

Nationwide Produce PLC



Planning, Design and Access Statement
Proposed Internal Access Road, HGV Trailer Parking
Area, Surface Water Lagoon, Security Fencing and
Landscaping.

Land off Cowper's Gate (South), Long Sutton

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town planning



landscape architecture



architecture

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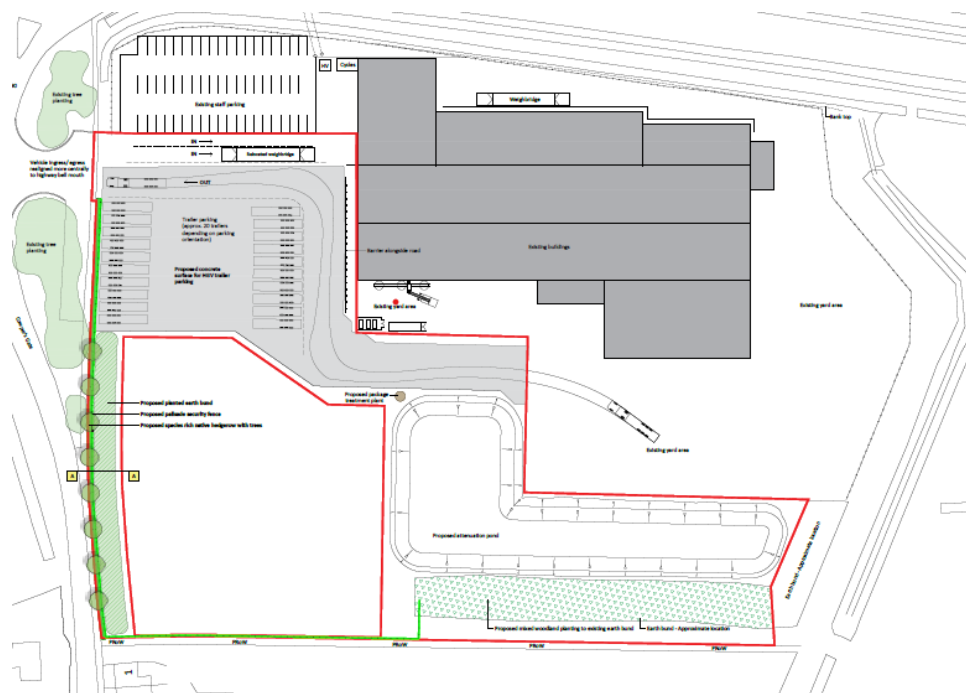
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by the Robert Doughty Consultancy Limited on behalf of Nationwide Produce PLC to accompany a full planning application for the formation of an internal access road (which will create a one-way system on site), an HGV trailer parking area, a surface water lagoon (amending that previously approved), a security fence to the Cowper's Gate boundary and associated landscaping.
- 1.2. The planning application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment, Surface Water Drainage Strategy, Preliminary Ecological Assessment, Biodiversity Net Gain assessment and all necessary drawings.
- 1.3. The existing buildings are currently being refurbished and extended under planning permission H11-1084-23, granted in July 2024, and which form part of a multi-million-pound investment in the site.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1. The application site is located to the south of Long Sutton in the south-eastern quadrant of the roundabout at the junction of the A17 and Cowpers Gate (B1390). The A17 runs along the northern boundary of the site which is the main east-west road artery through the county. Access to the site is directly off the B1390 and there is a derelict dwelling and curtilage that was purchased by the applicant in 2024. The hamlet of Sutton Crosses lies to the south and there is agricultural land to the east beyond an IDB controlled drain.
- 2.2. There is mature roadside planting to the A17, and an earth bund lies along part of the southern and eastern boundary (beyond a 9m drainage board easement) of the application site and there is a largely open frontage to the B1390 when south of the dwelling mentioned in paragraph 2.1 above.



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Site Plan showing the extent of the application site.

- 2.3. A search of Lincolnshire Historic Environment Records indicates that there is the Grade II Listed Sheaf Cottage (List entry number 1390054) to the south-west of the site on the western side of the B1390.
- 2.4. There are a number of buildings that make up the application site and these consist of plastic-coated metal profile clad sheds, typical of many other agricultural buildings seen in the area. These buildings have been

added to over the years, including most recently planning permission H11-1084-23, as have the outside storage areas where produce boxes and machinery are stored. The proposed HGV trailer parking area will be located where a derelict dwelling currently stands, which is awaiting demolition (H11-0817-24). The dwelling and curtilage were used as an operating base for scrap cars and have been an eyesore on Cowper's Gate for many years. The applicant had the opportunity to purchase the dwelling etc in 2024 and clean the site up, which has now been done.

