
KRONOSPAN, CHIRK

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LOG DELIVERY AND TRANSFER SYSTEM AND BUILDING TO HOUSE A REPLACEMENT WOOD CHIPPING AND FLAKING SYSTEM AND DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DEBARKING AND CHIPPING FACILITIES

PLANNING STATEMENT

August 2017

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Planning Application Drawings and Figures

Drawing / Figure Number	Drawing Title
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2195-01-02	Existing Site Layout
2195-01-03	Proposed Site Layout
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Figure 1	Site Location
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Appendix A – Noise Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

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FOREWORD

This document is the Planning Statement for the development of a log delivery and transfer system, and new building to house a replacement chipping and flaking facility within the existing Kronospan manufacturing facility on land off Holyhead Road, Chirk in Wrexham.

In addition to this Planning Statement and its associated technical reports, the planning submission comprises the requisite planning application form and certificates, Design and Access Statement, planning drawings and an application validation statement.

The development forms part of an ongoing improvement programme to deliver environmental improvements at the site and ensure the long term economic viability of the manufacturing facility. The ongoing improvement programme is referred to as Kronospan Vision 2020.

Kronospan Vision 2020 is an investment programme which will modernise and enhance the site over the coming three years. The forward investment programme has a total cost of £150 million. The plans will enable the company to reduce its environmental impact, improve operational efficiency and offer new business and revenue streams.

Kronospan is an important local and national business. It is the 6th largest manufacturing business in Wales and provides direct employment for over 630 people of which 90% live within 10 miles of the site. As such ensuring that the Kronospan site in Chirk remains a competitive and sustainable business is important to the local and national economy.

It is Kronospan's intention to ensure that the Chirk manufacturing site remains a world leading production site. Furthermore, as a result of the Kronospan Vision 2020 investment and development programme Kronospan will be able to deliver continued environmental improvements at the Site.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF THE APPLICATION

1.1 Introduction and Background

1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application made by Kronospan Limited (hereafter referred to as Kronospan) for the development of a new log delivery and handling system, and a replacement chipping and flaking facility, and the removal/demolition of an existing debarker and hacker (Proposed Development).

1.1.2 The Proposed Development would be undertaken at the Kronospan manufacturing facility on the industrial site that forms part of Maesgwyn Farm off Holyhead Road, Chirk, Wrexham. The location of the Proposed Development within the Kronospan site is shown on drawing 2195-01-01.

1.1.3 The Proposed Development is part of an ongoing improvement programme to deliver environmental improvements at the site and ensure the long term economic viability of the manufacturing facility. The improvement programme involves the submission of four planning applications to Wrexham County Borough Council over summer 2017. These are as follows:

- Wood Chip Preparation Building and WESP Chip Dryer (submitted May 2017, approved August 2017, Reference: P/2017/0416)
- Log Delivery and Transfer System and Building to House a Wood Chipping and Flaking System (this application);
- Raw Board Storage (submitted in parallel with this application); and
- Oriented Strand Board (OSB) Facility (to be submitted late summer 2017).

1.1.4 The locations of these proposals are shown on Figure 2.

1.2 Scope of the Planning Application

1.2.1 The planning application comprises the following main elements:

- Planning Application Form and Certificates;
- Application Validation Statement;
- Design and Access Statement;

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- Pre Application Consultation Report;
 - Planning Statement and supporting studies comprising;
 - a Noise Assessment;
 - a Heritage Assessment; and
 - a Landscape, Visual Impact Assessment
 - Planning Application Drawings.

1.2.2 This Planning Statement is divided into seven main sections following on from this introduction. Section 2.0 provides a description of the Proposed Development and its construction. Section 3.0 describes the need and benefits of the scheme. Section 4.0 summarises the relevant planning history associated with the Proposed Development and the Kronospan manufacturing site. Section 5.0 provides a description of the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Development. Section 6.0 provides a summary of potential cumulative effects with other schemes currently being proposed by Kronospan. Section 7.0 provides a detailed appraisal of the planning policy context against which this application should be determined and assesses the extent to which the development accords with that context. Finally, Section 8.0 provides the conclusions to this statement.

1.3 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

1.3.1 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 prescribe the types of development for which EIA is mandatory (Schedule 1 development) and others which may require an assessment if they have the potential to give rise to significant environmental impacts (Schedule 2 development).

1.3.2 The Proposed Development falls within the description at paragraph 8(a) in column 1 of the table in Schedule 2 to the Regulations (i.e. Industrial plants for the production of paper and board). The development exceeds the applicable threshold in column 2 of that table (new floorspace exceeding 1,000 square metres). As such it is necessary to consider whether the development is likely to give rise to significant environmental effects.

1.3.3 A number of environmental assessments have been conducted in support of this application, focusing on the elements of the development considered most likely to result in adverse environmental effects i.e. landscape, visual,

heritage and noise. The assessments demonstrate that there would be no significant environmental effects from the Proposed Development. As such the proposals are not considered to represent EIA development and therefore the application does not need to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

1.4 The Site & Its Context

- 1.4.1 The Proposed Development is located within the existing Kronospan manufacturing site. The Kronospan site is located on land adjacent to Holyhead Road (the B5070), Chirk and covers a total area of approximately 40 hectares.
- 1.4.2 The Proposed Development would be located close to the western boundary of the Kronospan site, adjacent to other structures and equipment used in the manufacturing process. It would be positioned alongside the existing railway siding that runs into the site from the Shrewsbury to Chester line.
- 1.4.3 The location of the Proposed Development within the Kronospan site is shown on Figure 1.
- 1.4.4 The entirety of the Kronospan site 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 site. A number of industrial process facilities are located in the west portion of the site. These facilities are used to process, sort and dry the raw wood materials used in the manufacture of MDF/particle board and include a number of tall structures including stacks that emit process emissions to the atmosphere. The tallest structure on the site is the combined heat and power (CHP) biomass plant stack which is 70m in height.
- 1.4.5 A number of process buildings are located in the northern half of the site including: a saw mill; formalin plant and the secondary product manufacturing facility (Kronoplus) which produces laminate flooring and worktops.

