

Project Sakura - Wrexham

Design and Access Statement

Supporting a Planning Application

Proposed Cold Store Extension and Associated Works for Thermotraffic

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Introduction

This document has been prepared by Ashton Smith Associates (ASA) on behalf of Thermotrafic in support of the submission of a Full Planning Application, for a series of extensions to their Cold Store (use class B2 / B8).

The proposal comprises the demolition of existing and outdated structures on site and the construction of 7,413m² of automated cold storage supported by production spaces, plant rooms, associated parking & servicing, landscaping, means of access and infrastructure within the application boundary covering 3.26 Hectares.

The purpose of this document is to highlight the evolution of the physical design and identify design responses with respect to access, appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale.

The statement contains a summary of the site context, analysis of the surrounding areas and an explanation of the relevant design frameworks, exploring the physical characteristics of the scheme that have been informed by the design process.

This document should be read in conjunction with the other technical reports and supporting documents submitted as part of the application.

Site Location & Background

The application site ('The Site') is located in the Wrexham Industrial Estate. The site is part of an operational industrial estate, located away from the town centre and to the East of Wrexham.

The site is accessed via Ash Road South. It currently comprises a Cold Store (with associated extensions) and a standalone office block.

The existing Cold Store is single storey, flat roofed with cladding to walls and roof; the office block is a two storey brick structure with a tiled roof. Car parking is situated on and off street, principally on Lydden Road.



Site Photographs



View of the cold store from the south (service yard)



Rear of the cold store building



West elevation of the cold store building



Eastern end of the south elevation showing the Dawson Units



East elevation showing the Dawson Units



Access road along the western elevation



Office block viewed from the service yard



Office block from Ash Road South, along with the unused site entrance



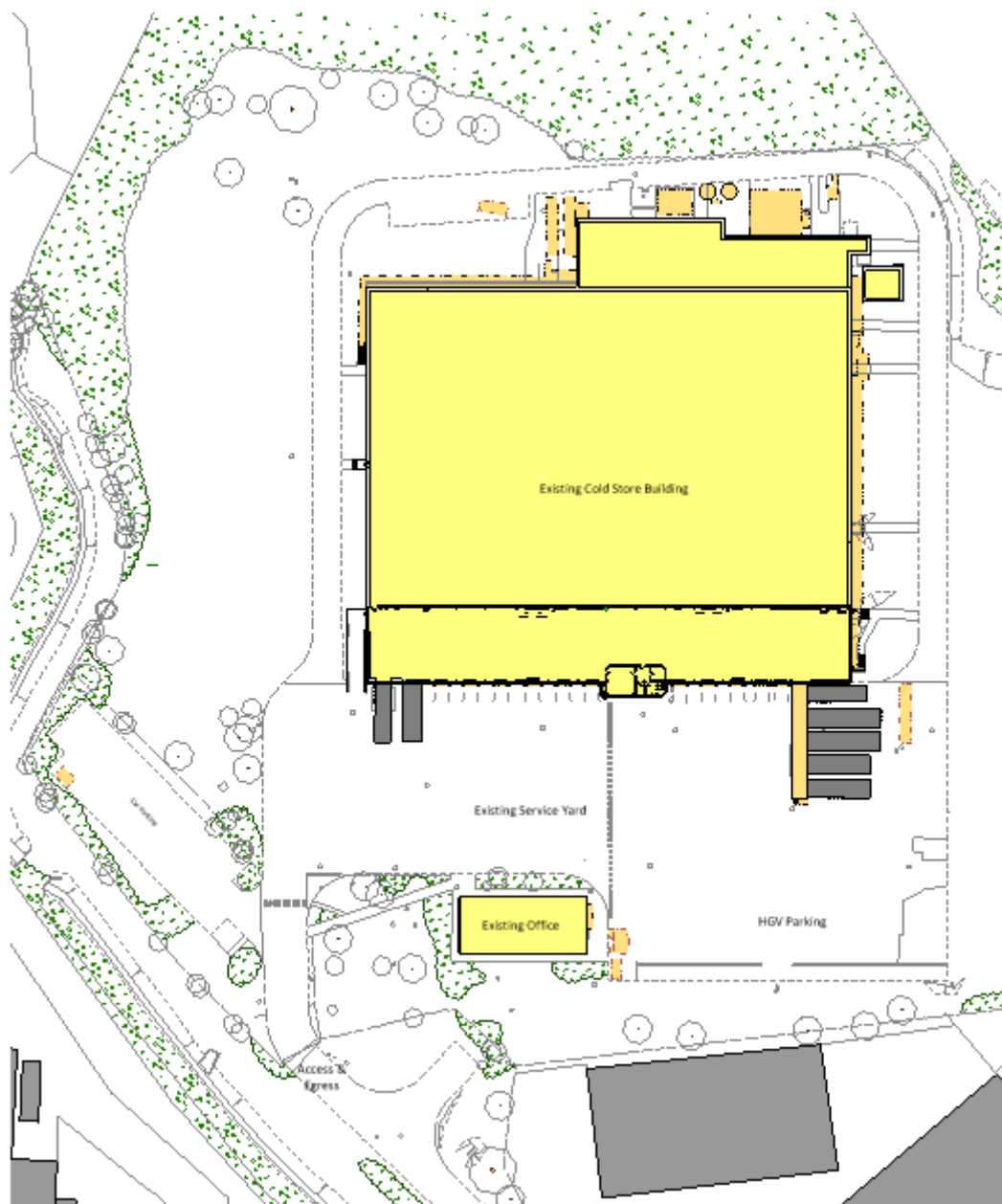
Existing HGV and car entrance to the site

