

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed extension to existing glasshouses, additional reservoir and expansion of outdoor growing area. (Part retrospective). At 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 was originally an arable farm based in Joys Bank, Holbeach St Johns. It has been in the hands of the Robinson Family for over 100 years. Over more recent years the site and business has moved away from traditional arable farming and has diversified into mail order plants and seeds for a number of large nationwide companies, all of which sell plants and seeds online which are grown, packed and distributed by Rookery Farm on their behalf.

The business now has 47 full-time employees and 120 seasonal workers. The site handles approx. 12,000 orders per day and has several postal lorries collecting orders each day.

The extra glasshouses and growing areas proposed under this application are required to keep up with the ever-increasing demand for internal sales of plants and seeds, this market/demand has significantly grown since Brexit and the need to grow more in this country. The increased public/domestic popularity in gardening during recent lockdowns has also contributed to this.

As a result of the extra glasshouses, a new reservoir is also required to not only handle the surface water run-off but store it for irrigation on site – a huge cost saving for the business. The new reservoir has been designed to the same constriction detail as the others on site and will hold 6million litres of surface water runoff.

'Glasshouse A' is already on site and is being applied for retrospectively.
'Glasshouse B' is not yet built and is proposed.

Glasshouse B also includes a dedicated packing/leading area, plus loading bay for the articulated lorries visiting site.

Design, Appearance & Layout

The proposed glasshouse extension are of traditional construction and will match the other 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, this has been adapted to reflect the changes on site.

Employment

As mentioned earlier, the existing business now has 47 full-time employees and 120 seasonal workers. The proposal will increase this number to 65 full time and 160 seasonal workers.

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 be 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.