DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

For

PROPOSED STAFF WELFARE FACILITIES BUILDING & ASSOCIATED EXTERNAL WORKS

At

FOLWER WELCH LTD.
WEST MARSH ROAD
SPALDING
LINCOLNSHIRE
PE11 2BB

For

FOWLER WELCH LTD.

PLANNING APPLICATION ISSUE

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Site observation and analysis

Location

The Fowler Welch headquarters site is located approximately 1850m north-northeast of the Market Place in Spalding. It forms part of the industrial zone of the town and within the zone it is towards the end of the peninsula bounded to the west by the Vernatt's Drain and to the east by the River Welland. The actual location for the proposal within the site is roughly in the centre, to the north of the main administration office block. A location plan at recognized scale is provided within the application pack to enable it to be located and the extent to be identified.

Site description

The site is an industrial depot which forms the headquarters for local company Fowler Welch Ltd. The site comprises buildings and external areas used for haulage and food storage (Fig. 01, 02, 03 & 04). The bulk of the site is roughly rectangular in shape with its main axis measuring approximately 550m running roughly perpendicular between West Marsh Road to the east-southeast and the bank of the Vernatt's Drain to the west-northwest. There is a further, connected section of the site to the south-west which accommodates storage sheds and associated circulation areas. Access to the site is via an approach road from the north-east.

Within the site there are a number of buildings that provide for either storage or administration. The storage buildings tend to be relatively high-bay single storey units with eaves at 6-9m above ground level (i.e. equivalent in height to a traditional building of 3 storeys). These are generally medium span, light-weight industrial buildings with coloured steel claddings to the exterior. There are a number of loading docks with associated doors, dock-levellers etc but few windows (as would be expected). These buildings dominate the central area of the site as well as that area to the south-west adjacent the Vernatt's Drain. Supporting the storage facilities are the main administration offices the primary block of which stands towards the north of the central warehouse block. This block provides administrative support for the Spalding site and also for the wider Fowler Welch network of depots throughout the UK. The main office block is of modular construction and comprises 2 storeys of offices with associated mess facilities. This block has a colour-coated flat steel panel wall cladding beneath a modular flat roof.



Fig. 01 – Main administration office block.



Fig. 02 – Main central warehouse block.



Fig. 03 – Central warehouse block.



Fig. 04 - West blocks (warehouse 2).

To the immediate north of the central administration block stands an area of undeveloped ground elevated some 3-4m above the general yard area (Fig. 05 & 06). The site for the proposed staff welfare facilities block is at the edge of this raised area, to the north of the existing main office administration block. It is proposed that the new building be cut into the raised area such that it can be accessed from the yard on the south-west side but will be surrounded by higher ground on all other sides.



Fig. 05 – Elevated land (to right of photo).



Fig. 06 – Elevated ground from, north-west.



Fig. 07 – Site for proposed building from high level.



Fig. 08 – Site for proposed building from SW.



Fig. 09 – Site for proposed building from SE.

Vehicular access to the site generally for both lorries and visitors' cars is via the barrier-controlled entrance to the north-east off West Marsh Road (Fig. 10). Vehicular access for staff cars is from a second entrance off West Marsh Road to the south; again this is barrier-controlled (Fig. 11). Access for people on foot or bicycles is via the same routes. Access to the specific facilities that are the focus of these proposals would be via existing internal site roads or on foot.



Fig. 10 – Primary site access on West Marsh Road.



Fig. 11 – Secondary (staff) access on West Marsh Road.

Site boundaries

The Fowler Welch depot is of significant area totalling approximately 13 hectares. The area now proposed for development is however limited to the footprint of the proposed building together with a perimeter footpath, patio and surrounding earth bank (which is existing but will need reshaping). The total area for development therefore extends to 500m^2 (excluding the bank). The proposed building is set a considerable distance from all site boundaries, however for completeness the following information is provided.

The north-east boundary is formed by a simple post and wire fence immediately inside of which is a raised bund and then a small drainage ditch (Fig. 12). Immediately outside of the boundary line is an area of undeveloped land that stretches for a considerable distance to the north-east. The nearest buildings are in excess of 250m away and appear industrial in nature. This boundary is located approximately 100m north-east of the proposed site for the staff welfare facilities building.

The south-east boundary is again formed by fencing inside of which is the vehicular access road for the site (Fig. 13). Immediately outside of the boundary line is an abutting site that accommodates a further food-related industrial facility (XPO Logistics). The nearest buildings are within 5m of the boundary and are industrial in nature. This boundary is

located approximately 130m south-east of the site for the proposed staff welfare facilities building.