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- 1.4.6 The site car park, reception building, weighbridge and main site offices are located in the south eastern corner of the site to the south of the MDF/particle board manufacturing buildings.
- 1.4.7 The western perimeter of the Kronospan site 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.
- 1.4.8 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.
- 1.4.9 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 east of the site and parts of the town centre are designated as Chirk Conservation Area.
- 1.4.10 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.

Access

- 1.4.11 The Proposed Development will not result in any change to the existing site access arrangements and will not result in any change to the current number of vehicles entering and leaving the site other than for a short duration during the construction period.
- 1.4.12 The site is accessed via a T-junction with Holyhead Road (B5070) which runs in a north south direction to the east of the site. The B5070 meets the A5 approximately 1.5km to the north of the site via a roundabout junction, known as Whitehurst Roundabout. Approximately 1km to the east of this roundabout the A5 forms a junction with the A483. The A483/A5 provide links north to Chester, west to Llangollen and south to Shrewsbury. To the south of the site access the B5070 leads to the A5 via Chirk town centre, this route is restricted to non-HGV traffic.
- 1.4.13 The existing railhead and sidings within the site are used to import timber for the manufacturing process.

1.5 The Applicant

- 1.5.1 The Applicant is Kronospan Limited. It is the UK's leading manufacturer of high quality wood-based panels and associated products and has been operating in the UK since 1970. The primary products manufactured by Kronospan at the Chirk site are particle board and medium density fibreboard (MDF), from which a number of secondary products are produced such as laminate flooring, worktops and melamine facing boards.
- 1.5.2 The Kronospan manufacturing facility is a major local employer within Wrexham County Borough (WCBC) with the site at Chirk employing 630 staff. It is estimated that the facility also provides indirect employment to 6,000 people in industries relating to the manufacturing and supply chains associated with the operations at the site.

1.6 Pre-Application Consultation

- 1.6.1 The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Amendment Order 2016 (DMPO 2016), requires the applicant to

consult the public and statutory consultees prior to submitting a planning application for major development.

1.6.2 The purpose of this consultation is to provide an opportunity for statutory consultees and the public to review development proposals and to raise any issues, or areas of concern that the developer may need to address before submitting an application.

1.6.3 The consultation undertaken by the applicant is fully described in the Pre Application Consultation (PAC) Report which has been submitted in support of the application. This section of the Planning Statement briefly outlines the consultation undertaken and the feedback received.

1.6.4 As part of this consultation process the applicant has undertaken the following, pursuant to the aforementioned Development Management Procedure Order:

- Erection of three site notices on the 3rd July 2017 publicising the proposed planning application and notifying the public of where a full copy of the draft application could be inspected.
- A full copy of the draft application was made available for inspection at the Kronospan reception for a 28 day period from the 4th July 2017;
- The owners/occupiers of land adjoining the application boundary, the Councillor representing Chirk South ward on Wrexham Borough County Council and the Clerk of Chirk Town Council were written to on the 3rd July 2017 notifying them of the forthcoming application and where a full copy of the draft application could be inspected.
- Dee Valley Water, Dŵr Cymru Cyf, the Health and Safety Executive and the Welsh Ministers were written to on the 3rd July 2017 notifying them of the forthcoming application. A digital copy of the application was provided to these consultees for their comment.

1.6.5 In addition to the above statutory requirements for consultation, Kronospan also conducted a Public Exhibition on the 6th July 2017 at which the company set out its development plans for the site, including details of the Proposed Development. A full copy of the application was available for inspection at the exhibition and staff from Kronospan were in attendance to respond to queries from members of the public. The exhibition was

advertised in Wrexham Leader and Advertizer and a letter inviting the public to the exhibition was posted to 2428 properties in Chirk and Chirk Bank.

- 1.6.6 In terms of the statutory consultation three responses were received from Chirk Town Council, Dŵr Cymru Cyf and the Welsh Ministers (specifically Cadw). The comments from Chirk Town Council related to the colour of the proposed buildings, Dŵr Cymru Cyf confirmed the approach that should be adopted to foul and surface water flows and the Welsh Ministers wrote advising on recently issued guidance in respect of assessment of impacts on the setting of historic assets. In summary no substantive comments were received in relation to the principle or effects of the Proposed Development. All comments received were minor in nature and have been considered and responded to in the PAC Report.
- 1.6.7 A number of written and verbal comments were offered at the Public Exhibition. Many of the comments relating specifically to the proposed development were positive, with recognition that the proposals would help improve air quality and reduce noise.
- 1.6.8 In summary, the extensive Pre Application Consultation did not identify the requirement for any additional information or assessment to be presented in the planning application, save for Cadw requesting that the draft Heritage Assessment is updated to reflect guidance published on the 31st May 2017. No in principle objections were raised by members of the public or statutory consultees and feedback from the public was positive in terms of the potential benefits that the Proposed Development offers.

2.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section of the Planning Statement provides a description of the layout and design of the Proposed Development, together with details of its construction. It also outlines the processes that would take place at the facility.

