SITE OBSERVATION, APPRAISAL, DESIGN, ACCESS & SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION STATEMENTS

For

PROPOSED EXTENSION TO FLOWER PACKING PLANT

At

HARVEY'S BARN
DAY'S LANE
DONINGTON
LINCOLNSHIRE

For

HORTIC EXPRESS LTD.

PLANNING APPLICATION ISSUE

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Site observation and analysis

Location

The site is located to the west of the junction of Bicker Road (A52) and Days Lane, 1250m north-west of the village of Donington in Lincolnshire (fig. 01). The full extent of the site is indicated on the site location plan within the drawing pack. The site area is stated within the planning application form.

The north boundary of the site is the south edge of Day's Lane (fig. 02 & 03). This is an open boundary. The east boundary runs along a grassed area at a slight angle to the north-west side of the A52. This is again an open boundary. The south boundary divides this site from the adjacent residential property (fig. 04 & 05). This boundary is currently defined by a timber post and rail fence approximately 1m high together with intermittent shrubs and planting. The west boundary is formed by a small drain, again this being an open boundary (fig. 06). The site itself is largely concrete hard-standing and grass (fig. 07). Refer to site plan for exact location of all boundaries.

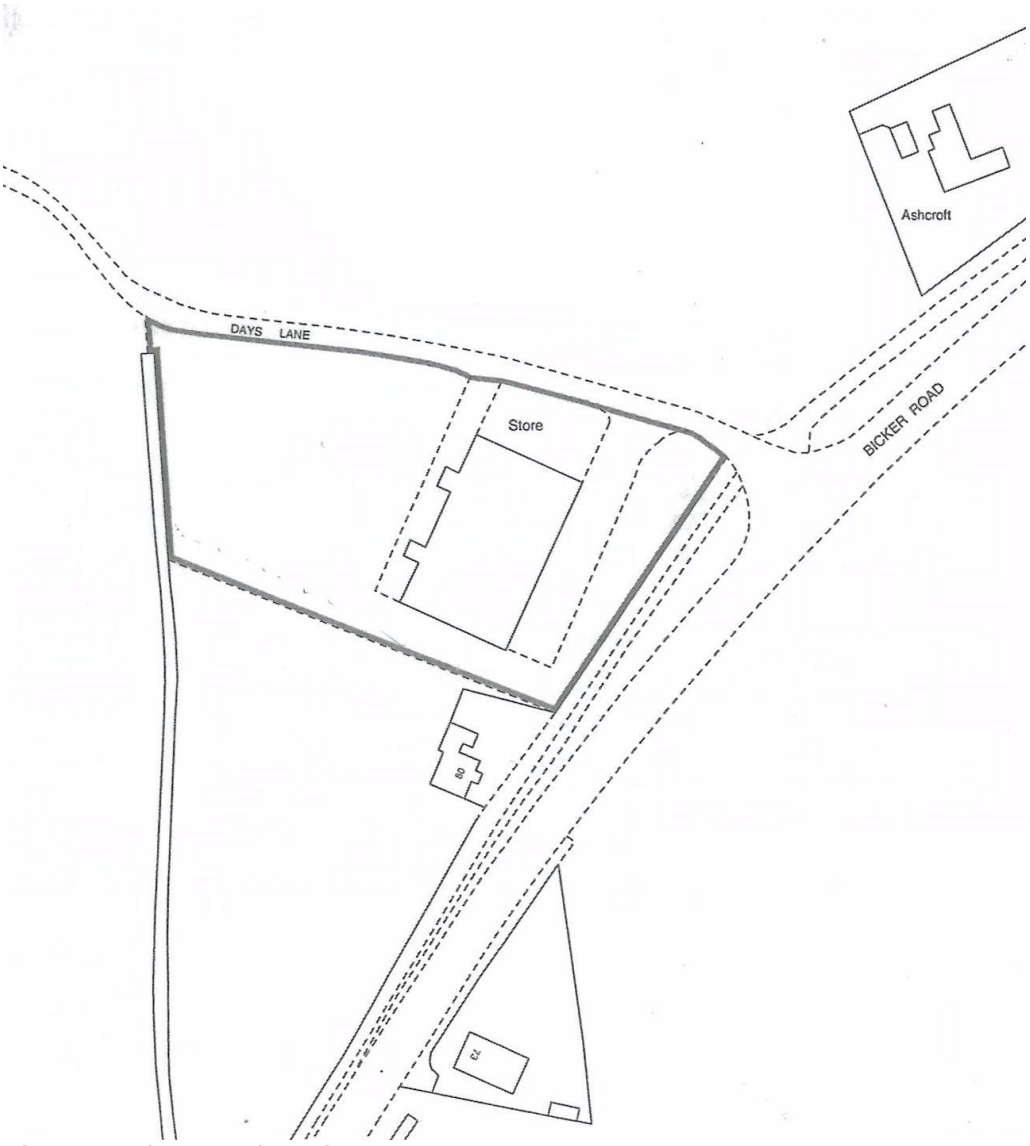


Fig. 01 – Site Location Plan



Fig. 02 – North boundary, east section.



Fig. 03 – North boundary, west section (site on right).



Fig. 04 – South boundary looking east.



Fig. 05 – South boundary looking west.



Fig. 06 – West boundary (drain hidden by tall grass).



Fig. 07 – General view of the site from the west.

Site description

Taking the site as a whole there is built development on the east half. The bulk of the development comprises a large warehouse type building. Before 2011 this was an asbestos clad structure (fig. 08), however the building was then completely reclad and fully refurbished (fig. 09). This has a high central bay with lean-too bays to both sides. The main roof ridge runs east to west.

To the east of the building is a concrete hard-standing and then a grass strip. Within the grass strip there are the remains of two small structures (fig. 10). These were used as display bases for conservatories (the former business for which the site was used prior to 2011).

