



KRONOSPAN, CHIRK

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR ERECTION OF AN ENGINEERING STORE BUILDING TO INCLUDE APPRENTICE WORKSHOP AND ANCILLARY WORKS

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application made by Kronospan Limited (hereafter referred to as 'Kronospan') for the erection of an engineering store building to include apprentice workshop and ancillary works which are described in Section 2 (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development'). The Proposed Development would be located at the existing Kronospan Manufacturing Facility in Chirk (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').
- 1.1.2 This document is to be read in conjunction with the Planning Statement, planning drawings and technical assessments which accompany the Proposal. In particular, the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment provides analysis and commentary, which is relevant to the contents of this document.
- 1.1.3 The statutory requirement for the production of a Design and Access Statement is set out within Article 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (see details below). It requires that this application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement that sets out the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development, demonstrates how the development takes context into account, and how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with.

1.2 Structure of Design and Access Statement

- 1.2.1 This Design and Access Statement is divided into 7 sections. Following this Section:
- Section 2.0 describes the legal background and guidance that underpins the document.
 - Section 3.0 describes the Site and its surroundings.
 - Section 4.0 provides a description of the Proposed Development.
 - Section 5.0 describes the design principles.
 - Section 6.0 identifies policies and issues relating to access.
 - Section 7.0 provides some concise conclusions.

2.0 LEGAL BACKGROUND AND GUIDANCE

2.1 Legislative requirements

2.1.1 The legal requirement to provide a Design and Access Statement is set out in Article 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (as amended). This is hereafter referred to as the “DMPO.”

2.1.2 A Design and Access Statement is required for development which is (*inter alia*) a major development. The Proposed Development is a major development as it would provide for greater than 1,000sqm of new floorspace, and accordingly a Design and Access Statement is provided.

2.1.3 Paragraph 4 of Article 7 requires that a Design and Access Statement must:

(a) explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;

(b) demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;

(c) explain the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in the development plan have been taken into account; and

(e) explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.

2.2 Design and Access Statements in Wales (April 2017)

2.2.1 This document provides guidance on how good design can be reflected in Design and Access Statements.

2.2.2 A Design and Access Statement “...communicates what is proposed and demonstrates the design process that has been undertaken to reach the final proposal” (page 5). It is recommended that a Design and Access Statement is concise.

2.2.3 This statement provides a description of the relevant design and access issues in respect of the development. The level of detail provided is considered to be appropriate and proportionate to the nature and complexity of the scheme.

3.0 THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1.1 The Proposed Development comprises the erection of an engineering stores building which includes space for a dedicated bespoke apprenticeship workshop. The location for the Proposed Development is within the existing Kronospan Facility, which is located on land adjacent to Holyhead Road (the B5070).
- 3.1.2 The Proposed Engineering Stores would comprise a large building located to the south of the existing main warehouse building on the site of an area of hardstanding and soft landscaping used as open storage with some temporary structures. There is an existing earth bund (with trees planted on it) which would need to be removed to make way for the development.
- 3.1.3 The entirety of the Kronospan Facility covers an area of circa 40ha, with circa 14ha of this developed with industrial buildings and plant. Figure 1 shows the layout of the Kronospan Facility. A number of industrial process facilities are located in the western half which are used to process, sort and dry the raw wood materials used in the manufacture of MDF / particle board. These include a number of tall structures, including stacks, that emit clean process emissions to the atmosphere. The tallest structure within the Facility is the combined heat and power (CHP) biomass plant stack which is 70m in height.
- 3.1.4 A number of process buildings are located in the northern half of the Facility including: a sawmill, formalin plant and the secondary product manufacturing facility (*Kronoplus*) which produces laminate flooring and worktops.
- 3.1.5 In April 2022, planning permission was granted for a new warehouse building (application reference: P/2021/0725) located to the north-east of the Facility which will deliver a further 15,029 sq.m. of floorspace (GEA). This recently consented planning application also includes a new sprinkler tank located between the northern extent of *Kronoplus* and the site's northern boundary.
- 3.1.6 The western perimeter of the Kronospan Facility is formed by the Shrewsbury to Chester railway. Improved railway siding facilities have been constructed within the site to enable an increased volume of timber to be imported by rail. The Llangollen Canal is located to the west of the railway line, circa 30m from the boundary of the site at its closest point. The canal is designated as the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site and as a Scheduled Monument. Water is abstracted from the canal for use in the manufacturing process. The eastern perimeter of the site is

formed by Holyhead Road (B5070). An earth bund, planted with trees, has been developed along the eastern perimeter of the site in order to reduce the visibility of the site operations from neighbouring properties on Holyhead Road.