2.1.2 The Proposed Development comprises the following key elements:

- The installation of a log delivery and transfer system comprising a rail frame with grab cranes and a log infeed system;
- A building to house a new disc chipper and flaker equipment, along with associated conveyers to transfer wood chip to the consented storage silos.
- Removal of the existing hacker, debarker & chipper.

2.2 Layout and Design of the Proposed Development

2.2.1 The existing layout of the site is shown on drawing layout 2195-01-02. This drawing illustrates the structures and equipment that will be removed / demolished as part of the development. The layout and elevations of the Proposed Development are shown on drawings 2195-01-03 and 2195-01-04 respectively.

2.2.2 The planning application covers a total area of 1.03ha and includes the development of a building with a gross external floorspace of 4,237m².

2.2.3 The Chipper / Flaker building would be located to the east of, and adjacent to, the rail siding and to the north of the wood chip storage silos that are currently under construction. The building would be up to 21.1m in height.

2.2.4 The log delivery and transfer system would be located to the north of the Chipper / Flaker building. It would be used to transfer logs from rail cars and delivery HGVs to the new Chipper / Flaker building.

2.2.5 The log delivery and transfer system would comprise two grab cranes which would be mounted on a new rail system adjacent to the existing rail siding. Both cranes would operate on a single rail line. Two conveyors would be

constructed that would be used to transfer logs into the Chipper / Flaker building. One conveyor would sit within the footprint of the new crane rail system, the other adjacent and to the east.

- 2.2.6 The colour and materials have been chosen in order to reduce the visual impact of the facility. The Proposed Development would be located close to existing established buildings at the Kronospan site and as such the colour and material used would be similar to those of adjacent buildings and structures. The Chipper / Flaker building would be clad in steel sandwich panel, powder coated and coloured Goosewing Grey (RAL 080 70 05 BS 10A05) or similar. The grab crane would also be coloured Goosewing Grey (RAL 080 70 05 BS 10A05) or similar.
- 2.2.7 A series of photomontages are contained in Appendix B that illustrate the Proposed Development from a number of key locations in the vicinity of the site.

2.3 Proposed Site Operations

- 2.3.1 At present round wood logs are delivered to the site by rail and HGV. The rail carriages and HGVs are unloaded using a series of diesel driven front loaders. The logs are then transported into the logyard for storage. When required for production, the logs are moved again by front loaders to the existing debarking, hacking and chipping facilities.
- 2.3.2 The new system would involve round wood being unloaded from the train carriages and HGVs by one of two cranes mounted on a rail system that runs parallel to the rail siding. The crane grabs would deliver the logs onto one of two conveyors that would feed in to the Chipper / Flaker Building.
- 2.3.3 The building would contain a series of machines that would be used to debark, chip and flake the logs. The bark and wood chip would then be conveyed into the storage silos to the south of the building (planning permission ref. P/2016/0219).

2.4 Construction

- 2.4.1 The general construction sequence of the Proposed Development would involve the following stages:

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- site preparation including slab breakout;
 - formation of foundations;
 - building and steelwork erection / modifications;
 - installation of plant and equipment;
 - electrical and controls installation;
 - fire detection and protection systems installation; and
 - testing and commissioning of the new press.

2.4.2 Once the new facility is constructed and commissioned the existing debarker, hacker and chipper would be decommissioned.

3.0 NEED AND BENEFITS OF THE SCHEME

- 3.1.1 Kronospan has operated its manufacturing plant in Chirk since the early 1970's. The site manufactures wood-based panels and other wood products. The primary products manufactured at the site are particle board and medium density fibreboard (MDF), from which a number of secondary products are produced such as laminate flooring, worktops and melamine facing boards (MF).
- 3.1.2 The Proposed Development is part of an ongoing improvement programme to deliver environmental improvements at the site and ensure the long term economic viability of the manufacturing facility.
- 3.1.3 The existing Hacker was installed in 1986 and the Chipper in 1992. This equipment has gradually been modified and altered to ensure product quality and to maintain its long term operation. At the point of installation, it was an innovative piece of equipment. However, over time it has become outdated and difficult and expensive to maintain.
- 3.1.4 Furthermore, the design of the plant has meant that it could not be enclosed. As such, by virtue of the processes being undertaken, the existing Hacker and Chipper equipment has the potential to give rise to fugitive dust emissions and noise. The Proposed Development would enable the chipping process to take place within a building and therefore adverse environmental impacts resulting from the manufacturing processes would be reduced.
- 3.1.5 The log offloading and handling facility would deliver benefits in terms of efficiency enabling the business to move to a 'just in time' delivery model, which introduces benefits by avoiding the double handing of materials and reduces the need for onsite storage, which has benefits in terms of logistics, air and water quality. The facility would also reduce the number of vehicle movements in the log yard. This will lead to improved safety for operatives working in this area and reduce noise resulting from the movement of vehicles.
- 3.1.6 Kronospan is continuously implementing projects aimed at further improving environmental conditions at the site. These include a project to reduce emissions and occasional plume grounding, and the development of

significant infrastructure to reduce fugitive dust emissions from the receipt, processing and storage of RCF and storage of other raw product including wood chips, sawdust and bark. This latter project involves the construction of six storage silos on the Site, a project that is nearing completion which will result in significant reductions in fugitive dust emissions from the site. These projects have a total capital expenditure of £13 million and demonstrate the commitment of Kronospan to ensure continuous environmental improvement and respond to local environmental concerns.

