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RGP ARCHITECTS

Garden Centre Extension, Woodlands Nurseries, Ashby Road, Stapleton

Design and Access Statement

Applicant:	Wyvale Garden Centres Ltd
Architect:	The Ratcliffe Groves Partnership
Planning Consultant	White Young Green

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07 February 2008
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Minor corrections

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RGP Application drawings

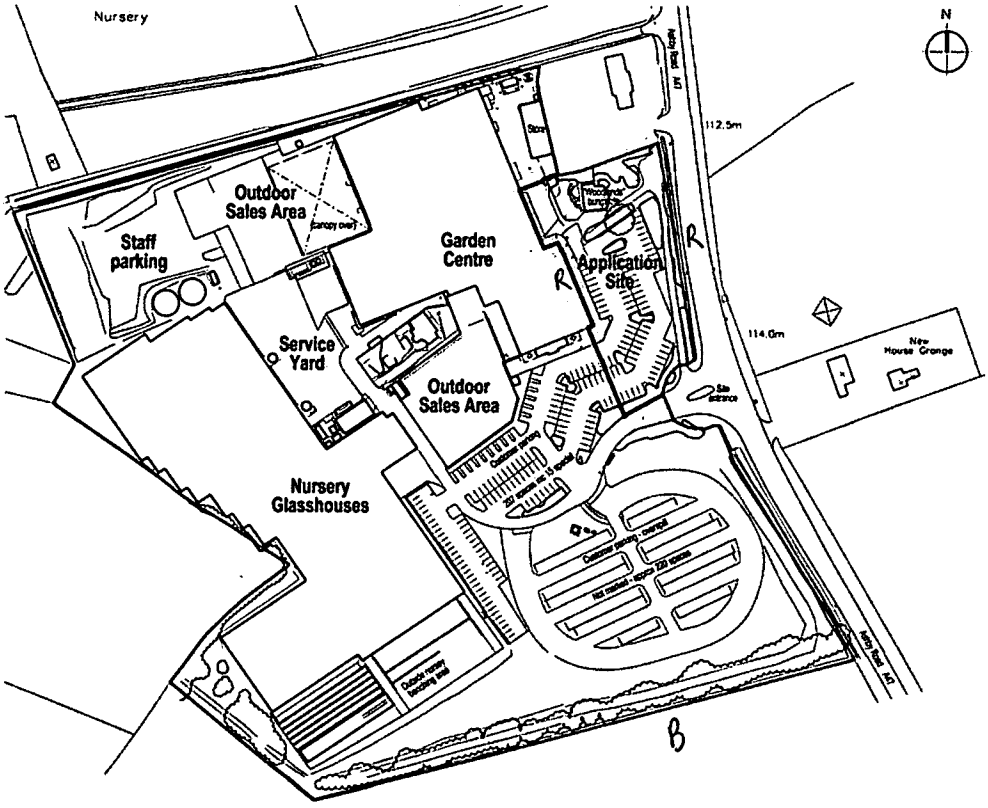
1.0. Introduction

1.1 This design statement is in support of a Planning Application for the extension of the existing Garden Centre building along with associated external works. The existing entrance / exit arrangements along the existing frontage will be revised as part of the proposals, servicing will be unaffected.

2.0 Assessment and Physical Context

2.1 The curtilage of the works, within the redline boundary, is approx. 0.47 hectares situated within the overall site of approx. 6.64 hectares. The Redline boundary includes an area for alterations to the parking / service road areas and stopping up of the existing bungalow driveway.

2.2 The Garden Centre site is located on the West side of the A447 trunk road approx. 1 mile north of Stapleton. The surrounding area is a flat open agricultural landscape, the only buildings in the immediate 0.5km vicinity being occasional detached dwellings, scattered agricultural buildings and farmsteads.



2.3 The Garden Centre is accessed from the A447 Ashby Road running approx. north – south along the eastern boundary of the site. There is a public car park and service traffic share the same access with parking areas adjacent on bothe sides of the entrance, the service traffic continuing through to segregated service yards. Beyond the road is open agricultural land with a single detached dwelling plot (New House Grange) opposite the site entrance.

2.4 The southern side of the Centre is bounded by open agricultural land.

2.5 The western boundary consists of open agricultural land and a adjacent plot containing a dwelling (Nine Acres) and series of outbuildings used for business purposes.