3. PLANNING POLICY

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.1. The NPPF sets out Central Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

3.2. Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the NPPF confirm the commitment to sustainable development based on three dimensions:

"an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible local services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' the community's health, social and cultural well-being; and

an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."

3.3. This is followed by a commitment to a presumption in favour of sustainable development and at paragraph 11,

"For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or,

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i) The application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or

ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

3.4. Paragraph 12 confirms that applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan and that, in such cases, Local Authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date

Development Plan, permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date Development Plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

Development Plan

- 3.5. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that, "If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."
- 3.6. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (Local Plan) adopted in March 2019.
- 3.7. Although in open countryside, the application site is an existing agricultural complex occupied by an existing range of buildings set within a well-defined curtilage.
- 3.8. Policy 2 of the Local Plan is a Development Management policy and sets out the considerations that need to be met and, amongst other matters, these include size, scale, layout, density, impact on amenity, sustainable drainage and flood risk.
- 3.9. Policy 3 refers specifically to the design of new development to create distinctive places through the use of high quality and distinctive design.
- 3.10. Policy 4: Approach to Flood Risk, requires applications be accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment covering all sources of flooding and include the impacts of climate change.
- 3.11. Policy 7: Improving South East Lincolnshire's Employment Land Portfolio, the local authorities will assist in supporting proposals, which assist in delivering economic prosperity. The application site falls to be considered under the "Other Employment Sites" as set out in Policy 7, which states that extending existing employment activities will be supported subject to compliance with criteria a-g.

4. DESIGN

USE, SCALE AND LAYOUT

- 4.1. The principal building on site has been extended under a Prior Notification Application (H11-0208-13) for a produce store (extension), a covered canopy (H11-0027-14) and most recently H11-1084-23, which included surface water attenuation and concrete hardstanding to store produce boxes and trailers that were historically stored on compacted hardcore. The most recent extensions are still to be constructed and the applicant now wishes to make changes to the external HGV circulation area, HGV trailer storage areas and to amend the surface water drainage strategy to deal with the water from the buildings and additional concrete parking areas. In addition to the above, there is an increasing need to provide greater security for the site in the form of fencing to the Cowper's Gate frontage and partly along the southern boundary where there is an existing Public Right of Way.
- 4.2. The main driver for the proposal is the need to provide better circulation around the site. Despite the applicant's best endeavours, the historic layout of the site with the principal building close to the north-eastern corner of the site has resulted in a 'bottleneck' in this area which no amount of organisation has managed to resolve. The need for external storage of wooden produce, produce trailers and HGV manoeuvring all of which use a single access road to the rear of the site has necessitated an internal reorganisation of the site. This reorganisation has resulted in some of the HGV trailer parking being relocated to the front of the site where the existing dwelling and curtilage lie, a new one-way system created clockwise around the main building and the surface water attenuation system altered to cater for the new areas of concrete. The new location of the surface water attenuation pond has also meant that the area of archaeological interest on site can be avoided thereby avoiding the need to destroy it.
- 4.3. The proposed access and parking/storage are in response to the expansion of the existing agricultural business and the entire project represents a multi-million-pound investment in the site by the applicant. The principle of the proposal, therefore, accords with local plan policy 7 a.

- 4.4. It is proposed to link the approved parking and turning area at the east and south of the main building with the new HGV trailer parking area at the front (west) of the site. The derelict dwelling is to be demolished and hard surfaced to make way for the new parking area and a new section of concrete laid to link the front and rear of the site. Vehicles will then be able to drive into the site using the existing access (which is to be improved under H11-1084-23) then around in a clockwise fashion and out of the same access. In order to reduce any impact arising from the new area of parking, it is proposed to create an earth bund along the Cowper's Gate frontage, erect a security fence and also plant a native hedgerow and trees as landscaping. This planting will also form part of the 10% post-development mandatory biodiversity net gain provision.
- 4.5. The proposed planting will augment the existing trees to the west (front) of the site, which are located within the public highway and will assist in screening the entire site from Cowper's Gate and from dwellings to the south east.
- 4.6. An existing earth bund screens the entire site from the dwellings to the south.
- 4.7. Overall, the proposal will have little impact on the character of the area and accords with LP Policy 7b.

Appearance

- 4.8. The applicant has cleared the site where the derelict dwelling currently stands, removing significant amounts of rubbish, old cars and derelict outbuildings, which has significantly improved the character of the area. Once the derelict dwelling has been removed (a Low Impact Bat Licence has been applied for), the site will be concreted and used for parking and a new security fence will be erected behind native hedgerow planting on the boundary to Cowper's Gate. The proposed site shows that the proposed parking will be screened by the existing mature trees on the Cowper's Gate frontage.
- 4.9. There is an existing Public Right of Way along the southern boundary of the site and this remains unaffected by the proposals.