3.1.7 Additionally, under the existing arrangements, there is not capacity at the site for all round wood to be debarked prior to wood chips being produced. Therefore certain grades of Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF) are made from unpeeled chips produced in the existing Hacker. Accordingly, apart from improving the environmental status of the site the Proposed Development will ensure that all material used in the particleboard and MDF manufacturing processes will have been debarked prior to the production of wood chips, this will result in a better quality product.

3.1.8 The continual improvement of the operational efficiency of the site will allow Kronospan to compete effectively with rival wood-based panel manufacturing companies across Europe, sustaining this important local business which provides employment to circa 630 staff and in turn the circa 6,000 plus people in the UK indirectly supported by its operations.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Prior to the 1970s, the site was greenfield agricultural land and included a farm house. The original 17th Century farmhouse still forms part of the offices of Kronospan. The site at Chirk was chosen because of its central location between its main customer base and its plentiful supply of raw materials.

4.1.2 The construction of the first factory building commenced in 1971 and the company began operating in 1973. In the late 1980s, the company bought the factory next door and this has since been extended to provide the base for the company's 'Kronoplus' operation, which produces laminate flooring and worktops.

4.1.3 The site has a long and complex planning history, therefore only the larger/noteworthy applications have been included in the table below (e.g. planning applications for signage or canopies over storage areas for example have not been included).

Table 4.1 Planning History

Application Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision Date
9/1459	Erection of a factory for the manufacture of particle board together with timber storage, accommodation, kiln, offices with flats over and other ancillary buildings, provision of car parking facilities and enlargement of existing access.	4 August 1970
9/1534	Outline application for the development of land by the erection of a factory for the	16 August 1971

Application Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision Date
	manufacture of particle board and alterations to existing access.	
9/1534/1	Details of the factory for the manufacture of particle board and plastic faced particle board and alterations to existing access.	29 October 1971
9/1549	Use of existing dwelling as office accommodation in association with proposed factory development.	10 September 1971
9/1884	Details of warehouse for the storage of finished particle board submitted in accordance with Condition No.2 of planning permission 9/1534.	29 March 1974
4/472	Relocation of an existing warehouse.	15 January 1975
4/1798	Extension of existing factory for the manufacture of particle board.	17 December 1976
4/1799	Erection of a new warehouse.	12 April 1977
4/2690	Erection of new flanker building and associated wood chipping machinery.	25 July 1978
4/2843	Extension to warehouse with garage and vehicle inspection pit.	3 October 1978

Application Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision Date
4/5288	Erection of building to house new waste material boiler.	8 April 1982
4/5913	Proposed construction of a pre-drier unit (for the pre-drying of wood chips).	30 November 1982
4/6500	Proposed erection of a formaldehyde plant at existing factory.	29 November 1983
4/6690	Proposed extension to existing factory to provide a new particle board press line.	29 November 1983
4/6737	Proposed extension to existing warehouse to provide additional storage accommodation.	17 January 1984
4/7217	Proposed extensions to existing factory to provide a 4th particle board press line and 5th melamine press with additional warehousing facilities and extensions to canopies over loading bays and re-siting of gatehouse.	21 December 1984
4/7554	Proposed erection of plant in the form of a stack, 16m high above the level of factory roof for the collection and exhaust of fumes from the drying ovens.	7 November 1985

Application Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision Date
4/7724	Proposed construction of a new substation to increase electrical capacity to pre-production area.	1 October 1985
4/7747	Proposed installation of incinerator to deal with the formaldehyde plant tail gases.	6 December 1985
4/8926	Proposed installation of 7.55MW boiler and erection of a 52m high chimney.	16 October 1987
4/8970	Proposed construction of 52m chimney to serve existing wood chip drying plant (no. 3 drier).	13 May 1988
4/11904	Proposed installation of medium density fibreboard plant comprising a refiner building, tube drier, sifter, a forming station and in the existing building a new production line and the installation of abatement equipment in the form of an electrostatic fluidised bed (EFB) system to filter emissions from the weiss boiler and the no. 1 Babcock drier.	7 July 1993
4/13976	Erection of sawmill incorporating log in-feed	13 July 1994

Application Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision Date
	conveyor, de-barker, chipper line, hoggers, cantor chippers, trimmer, profile units, screen units and saws, saw sharpening and tool assembly workshop and stores, plant sorting and stacking unit for the manufacture of timber planks and wood chips (partly retrospective).	
CB01264	Turbine hall extension including 35m high stack.	6 April 1998
CB02609	Amended application for 4 cyclones for MDF II	10 November 1998
CB02899	Erection of new warehouse.	8 March 1999
CB3633/HS	Deemed Hazardous Substance Consent.	29 October 1999
P/2012/0165	Development of biomass plant, recycled wood fibre (RCF) offloading & screening facility & associated infrastructure to support existing production operations	Approved - 14 September 2012
P/2013/0824	Development of biomass plant comprising biomass boiler & furnace ash, handling facility & flue, gas treatment facility including stack & air pollution control, reagent storage silos, recycled wood fibre offloading	Approved - 07 May 2014