To the north of the main warehouse is a gravelled area that is used for parking and vehicle circulation (fig. 11). To the west of the warehouse there is a wide concrete apron, then a gravelled area and finally an area of grass. To the south of the warehouse there is a grassed strip with the boundary fence adjacent.



Fig. 08 – The main warehouse before re-cladding (2011)


Fig. 09 – The main warehouse after recladding (2015)


Fig. 10 – Grass strip and temporary structures to the east.


Fig. 11 – Parking area to the north.

Site history

No detailed historical information for the site is available. From its location and appearance it is known that it was originally utilized for agricultural purposes. The building was completely refurbished in 2011 / 2012 and those works revealed redundant heater ducts within the floor and structural reinforcement (in the form of timber sleepers between steel columns) to the lower section of the external wall. This would suggest that the building was used to store grain. No further information is currently available.

Planning History

In 2000, an application was made seeking approval to convert the then agricultural grain store to a plant for the fabrication of windows and conservatories. Approval was granted by SHDC on 08.12.2000 under reference H04-1157-00. The building was then used for this purpose until the resident company went in to administration and vacated the site.

Decisions on subsequent applications for this site were then issued as follows:

H04-0016-02	-	App. for 4no. free standing signs	-	Refused 11.02.02
H04-1238-05	-	App. for cont. use of Potakabins	-	Approved 23.11.06
H04-0821-10	-	App. for cont. use of Portakabins	-	Approved 10.11.10

The first two applications where made by Conservatories and windows direct in connection with their business. The latter was made by Wenman Design Solutions Ltd. following vacation of the site by the former owner.

Hortic Express Ltd purchased the site in 2011 and planning approval for Change of Use from a window fabrication plant to B2 (General Industrial) was granted on 27th July 2011 under SHDC reference H04-0425-11. This approval was implemented shortly after and the building was entirely refurbished and re-clad. The material specification for the external walls was approved under SHDC reference H04-0769-11 on 27th October 2011. There have been no subsequent applications for this site since October 2011.

Aside from the above there is believed to be no other recent planning history.

