

# Planning Statement

Full Application: Extension of a commercial building including parking and turning area, as well as landscape and biodiversity enhancements

17<sup>th</sup> February 2025 – David Harris-Watkins PgD MRICS

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# Planning Statement

Including combined Design and Access Statement

## 1.0 Introduction

This statement has been submitted by Andrew Large Surveyors Ltd on behalf of the applicant Mr. Pickup. This statement relates to a full application for the **Extension of a commercial building including parking, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.**

Alongside this statement the following documents are being submitted in support of the application:

- Site Location Plan
- Proposed Site Layout – Including Visibility Splay
- Existing Elevations and Floor Plan
- Proposed Elevations and Floor Plan
- BNG Calculation – Small Sites Metric
- BNG Minimum Requirements Statement
- BNG Baseline Plan
- Speed Survey

## 2.0 Background

The site comprises a small commercial business park, with a range of buildings formerly forming a farm and stable yard having been converted over the last few decades, primarily into small rental units. The business park is a successful enterprise, and the applicant is inundated with requests for additional units both via their commercial agent and also through contacts locally. The most recently erected building 22/00533/CONDIT is fully occupied. The applicant is therefore seeking for additional units to fulfil the local demand.

## 3.0 Site Appraisal

### 3.1 Physical and Environmental Context

The existing building comprises a steel portal frame building with concrete block walls clad over in box profile sheeting. The development will extend this building to add two further small units. The land which the building is to be located on was formerly used as an equestrian paddock associated with former stabling at the site, but is no longer in active production or is managed.

The wider site is bordered by a mature native species hedgerow. The biodiversity enhancements proposed are to supplement the existing screening of the site with a combination of mixed scrub and native tree planting.

### 3.2 Socio Economic Context

The proposed development will have both short and long-term economic benefits. In the long term, small commercial units provide employment opportunities for local residents, reducing rural unemployment. Small businesses also foster local spending, and the size of the units are commensurate with start-ups and entrepreneurship, allowing people to start business without high costs. In the short term it has provided work for those in the design and construction industries locally, though the construction of the building.

## 4.0 Design Component

### 4.1 Use

The proposal is for the extension of an existing commercial building.

### 4.2 Amount

The Gross Internal Area of the proposed extension is 138.9m<sup>2</sup>

The Gross External Area of the proposed extension is 144.5m<sup>2</sup>

### 4.3 Layout

The extension will comprise two units, each with their own toilet. Parking will be to the front of the building where the existing yard will be extended, and the existing green metal fencing will be relocated back to include the extension.

### 4.4 Scale

The Eaves height ranges from 4.95m – 5.41m due to the slight fall in ground levels from the front to the rear elevation of the building, with the ridge height being 5.94m as measured from the ground level of the existing yard.

### 4.5 Appearance & Materials

The extensions materials will be as per the existing building.

Materials:

- Walls: Concrete block overclad with juniper green box profile sheeting
- Roof: Juniper green box profile sheeting
- Doors: Solid white personnel door
- Windows: White UPVC
- Gutting and downpipes: Black UPVC

### 4.6 Landscaping and Biodiversity

The wider site is bordered by a mature native species hedgerow, the biodiversity enhancements proposed are to supplement the existing screening of the site with a combination of mixed scrub planting with native tree planting also.

The aim of the landscaping impacts of the biodiversity enhancements is that they will mature and improve the screening of the existing site from the wider area, whilst also being of benefit to biodiversity.

### 4.7 Drainage Strategy and Flood Risk

The proposal includes the provision of additional toilets (Male and female toilet in each unit) to provide private facilities for each of the future occupiers. The site is served by an existing Package Treatment Plant that has capacity for the minimal increase in flows to be generated by the proposed extension.

## 5.0 Access Component – Transport Assessment

### 5.1 Trip Assessment

The proposed development will result in the creation of vehicle trips (two-way movements) through the provision of two additional small units at the site.