Application Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision Date
	& screening facility, biomass storage area & associated infrastructure (substitution of planning permission code P/2012/0165)	
P/2014/0215	2.5m diameter by 7m high extension to existing 15m high abatement stack.	Approved 02 June 2014
P/2015/0728	Erection of building to contain three gas engines and three steam boilers, erection of electrical substation building, oil tank compound, a duct from the press abatement system to carry process emissions to the SEKA (WESP) stack and associated infrastructure to support existing operations.	Approved - 04 Jan 2016
P/2016/0219	Construction and Operation of a Recycled Fibre (RCF) Reception Facility, Grading Plant, Storage Silos And Other Associated Infrastructure (referred to as the log yard RCF project)	Approved – 03 May 2016
P/2016/0336	Extension of a building to house a new melamine facing (MF) press, following the demolition / relocation of the existing MF department's ventilation system, hydraulic	Refused – 05 September 2016 Granted at Appeal – 04 May 2016 (Reference APP/H6955/A/16/3165368)

Application Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision Date
	oil and diesel storage tanks, a vehicle filling station, garage service building and other associated infrastructure	
P/2016/0534	Proposed building extension to store medium density fibreboard (MDF) and chipboard	Refused – 05 September 2016
P/2017/0416	Replacement of existing wood chip preparation facility and development of a new wood chip dryer and associated equipment.	Approved – 31 July 2017

4.1.4 In conclusion, the planning history identified that:

- The Kronospan site has been developed since the 1970s;
- The site has a long history of planning consents for large industrial development;
- There have been a number of planning applications from 1999 through to 2017 relating to development such as the biomass plant, extensions to existing buildings, gas engines, temporary stacks, new silos, fencing and signage; and
- The planning consents include permissions for tall stacks, new buildings and wood processing plant.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 The Proposed Development is located within the existing built area of the Kronospan site and would involve the introduction of a new building, new plant and machinery and the removal of two existing pieces of plant. The new development would be located adjacent to the western boundary of the site at the rail sidings, as shown on Figure 1.
- 5.1.2 The Proposed Development is one of a series ongoing environmental improvement projects being undertaken at the site. The development will result in improvements to air quality and noise. Nonetheless, the Proposed Development has the potential to result in some environmental effects.
- 5.1.3 At the pre-application meeting held with WCBC on the 26th May 2017, it was agreed that the planning application should provide a detailed assessment of the noise, landscape and heritage effects of the Proposed Development.
- 5.1.4 The proposed location for the facility is within the existing developed area of the site and would therefore avoid any direct effects on ecology. The Proposed Development would result in an improvement with regards to air quality by virtue of moving the chip processing operations within a building. The Proposed Development would not increase the impermeable area of the site and therefore would not result in any adverse effects on flood risk or drainage, Figure 3 illustrates how the Proposed Development would connect to the existing onsite drainage network.
- 5.1.5 The following sections of this chapter summarise the findings of the detailed environmental assessments that are appended to this Planning Statement.

5.2 Noise

- 5.2.1 A detailed noise assessment is provided in Appendix A. This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with appropriate standards and guidance and the approach agreed with the WCBC Environmental Health Officer with regards to the assessment of noise impacts from previous development at this site.

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- 5.2.2 The assessment has been undertaken to inform and guide the design of the development such that any likely noise impact on existing dwellings is minimised. Existing background noise monitoring data has been used along with contemporary site specific monitoring to determine the baseline noise conditions at nearby residential receptors.
- 5.2.3 Observations at the nearest residential properties indicate that intermittent noise from local and distant road traffic, intermittent rail movements and noise from the existing industrial activities in the area form the general noise climate at the nearest receptors.
- 5.2.4 Noise from the operation of the existing Chipper and Hacker is shown to be one of the main contributors to existing noise levels at sensitive receptors.
- 5.2.5 The Proposed Development would be designed to eliminate any unusual noise characteristics perceptible at the nearest sensitive receptors by the introduction of for example, suitable building cladding, design, plant selection and where appropriate system silencers.
- 5.2.6 Noise modelling has been undertaken that demonstrates the Proposed Development would result in a general reduction in noise contributory levels in sensitive directions (i.e. reduction of 1dB to 6dB) and would result in noise levels continuing to comply with all relevant standards for noise at the nearest sensitive receptors.
- 5.2.7 A cumulative assessment has also been undertaken to understand the effect of all new plant consented since 2011. The results show that the cumulative effect of the new facilities operating would be at least 10dB below the baseline residual noise and therefore would not cause any increase in residual levels. The cumulative noise level from consented development is also at least 6dB below baseline background sound levels.
- 5.2.8 The cumulative effect of development submitted but not yet permitted has also been considered (noting this assessment includes the now approved Wood Chip Preparation Building and WESP Chip Dryer ref P/2017/0416). The results show that the overall cumulative effect of new plant and facilities would result in a general reduction in overall noise levels at sensitive receptors. Based on this analysis and in consideration of the context of the noise compared with the residual levels, we can conclude that the Proposed

Development would not result in any background noise ‘creep’ in accordance with H3 Horizontal Guidance Note for Noise Part 2: Noise Assessment and Control and BAT.

- 5.2.9 On this basis it is concluded that noise levels from the Proposed Development when considered in isolation and cumulatively with the noise levels from the existing plant at the Kronospan site would be acceptable.

