DECISION DELEGATED TO DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Application No:	**H09-1270-18**	**Applicant:**	**Fresca Group - D G M Growers**
Proposal:	Proposed growing and packing house - approved under H09-0399-18. Modification of Conditions 2 and 6 to allow amendments to previously approved plans and change openings on northern and eastern elevations and to include material schedule - Condition 3		
Location:	D G M Growers Oak House Holbeach Bank		
Terminal Date:	1st April 2019		

Planning Policies

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan - Adopted: March 2019

01	Spatial Strategy
02	Development Management
03	Design of New Development
04	Approach to Flood Risk
07	Improving South East Lincolnshire's Employment Land Portfolio
30	Pollution
33	Delivering a More Sustainable Transport Network

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework 2019

2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 14

Representations:

	Object	Support	No Obj.	Comments
PARISH COUNCIL	0	0	0	0
WARD MEMBER	0	0	0	0

CASE OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Proposal

Full planning permission was granted for a growing and packing house in September 2018 (ref. H09-0399-18). Permission is now sought to revise the openings on the northern and eastern elevations. Details of external materials have also been submitted. Work has commenced on site.

When the previous application was considered the applicant indicated that the proposal would provide new premises specifically designed to suit the needs of Chicory growing and processing, which in turn would enable removal of an existing building along the frontage close to residential property. The latter has outline planning permission for 4 plots (ref. H09-1112-17).

Representations

Holbeach Parish Council - No comments received.

Environmental Protection - Previously raised no objections subject to a noise condition. Request a note concerning contamination.

Environment Agency - Previously recommended appropriate mitigation measures.

South Holland IDB - Previously raised no objections in principle, subject to a definitive surface water drainage plan.

Public - No comments received.

Information previously submitted by applicant (summarised):

Since 1983 Chicory and Celeriac has been grown and processed on this site originally by Jack Buck (Farms) Ltd, before being purchased by DGM Growers Ltd in 2007, during which time and as part of the M & W Mack Ltd group, who as one of the UK's most trusted names in the fresh produce industry, the business has continued to grow. This site currently produces 7.5 million Chicory heads per annum (550 tonnes per annum) and represents 100% of the UK production, as well as being 73% of the UK consumption with the remainder of the expanding market being imported by wholesale / caterers.

The growing and processing of the Chicory is currently undertaken in historic buildings circa fifty years old, which are coming to the end of their serviceable life and combined with their position at the Northern end of the site, it is neither economic to maintain the building or has sufficient space around it to permit extension without impacting upon the neighbouring residential dwellings on Roman Bank.

In order that DGM Growers can expand into the ever expanding Chicory market and continue to produce an economical product compared with lesser quality / freshness imports, it is proposed to construct a building that will meet the specific needs of growing, processing and storing Chicory throughout the calendar year.

This scheme will increase employment within the area and hopefully enable DGM Growers to maintain at least 73% of the UK market in Chicory.

Material Planning Considerations

The main issues are:
-The principle of an additional growing and packhouse building upon the site;
-Character/appearance;
-The likely impact upon the amenity of nearby residents;
-Highway safety;
-Other material considerations such as drainage and flood risk.

Principle

Policy 7 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, 2019 indicates that new employment development outside an allocated employment site will be supported provided that the proposal involves the re-use of previously developed land or the conversion/re-use of redundant buildings.

The above policy is in accordance with the general thrust and aims of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2019 which supports sustainable economic development and growth. Paragraph 83

indicates that LPAs should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas. No objections are therefore raised in principle.

Character/appearance

The buildings would have a maximum ridge height of 13.1m approximately and would be metal clad (Moorland Green with Forest Green flashings). They would be viewed alongside existing commercial buildings and would not materially harm the visual amenities of the rural locality.

Residential amenity

DGM Growers are the UK's only commercial grower of chicory, with more conventional field farming also a large part of their operations. They pack and market their own crops and also those of other UK farmers. On site processing of agricultural produce is an increasing feature of the food industry. Whilst the proposal is closely related to the applicant's agricultural business, activities such as processing and food preparation/packaging are industrial in nature. Consequently, some farm based food processing businesses have encroached into a general industrial use.

The building would be used for growing, processing and storing Chicory, as well as cold storage and processing of other seasonal vegetables. The latter would include Peas and Beans, Pak Choi and Choi Sum, Jerusalem Artichokes, Fennel, Celeriac, Courgettes and Purple Sprouting Broccoli.

