

Opperman Plants Limited

rdc
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Consultancy

Design and Access Statement for Glasshouse
development at 9-15 Mallard Road, Low Fulney,
Spalding

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Opperman Plants Limited, the applicant company, is a well established and successful grower of plants for supply to supermarkets and garden centres. The family firm produces 8 million plants a year using innovative growing techniques to ensure crops are of the highest quality in both Tropical/Indoor House Plants and Outdoor Ornamentals.
- 1.2. All is grown from the existing site on Mallard Road where there are glasshouses and outdoor growing areas, alongside office space, a biomass building that provides thermal energy to the glasshouses and a reservoir to store collected roof water for reuse.
- 1.3. The applicant company has identified the opportunity for investment in new glasshouse technology that will enable more efficient growing activity, reducing the need for electricity and water supply. To achieve this, the area of outdoor growing is to have new glasshouse development in a first phase followed by two further phases to renew older glasshouses with some demolition, including the creation of an enhanced delivery area that will allow vehicles to turn within the site, which they cannot do at present.
- 1.4. New water storage tanks will be installed within the buildings to enable recycling and reuse of clean water for plants.
- 1.5. The overall project will require an investment in the region of £3m and enables the applicant company to respond positively to reduced availability of the larger workforce available prior to the pandemic and to develop a reduced number of full-time skilled employment opportunities.

2. APPLICATION SITE

- 2.1. The applicant company occupies a series of linear plots of land that were Land Settlement Association smallholdings until the scheme was wound up and privatised in the 1980s.
- 2.2. The application site sits, therefore, within an established area of growers with residential properties nearby. The land is currently dominated by the existing glasshouse complex with an area of land used for outdoor growing and a reservoir. There are no natural features to distinguish the site and it is relatively hidden from public view by existing development.
- 2.3. There are two accesses to the site from Mallard Road. To the north there is access to a car park and the biomass building and to the south is the principal access for deliveries, which requires larger vehicles to drive past the access point and reverse to enable loading and unloading.

3. DESIGN AND ACCESS

- 3.1. The glasshouse development is split into phases. Phase 1 includes glasshouses of up to 6.2m high constructed using primarily clear plastics as well as glass with a high insulation value and utilising internal screens to improve insulation and control sunlight efficiently using shade. Phases 2 and 3 use a slightly different glasshouse size with height of 5.3m.
- 3.2. Internally, the glasshouses will be racked for computerised and automated systems to maintain plants throughout the day and night. A new watering system will be installed that enables highly efficient recycling of water, minimising waste and using internal storage tanks to be installed within the new buildings.
- 3.3. Within phase 1 there is also an insulated heat storage tank measuring 13m in height that takes energy from the existing biomass boiler to provide heated water to heat the new covered growing areas.
- 3.4. An area of existing glasshouses is to be retained to the east of the application site, but to which the new structure will be attached.
- 3.5. Another area of existing glasshouse to the south of the application site will be demolished to create a clear and level turning facility for HGVs, with a new loading area created to improve on the current facility.

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