

Design and Access Statement

Client

Eurospark Ltd
Island Lane Farm
Ashby Road
Stapleton
LE9 8JE

Project

New showroom facility with office space.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this statement is to outline the design, access, and planning considerations for a proposed extension to existing industrial buildings (B8 use class) for use as a showroom with associated administration/office areas.
- 1.2 The applicant, Eurospark Ltd specialises in the supply of EDM machinery and associated consumables, for use in metal fabrication and the aim of the proposed development is to provide a facility for the display and demonstration of these products.
- 1.3 The proposal seeks planning permission to extend the existing buildings currently operating within use class B8 as workshops and storage facilities, to provide a location for the demonstration and display of equipment which does not impact existing business operations and addresses the health and safety risks associated with the visiting public interacting with on-site operations.
- 1.4 An appraisal undertaken to assess the viability and impact of accommodating the required showroom within existing buildings concluded that it would not be either practical or commercially viable to re-purpose or sub-divide the existing space. This is primarily due to the unacceptable loss of storage or workshop space which is currently fully utilised, but also the suitability for purpose of the existing buildings, particularly in terms of access, site safety and the practicalities of upgrading the existing building fabric in order to achieve current building regulations standards.

2 Planning History

2.1 Planning history - dwelling:

- Lounge and bathroom extension:87/00077/4 | Status: Planning Permission
- Two storey extension to dwelling:97/00491/FUL | Status: Refused
- Two storey extension:98/00427/FUL | Status: Planning Permission
- Erection of detached triple garage:03/00904/FUL | Status: Planning Permission
- One and a half storey side extension:21/00181/HOU | Status: Planning Permission
- Demolition of existing bay window, single storey side extension & new carport to side of garage: 23/01193/HOU | Status: Planning Permission

2.2 Planning history - commercial use:

- Change of use of outbuildings to storage workshop and office: 02/00613/COU | Status: Refused
- Change of use of outbuildings to storage workshop and office and improvements to farm access: 02/01015/COU | Status: Planning Permission
- Variation of condition 1 of application 02/01015/cou to allow continued use of outbuildings for storage workshop and office and improvements to farm access: 05/00029/CONDIT | Status: Planning Permission
- Removal of condition no.1 of planning permission 05/00029/condit: 11/00006/CONDIT | Status: Planning Permission

3 Site

- 3.1 The site is located to the north of the village of Stapleton adjacent to Ashby Road, within the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough.
- 3.2 The site lies outside the settlement area of Stapleton and is located in a region of open countryside which contains a number of established businesses in isolated groupings located along Ashby Road. These predominantly consist of agricultural, retail and industrial developments and the application site is a typical example of this type of development.
- 3.3 The application site is set back approximately 150m from Ashby Road and a public footpath is located along the northern boundary of the site (T67).
- 3.4 The surrounding area contains few dwellings, mainly farmsteads or buildings of agricultural origin. The closest dwelling is located north west of the existing site, approximately 100m from the proposed extension.
- 3.5 The development site is within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse under the applicant's ownership (outlined in blue on the Site Location Plan) and consists of a detached dwelling located in the centre of the site, a detached garage to the south of the dwelling and a stable block to the rear, generally of masonry with slate pitched roofing. Attached to the stable block are a number of small brick-built outbuildings which form part of the commercial (B8) use of the site along with two agricultural steel-framed buildings in blockwork and metal cladding. The steel clad buildings are a mix of 'Dutch Barn' style, with a curved main roof structure and lean-to, along with a pitched roof portal frame building to the west.

4 Access

- 4.1 The existing site is accessed from the west side of Ashby Road and provides separate access for the dwelling and the business. The dwelling is accessed via a driveway located to the south of the site and the business is accessed via a driveway to the north.
- 4.2 Access to the showroom is via the existing entrance to the north of the application site and adjacent parking provision is available. The showroom is accessed from the car park via a pedestrian gate located to the side of the vehicle gates.
- 4.3 The purpose of the proposed showroom is to increase the efficiency of existing operations and it is not expected that visitor numbers or staff levels will increase as a result. However, on-site parking provision for staff visitors including the additional proposed spaces adjacent to the extension would be sufficient to accommodate the expected growth for a business of this nature.
- 4.4 The existing parking provision to the north of the site is sufficient for a minimum of seven vehicles and allows for the turning of goods vehicles. The existing tarmac surface shall be extended (using similar surface materials and ground build-up) to allow for an additional three vehicles, including two disabled spaces, with the turning facility retained.