In association with the planning application 21/00657/FUL, which is the building to be extended, the Leicestershire Highways Authority was consulted and stated the following in their consultation response

*The applicant has confirmed that there are currently 10 units on the site which are occupied by 9 people. The breakdown of the traffic movements from these units is as follows:*

- *Each person comes in and out once per day:  $9 \times 2 = 18$  (two-way)*
- *The units are occupied 5 or 6 days a week:  $6 \times 18 = 108$*
- *The units have on average one delivery per week =  $9 \times 2 = 18$  (two-way)*

*The LHA understands that some units do not have deliveries each week, while others may have two in one week and none for a few weeks. Therefore, the LHA is content that the existing units on the site would usually generate about 126 movements per week.*

*As part of the current planning application the applicant has said that the proposed development would have three units, which would be let to two occupiers. The trip generation is outlined below:*

- *Movements per day:  $2 \times 2 = 4$  (two-way)*
- *Movements per week:  $4 \times 6 = 24$  (two-way)*
- *Deliveries two per week:  $2 \times 2 = 4$  (two-way)*

*Based on the information provided the LHA predict that the proposed development would generate a maximum of 28 (two-way) trips per week.*

21/00657/FUL was approved however the constructed building is only utilised by one occupier, though comprising of two members of staff. As such, the anticipated increase in vehicle movements is considered relatively accurate. On this basis the site generates 154 movements per week, approximately 26 per day.

As the extension is for a further two units of the building to be extended, it is anticipated that the approval of the application would generate a maximum of an additional 28 movements per week, on average 4.7 per day, which is only a minimal increase.

### 5.2 Access Geometry

The access has a minimum width of 5.1m for 15m from the highway boundary, and a kerbside width of 10+ meters (the access is not symmetrical because of access to units to the south). The largest vehicle anticipated to utilise the development is a Luton Van, for deliveries.

### 5.3 Visibility Splay

The access point sits on a section of Markfield Road that is restricted to 50mph. However, Manual for Streets and the Leicestershire Highways Design Guide states measured speeds should be taken into account following a speed survey. A survey has been carried out by Leicestershire County Council

Network Data and Collection Team showing 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds below the national speed limit, as follows:

- Northbound: 41.0 mph
- Southbound: 44.1 mph

Splays Required:

- Northbound (looking right/southwest out of the access): 2.4m x 107.6m
- Southbound (looking left/northeast out of the access): 2.4m x 122.5m

The submitted Proposed Site Layout demonstrates these are achievable in either direction.

In association with the planning application 21/00657/FUL, which is the building to be extended, the Leicestershire Highways Authority was consulted and stated the following in their consultation response:

*After a site visit the LHA is content that the visibility splay of at least 160m to the north of the site access can be achieved, although it would help if some of the existing vegetation was removed.*

*The visibility splay to the south of the access is 2.4m x 125m. These visibility splays are in accordance with the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide based on measured 85th percentile vehicle speeds.*

*On balance the LHA considers that given the position of the site access on the outside of the bend and the low number of predicted trips the site access arrangements are acceptable to serve the proposed development.*

#### 5.4 Parking

4 parking spaces are provided adjacent to the building with more than sufficient turning area.

#### 5.5 Waste and Recycling Collection

Waste will be collected in line with existing waste collections for the existing units at Heather Close Business Park.

#### 5.6 Accident Record

There are no reported incidents within 500m of the site access in the 10 years as noted on CrashMap.co.uk

#### 5.7 Highways Impact

The increase in vehicle movements generated by the proposal is minimal, whilst the site access can demonstrate safe visibility at the access point. The proposed development is essentially the same level of usage that was found acceptable in the Leicestershire Highways Authorities assessment of 21/00657/FUL. Therefore, it is considered that the impacts of the development on highway safety would not be unacceptable and impacts on the road network would not be severe.

## 6.0 Planning Policy

### 6.1 National Planning Policy Framework

#### *Supporting a prosperous rural economy*

*88. Planning policies and decisions should enable:*

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings;*
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.*

*89. Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.*

The site is already a successful business park, catering for small business enterprises. It is important for commercial properties in the district to cover a range of sizes and locations in order to provide diversity of choice in the area. These include units closer to the homes of those who run the businesses in rural areas and also those who have businesses that would not be compatible of larger business park sites, many of which do not provide smaller units such as those at the site.

### 6.2 Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy 2006 -2026

#### **Policy 21: National Forest**

*To support the implementation of the National Forest to the north east of the borough, proposals that contribute to the delivery of the National Forest Strategy (increasing woodland cover; enhancing biodiversity; developing a new woodland economy for timber products and wood fuel energy; outdoor recreational and sports provision; and tourism developments, especially overnight quality accommodation linked to tourism in the Forest) will be supported provided that:*

- The siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriately related to its setting within the Forest*
- The development respects the character and appearance of the wider countryside and*
- The development does not adversely affect the existing facilities and working landscape of either the Forest or the wider countryside*

*Within the National Forest new developments will be required to reflect the Forest context in their accompanying landscape proposals. Developments shall provide on-site or nearby landscaping that meets the National Forest development planting guidelines. Landscaping will generally involve woodland planting, but can also include creation and management of other appropriate habitats, open*