5.3 Landscape and Visual and Heritage

- 5.3.1 Appendix B contains a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). The assessment was undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI). The LVIA follows best practice guidance set out in ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ (3rd edition 2013, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment), hereafter referred to as the GLVIA.
- 5.3.2 The Proposed Development would be introduced into an existing large-scale industrial site that has an established influence upon the town of Chirk and the surrounding rural area. 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.
- 5.3.3 The Proposed Development would always be seen in the context of views where the presence of large-scale structures at the Kronospan site is an established influence, and the Proposed Development would typically result in only a minor change to the arrangement of elements within the wider site. Several of the existing structures are appreciably larger than the Proposed Development in terms of height, mass, floorspace, or all three.
- 5.3.4 The Proposed Development would not have a material effect upon either the statutory purposes or the special qualities of the AONB. The presence of the Kronospan facility is an established part of the context of the south-eastern edge of the AONB (i.e. the area around Chirk), and the addition of the Proposed Development would not materially increase this influence upon the designation.
- 5.3.5 The cumulative landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development, the proposed new WESP Chip Dryer (approved in July 2017), the proposed

Raw Board Storage and the proposed OSB Facility developments would not be significant. Whilst each of the four schemes would include industrial structures that are substantial in scale, they would all be introduced into the existing Kronospan site, where much larger existing structures exert an established influence upon the surrounding area. Additionally, the landform and level of vegetation cover in the area surrounding the site combine to limit the number of locations where clear views of the schemes would be available. As such the cumulative effects of their presence would be limited.

- 5.3.6 In summary the additional presence of the Proposed Development would be unremarkable and would result in little appreciable change to the existing influence of the Kronospan Site upon the surrounding area.

5.4 Cultural Heritage

- 5.4.1 An assessment of the predicted impact of the Proposed Development on the setting of cultural heritage assets has been undertaken and is presented in Appendix C.
- 5.4.2 The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the guidance relating to the setting of historic assets, *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales*, May 2017.
- 5.4.3 Stage 1 of the assessment considered the 92 designated heritage assets located within 2km of the Kronospan site and identified only one asset that merited detailed assessment because of some potential for adverse impacts on heritage significance. This was the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal WHS, which is separately designated as a Scheduled Monument.
- 5.4.4 Having identified the contribution that setting makes both to the heritage significance of the Scheduled Monument and to the outstanding universal value (OUV) of the WHS it was concluded that the Chipper & Flaker would have an adverse impact of negligible magnitude in both cases.
- 5.4.5 The assessment also considered the potential for cumulative impacts resulting from the combined operation of the Proposed Development, the proposed new WESP Chip Dryer (approved in August 2017), the proposed Raw Board Storage and the proposed OSB Facility.

5.4.6 It was concluded that there would be cumulative impacts of negligible magnitude.

6.0 CUMULATIVE EFFECT

6.1.1 The proposed development is one of up to four principal planning applications being submitted to Wrexham County Borough Council over summer 2017, as follows:

- Wood Chip Preparation Building and WESP Chip Dryer (Submitted May 2017, approved August 2017, Reference: P/2017/0416)
- Log Delivery and Transfer System and Building to House a Wood Chipping and Flaking System (this application);
- Raw Board Storage (submitted in parallel with this application); and
- Oriented Strand Board (OSB) Facility (to be submitted late summer 2017).

6.1.2 These developments form part of the Kronospan 2020 strategy and the locations of these proposals are shown on Figure 2.

6.1.3 As it is possible that two or more of these applications will be in the determination phase at the same time it is considered important to take into account the cumulative effects of the proposed developments with regard to noise, air quality, landscape and heritage impacts. The cumulative environmental benefits include an overall reduction in the noise resulting from the site operations and less potential for fugitive dust emissions. From an economic and social perspective, it has been highlighted on a number of occasions within this statement that the implementation of the projects that form the Kronospan Visions 2020, will together enable the continual improvement of the operational efficiency of the site. This will allow Kronospan to compete effectively with rival wood-based panel manufacturing companies across Europe, ensuring the long term sustainability of this important local business.

6.1.4 The potential for cumulative effects in terms of noise, landscape and visual, and cultural heritage have been assessed as set out in the preceding section of the report. The assessments have concluded that no significant adverse cumulative effects would arise from the construction and operation of the four proposed facilities.

7.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT AND APPRAISAL

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This section of the Planning Statement provides an analysis of the Proposed Development in the context of all current, relevant planning policy and guidance.

7.1.2 Following on from this introduction the policy appraisal is divided into four sections. Section 7.2 provides a brief overview of the relevant policy context and identifies the principal documents to which further reference will be made. Section 7.3 provides a detailed assessment of how the proposals accord or otherwise with the relevant policy considerations. Finally, Section 7.4 provides a summary of the Planning Policy Appraisal.

7.2 Policy Context – Overview

The Statutory Development Plan

7.2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (September 2004) and paragraph 3.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales (November 2016) requires that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.2.2 In the case of the Proposed Development the relevant statutory Development Plan comprises the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 (UDP), which was adopted on the 14th February 2005.

7.2.3 The key environmental considerations in relation to the Proposed Development at the existing Kronospan site are noise, heritage and landscape and visual impacts. The relevant policies of the UDP in relation to these matters, as well as the general principle of the development, have been identified as follows:

- Policy PS2: Strategic Policy
- Policy PS3: Strategic Policy
- Policy GDP1: Development Objectives
- Policy E4: Employment Development (of un-annotated land) within Settlements

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- Policy EC5: Special landscape Areas
 - Policy EC6: Biodiversity Conservation
 - Policy EC7: Conservation Areas

Material Considerations

7.2.4 In addition to the policies of the statutory Development Plan, the proposal has also been considered in the context of other material planning considerations. These include (but are not necessarily limited to) the following:

The Emerging Development Plan

- Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028 ‘Preferred Strategy’ (February 2016)

Other National, Regional and Local Planning Considerations

- Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 9 (November 2016);
- Technical Advice Note (TAN) 23: Economic Development (2014)
- People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update (July 2008);
- One Wales: One Planet, The Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government (May 2009); and
- The following Local Planning Guidance Notes:
 - Local Planning Guidance Note No.4
 - Local Planning Guidance Note No. 26
 - Local planning Guidance Note No. 33.