- 3.1.7 A sewerage pumping station and one property, owned by Kronospan, are located to the immediate north of the site. To the immediate south of the site is the Cadbury's (Mondelez) factory, the Chirk AAA sports ground and the Chirk recreational ground.
- 3.1.8 Surface water for the majority of the Site currently drains to two lagoons located on the northern boundary of the Site, each of 2,033sqm in volume. A third lagoon was constructed to take surface water from the log yard.
- 3.1.9 The main residential area of Chirk is located to the east of the site with residential properties lining the majority of the eastern side of Holyhead Road. Chirk town centre is located approximately 500m to the south and south east of the site and parts of the town centre are designated as Chirk Conservation Area.
- 3.1.10 The wider area beyond the urban settlement of Chirk is dominated by agricultural fields and woodland. Chirk Castle (Grade 1 listed) and its grounds (Registered Park and Garden) are located circa 500m to the west of the site, beyond the canal. The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) also lie to the west of the site, the closest boundary of the AONB runs concurrent with the grounds of Chirk Castle.

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1.1 The proposed general arrangement, floor plan, elevations and sections are shown on drawing 7000/598 Rev J.
- 4.1.2 The Proposed Development would consist of a new building to the south of the Site within its curtilage adjacent to the existing reception building and south of the Main Warehouse Building. The new building would be sited on an area of hardstanding and soft landscaping currently used as open storage with some temporary structures and an earth bund.
- 4.1.3 The Proposal would consist of erecting a new building to form an engineering stores and a dedicated apprentice workshop, alongside an external access track and landscaping bund.
- 4.1.4 This area is bound by the main industrial and warehouse buildings to the north, the and the farmhouse building to the east, forming a space into which the Proposed Development inside the Facility's boundary to the south and east. It is noted that if the application for the covered loading yard is approved and the development is constructed, or if it is not, the immediate context of the Proposed Development would remain unchanged.
- 4.1.5 The existing earth bunds on the site and line of cypress trees would be removed. If feasible, it is proposed to translocate the existing Leyland Cypress trees, along with new planting, to land to the south of the red line boundary on land outside of the Applicant's control. If this is not feasible, new tree planting will be proposed elsewhere in the Facility on land within the Applicant's control. The form and location of this proposed new tree planting will be agreed with the local planning authority.
- 4.1.6 The area immediately adjacent to the site, just north of the existing SUDs Pond would be used to store the earth removed from these bunds to make way for the development. On-site and off-site mitigation would be agreed with the local planning authority through this application and result in a greater quantity and quality of habitat which would be managed going forward.
- 4.1.7 The proposed new engineering stores and dedicated apprentice workshop would provide for 5,844sqm (GEA) of floorspace.
- 4.1.8 The external walls of the extended area would match the height of the existing pitched main warehouse building's roof at a maximum height of 11.29m. The walls

would be constructed of galvanised steel sheeting in a light grey colour (RAL 7038 – goosewing grey) to match the existing main warehouse building.

5.0 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The following sub-sections provide an explanation of the design principles and concepts that have been applied in formulating the proposal scheme.

5.2 Design Principles and Concepts

Use

- 5.2.1 The Proposed Development would not constitute a change of use at the site, but instead would add additional floorspace to the existing industrial facility. This would complement the existing operations at the manufacturing facility. The Planning Statement provides a detailed assessment of the land use policies, but as a summary there is support for locating a engineering store building in this location. Policies PS1 and PS2 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996 – 2011 direct development to within the defined settlement limits / employment areas, which includes the Site as part of the wider settlement of Chirk. Policy PS3 also encourages development on previously developed land, which the Kronospan Facility is considered to be.
- 5.2.2 The policies of the Local Development Plan, which are not adopted but are at an advanced stage, strengthen the approach of the UDP: Policy SP2 continues to direct new development to settlements and employment areas, although the draft Proposals Map proposes to demarcate settlement limits and employment areas so providing a stronger and more focussed indication of where employment uses should be located than the existing UDP. In addition, the Kronospan Facility is within one of 25 designated employment areas in the County of Wrexham which are safeguarded from a change of use, with the rest of Chirk identified as a settlement with defined boundaries. The Proposed Development accords with both the existing and proposed planning policy approach.
- 5.2.3 The Kronospan Facility covers an extensive area on the western side of Chirk. It has been a manufacturing site for over 40 years, and so is well established. The Mondelez site is also to the south, so the industrial context is an established feature of the western side of Chirk. The remainder of Chirk is predominantly residential, and there is a clear demarcation between these two land uses, with Holyhead Road forming the

