DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed extension to existing glasshouses, additional reservoir and 2No. biomass boilers. Rookery Farm, Joys Bank, Holbeach St John, Spalding Lincs, PE12 8SG.

Introduction

This planning application has been prepared by Peter Humphrey Associates acting as agent for the applicant Mr David Robinson.

Rookery Farm is a 90 hectare arable farm based in Joys Bank, Holbeach St Johns. It has been in the hands of the Robinson Family for 96 years. The farm currently crops 56ha of wheat, 15 ha of oilseed rape, and 9ha of spring beans. 8 years ago the farm diversified into the growing and packing of flowers and plants for the horticultural mail order industry, this is now the primary income source of the business.

The farm is also the home of The National Cut Flower Centre (www.nationalcutflowercentre.co.uk), which is a HDC funded project for the research and development of commercial cut flower growing. This section of the business has designated trial growing areas on site and see's visitors from flower growing companies all over Europe to inspect the growing trials which take place on site.

The business now has 32 full-time employees, including 10 from the local village, who grow, pack and dispatch over 2 million plants per annum for its mail order customers.

As a result of the farm's diversity, the business and site has expanded rapidly to cope with demand. Mr Robinson now requires a third extension to his main glasshouses to meet the demand/supply of new contracts, as shown on the proposed site plan. A new reservoir is also proposed to hold additional surface water run-off from the additional glasshouse and 2No. biomass boilers to heat the additional space. This is effectively a continuation of the existing processes on site.

As existing, the additional glasshouses will be used to grow bedding plants etc. The proposed glasshouses will be heated via the new biomass boilers proposed.

Design, Appearance & Layout

The proposed glasshouse extension is of traditional construction and will match the recently constructed glasshouse; please see elevational drawings provided with this planning application.

As highlighted by planning officer David Gedney under the previous applications for the glasshouses on this site, the development on site will have very little visual impact on the area with the site already being a nursery and where glasshouses already exist site.

Access

The proposed development will utilise the existing site access into Rookery Farm.

Soft Landscaping

As shown on the proposed site plan, there is already an approved site perimeter landscaping plan comprising dense Hawthorn hedging and native trees under the original permission.

Employment

As mentioned earlier, the existing business now has 36 full-time employees, including 10 from the local village. The proposed development will create 2 additional full time jobs in the new glasshouse.

Flood Risk Assessment

In accordance with the Environment Agency's flood zone maps, the application site falls within flood zone 3.

The Environment Agency has been consulted on all previous developments on site. Christopher Hayes the Planning Liaison Officer for South Holland stated the following:

"The site is located within an area defined as Flood Zone 3 'high probability' according to the Environment Agency's Flood Zone Maps. Therefore, the application would have to accompanied by a supporting Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). That said the site is located within the white 'low risk' area according to the South Holland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and therefore we would **not** wish to see the flood risk assessment for this site (the council would determine the application following our standing advice).

It must also be noted that the development is purely a glasshouse, with no habitable rooms or sleeping accommodation.

Please see that a separate document has been prepared by a specialist to detail the handling of surface water from the new development – whereby an additional reservoir is being proposed to provide the necessary capacity for the additional surface water run-off.