7.2.5 A further material planning consideration is the established ‘need’ for the development which is set out in Section 3.0 of this statement.

7.3 Planning Policy Context and Appraisal

7.3.1 The following sub-section sets out the policies contained within the statutory Development Plan and other material considerations that are of relevance to the proposal. The objective of this assessment is to determine whether the Proposed Development would lead to the achievement, or otherwise of

national and local planning policy and guidance objectives. The appraisal also establishes the degree to which the Proposed Development is supported by, or conflicts with, other material planning considerations.

The Development Plan - Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 (February 2005)

- 7.3.2 The Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in February 2005 and was originally scheduled to cover the period to 2011. Its primary functions are to set out planning policies and to provide a basis for decisions on planning applications and to make proposals for development and the use of land. There are several strategic policies of relevance to the proposal.

Policy PS2: Strategic Policy

- 7.3.3 Policy PS2 is a strategic policy which aims to ensure that the countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment are not detrimentally affected by development.
- 7.3.4 The Kronospan site comprises a number of existing large industrial process buildings including air emissions stacks, storage areas for raw materials, warehouse buildings for manufactured products, offices and car parking. The Proposed Development would be located amongst the existing equipment and would therefore not materially detrimentally affect the character of the local area or the quality of the natural environment. In the context of the existing site conditions, the Proposed Development will result in net environmental gains through a reduction in emissions and noise produced at the site. The proposal therefore accords with Policy PS2.

Policy PS3: Strategic Policy

- 7.3.5 Policy PS3 aims to ensure that development is directed at brownfield sites rather than greenfield land.
- 7.3.6 The Proposed Development would be located on previously developed land (as defined in Figure 4.4 of the PPW) and therefore the proposal accords with Policy PS3.

Policy GDP1: Development Objectives

7.3.7 Policy GDP1 sets out eleven objectives for all new development. The following three objectives are considered to be particularly relevant to the proposal:

- *“a) 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 and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality”.*
- *“f) Ensure the safety and amenity of the public and safeguard the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land or air, hazards from industry and quarrying, and associated noise, odour or vibration arising from development”.*
- *“k) Secure the development of sustainable communities, through the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area”.*

7.3.8 As described in Section 5.0, several of the existing structures are appreciably larger than the Proposed Development in terms of height, mass, floorspace, or all three. The Proposed Development would always be seen in the context of views where the presence of large-scale structures at the Kronospan site is an established influence, and the Proposed Development would typically result in only a minor change to the arrangement of elements within the wider site. Additionally, a Long Term Landscape Strategy has been submitted to the Council. Once approved, this strategy will ensure that Kronospan continue to build upon previously implemented mitigation measures which have been highly successful.

7.3.9 As described within Section 2.2 the materials used in the construction of the Proposed Development would reflect the existing built infrastructure at the Site. Accordingly, the Proposed Development would accord with the character of the site.

7.3.10 The proposals form part of a suite of other projects at the site which will improve the environmental viability of the manufacturing facility. The Proposed Development would result in a reduction in noise and fugitive dust from the manufacturing processes at the site. It should also be noted that

the site is currently operated under an Environmental Permit which is in place to protect the safety and amenity of the public and safeguard the environment.

- 7.3.11 Kronospan is the 6th largest manufacturer in Wales¹ and provides direct employment for over 600 people, of whom 90% live within 10 miles of the site. In addition to the environmental benefits set out above, the Proposed Development would enhance product quality and improve the operational efficiency of the facility. This continual improvement is vital to ensure the long term success of the business and therefore the economic sustainability of this important local employer.
- 7.3.12 In light of the foregoing the Proposed Development is considered to accord with Policy GDP1.

Policy E4: Employment Development (of un-annotated land) within Settlements

- 7.3.13 This policy confirms that employment development proposals on unannotated land within settlements will be permitted provided that the proposal accords with Policy GDP1.
- 7.3.14 The Kronospan site is not allocated for employment within the UDP but has been occupied by the manufacturing facility, and thus in employment use, for over forty years. The application site is within the settlement limits of Chirk as identified on UDP Proposal Map 4: Inset 7. Additionally, the proposal has been found to be in accordance with Policy GDP1 and therefore the proposal fulfils the requirements of Policy E4.

Policy EC6: Biodiversity Conservation

- 7.3.15 This policy confirms that development within or in close proximity to a site of biodiversity interest will be required to demonstrate that the need for the development outweighs the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site. This policy is only relevant where a development would harm a site of biodiversity interest.

¹ Research compiled by Cardiff university and Creditsafe for “Top 300, 2015 Walesonline”

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- 7.3.16 The Chirk Castle and Parkland Site of Special Scientific Interest is located approximately 500 metres west of the Proposed Development site. The development is proposed within the existing boundary of the Kronospan facility on an area currently occupied by manufacturing equipment. As such there would be no direct effects on the SSSI or any other designated site.
- 7.3.17 It can be concluded that the Proposed Development would not result in any harm, directly or indirectly, to sites of biodiversity interest. In light of the foregoing, there is not considered to be any conflict between the Proposed Development and Policy EC6.

Policy EC7: Conservation Areas

- 7.3.18 This policy seeks to ensure that conservation areas are preserved or enhanced and requires new development *within or in close proximity* to be compatible with the special qualities of the conservation area.
- 7.3.19 Chirk Conservation Area lies approximately 750 metres to the south-east of the Proposed Development. No development is proposed within the conservation area. Viewpoint A (Figure 2A within Appendix B to the Planning Statement) along with the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) figures contained in Appendix 5 of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Appendix B to the Planning Statement), demonstrates that there would be no visibility of the Proposed Development from the Conservation Area. On this basis it can be concluded that the Proposed Development would not detrimentally affect the existing views and character of the Conservation Area and as such would not be contrary to Policy EC7.