Infrastructure and vehicle movements

The number of vehicles using Bicker Road is high. This is because this is the A52 (Viking Road) which links the cities of the East Midlands (Derby and Nottingham) with the East Coast (Skegness etc). All vehicle types use this road including a high number of heavy goods vehicles and more locally, vehicles of an agricultural nature. Obviously there are peaks in traffic flow, but there is some use of this road 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The speed limit adjacent this site is such that there is a reasonable amount of traffic noise.

Day's Lane is a minor road which links the A52 with the small village of Northorpe. This is of local interest only and would generally only be known to people with local knowledge. It is a two directional lane, of limited width although it widens considerably in the vicinity of the site (where it joins the A52). Vehicular traffic movements along this lane are obviously considerably less than along the A52.

The rural nature of this location dictates that there is little on-street parking in the vicinity of the site. In general, sites have their own parking.

The site itself has direct vehicular and pedestrian access from Day's Lane at its junction with the A52. In addition there is a footpath to the north side of the A52 which directly passes this site. The site is generally within walking and cycling distance of the village of Donington.

Streetscape / planting

Planting and tree growth in the vicinity of the site is as would be expected within a primarily agricultural area. Tree growth on the site is limited to a small number of semi-mature trees along the eastern frontage. There are further trees on the residential site to the south.

The streetscape is completely open, largely comprising detached buildings within an open, agricultural landscape.

Amenities

Donington is a village within the district with a full range of amenities. A full list is not provided here, although virtually all facilities fall within 1.5 miles of the site and are generally accessible on foot or cycle.

Context - general development

As stated, there are few buildings in the immediate area of the site. There is a house to the south side of the site, but the areas to the immediate north, east and west are open and agricultural in use (cultivated fields).

Architectural context

There is no strong architectural context in the vicinity of this site. The warehouse itself is a timber structure, clad externally with colour-coated profiled metallic sheets (fig. 12). The dwelling to the south is of traditional construction of brick beneath a hipped roof with chimneys to both end walls (fig. 13).



Fig. 12 – The warehouse.



Fig. 13 – The dwelling to the south.

Materials

The warehouse is a structure that is specific to this site and does not relate particularly to anything within its context (due partly to the fact that there is very little built development). The existing cladding material is coloured-coated profiled metal sheet which is a common material for buildings of this type.

As stated, the only other buildings in the vicinity of the site are residential in nature and these are generally distant from the warehouse itself. Their materials of construction are therefore seen as being largely irrelevant. Study beyond these limits would appear to be of little value.

Architectural Features

As with materials, there is limited scope for comment. The exterior of the warehouse was greatly improved in 2011/2012 when the asbestos sheeting was removed and replaced with a modern cladding system. At the time an office suite was introduced and along with this a glazed entrance was provided at the north-east corner. The building is however 'functional' in type and is therefore configured to suit a fairly specific purpose.

Site Appraisal

Details of the site and general context have been recorded and analysed within the site observation and analysis above. From those findings the following statements relative to the site are believed true.

1. The site is very well suited for industrial use and its success in this respect has been proven by Hortic Express Limited thriving as a business here since 2012.

2. Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is good and has proven suitable since 2012.

3. The external appearance of the building was improved dramatically in 2011 / 2012 and now presents a tidy and attractive site.

4. The area to the north-west of the building remains under-utilized and is in an unmaintained condition that benefits neither the site nor the surroundings.

5. The undeveloped land area to the north-west of the building is of significant size and is more than capable of accommodating a large extension to the premises. Any extension located here would be largely concealed from the Bicker Road frontage, it would also be distanced from the residential dwelling to the south.

6. Considering over-shadowing, any extension to the north-west of the existing building would be of no detriment to the neighbouring residential site as this lies due south.

7. From a privacy perspective, any extension to the north-west of the existing building would present no issues as it would not have windows to the south side where the only close neighbour is.

Design Statement

Given the foregoing, the following statements are given to describe the proposal and relate back the elements of the proposal to the comments made in the foregoing appraisal.

Statement 1.
It is proposed that the warehouse be extended on the north-west side.

Justification:
This location works well relative to the existing building. An extension here would be largely concealed from the road frontage and also would have less impact upon the neighbouring residential property to the south.

