

Opperman Plants Limited

rdc
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Consultancy

Flood Risk Assessment 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 AND FLOOD RISK

- 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.
- 2.3. 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.
- 2.4. The application site is within Flood Zone 3.
- 2.5. The use of the land for agriculture is Less Vulnerable development.
- 2.6. While the sequential test applies to new development in Flood Zone 3, the application proposal is for the same use as it is now and the area of search is reasonably limited to the current operational base of the applicant company.
- 2.7. It follows that the risk of flood is not relevant to the application proposal, because that risk to the scheme is the same now as it will be after the new glasshouses are installed.

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