Existing Site Details

Establishing a clear understanding of the application site is fundamental and integral part of the design process. These views show the existing site features, constraints and opportunities that influenced the design.

The Site is currently occupied by a single business and consists of a cold store and office block. The site also includes metal containers for storage, external electrical transformers, and small attached plant buildings. There is a car park to the southwest and a service / marshalling yard to the south. On all boundaries there is significant landscaping. Access for cars and service vehicles is off Ash Road South (Cul-de-Sac), and there is an unused spur.

The existing cold store (with attached plant buildings, office, etc.) at ground floor; all totalling 9,097m². The existing office block is over two floors and totals 620m².



Planning Policy Context

The statutory Development Plan for the area is the 'Future Wales: The National Plan' and the 'Wrexham Local Development Plan (LDP) 2013-2028.' Other material considerations at a national level include 'Planning Policy Wales 12' and relevant 'Technical Advice Notes' (TANs). Local level material considerations include Local Planning Guidance Notes 16: Parking Standards, Note 26: Landscape and Industrial Development and Note 29: Wrexham Industrial Estate.

The policies considered of particular relevance to the proposed development are considered below.

National Planning Policy

Future Wales

Future Wales is the Welsh Government's highest tier of development plan in Wales. Planning decisions at every level of the planning system in Wales must be taken in accordance with the development plan as a whole.

Policy 1 The Welsh Government supports sustainable growth in all parts of Wales. In three National Growth Areas there will be growth in employment and housing opportunities and investment in infrastructure. The National Growth Areas are:

- Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys
- Swansea Bay and Llanelli
- **Wrexham and Deeside**

Policy 9 'Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure' notes the importance of enhancing ecosystems, biodiversity and green infrastructure when considering approaches to development proposals through nature-based methods.

Policy 12 'Regional Connectivity' refers to improving the connectivity in urban areas by integrating active and sustainable travel and public transport. Active travel is encouraged in all new developments.

Planning Policy Wales 12

The primary objective of PPW, as set out at Paragraph 1.2, is "to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales".

Paragraph 5.4.1 states that "For planning purposes the Welsh Government defines economic development as the development of land and buildings for activities that generate sustainable long-term prosperity, jobs and incomes". Paragraph 5.4.2 goes on to confirm that "Economic land uses include the traditional employment land uses (offices, research and development, industry and warehousing), as well as uses such as retail, tourism, and public services".

Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

Relevant TANs include:

- Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning
- Technical Advice Note 12: Design
- Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk
- Technical Advice Note 18: Transport

Local Planning Policy

Wrexham LDP (Adopted December 2023)

LDP policies of particular note include:

- **Policy SP2** New development is directed to the defined settlement limits and employment areas identified on the Proposals Map.
- **Policy SP5** Planning obligations will be sought to mitigate any impacts directly related to the development and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in line with relevant planning legislation.
- **Policy SP8** To ensure the continued role of the County Borough as a key economic driver in North Wales and the wider region, the Plan will diversify the local economy and widen the economic base by, inter alia: allocating a strategic expansion site of 28ha at Wrexham Industrial Estate and protecting a strategic ecological network for a number of local, national and internationally protected species and habitats.
- **Policy SP9** Wrexham Industrial Estate will be the primary focus for new employment development over the plan period for B class employment and other ancillary related development. Land is also protected on the estate for a strategic ecological network for a number of local, national and internationally protected species and habitat.
- **Policy SP11** Wrexham's transport network will be developed in a safe, efficient and sustainable manner through, inter alia, restricting development that would have an unacceptable impact on the safe and efficient operation of the transport network.
- **Policy SP12** All development will be required to be of a high quality, sustainable design which makes a positive contribution to the creation of locally distinctive places.
- **Policy SP13** All development should seek to reduce health inequalities and provide opportunities for healthy lifestyles and improving health and well-being.
- **Policy SP14** Development will only be supported where it protects, conserves and enhances the natural environment.
- **Policy SP18** Development proposals will need to demonstrate measures to mitigate against the effects of climate change and adapt to its impacts.
- **Policy SP19** Wrexham's distinctive natural heritage provides a network of green and blue infrastructure. Protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage networks needs to be reconciled with the benefits of development.
- **Policy DM1** is a multi-criterion-based policy which requires all new development to, inter alia: ensure that built development in its scale, design and layout, and in its use of materials and landscaping, accords with the character of the site; make best use of design techniques; and safeguard sites and areas of nature conservation and wildlife interest etc.
- **Policy NE2** Development which impacts on the nature conservation and/or geological importance of locally designated sites, habitats and species will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.
- **Policy NE3** Development will only be permitted where it does not cause unacceptable harm to trees, woodlands and hedgerows of significant public amenity, natural or cultural heritage value or those that provide important ecosystem services including mitigating the effects of climate change.
- **Policy T1** Developments that would generate significant amounts of movement should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan.
- **Policy T2** To enable people to access employment, education, healthcare and other essential services, new development will be supported where, inter alia, facilities that encourage and promote Active Travel are provided.

Local Guidance Note 29: Wrexham Industrial Estate

This guidance notes amplifies policies in the former Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and supplementary planning guidance in the Wrexham Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2002) and Local Planning Guidance Note 26: 'Landscape & Industrial Development

It emphasises:

- the need for an ecological assessment of the site.
- the protection of habitats that are found in preference to mitigation or off-site compensation and
- the protection of the developable area of a site from colonisation by species.

Relevant planning history

A review of the Council's planning history identifies the below applications relevant to the site:

- Ref: 21955 - Erection of foodcare and food storage facility and alteration to existing vehicular access. Approved 16 March 1994.
- Ref: 22573 - Erection of new office building to serve new cold store. Approved 10th August 1994.

Planning Designations

The site is situated within the Wrexham Industrial Estate settlement limit as per the current adopted LDP Proposals Map. No other landscape, ecological nor heritage designations affect the site.

Development Proposal

Design Principles

Taking into account the requirements of the brief, combined with an understanding of the site constraints and opportunities, this allows a number of key principles to be established, as follows:

Design & Character

To create an attractive, self-contained and functional development with clear identity, which relates well within its context. Buildings should be well-designed, with attention to detail and provide clear legibility in the choice of façade material specifications.

Functionality

To provide a development that will meet the long-term needs of the occupier, for running an efficient and successful business. Clear thought must be given to optimise functionality and avoid unnecessary routes of travel.

Protect Key Viewpoints

To design the building form and elevation treatment considering key viewpoints and context of the development. Views may be mitigated with appropriate use of screen bunding and landscaping, and where this cannot be achieved the architecture of the buildings should address best practice to reduce visual impact.

Orientation & Movement

To ensure that the development provides a sense of arrival for visitors. Routes for HGVs, cars and cyclists should be clearly segregated to avoid potential conflicts. Clarity of design and layout should be at the forefront, with signage being a fallback.