*space provision and the provision of new recreational facilities. The appropriate mix of landscaping features will depend upon the setting and the opportunities that the site presents.*

*In exceptional circumstances, where planting and landscaping cannot be accommodated on or nearby the development site due to lack of land, a commuted sum will be negotiated. This will be towards the cost of purchasing land for planting, creating a new woodland, providing public access to it and maintaining the site for at least 5 years. Commuted sums will normally be paid to the local authority, who in partnership with the National Forest Company will decide how they should be utilised.*

The proposal includes a landscaping and biodiversity enhancement scheme that will complement the existing mature hedgerows surrounding the site, which primarily includes mixed scrub and native tree planting. The proposal does not include the removal of any existing trees. The enhancement scheme will be secured for a minimum of 30 years.

### 6.3 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2006 - 2026

#### **DM4 - Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation**

*To protect its intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character, the countryside will first and foremost be safeguarded from unsustainable development. Development in the countryside will be considered sustainable where:*

- a) It is for outdoor sport or recreation purposes (including ancillary buildings) and it can be demonstrated that the proposed scheme cannot be provided within or adjacent to settlement boundaries; or*
- b) The proposal involves the change of use, re-use or extension of existing buildings which lead to the enhancement of the immediate setting; or*
- c) It significantly contributes to economic growth, job creation and/or diversification of rural businesses; or*
- d) It relates to the provision of stand-alone renewable energy developments in line with Policy DM2: Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development; or*
- e) It relates to the provision of accommodation for a rural worker in line with Policy DM5 - Enabling Rural Worker Accommodation.*

*and:*

- i. It does not have a significant adverse effect on the intrinsic value, beauty, open character and landscape character of the countryside; and*
- ii. It does not undermine the physical and perceived separation and open character between settlements; and*
- iii. It does not create or exacerbate ribbon development;*
- iv. If within a Green Wedge, it protects its role and function in line with Core Strategy Policies 6 and 9; and*
- v. If within the National Forest, it contributes to the delivery of the National Forest Strategy in line with Core Strategy Policy 21*

The proposal lies outside any defined settlement boundary and is therefore within the countryside and policy DM4 is applicable. The proposed development comprises an extension of an existing rural building, including landscaping and biodiversity enhancement which will be secured for a minimum of 30 years. When mature these enhancements will help screen the proposed extension as well as the existing site from the wider countryside, enhancing the immediate setting.

### **DM6 - Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest**

*Development proposals must demonstrate how they conserve and enhance features of nature conservation and geological value including proposals for their long term future management.*

*Major developments in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to restore, enhance and create valuable habitats, ecological networks and ecosystem services.*

*Proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity or geological interest will be permitted where they comply with other relevant policies in the plan.*

*On site features should be retained, buffered and managed favourably to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. The removal or damage of such features shall only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated the proposal will result in no net loss of biodiversity and where the integrity of local ecological networks can be secured.*

*If the harm cannot be prevented, adequately mitigated against or appropriate compensation measures provided, planning permission will be refused.*

A BNG metric is submitted alongside the application showing the development will lead to an increase in biodiversity value of the site in excess of 10%.

### **DM7 Preventing Pollution and Flooding**

*Adverse impacts from pollution and flooding will be prevented by ensuring that development proposals demonstrate that:*

- a) It will not adversely impact the water quality, ecological value or drainage function of water bodies in the borough;*
- b) Appropriate containment solutions for oils, fuels and chemicals are provided;*
- c) All reasonable steps are taken through design, siting and technological solutions to ensure the abatement of obtrusive light to avoid sky glow, glare and light intrusion;*
- d) It would not cause noise or vibrations of a level which would disturb areas that are valued for their tranquillity in terms of recreation or amenity;*
- e) Appropriate remediation of contaminated land in line with minimum national standards is undertaken;*
- f) It will not contribute to poor air quality;*
- g) It will not result in land instability or further intensify existing unstable land; and*
- h) The development doesn't create or exacerbate flooding by being located away from areas of flood risk unless adequately mitigated against in line with National Policy.*

The proposed development will connect into existing foul and surface water systems that meet current standards. The surface water system will be upgraded in order to accommodate the existing flows, whilst the existing package treatment plant has capacity to take on the additional minimal load as a result of the development.

The site is also located in Flood Zone 1 and is not at risk of surface water flooding in accordance with current EA flood mapping.