boundary. The Proposed Development would respect this by being entirely within the existing Kronospan site and within the area identified for employment uses.

- 5.2.4 Therefore, the immediate and wider context has been considered in determining that the proposed building would be appropriate when considering the Site and also the wider context of Chirk.

Layout

- 5.2.5 The siting and layout of the proposed engineering stores has been carefully considered, and the Proposed Development has had regard to the buildings and spaces which make up the existing Kronospan Facility, whilst ensuring large vehicles can enter and exit the space using swept path analysis.
- 5.2.6 The proposed engineering stores would sit within the curtilage of the main warehouse building and continues the existing southern boundary line. There are two bunds on site; the northern bund would be removed, and the southern bund will be reduced in size.
- 5.2.7 The proposal would blend into the existing backdrop of the main warehouse building. The Site has limited visibility outside of the Facility.
- 5.2.8 The existing activities to be removed on the Site to make way for the Proposed Development are external storage areas, and landscaping bunds. The intention is to ultimately improve the productivity of Site by using this previously developed land to allow the facility to operate more efficiently and effectively.
- 5.2.9 Overall, the proposed engineering stores layout has responded to the constraints of the Site and the operational requirements. It is a logical position for a building which references the pattern of existing buildings which form part of the existing Kronospan Facility and which constitute the immediate context.

Scale

- 5.2.10 The proposed new engineering stores and dedicated apprentice workshop would provide for 5,844sqm (GEA) of floorspace. The floorspace proposed reflects both the operational needs and the Site's constraints. The new stores building for engineering spares would see the covering of the existing outdoor storage yard, which would improve the quality of the service and reduce potential for damage to equipment and incorporate automated retrieval technology which would optimise the stock holding

of spare parts. The size of the building reflects the amount of storage required for spares.

- 5.2.11 The scale of the proposed engineering stores is substantial but reflects its use. This southern part of the Facility is occupied by the main warehouse building, and the proposed engineering stores would not detract from the existing buildings collective scale and complex of connected and adjacent buildings and structures. As a whole, the existing warehouses and structures within the facility are well in excess of the proposed engineering stores.
- 5.2.12 The proposed building would have a width of 186m along its southern face, but this would predominantly be screened from views from public and private areas to the south being very limited. The eastern face of the warehouse building would be 30m in length which would be visible behind the existing Kronospan office building.
- 5.2.13 The building would be a maximum of 11.29m at its highest point with the pitch of the roof reducing this towards the eastern and western walls. This is necessary to allow for the volume of storage required and for products to be stacked and moved as required. This height allows for forklift trucks to safely lift and stack products to a standard height. A lower height would compromise the efficiencies that can be achieved. The height matches the existing building to the north, which is important as it allows for products to be stored in the same way in both.
- 5.2.14 The conclusion is that although the scale of the Proposed Development would be substantial it would be proportionate to other buildings within the Kronospan Facility. The Proposed Development would be an unremarkable addition that is unlikely to be clearly visible from outside of the Kronospan site boundary, and which would result in little or no appreciable change to existing influence of the Kronospan site upon its surroundings.

Landscape and Visual

- 5.2.15 The application is accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which identifies viewpoints and identifies the potential impacts of the new engineering stores building. There is a separate assessment of heritage provided.
- 5.2.16 Two viewpoints were identified as being appropriate locations to test the visual impact. This includes one view from the Chirk Recreation Ground to the south and one long range view from Green Lane.