2.6 The site is bounded on the immediate North side by an access lane to the plot noted above, and beyond by agricultural land with a working farmstead (Woodside Farm). The North-Western corner of the block is occupied by a large dwelling plot accessed off Ashby Road.

2.7 The boundaries to all sides are formed alongside hedgerows and narrow perimeter tree bands to the adjacent fields. These hedgerows are of varying age, size and state of repair; and are not consistently on the Garden Centre side of the boundary line.

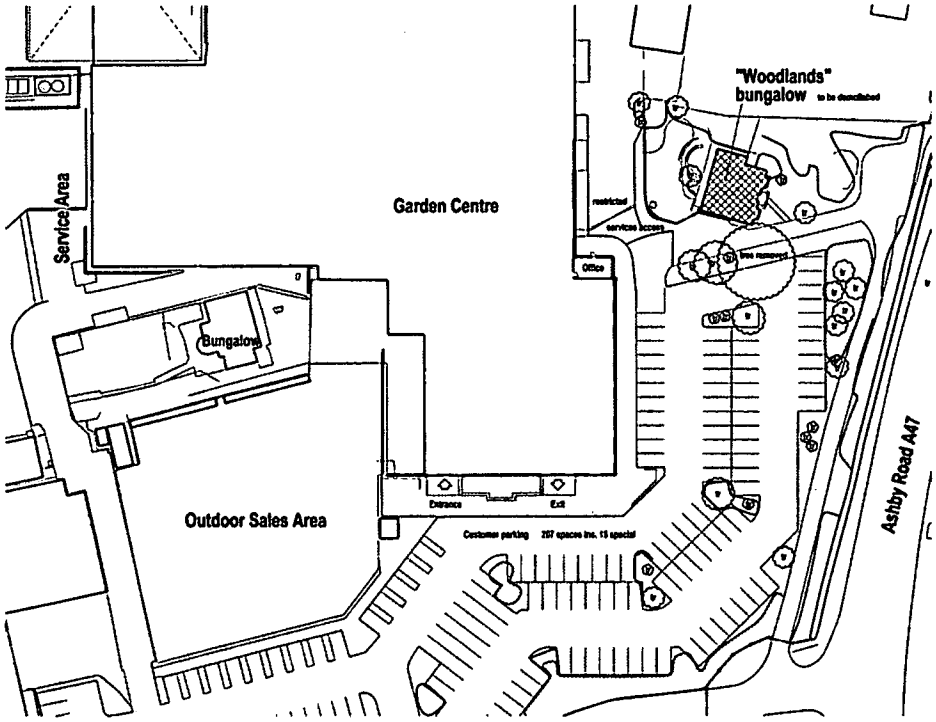
2.8 On-site parking is split into 3 distinct areas: A) The permanent tarmac areas immediately in alongside the buildings – 180 spaces including 18 or 10% special bays. B) Overspill parking in the grassed landscape area to the South-East corner of the site. This is not permanently surfaced or marked out – approx 220 spaces, but with provision to spill over further onto the grassed areas. C) Staff parking in an area to the North-West of the site, accessed through the Service Yard.

3.0 Site Evaluation and Layout

3.1 The Garden Centre is split into 4 distinct zones with effective separation between the public and staff /service areas: A) Public parking, permanent surface and temporary hardcore areas, including adjacent grassed and landscape areas. B) Public retail areas, framed glasshouse and other buildings, external sales areas. C) Nursery buildings. D) Service yards, storage and staff parking areas.

3.2 The proposals for the main building extension are designed to have a limited impact on the existing layout of the site. The extension is set out alongside the main building on an area of existing parking and plot containing a detached dwelling used by the site mangement.

3.3 The servicing to the main indoor / outdoor sales areas and nursey glasshouse is from a central service yard between the two main building blocks. There is a small secondary service yard to the North-East corner of the complex which serves some ancillary buildings and the adjacent customer restaurant. Access to this for small vehicles, refuse trucks and fire tenders is maintained in the proposals.