Layout and Arrangement

This section describes the process of design and how it has been informed by the identified key design principles, in order to define those constraints that restrict the site's redevelopment and identify the opportunities and options for development.

The existing buildings and overall site are in a reasonable condition but the technology behind them is out of date and for the business to succeed higher standards must be achieved.

The proposal supplements the existing buildings with a new automated racking cold store designed to maximise the potential of the site. The scheme is also adaptable and flexible to respond to the requirements of operator.

This application seeks consent for use class B2/B8 (General Industrial / Storage and Distribution). As part of this, the facility will require 24 hour / 7 days a week / 365 days a year operation, to provide flexibility and efficiency, whilst also giving opportunity for traffic associated with the development to be spread out of peak hours.

The application looks to seek approval for the following elements:

- Proposed cold storage extension, made up of a Low Bay marshalling building, a High Bay automated / racked cold store (including first floor plant gantry), associated links back to the existing facility and external stairs; all totalling 6,235m²,
- Proposed main plant building with a roof mounted plant deck; all totalling 499m²,
- Proposed blast freezer plant building with a roof mounted plant deck; all totalling 200m²,
- Proposed production extension; all totalling 394m².

- As part of the works two 'Dawson Units' (temporary freezer stores) and a generator storage out building are to be demolished, which totals around 100m²,
- The offices are unaffected by the proposals.

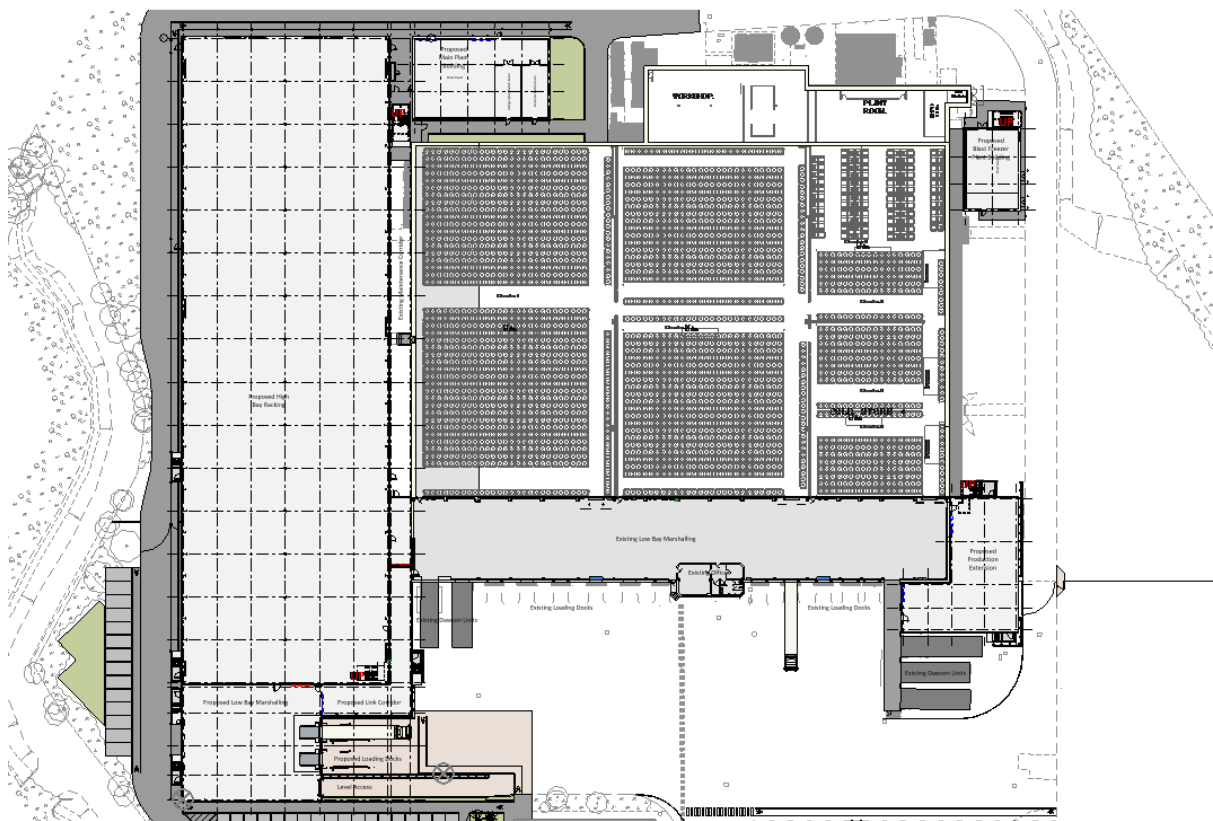
The new extensions 'book end' the existing building, with the two new plant buildings concealed behind and to the side.