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- 5.2.17 A material consideration is that the Proposed Development would be similar in height to adjacent buildings. Also, the surrounding landform and pattern of vegetation cover (in particular the existing bund and tree cover to the south) is a further consideration.
- 5.2.18 The impact of the Proposed Development has been modelled from the two viewpoints, and this has demonstrated that there would not be significant visual effects.
- 5.2.19 The Proposed Development would be introduced into an existing large-scale industrial site that is an established influence upon the town of Chirk and the surrounding rural area.
- 5.2.20 Views of existing tall, bulky structures at the Kronospan site are commonplace within the study area and their presence is an established part of the character of the landscape.
- 5.2.21 In comparison, the Proposed Development would comprise a relatively limited extension to the existing assemblage of structures within the wider Kronospan site and would be very similar in height, form and materials to more the extensive existing warehouse building to the north. Due to its location within the wider Kronospan site relative to existing larger structures and pattern of vegetation cover, the Proposed Development would be very well screened, even at short range, and would be difficult to make out as a distinct feature separate from the existing assemblage of structures.
- 5.2.22 The Proposed Development would be an unremarkable addition that is unlikely to be clearly visible from outside of the Kronospan site boundary, and which would result in little or no appreciable change to existing influence of the Kronospan site upon its surroundings. Neither the landscape effects nor the visual effects of the Proposed Development would be significant.
- 5.2.23 Following on from this, it is concluded that the impact on the nearby Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB would not be significant in the context of the Kronospan Facility. The effect on heritage assets is considered in the separate Heritage Desk-Based Assessment and the impact is demonstrated to not be significant.
- 5.2.24 Off-site mitigation would be agreed with the local planning authority through this application and result in a greater quantity and quality of habitat which would be managed going forward. The planting would enhance the habitat at the Site and surrounding area.

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- 5.2.25 Overall, the impact of the Proposed Development would be acceptable, and hence there is no need for specific mitigation to screen it.

Appearance

- 5.2.26 The proposed elevations illustrate the Proposed Development's appearance. The warehouse would be constructed of galvanised steel, and it is proposed for all elevations to be goosewing grey in colour (RAL 7038), which would match the existing main warehouse building's colour. The appearance would reflect the use of the building as a warehouse forming part of an industrial facility.

6.0 ACCESS POLICY

- 6.1.1 This section of the Design and Access Statement explains the relevant access policies and sets out how policies relating to access have been considered.
- 6.1.2 The legal basis for Design and Access Statements within the DMPO includes the need for an explanation of how the approach to access has been defined with reference to relevant policy in the development plan.
- 6.1.3 The adopted development plan document of relevance in this case is the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 (UDP), which was adopted on the 14th February 2005. Local Planning Guidance Note 6, *Access to and Use of Buildings*, supports it. This is dated September 2004, updating the original document of February 1993. The Guidance Note seeks Access Statements for developments which are accessed by members of the public or residential developments of 3 or more homes (which does not apply to the Proposed Development).
- 6.1.4 The emerging LDP contains SP12 (Transport and Accessibility) which seeks to improve accessibility of new developments to existing public transport facilities and the walking and cycling network. This principle is reflected in policies DM1 (Development Management Considerations) and T1 (Managing Transport Impacts) which seek to maximise sustainable travel choices.
- 6.1.5 The existing arrangements for accessing the Site would remain unchanged. Those persons travelling to the Site for work would be able to use existing public transport or cycle storage at the Site.
- 6.1.6 The Site is not publicly accessible, and there is a controlled gated access near to the main entrance to prevent unrestricted access to the operational part of the Facility. Access within the Facility is heavily controlled for safety reasons, with protocols to ensure the safety of employees and visitors. Once within the site vehicles and pedestrians have clearly demarcated routes.
- 6.1.7 The Proposed Development would accord with Part M of the Building Regulations. When approaching and entering the buildings there would be level access with a finished floor level of 0.15m above the adjacent ground. This is necessary to accord with Part C of the Building Regulations as well as Part M. Within the building sufficient clear widths would be provided to door openings to meet current Building Regulations and level door thresholds would be incorporated throughout.

6.1.8 The Proposed Development has been designed with access as an important consideration.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1.1 The details submitted with the application show that the Proposed Development would provide a high-quality development utilising existing industrial land in a sustainable location.
- 7.1.2 The design has been considered carefully and responds to the context of the Site and its constraints. Access to and within the site has been considered and the form of the development reflects this.
- 7.1.3 As such, there are not considered to be any unresolved design or access matters which should prevent the grant of planning permission.