Statement 2.
It is proposed that the area created by the extension be used for additional cold storage / R & D workspace.

Justification:
From a use perspective this would be entirely in-keeping with the existing business use.

Statement 3.
It is proposed that the lorry circulation area be located in the yard to the north-west of the proposed extension.

Justification:
Though there are few lorry movements associated with this site it appears logical that lorry circulation should occur on the north-west side. This works logically relative to the building but also places the building as a buffer between the circulation area and the residential neighbour to the south.

Statement 4.
It is proposed that the extension be constructed in materials that will largely match the existing building. Detail will be varied locally as necessary to address the requirement for general cooling within the extended area.

Justification:
Again, this appears logical aesthetically and will ensure that the building exterior has a consistent and well considered appearance.

Statement 5
It is proposed that one of the two small buildings on the grassed area to the south-east edge of the site together with the PortaKabins on the north side be demolished / removed. The floor area lost will be re-provided within the extension.

Justification:
The removal of this building will be of benefit to the site visually and will help to tidy the appearance when viewed from both Bicker Road and Day's Lane, the two public frontages.

The following section demonstrates how the conceptual approach has taken account of the identified physical, social and economic context set against development plan policies for design.

Use

The existing use is as a flower packaging plant, the extension will be utilized for exactly the same purpose.

Amount

The proposal looks to extend the unit by its full width and for set depths as indicated on the drawings. This seeks to maximize the use of the site whilst maintaining sufficient external space for vehicle circulation.

Layout

The proposals place the extension at the north-west side of the site. This is logical as it keeps vehicle circulation out of sight from Bicker Road. This also works logically in relation to the existing building entrance, administration offices etc.

Scale

The footprint of the extension is a significant increase to the existing but remains slightly smaller than the original. The eaves have been designed to marry with the existing but with the higher central bay omitted as this is not required for the proposed internal space.

Landscaping

There are no opportunities to introduce landscaping on this site though the rear area will remain a communal yard. This is appropriate in this context.

Appearance

Elevation proposals are included as part of the application drawings pack. These demonstrate that the extensions have been designed sympathetically to 'fit in' with the existing building and tidy up the site in the process

Access Statement:

Site Location
The site is located at the junction of Bicker Road and Day's Lane, to the north-east of Donington village centre. There are shops and general amenities within a mile of the site. Public transport is available within the area.

Access to the site
This is likely to be by private vehicle given the rural location. There is however a footpath to the north side of the A52 from the direction of Donington.

Access to the building.
The warehouse is generally accessed at ground level and there is sufficient external circulation space to allow approach by all people.

There are no particular gradients on the site.

Access within the building.
The interior of the existing building was redesigned to provide both offices and production areas in 2011. The offices are equipped with accessible toilet facilities and all areas needing to be accessed by the public are located at ground floor level. Door widths, corridor widths etc have been designed generally in accordance with Approved Document M of the Building Regulations and BS8300. The proposed extension will only accommodate additional storage and non-public areas.

Sustainable Construction Statement:

The following design decisions have been taken with sustainable construction and environmental issues in mind. It must however be acknowledged that the existing site and structure restrict what is reasonably possible on this site.

1. The reuse and redevelopment of previously used land is effectively 'recycling' a partly developed site.
2. A large, screened area for waste collection is again proposed and within this there will be separate receptacles for recyclable waste.

Further options will be investigated as the detailed design develops.

Appendix 1 - Applicant Statement:

Hortic Express Development of Harvey's Barn

- Renovation of redundant building back to commercial use.
    - Controlled removal of asbestos from the environment.
    - Aesthetic improvements due to quality of the renovation.
    - Maintained landscape around the building .
    - Overall improvement of the visual appearance of the area.





- Creation of 3 full time equivalent jobs, including Production Manager from Donington village.
- Close relationship with local residents.
    - Fully supportive of the renovation.
    - Fully supportive of the relaxation of operating restrictions.
- Our Company deals with high profile retailers who demand the highest professional standards.

- Supporter of local charity events.
    - Donington Church Flower Festival
    - Bicker Steam Festival
    - Bicker Primary School