Existing site plan (not to scale)

Site Photographs

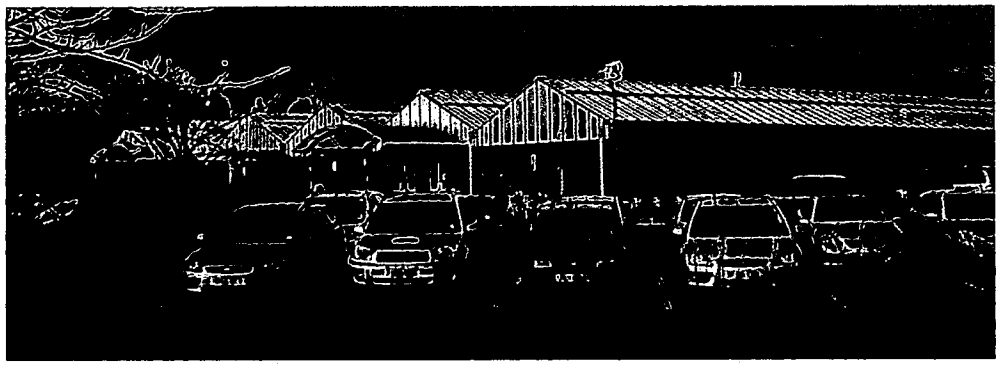


Photo 1 – Looking across existing entrance frontage. Extension site to right

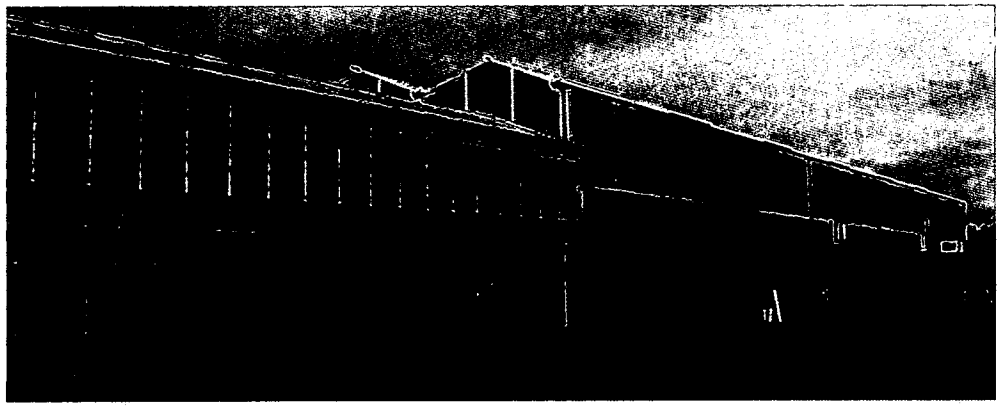


Photo 2 – Looking down side of existing building towards side yard

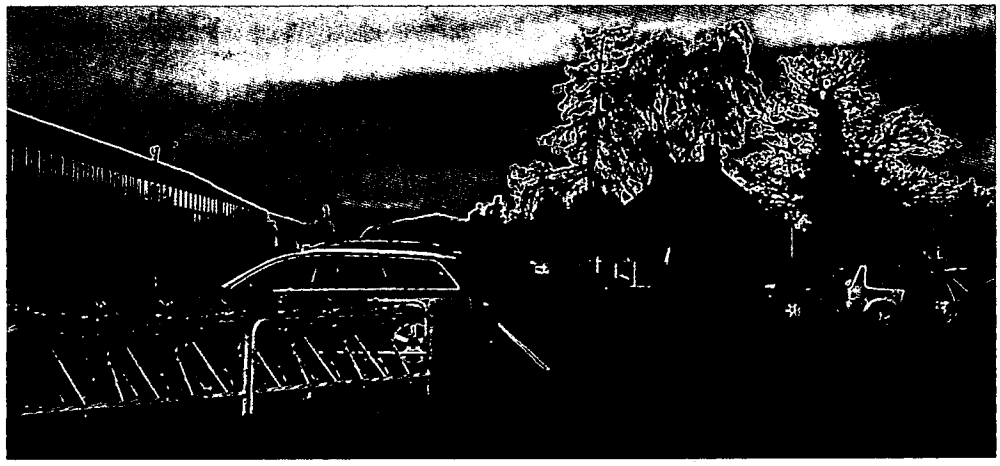


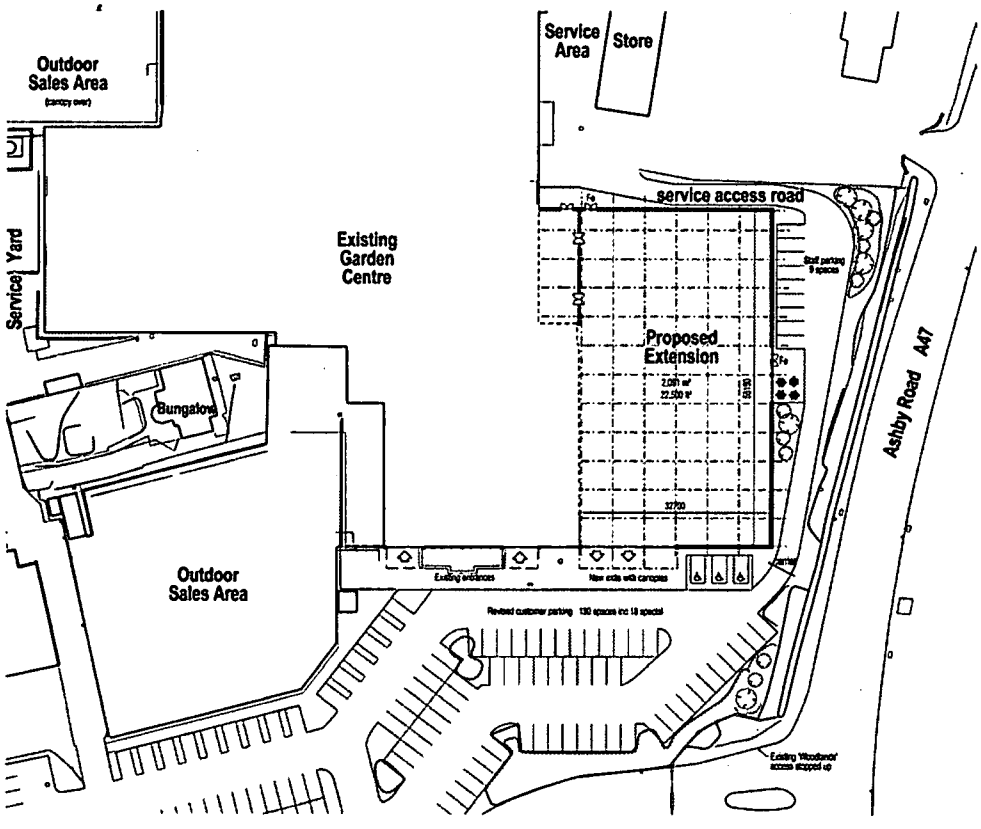
Photo 3 – Looking across extension site towards 'Woodlands'

4.0 Building Design

4.1 The existing Garden Centre and Nursery buildings are single storey mainly medium height lightweight steel framed glasshouse structures with a mixture of glazed panel and brick panel walls. Some later infill or extension blocks are single storey masonry structures with flat roofs.

4.2 The scope of the proposals is to extend the main internal retail building including the location of entrance / exits into the new frontage. The extension in particular enables the internal checkout area to be rationalised and extended to cope with peak-time pressures.