Complaints have previously been received from residents on grounds of increased noise and disturbance, etc. This matter was taken up with the applicant at the time who indicated the following:
·Currently the storage, growing, packaging and dispatch is undertaken within three buildings, with each element of the process being trafficked across external yard space. If contained within a single building there would be no trafficking between buildings.
·Current thermal requirements for the new building envelope and improved internal mechanisation will better insulate against noise emanating from within the building compared with the existing buildings.
·Whilst chicory production would increase, as it is bulk dispatched to supermarket / wholesale market distribution centres it will only increase the HGV movement by three per day, each of which use the existing dock levellers that are already positioned on the opposite side of the dispatch building to the dwellings on Roman Bank.
Environmental Protection was previously consulted as part of the planning process. They indicated that they were not in receipt of any complaints regarding noise from the site. The previous complaints logged on their system were from 2008. The loading/unloading of vehicles would occur on the opposite side of the buildings to Roman Bank. The buildings would therefore form a buffer, unlike at present. Environmental Protection previously raised no objections to the application subject to mitigating conditions.

Concerning the proposed revisions to the windows, the applicant has indicated that they have removed the first floor bands of ribbon windows and replaced them with individual windows to better suit the office layout internally. This reduces the total window area at first floor level, as well as moving some to the ground floor. The first floor canteen/office windows are some distance from neighbouring residential properties and are partially screened by landscaping/hedging. Consequently, overlooking/privacy issues are not considered to be such as to justify a refusal of permission. The ground floor windows will have no significant impact on the neighbouring properties due to fencing and hedges.

In conclusion, it is considered that the amenity of neighbouring residents would not be affected to such a degree as to justify refusal in terms of noise and disturbance, overbearing effect, overshadowing, loss of privacy, loss of light, etc, subject to safeguarding conditions. Blockage of view is not a material planning consideration and therefore carries no weight.

Highways

The site is accessed by HGV vehicles via a roadway off Washway Road to the south. The entrance onto Roman Bank should only be used by visitor and staff vehicles. The applicant has previously indicated that the access needs to be retained to ensure that staff cars/visitors and the commercial delivery/dispatch areas are segregated for health and safety reasons. An emergency access is also required for fire appliances, etc.

Residents have previously raised concern over traffic and noise and particularly HGVs trying to

access the site via Roman Bank. This was previously taken up with DGM, who altered their website to direct HGVs to the main entrance off Washway Road and not Roman Bank. Negotiations are also currently underway with LCC Highways to provide signage at the Washway/Roman Bank junction to discourage HGVs from accessing the site via the latter.

The County Highways Authority has previously indicated that it does not wish to restrict the grant of permission on highway safety grounds.

Other Material Planning Considerations

Flooding - The site is within Flood Zone 3 on the Environment Agency Maps. The Environment Agency's Flood Maps have been created as a tool to raise awareness of flood risk with the public and partner organisations, such as Local Authorities, Emergency Services and Drainage Authorities. The Maps do not take into account any flood defences. Also, large parts of the South Holland District lie within Flood Zone 3. It is therefore necessary to use the refined flood risk information (Hazard and Depth maps) within the South Holland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017) as a basis to apply the sequential test

The SFRA indicates that the site is located in an area identified as "Danger for Some". However, this is a less severe category and the proposal relates to an existing industrial site that is well established. Vulnerability is not increased. It is not possible, consistent with wider sustainability objectives, for the development to be located in zones with a lower probability of flooding.

The exceptions test should therefore be applied. In terms of the first element, the proposal scores positively against the aims and objectives of the Local Planning Authority's sustainability appraisal and would provide economic benefits that outweigh flood risk. Concerning the second element, the Environment Agency has previously raised no objections from a safety point of view given that the use is already well established and the vulnerability is appropriate for the flood zone. There is no change to the proposal in this respect since it only relates to a revision of fenestration.

Drainage - The South Holland Internal Drainage Board raises no objections subject to the applicant providing more definitive details of existing and proposed surface water disposal. This can be addressed by means of a condition.

Conclusion

The proposal would promote economic growth in a rural area and help to create jobs. Environmental Protection and LCC Highways have previously raised no objections, subject to mitigating conditions. Whilst the proposal may have some impact upon the amenity of nearby residents in terms of noise and disturbance, traffic, privacy, etc, the level is not considered to be such as to outweigh factors in favour of the proposal and justify refusal, subject to mitigating conditions.