5 Design Principles

- 5.1 The proposed extension is a portal – framed building with a pitched roof matching the pitch of adjacent buildings. It is set back from the adjoining building and is subservient in form with a proposed ridge height lower than the apex of the adjoining unit.
- 5.2 Internally, the ground floor shall be used for the display and demonstration of EDM equipment with an area set aside for administrative purposes. The showroom has a linking door allowing staff access between units.
- 5.3 Allowance has been made for the installation of a mezzanine floor to be used as office space and for light storage use. Located at each or either end of the building, as illustrated on the submitted plans, the mezzanine shall have a maximum footprint of 50sqm, equating to approximately half the ground floor area.
- 5.4 Proposed external materials include metal cladding to match the existing industrial units on site, a glazed customer entrance door and a roller –shutter loading door. High level windows are proposed to aid natural light whilst reducing the impact of glare and to maximise the amount of wall space available for display. The windows shall also provide daylighting to the mezzanine areas.
- 5.5 The proposals include the re-positioning of the existing iron entrance gates currently installed between the two steel framed units at the northern entrance adjacent to the car park, including a dedicated pedestrian gate for access to the showroom. The gates are a security measure and will enable the entire site to be locked when not in use.

6 Visual Impact

- 6.1 The application site is surrounded by agricultural fields and is visible from Ashby Road and the adjacent public footpath. A landscape buffer of mature trees and hedgerow provides significant screening from Ashby Road along the eastern site boundary and further landscaping to the north ensures visual separation from users of the footpath.
- 6.2 The proposed extension shall reflect the materials of the existing adjacent buildings and at a scale and form which is in keeping with the character and appearance of the existing development.

7 Environmental Impact

- 7.1 The proposed development site is located on modified grassland to the north of the site, adjacent to the car park and existing buildings.
- 7.2 The development will not result in the removal of trees or hedgerow.
- 7.3 The development will not impact the site-wide ecology. Established vehicular access shall be used and all building materials will be stored on existing hardstanding/buildings within the site.

- 7.4 A baseline habitat survey of the site was undertaken by a qualified ecologist in order to provide the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations and assessment. The completed Statutory Biodiversity Metric for the pre-development and post-development value of the on-site and off-site habitats is included within the submitted documents including an Indicative Biodiversity Gain Plan.
- 7.5 The proposed building will conform to or improve upon current building regulations requirements concerning thermal performance and sustainability standards.

8 Planning Policy

8.1 Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy 2006-2026

The Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy was adopted in the 2009. The Development Plan also consists of Development Management Policies DPD adopted in July 2016. The following policies of the Development Plan are relevant to the determination of this application:

DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
DM4 – Safeguarding the Countryside and Settlement Separation
DM6 – Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest
DM10 – Development and Design
DM17 – Policy DM17: Highways and Transportation
DM18 – Vehicle Parking Standards
DM20 – Provision of Employment Sites

8.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)

Paragraph 2 of the Framework states that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The NPPF encourages supporting the rural economy by enabling the development of a wide range of business and employment opportunities and emphasizes the importance of sustaining and enhancing rural businesses.

The NPPF advocates for development that is appropriate to the character of the rural area. It suggests that planning policies should consider the role of local businesses and the need to balance economic growth with environmental sustainability.

Development should be directed to locations where it can be most sustainably integrated with the existing rural community, particularly in larger rural settlements or on the edges of settlements.

Paragraph 88 states that planning policies and decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings and also the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The proposed development is for the extension of an existing building in the countryside with established B8 use. The proposed extension will provide a suitable showroom and demonstration facility to support current business operations. The display and demonstration of equipment is a key part of the existing business, and is currently carried out in various unsuitable locations within the existing buildings. Provision of a designated facility will provide much needed physical separation from the day to day operations of the business for the visiting public and a more sustainable, comfortable and generally fit-for-purpose environment.
- 9.2 The new facility shall also provide an opportunity to maximise the efficiency of current business operations, rationalise workshop and storage facilities, make better use of existing space and provide potential future employment benefits and room for economic growth.