Access

- 4.10. The existing access will be widened and improved in accordance with the details approved under planning permission H11-1084-23. The proposal

does not generate additional vehicular movements but simply deals with the arrangements for internal circulation and parking. A swept path analysis has been undertaken to demonstrate how vehicles navigate around the site and use the proposed parking spaces.

Surface Water Drainage

- 4.11. In order to adequately deal with both roof water and surface water from the parking areas, a Surface Water Drainage Strategy has been developed in accordance with Local Plan policy 4 and includes the principles of Sustainable Drainage. The strategy includes the provision of a surface water attenuation pond towards the middle of the site, with an outfall into the Internal Drainage Board system. An application to the Board will be submitted in due course. In order to cater for the additional surface water run-off from the new concrete areas, the drainage system shown under planning permission H11-1084-23 has been updated.

5. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. The closest heritage asset is the Grade II Listed Sheaf Cottage to the south-west/west of the site. This heritage asset is a thatched cottage on the B1390 frontage and was added to the official List in 2002. The setting of the Listed Building is defined by the existing development around it, which consists of the modernised row of cottages to the east together with the intervening B1390 and more modern residential development immediately to the south.
- 5.2. The application site and the complex of buildings were in situ when the cottage was listed in 2002 and there have been a number of extensions to the complex in the intervening period.
- 5.3. Having regard to the distance between the proposed development and the relatively localised setting of the Listed Building, it is proposed to screen views into the application site with an earth bund, which will be landscaped, together with native screen planting along the Cowper's Gate frontage. The approved planting for H11-1084-23, together with that proposed as part of this application, will significantly enhance the setting of the Listed Building, simply by removing views across to the application site which to date have been completely open.
- 5.4. An archaeological investigation was carried out as part of planning application H11-1084-23. The trial trenching that was undertaken revealed the need for a localised site strip in the south western corner of the site where the original surface water lagoon was going to extend into. Accordingly, the amended surface water lagoon has been changed to avoid this area, thereby not impacting on the area of known archaeology.
- 5.5. The proposal, therefore, complies with Local Plan policy 29: The Historic Environment.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.6. Although the last planning permission (H11-1084-23) was not subject to mandatory biodiversity net gain (BNG), this current application is, and therefore a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) has been carried out and a post-development BNG plan provided to show how the 10% net gain can be achieved, which will be the subject of the mandatory BNG condition. It should be stressed that the PEA was carried out **before**

the site of the dwelling was cleared and the BNG plan takes into account the state of the site before any habitat etc was removed in accordance with Schedule 14 of the Environment Act.

- 5.7. The PEA and BNG Baseline Assessment provided by ESL Ecology and dated October 2024 provides a post-intervention scenario which, through the inclusion of modified grassland habitat into the development proposals along with new native hedgerow, would deliver 0.18 Biodiversity Units (BU) for habitat and 0.43 BU for hedgerows which would result in a 92.2% and 12.90% net loss respectively.
- 5.8. Following design development, the Statutory Metric provided as part of the BNG Assessment by ESL Ecology Ltd has been **updated** to reflect changes to the baseline assessment resulting from amendments to the overall development proposals and associated site layout. Whilst retaining the core elements of the original assessment, the revised metric now includes additional land to the south. At the same time, the post development scenario within the submitted Statutory Metric has received closer examination with the incorporation of specific detail in relation to proposed habitat creation with the aim of satisfying the requirement for 10% biodiversity net gain and compliance with the Habitat Trading Rules. Through onsite and offsite habitat provision, it is concluded that the development proposals will deliver 0.77 BU for habitat and 0.53 BU for hedgerows, which would result in a 23.41% and 109.06% net gain respectively and satisfy the required Trading Rules.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1. The application site is the established base for Nationwide Produce Plc, providing agricultural floorspace and ancillary external parking and storage areas.
- 6.2. The recent significant investment has seen the need arise for a reorganisation of how the internal circulation of the site operates and, in turn, this has necessitated changes to parking, turning and design for surface water attenuation. In addition, the application includes greater site security in the form of a new boundary fence to protect the investment and for general safety and associated landscaping of the site.
- 6.3. The continued growth of the business is wholly compliant with the Local Plan policy objectives, the wider development management requirements and is in accordance with up-to-date Government guidance in the NPPF. Further investment in the business is to be welcomed.

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