4.3 The form of the extension closely follows that of the existing building with a series of pitched roof bays running back from the frontage; the main structure being an economical portal frame rather than lightweight steel framed trusses. It is proposed that the extension external elements will be insulated to current standards with insulated roof panels rather than the un-insulated glazing of the existing. The faces of the lower walls will be brickwork to match the existing masonry panels.

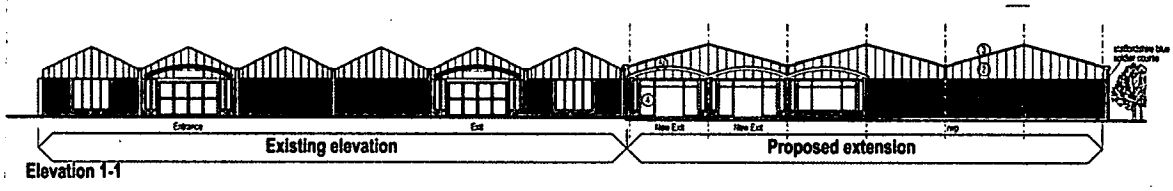


Proposed site plan (not to scale)

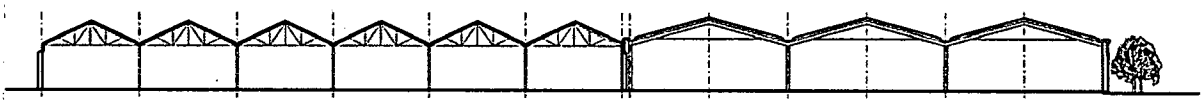
4.4 The entrance doors and canopies will be retained, with a new set of matching doors and canopies built into the new extension frontage to provide more flexibility in the checkout and exit area.

