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Our ref: 4372-25

**AGRICULTURAL WORKERS ACCOMMODATION
VICKERS PARK
WASHWAY ROAD
MOULTON MARSH
SPALDING
LINCS
PE12 6LP

FOR

NAYLOR FLOWERS LTD**

PLANNING STATEMENT

VAT No: 552 6200 69
Registered in England No: 05667107

Registered Address: Bank House, Broad Street, Spalding. PE11 1TB

This planning application is following a previous application under reference H13-0965-19 where permission was granted for the siting of 8 No Agricultural Workers Accommodation for the benefit of Naylor Flowers Ltd.

Condition 1 attached to this permission stated that the workers accommodation which includes static caravans, lodges and ancillary structures shall be removed from the site at or before 5 years of the date of the permission.

Only 2 No lodges and 2 No static caravans have been placed on site in the position shown on the accompanying plan 4372-25-01, this application is to allow these 4 No workers accommodation to be granted permission for another 5 years.

Naylor Flowers Limited is a Privately- owned business run by Matthew Naylor and Christopher Edgeley. Before it was Incorporated, the business was a family farming partnership based in Moulton Seas End since 1940s. It is member of the linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) Marque, which is a leading global assurance system recognising more environmentally sustainably farmed products. It is held by farm businesses which meet LEAF's Rigorous standards of sustainable farming practice.

The business grows cut flowers and potatoes on approximately 202 hectares of land in a 16 Km radius of Moulton Seas End. The Products are all grown for supermarkets, Including Aldi, the Co-operative Group and Waitrose, on a contracted basis through partners and agents including JZ Flowers, Nene Potatoes and the Butters Group. The Applicant company is profiled in the Growers Section of the Co-operative Group's website, which can be found via the following link <https://www.coop.co.uk/our-suppliers/farmers/growers>. The business produces over 50 million stems of flowers each year and is a leading producer in the British flower industry.

Cut Flower production is major industry in South Holland and the exit of the UK from the EU will have a significant impact on this sector. The UK imports 85% of the cut flowers that consumers buy and the demand for Home-grown production is likely to increase now that the value of Sterling has weakened.

Having workers based on the farm represents an established method of providing a well-managed, cost effective and sustainable work force enabling the farming business to operate and plan effectively.

The desire of supermarkets to reduce air freight on flowers is driving demand for the flowers that Naylor Flowers can grow in the UK. Despite their attempts to mechanise, the requirement for skilled labour in the harvesting season is still significant. Having accommodation on site allows Naylor Flowers to meet their needs flexibly and creates circumstances which are convenient for the workers and saves them travelling to and from work.

APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Vickers Park is an established part of the Naylor Flowers Limited's Holding comprising a large general purpose agricultural building a recently erected agricultural store, parking and turning, polytunnels and the surrounding fields for flower production, where many of the workers who will be housed in the proposed accommodation will work.

There is an existing access to Washway Road which serves the farming operation and the existing pair of semi-detached properties, there is also a variety of landscaping around the periphery of the site none of which impacted upon by the proposal and a field drain to the north. The site is generally flat with no other features of note.

The Horticultural industry in Lincolnshire has traditionally relied on seasonal workers. It is extremely labour intensive and historically Naylor Flowers has used licensed gang masters to provide its flower harvest workers. These workers are bussed in from elsewhere, often over significant distances, resulting in increased vehicle movements.

Providing the accommodation on the farm reduces the pressure on the limited supply of housing at the lower end of the housing market. The benefits of temporary on-farm accommodation was the subject of a recovery appeal for Staples Vegetables Ltd reference APP/Z2505/V/09/2119176 decided in 2011.

If the horticultural business did not have the benefit of transient labour it would fail. Accommodation for the workers on the farm result in a sustainable form of development in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF and on the basis that the business would fail without the labour the proposal is essential to the horticultural business.

In the last few years Naylor Flowers has increased production by 50%. The low level of unemployment in the South Holland area means that Naylor Flowers must bring in seasonal workers from other areas. Despite significant efforts, Naylor Flowers has found it impossible to find a labour agency which can meet this requirement in a way which is legal and which treats workers fairly.

Recruiting and accommodating their own seasonal staff is an essential step for the business. It is proposed to accommodate between 12 and 16 employees in the 4 Units of accommodation

Employees work in the fields, weeding, planting and picking flowers, maintaining polytunnels and packing the product ready for dispatch to the customer the work programme is as follows: -

MONTH	ACTIVITY
Jan – April-	Daffodil Flower harvesting
April – May-	Flower Planting
May – October-	Harvesting summer flowers (including sunflowers, gladioli, sweet Williams)
October – November -	Potato harvesting

It is now increasingly the case that there is significant turnover of staff being supplied to the business which is very difficult to manage effectively. It is very expensive and has safety implication to constantly train new staff on a daily basis to carry out the core activities of the business.

Staff will be working in the fields surrounding the accommodation but, when travelling further, there will be nominated drivers among the workers to transport them between fields. These nominated drivers will also transport the workers to shops in Holbeach, Spalding or Boston for groceries and recreational activities.

The Growing of cut flowers is seasonal, and the application proposes that with the drop-off on the need for workers in the winter months, the caravans and lodges will only be in use for 9 months in the year (HMOs will be used for the remaining time).

Naylor Flowers feel that the tried and tested method of accommodating a well- managed workforce on site would stop exploitation of workers in a way that could not be guaranteed under the current arrangement. It would give the workers the security of employment and affordable well-maintained accommodation. It would also stop workers migrating to other agencies at the promise of higher wages to only find that the work has dried up two weeks later.

The Proposal to use the caravans and lodges is a well – tested form of accommodation and subject to suitable management which the applicant company is committed to doing will provide a good standard for the workers while at the farm.

There have not been any complaints regarding the siting of the lodges and caravans. It is largely screened from fleeting public views of those travelling along the A17, the need for additional landscaping is not necessary.

The site is in Flood Zone 3 therefore a full Flood Risk report by RM Associates is submitted with this application.

My clients are happy for the previous conditions to be applied to the new permission. The previous statement provided under H13-0965-19 should be considered.

CONCLUSION

The siting of the 2 No caravans and 2 No lodges at Vickers Farm for the benefit of Naylor Flowers and their agricultural workers should be favourable considered for another 5 years to enable this flourishing company to continue to grow.