The south-west boundary is formed by industrial fencing and separates Fowler Welch from the neighbouring industrial site - Bakkavor (Fig. 14). Immediately inside the boundary is a private vehicular access road. Immediately outside of the boundary line is a car park and circulation area associated with the neighbouring use. The nearest buildings are within 25m of the boundary and are industrial in nature but this is largely irrelevant for the current proposal as the main buildings on the Fowler Welch site sit between the proposed development and the south-west boundary. This boundary is located approximately 120m south-west of the site for the proposed staff welfare facilities building.

The north-west boundary is formed by a chain-link fence to the south-east bank of the Vernatt's Drain (Fig. 15). Immediately inside the boundary is an undeveloped grassed area and then the vehicular access ramp to the trailer park. Immediately outside of the boundary line is the drain. The nearest buildings on the north-west side of the drain are estimated to be approximately 50m from the Fowler Welch site boundary. These are again assumed to be in industrial / commercial use. This boundary is located approximately 200-220m north-west of the site for the proposed staff welfare facilities building.


Fig. 12 – Boundary on north-east side if site.


Fig. 13 – Boundary on south-east side of site.


Fig. 14 – Boundary on south-west side of site.


Fig. 15 – Boundary on north-west side of site.

Neighbouring Development

The site sits in a relatively highly developed part of the town where virtually all use is industrial in nature. The area immediately to the north is generally undeveloped until the site of the Spalding Energy Facility (power station) is reached. Other uses locally (to the north) are the District Recycling Centre and the Water Treatment Plant. Development height

locally is as would be expected of industrial storage units with the exception of the chimney flues of the power station which are some of the tallest structures in the district.

Existing access arrangements

Access to the proposed staff welfare facilities building unit for vehicles will be from the south-west through the existing yard. Pedestrian access for staff will again be direct from the adjacent yard.

No new access to the site is required and there will be no changes to the existing access arrangements.

Streetscape / planting

The site sits within an industrial zone which features few trees. There are a small number along the main site access road to the east though these are not of particular significance. The banks of the Vernatt's Drain are soft landscaped and provide a habitat for various animal, bird and plant species. To the south of the proposed site the context is largely building dominated.

Amenities

The site sits close to the town centre and therefore within 2 miles of all amenities.

Views into, through and out of the site

In general, all views from the north (available mostly from private land only) are across the open fields south of the power station and look at the north elevation of the storage warehouses and administration offices on this site (Fig. 16). The buildings on site block all views further south. Views from the site to the north are simply across open fields toward the power station (Fig. 17). That said, the elevation of the proposed staff welfare facilities building, cut in to the earth bank will largely obscure all views to and from the north.


Fig. 16 – View across site from north.


Fig. 17 – View from site looking north.

All views of the site from the south are obscured by the warehouse buildings on this site. All views to the south are likewise obscured. There are no views through the site from the south.

All views of the site from public land to the east are obscured by the warehouse buildings on the adjacent site. Likewise all views from the site to the east are blocked by the warehouses on the adjacent site. There are no views through the site from public land to the east.

Views from the site looking west are across the Vernatt's Drain to the industrial buildings on the opposite side (Figs. 18 & 19). These views are however at least partly obscured by the presence of earth bunds / banks at ground level. Views from the west are available from the riverbank across the site though again these are limited in distance by the buildings on the adjacent site to the east. There are no significant views through the site from public land to the west.


Fig. 18 – View from site looking west.


Fig. 19 – View from site looking west.

Context - Physical

The site is occupied by Fowler Welch and is utilized in connection with their haulage and temperature-controlled food storage business. This site stands within an industrial estate where the majority of sites are in food-related use. The buildings on site are medium-span, light-weight structures typical of those used within the food storage and transportation industry. All development locally generally dates from the mid to late 20th Century.

Context - Social

The site accommodates warehouse and office facilities together with external circulation and parking areas. As such it therefore contributes to the employment core of the town.

Context – Economic

The site employs a significant number of people on both a full and part-time basis and is a business of significant size operating on a national scale.

History - General

Neither the site nor the buildings on it are of any architectural or historic value. All structures date from the mid to late 20th Century and are, in architectural terms, standard grade industrial buildings, utilitarian in nature and appearance.

History - Planning

Over the years a number of planning applications have been submitted relating to various aspects of the broader site though few specifically for the area now proposed for development. The most recent applications related to the undeveloped land area to the north and west of the current proposal which was to be developed as a vehicle parking area. This was approved on under SHDC application reference H16-0930-10 and has since been implemented. There appear to be no further events of significance relative to the planning history of this site.

Site Evaluation

Details of the site and general context have been recorded and analysed within the site observation and analysis above. From those findings the following key statements are identified.