4.5 A secure side access road has been maintained to the existing rear yard to the North-East of the existing building. This will enable small service vehicles access to the ancillary stores off that yard as well as catering for refuse trucks and fire tenders complete access to that side of the buildings.

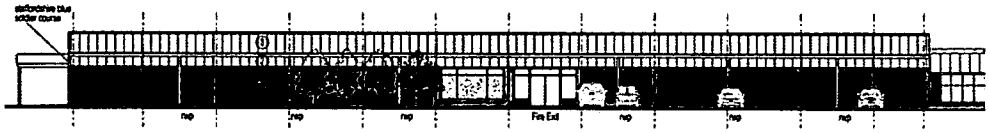
4.6 The car parking bays immediately alongside the extended frontage will be realigned to suit the new entrances, with an overall loss of 27 parking spaces from the permanent car parking zone alongside the buildings. This will be partially balanced by provision of a further 9 permanent staff parking spaces alongside the extension. Minor alterations to the layout of the overspill parking area will compensate for the other lost spaces.



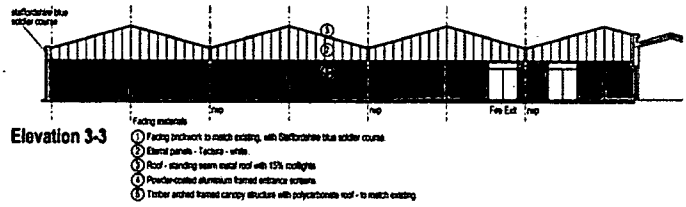
Elevation 1-1



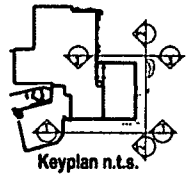
Typical section A-A



Elevation 2-2



Elevation 3-3



Keyplan n.t.s.

Proposed Elevations (not to scale)

5.0 Accessibilty Statement

5.1. The proposals will maintain the current satisfactory accessibility and inclusive access for the Garden Centre which has been considered throughout the design process for the alterations. The internal layout and fittings of the public and staff areas of the new tenancies will comply with the requirements of Part M of the building regulations.

5.2. Although the numbers are reduced, the basis of the existing car parking layout generally is unaltered except for the re-setting out of parking spaces away from the building frontages. The current walkway across the building front will be extended across the front of the extension to suit the relocated entrances. This, along with an increase of 3 bays results in better disabled parking provision for visitors.

5.3 The current walkway has flush kerbing from the general car park level. This arrangement will be replicated in front of the extension.

6.0 Landscaping & External Works

6.1 Landscaped areas around the fringe of the removed car park and demolished house and driveway will be affected by the proposals.

6.2 Overall, the landscape zone alongside Ashby Road will be increased in depth and quality by the proposals, providing an opportunity to effectively screen the flank of the buildings from the road.

6.3 The lawns and shrub planted garden of the existing house will be built over either by the extension or access lane to the rear yard.



Photo 4 –'Woodlands' driveway alongside Ashby Road. Roadway to be taken out and boundary landscaping enhanced.

7.0. Summary

7.1. The proposed extension and frontage works will both enhance the appearance of the Centre and improve the access and internal circulation of the main Garden Centre building. Although there will be a small loss of parking spaces, the proposal will thus offer the public a better experience and access than the existing arrangements.

7.2. The proposals result in a loss of 27 car park spaces alongside the flank of the existing building. However, the current arrangement is a long winding single echelon circulation, having a tendency to congest when busy. The shorter circulation resulting from new building can be expected to improve traffic flow around that part of the car park and thus improve its effectiveness. Overall, the revised overall car park capacity of around 400 spaces is calculated to be adequate.

7.3 The existing buildings have grown piecemeal over the years. The extended main building elevation will present an improved frontage to the visiting public. The proposals will have a minimal impact on the aesthetic appearance of the existing architecture.

7.4 The proposals are carefully devised to have no detrimental impact on the appearance, parking, servicing and general accessibility of the existing Garden Centre buildings, and its internal pedestrian connections to the car park areas.

END