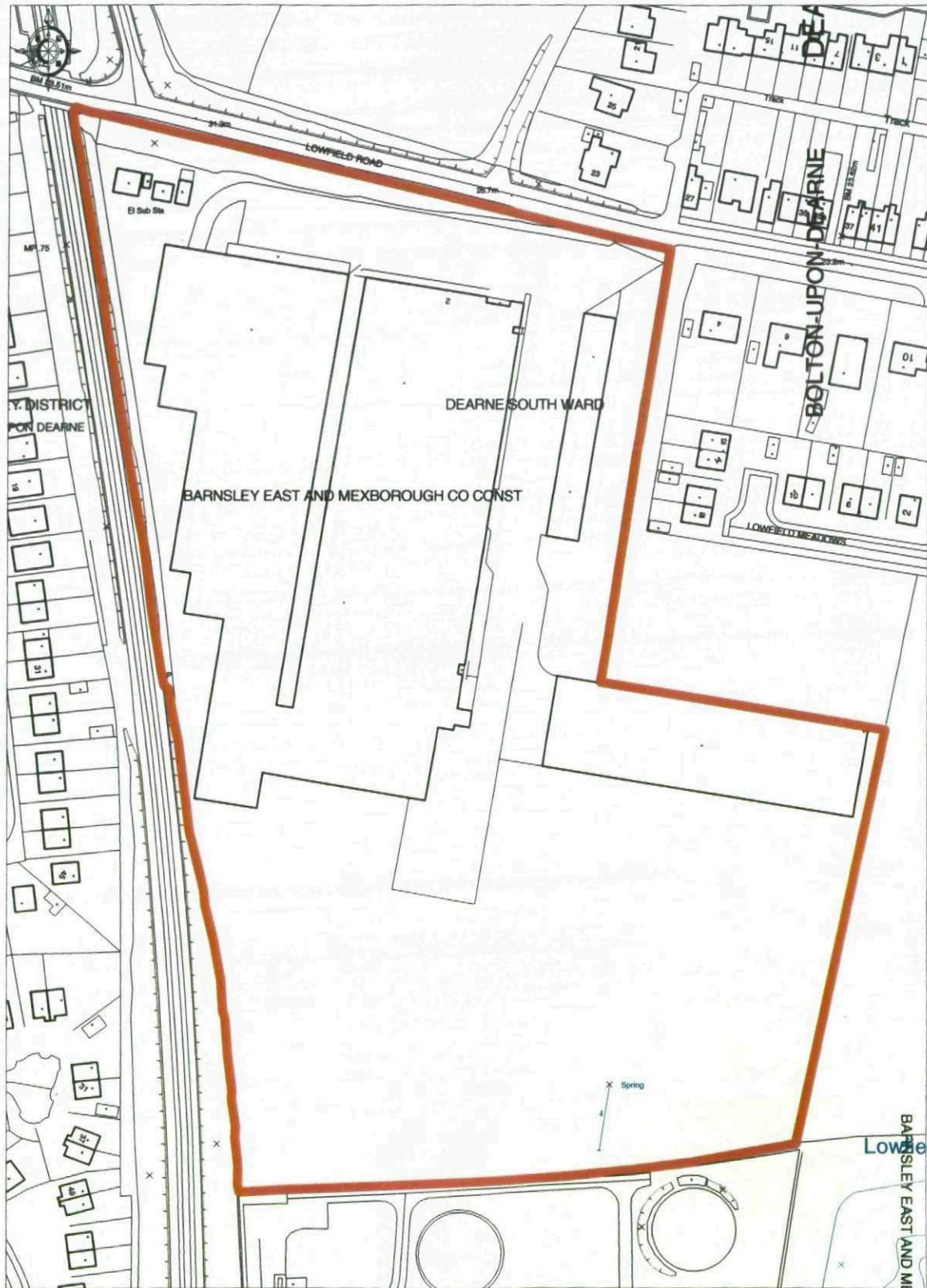
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Appendix 2 – Site Plan