The open yard allows for clear, uninterrupted sightlines across site so users of the site can identify when it is safe to manoeuvre and carry-out loading / unloading operations.

The proposed steel construction provides large internal spans which can be reconfigured to respond to the requirements of the future.

Improvements are to be made to the access of the site with the introduction of a new HGV access, away from the car access and modified landscaping.

A central external operational area also allows for a simplified lighting strategy to help users feel safe, deter crime and reduce light pollution for surrounding properties.



Scale

The Production Extension is designed to marry in at exactly the same height and scale as the existing Low Bay Marshalling area at 9m, with the parapet capping running through.

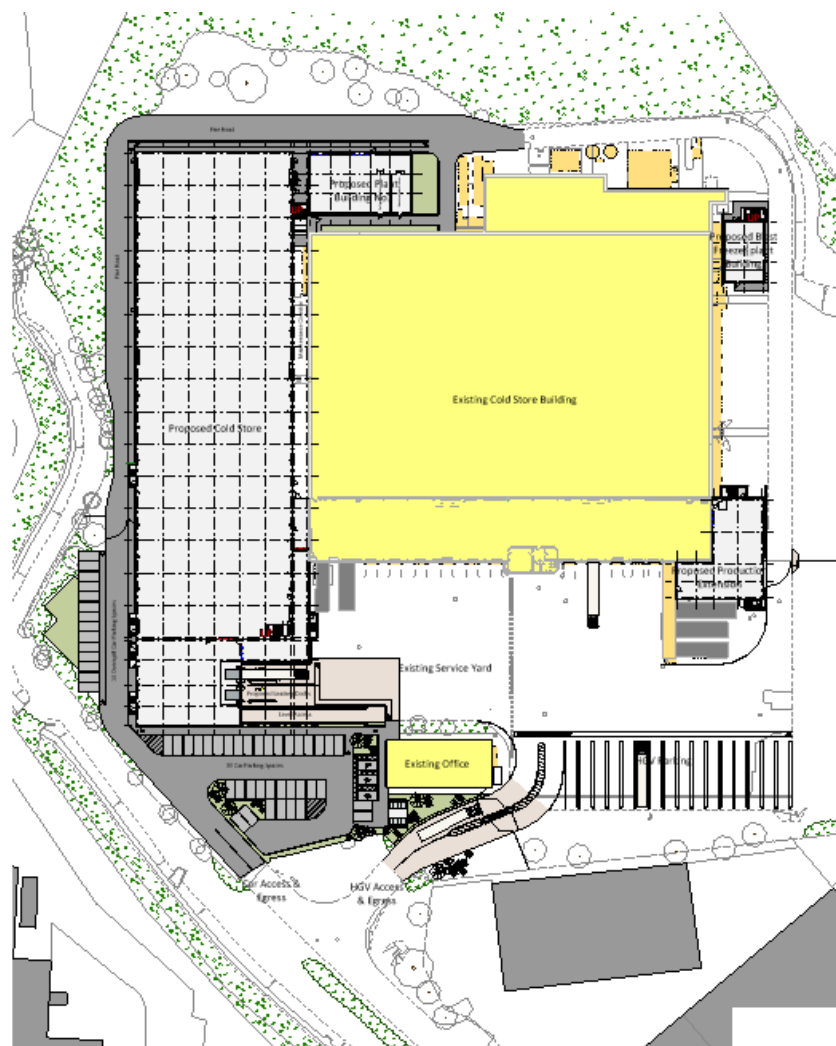
The new Low Bay Marshalling area, is proposed to be at a maximum 11.5m to help integrate the cold store extension with the existing built context in and around the site.