1. The land area available within the site is easily large enough to accommodate a staff welfare facilities building without causing any detrimental impact on either the site or the wider context.

2. The introduction of a purpose-built staff welfare facilities block will greatly improve facilities for all staff and particularly those on the operations side. This will improve provision to that which would be expected of an employer of this size and will assist in the future development of what is a successful local business.

3. The site proposed for the staff welfare facilities block is logical in that it would allow direct access from both the yard areas and the office block. This would allow it to be used by a maximum number of staff and would minimize walking distance from the various work areas on the site. This is considered to be both an operational and safety benefit.

4. The introduction of an external seating area would be of benefit to staff who may spend much time within warehouse accommodation which has limited access to natural light and ventilation. The ability to sit outside in good weather is seen as being of benefit to the health and well-being of the workforce.

5. Redevelopment of the site on this scale would appear wholly appropriate in support of the business of a major local employer.

6. The proposals would require no demolition, only limited earth moving, and would have no detrimental impact upon the existing facility.

7. The introduction of a new building of modest size on this site would not impact upon views to or from the site.

8. With regard to materials the site already features a mixed palette across the range of building stock though colour-coated steel claddings / panels would appear the appropriate choice for a building of this nature.

Design Statement

The following section demonstrates how the conceptual approach has taken account of the identified physical, social and economic context set against development plan policies for design.

Use
The site provides warehousing and logistics facilities for ambient and temperature-controlled food storage and distribution, this includes administration areas for both the Spalding Depot and the wider Fowler Welch network. The development here proposed is entirely ancillary to that which exists and is therefore wholly appropriate for the site.

Amount
The proposal looks to secure approval for a staff welfare facilities building. This building will have an internal footprint of approximately 26.5 x 12.4m and will accommodate lockers, changing areas, showers, toilets and a canteen area. The building dimensions and height are appropriate for the number of people that need to be accommodated. The proposed building is of modest size given the overall site area and is considerably smaller than the major blocks within the wider complex.

Layout
The proposal for the staff welfare facilities block seeks to position it adjacent the yard and central office accommodation. In this location it will be close to the areas it will serve but will also be clear of the main vehicular circulation zones. The plan design of the building is specific for the accommodation it offers.

Scale
As previously stated, the site features a number of large buildings that are typical of the type of facility found within a food storage and haulage depot. The building here proposed provides support facilities and will be much smaller than the main blocks. This is however logical and appropriate for the facilities now required.

Landscaping
Given that the site is industrial in use there is no real requirement to, or benefit in, providing a significant planting scheme. The area to the north-east of the proposed development site will remain soft surfaced and will therefore continue to provide some ecological benefit, as will the nearby river bank.

Appearance
Elevation proposals are included as part of the application drawings pack. These demonstrate that the proposed block is appropriate in scale and general appearance for an industrial site.

Access Statement:

The Staff Welfare Facilities Building will generally only be accessed on foot. The people frequenting this building will be drivers, warehouse operatives, office staff and accompanied visitors. The main entrance has been designed to be accessible and in addition a unisex accessible toilet cubicle is included. The detailed design of the building will avoid steps at personnel door thresholds and in general openings will be sufficiently wide to permit access by people in wheelchairs. The detailed design of the building will, where practicable, be progressed in accordance with Approved Document M of the Building Regulations together with BS 8300.

Demolition Statement:

The proposal does not require any demolition, only limited earth moving.

Flood Risk Assessment:

It is acknowledged that this site lies within a Flood Zone 3 area as identified within the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Maps, however referring to the may by Royal Haskoning DHV entitled 'Update to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Spalding showing Residual Peak Depths for Spalding Year 2115 0.1% Event Probability' this indicates the area to the north of the existing office block (i.e. the proposed site) as being unshaded (i.e. no flooding). The relevant edge of the yard to the south is shaded in yellow indicating a flood depth of 0 to 0.25m. In addition to this the proposal is one that would not be particularly sensitive to flooding.

The yard in the vicinity of the proposed new building occurs at nominally 4.10m AOD with the site currently covered by an earth bank rising from 4.30m AOD to 7.70m AOD. The existing main central office facility stands immediately to the south of the site with a finished floor level at 4.585m AOD. It is proposed that an area for the building be created by cutting into the bank, creating a hardstanding at nom. 4.30m AOD on to which the building will be mounted. Taking account of the depth of the support structure and floor construction this will result in a finished floor level of nominally 4.585m AOD which will match the ground floor of the main administration office building adjacent.

On this basis the applicant considers an in-depth, formal Flood Risk Assessment unnecessary.

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