Lowfields Road, Bolton upon Dearne

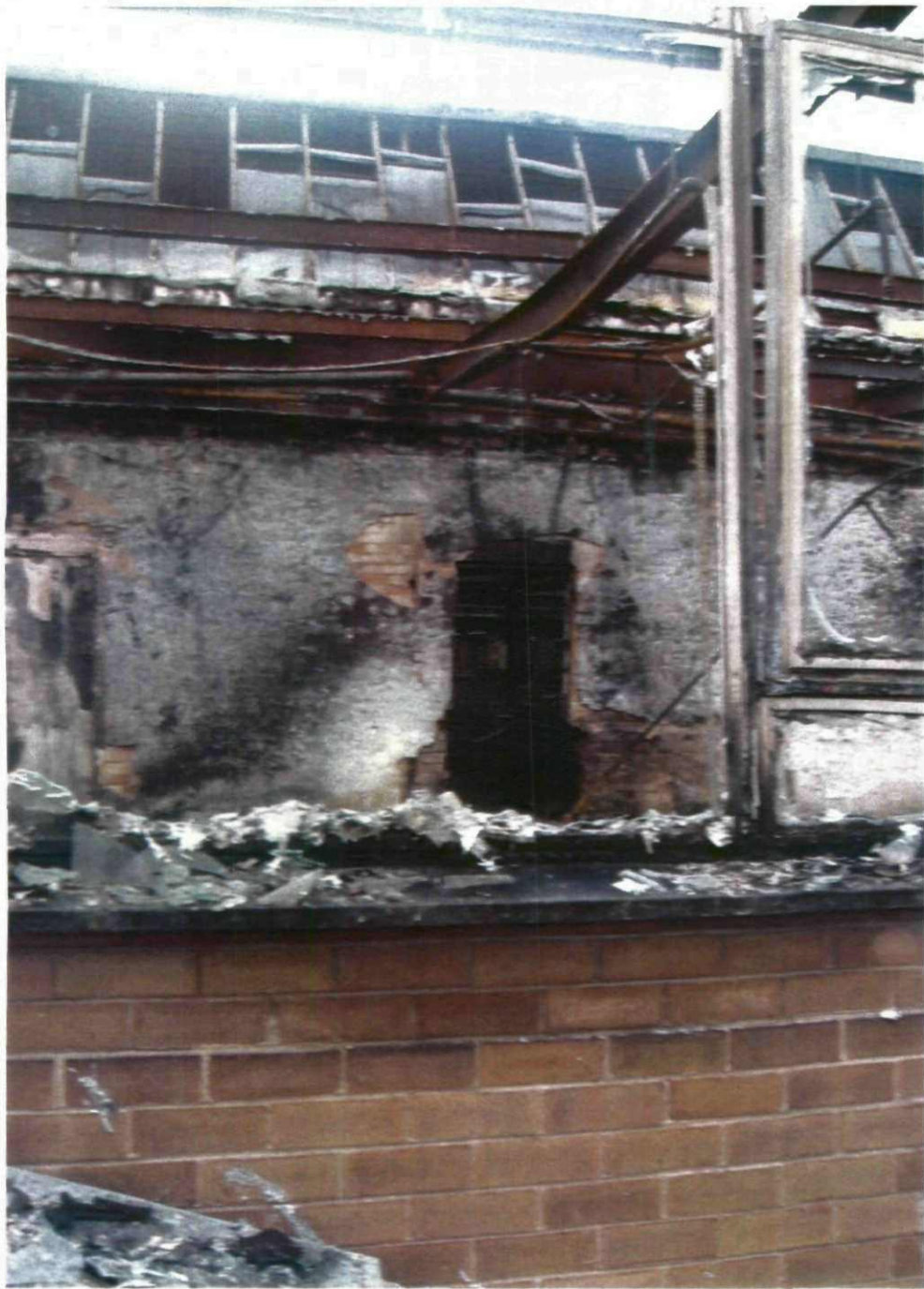


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Appendix 3 – Photographs of the site















Donaldsons LLP
48 Warwick Street, London W1B 5NL
Tel: +44(0)20 7534 5000 Fax: +44(0)20 7434 0045
www.donaldsons.co.uk
enquiries@donaldsons.co.uk

Donaldsons UK Offices

Birmingham

120 Edmund Street,
Birmingham, B3 2ED
Tel: +44 (0)121 212 1090
Fax: +44 (0)121 212 1099

Bristol

Rivergate House, 70 Redcliff Street,
Bristol, BS1 6AL
Tel: +44 (0)117 910 6640
Fax: +44 (0)117 929 8270

Cheltenham

Vittoria House, Vittoria Walk,
Cheltenham, GL50 1TW
Tel: +44 (0)1242 521 102
Fax: +44 (0)1242 221 754

Edinburgh

93 George Street,
Edinburgh, EH2 3ES
Tel: +44 (0)131 243 2558
Fax: +44 (0)131 243 2542

Glasgow

90 St.Vincent Street,
Glasgow, G2 5UQ
Tel: +44 (0)141 221 2871
Fax: +44 (0)141 221 1099

Leeds

St Paul's House, 23 Park Square South,
Leeds, LS1 2ND
Tel: +44 (0)113 246 1161
Fax: +44 (0)113 244 1637

Manchester

Century House, 11 St.Peter's Square,
Manchester, M2 3DN
Tel: +44 (0)161 237 9977
Fax: +44 (0)161 237 3311

and the **Donaldsons europe** network of affiliated companies