The height of the new High Bay is 32m, which is taller than the existing, as a consequence of the buildings function; this is dictated by maximising the modern refrigeration equipment and reducing the energy consumption of the mechanical handling systems. However, using colour and the impact of the Low Bay, it is believed that the height will not be intrusive.

The two plant buildings are smaller than the existing cold store at 10m (Main Plant) and 7.5m (blast Freezer Plant) in height and masked by it. The scale of these buildings is in context.

Overall, whilst the height of the building is increasing, it is broadly in line with the wider industrial estate, and neighbouring buildings to the west, which are founded on a higher plateau.

The scale of the proposal, in a wider site context does not contribute to over development and is in line with what would be expected of an industrial site.



Elevations

The proposed elevations are illustrated on ASA drawing TCSW-ASA-00-NB.XX-D-A-0003_(S2-P01)_Proposed Overall Elevations.

The underlying principle of the proposed design is to provide buildings offering architectural character and adding quality and aesthetic enhancement to the immediate vicinity. The proposed building represents high quality industrial architecture that integrates well in the existing site and with the surrounding context.

The elevations have been detailed to punctuate key features of the building and to frame the existing southern elevation. The use of varying cladding profiles and colours will raise the aesthetic quality and serve to break down the overall uniformity of the warehouse design whilst offering excellent longevity and durability.

Following discussions particular consideration has been paid to the prominent south elevation, as viewed when entering the site by car. The Low Bay and the Production extension to the east have been designed as blocks of bold colour, framing and book ending the existing. Behind the Low Bay is the High Bay freezer store, the height of which is dictated by the automation systems inside and to maximise efficiency of the cooling systems. In order to break up this building, bands of cladding (complimenting the Low Bay) have been used on the end of the building and wrapping around the sides.

Over time there will be little noticeable change in appearance of the development as chosen materials are resistant to weathering and ageing. All materials are of a robust nature in keeping with the use of the site and existing conditions.



Appearance

The existing cold store is a cladded structure (trapezoidal profile), which has been painted grey, with a blue trim.

Due to the nature of the project, it is the intention that the additions will also be constructed from composite cladding.

The two plant buildings will be a trapezoidal profile, sympathetic to the existing, but in Kyanite (RAL7000), to match other parts of the new works.

The new Low Bay and Production extension will be in composite cladding, with a Microrib profile (almost flat), in Kyanite (RAL7000) to give them a bold and more modern look and be statement pieces.

The High Bay freezer stores are traditionally in white, to reduce thermal build up and ensure that the refrigeration equipment is not overtaxed. However, on the southern face, and wrapping around the corners, the white panels have been broken up by bands of Kyanite (RAL7000) cladding, pulling in elements of the lower structures. All panels on the High Bay will be MicroRib in profile.

The new HGV access road will be in hard wearing concrete. The car park will be a mixture of tarmacadam roadways, with grey permeable block paving to car parking bays.

Landscaping

The proposals will sit upon land currently used for car parking, service roads, grassed areas and small areas of landscaping that has little value. As part of the project, new and enhanced landscaping will be provided around and within the new car park and HGV entrance.

To differentiate between safe walkway zones and vehicular zones there will be yellow lineage applied throughout the yard and parking areas. The lineage will keep pedestrians and vehicles separate and provide safe routes to navigate through the site. The painted lineage is a low maintenance economical solution which can be easily managed and maintained.

The new landscaping along with the resurfacing works and site perimeter improvements will greatly improve the look and feel of the site.

A tree survey has been carried out and a report published, which confirms that no high quality trees are present on site. On this basis ASA have produced existing and proposed tree constraints plans, see drawings TCSW-ASA-90-VS.ZZ-D-A-9011_(S2-P05)_Tree Constraints Plan – Existing and TCSW-ASA-90-VS.ZZ-D-A-9012_(S2-P05)_Tree Constraints Plan - Proposed, demonstrating that 19 number trees and 7 number tree groups are to be removed, none of which are high quality.