### DM10 Development and Design

Developments will be permitted providing that the following requirements are met:

- a) It would not have a significant adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of nearby residents and occupiers of adjacent buildings, including matters of lighting, air quality (including odour), noise, vibration and visual intrusion;
- b) The amenity of occupiers of the proposed development would not be adversely affected by activities in the vicinity of the site;
- c) It complements or enhances the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials and architectural features;
- d) The use and application of building materials respects the materials of existing, adjoining/neighbouring buildings and the local area generally;
- e) It incorporates a high standard of landscaping where this would add to the quality of the design and siting;
- f) It maximises opportunities for the conservation of energy and resources through design, layout, orientation and construction in line with Core Strategy Policy 24;
- g) Where parking is to be provided charging points for electric or low emission vehicles are included where feasible;
- h) An appropriate Sustainable Drainage Scheme is submitted to and approved by the relevant Authority. Schemes should incorporate wildlife areas, ponds, swales and permeable paving where appropriate;
- i) It maximises natural surveillance and incorporates the principles of Secured by Design and has considered the incorporation of fire safety measures.

*In exceptional circumstances where outstanding, innovative design is demonstrated (particularly where high levels of sustainability are an integral feature), applications will be considered favourably, even where this may result in some limited conflict with the above criteria.*

The proposed development replicates the existing materials and design used for the existing building and found elsewhere on the site. The nearest dwelling located at the site entrance is in the same ownership as the rest of the application site, and in any event the extension is located on the far side of the business park.

### DM17 Highways and Transportation

Development proposals will be supported where they:

- a) Seek to make the best use of existing public transport services and, where appropriate, provide opportunities for improving and sustaining the viability of those services;

- b) Seek to ensure that there is convenient and safe access for walking and cycling to services and facilities;*
- c) Demonstrate that there is not a significant adverse impact upon highway safety; and in the case of development that generates significant movement;*
- d) That the development is located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised;*
- e) Where it can be demonstrated that the residual cumulative impacts of development on the transport network are not severe.*

*Where appropriate, improvements will be required to be undertaken to the highways and transportation network to limit any significant impacts arising from the development (taking into account cost effectiveness).*

*All proposals for new development and changes of use should reflect the highway design standards that are set out in the most up to date guidance adopted by the relevant highways authority.*

Please see section 5.0 for further detail.

#### **DM18 Vehicle Parking Standards**

*All proposals for new development will be required to provide an appropriate level of parking provision justified by an assessment of the site location, type of housing, other modes of transport available (e.g. public transport and cycle provision) and appropriate design. Any development will be expected to provide disabled parking provision.*

*Developments within Hinckley Town Centre should demonstrate that they would not exacerbate existing problems in the vicinity with increased on-street parking.*

The proposed development provides 4 parking spaces, with 2 spaces allocated to each of the units.

#### **DM20 Provision of Employment Sites**

*The development of new employment sites for B1, B2 and B8 uses outside of allocated employment areas will be supported where they stand within settlement boundaries or on previously developed land.*

*Proposals which stand outside the settlement boundary and on Greenfield sites will only be found acceptable where it is demonstrated that there are no suitable alternative sites identified sequentially in the following locations:*

- a) Within settlement boundaries;*
- b) On previously developed land;*
- c) Adjacent to existing employment areas;*
- d) Adjacent to settlement boundaries.*

*Non-ancillary B1(a) office development is considered a Main Town Centre use and as such is excluded from the provisions of this policy and should be considered under Policy DM21: Locating Sustainable Town Centre Uses.*

The officers report for 21/00657/FUL states:

*Policy DM20 of the SADMP seeks that new employment sites are first and foremost provided within settlement boundaries, and then previously developed land which should be applied sequentially. In addition the principle of light industrial use on this land has already been accepted and commercial enterprise has been present for nearly 30 years. The proposal is therefore in compliance with policy DM20 of the SADMP.*

The site is the extension of an existing building which forms part of an existing employment area, comprising Heather Close Business Park.

## 7.0 Conclusion

The proposed development will comprise a modest extension to an existing building, providing relatively small commercial units ideal for start-ups and small business enterprise. The proposed development also includes a scheme of landscaping and biodiversity enhancements that will result in an enhancement of the immediate setting through providing additional screening for the existing site from the wider area, as such the proposal adheres to policy DM4 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies. The proposals also result in a biodiversity net gain above the legislative minimum requirement.

Taking into consideration all matters outlined in this report into the planning balance, the site and development is sustainable in terms of its socio-economic and environmental impacts, and there are no material considerations against the application, it should therefore be granted consent without delay.

Signed.....

David Harris-Watkins BA(Hons) PgD MRICS