Inclusive Access

The proposals do not affect any of the current arrangements for Inclusive Access.

Two new Inclusive Parking spaces are being provided, one of which is served by a new EV charging post. The additional new EV parking bay is sized adequately to allow for Inclusive Access use. All these new spaces are as close to the Office entrance door as possible and have step free access.

Any new floors created are level with the existing (with the exception of plant decks), and there is no new access into the buildings.

There are no new welfare or other facilities being created.

Vehicle access

Currently all vehicles enter the site through the same point, which is controlled by a pair of automated gates.

The proposal is that the existing gate will provide access for cars and cyclists only, into a new car park, which will be adjacent the office building.

The unused access point from the highway will be opened up and afford access to the service yard for HGV's and other service vehicles. The access will be controlled by a new set of automated gates, linked back to the office block.

As part of the works, two new cycle shelters are to be provided, with 16 cycle spaces.

Swept path analysis has been carried out on both accesses, parking bays and the new loading docks. Please refer to the Transport Assessment.

Crime Prevention

Access into, and around the site will be enhanced by new security fences / gates, which will restrict any movement to the rear of the cold store buildings.

The exiting car park automated gate is to remain, and the HGV access will be served by a new automated gate.

The new works will be fully secured from the outside, with restricted access, which is only intended for maintenance or escape.

Natural surveillance is a key factor in the overall design of the site and the positioning of the offices overlooking parking / cold store / service yard offers a high degree of visual control. The building design and layout have been considered to minimise visual obstacles and eliminate places of concealment and any potential dark areas will be well lit. The existing CCTV camera system will be adapted to suit the new layout.

Waste Management

As existing, any paper, cardboard or recyclable waste is stored on a dedicated trailer, which is then taken off site to a licenced recycling centre.

Any non-recyclable waste is stored in a skip (to the rear of the cold store) and collection arranged when full (to a licenced waste disposal company).

The proposals do not change or impact on these strategies.

Sustainability & Renewable Energy

The proposed development will be constructed to be environmentally responsible wherever possible and will strive to reduce carbon in terms of regulated energy.

The proposals will have a lower energy consumption as compared to the energy use of the existing cold store and we have produced a design which is as energy efficient as possible by the use of thermally efficient wall and roofing cladding systems. The buildings will also incorporate a number of energy efficiency measures to adopt a sustainable approach to building design.

The following sustainable design features will apply:

- High efficiency LED lighting to the car park and service yards,
- High thermally efficient panels used to construct the building,
- High air tightness to the building envelope/fabric to prevent temperature loss,
- Rainwater harvesting technologies
- Photovoltaic panels on roof

The buildings will feature roof mounted PV panels for the solar generation of electricity which will be designed by a Simplified Building Energy Model (SBEM) to demonstrate compliance with UK Building Regulations part L2a and L2b.

The building will be designed and constructed to a high standard utilising robust and durable materials. All materials specified will be recognised as having low environmental impact and listed under the BRE Green Guide to materials specification. All materials will be responsibly sourced, and waste generated will be kept to a minimum and recycled where possible. All imported fill will be locally sourced recycled demolition arisings.

All material waste from the buildings when occupied will be segregated and recycled wherever possible to include general waste, metals, cardboard and plastic.

Conclusion

This statement demonstrates that this the proposed design has been developed specifically to suit the site context, setting and local environment.

The proposed scheme will greatly improve an industrial site to provide a modern, high-quality facilities which are well suited to the occupier's requirements, more attractive in appearance, and more suitable in regard to their construction and energy demands.

The submitted design proposals have been carefully considered by multiple design and construction professionals and developed with due regard to the existing site, it's context and surroundings, to create a coherent, usable site, consisting of a modernised building with efficiency and consistency in mind to fulfil the client's aspirations. The proposals allow for the best possible access by all modes of transport and encourages travel to the site by means other than car.

The development will deliver on the aspirations of the Local Authority and their Local Plan and will help to promote and support employment growth, acting as a catalyst to further stimulate economic regeneration and local investment through the creation of new jobs.

The scheme represents a high-quality, policy compliant development and substantial investment to the local area, an aspiration that the applicant hopes is shared with the Council.