Material Planning Considerations – The Emerging Development Plan

Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028 ‘Preferred Strategy’ (February 2016)

- 7.3.20 Wrexham County Borough Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Development Plan (LDP) for the County Borough. The LDP is the Council’s land use plan that will establish where and how much new development will take place in the County Borough over the period 2013 – 2028. It will also identify which areas need to be protected from

development and will replace the existing Unitary Development Plan (UDP, 1996-2011) once adopted (currently programmed for March 2018).

7.3.21 The Preferred Strategy is the first formal publication in the Local Development Plan (LDP) preparation process. It sets out the broad approach that the LDP intends to take to ensure that the County is developed in a sustainable manner. It provides the strategic framework for the more detailed policies, proposals and land use allocations which will subsequently be included in the Deposit LDP. The Preferred Strategy is non-strategic and does not contain site specific land allocations or detailed planning policies.

7.3.22 Consultation is currently taking place on the Evidence Base & Supporting Documents and the plan is scheduled to be submitted to the Welsh Government for Examination in June 2017. As such, the emerging Development Plan is at an advanced stage of its preparation and due weight should be attributed in the determination of this planning application to the policies contained within the emerging plan.

7.3.23 Strategic Objective SO2 is therefore considered to be a material consideration in the determination of the planning application, albeit with limited weight attached:

“Objective SO2: Support a vibrant, diverse and competitive local economy that provides a range of job opportunities to enable new and existing businesses to grow in Wrexham County Borough”.

7.3.24 This objective is supported by Strategic Policy SP1, Economic Growth, Employment and Enterprise. In order to achieve this objective, manufacturing facilities such as Kronospan must remain competitive. The Proposed Development is part of a programme of continual improvement of the operational efficiency of the site which will allow Kronospan to compete effectively with rival wood-based panel manufacturing companies across Europe and therefore continue to contribute to employment and economic stimulus within the borough and the wider region. These policies therefore add weight to the policy support for the Proposed Development.

Material Planning Considerations – Other National, Regional and Local Planning Considerations

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9, November 2016)

- 7.3.25 Planning Policy Wales (PPW), which is supplemented by Technical Advice Notes (TANs) and circulars, is the national planning policy for Wales and sets out the land use policies of the Welsh Government. The policies of relevance to the Proposed Development have been considered in the subsequent section. PPW and the TANs are material to decisions on individual planning applications and, as such, it is important to consider how the Proposed Development fits within this policy context.
- 7.3.26 The following chapters of PPW are considered relevant to the Proposed Development:
- Planning for Sustainability (Chapter 4);
 - Economic Development (Chapter 7); and
 - Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution (Chapter 13).
- 7.3.27 The relevant advice within these chapters of PPW is outlined below and considered in the context of the Proposed Development.
- 7.3.28 Chapter 4 relates to 'Planning for Sustainability' and sets out the Welsh Government's commitment to achieving sustainable forms of development. The Welsh Government acknowledge the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development within the definition provided in Figure 4.2 of PPW. Paragraph 4.2.1 states that the planning system has a fundamental role to play in achieving sustainable development in Wales.
- 7.3.29 Paragraph 4.2.2 states that the planning system provides for a presumption in favour of sustainable development to ensure that social, economic and environmental issues are balanced and integrated.
- 7.3.30 The environmental impacts of the Proposed Development have been assessed, as reported in Section 5.0 of this Planning Statement. The assessments conclude that the development would not give rise to any

significant adverse effects, and would result in benefits in terms of noise and air quality. The development would also make a positive contribution in terms of the safety of operatives at the site, through a reduction in movement of heavy vehicles within the logyard.

7.3.31 The need and benefits of the Proposed Development are set out in Section 3.0 and the economic benefits are explored further below in context of Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development. It is clear that the Proposed Development will contribute to sustaining the valuable economic contribution that the business makes to the local and national economy.

7.3.32 Based on the foregoing it is clear that the Proposed Development constitutes Sustainable Development as defined within PPW and therefore there is a presumption in favour of granting planning permission for the development.

7.3.33 Chapter 7 of PPW, 'Economic Development', explains that in assessing the economic benefits of a scheme, key factors include:

- *“the numbers and types of jobs expected to be created or retained on the site;*
- *whether and how far the development will help redress economic disadvantage or support regeneration priorities, for example by enhancing employment opportunities or upgrading the environment; and*
- *a consideration of the contribution to wider spatial strategies, for example for the growth or regeneration of certain areas.”*

7.3.34 As noted above, and discussed further in the next section of the report, the Proposed Development provides significant economic benefits to Wrexham and Wales and therefore makes a positive contribution to this national policy goal.

7.3.35 Chapter 13 of PPW relates to minimising and managing environmental risks and pollution, in particular the risks associated with climate change. The environmental risks that proposed developments should take into consideration are flood risk, unstable and contaminated land, air and water quality, noise and light pollution. All these factors have been considered and where appropriate assessments have been presented in this application. In

this regard the Proposed Development accords with the policies set out in Chapter 13 of PPW.

Conclusions

- 7.3.36 The Proposed Development would contribute to each of the national policies outlined above and it has been established that the proposals are Sustainable Development. The Proposed Development would result in a number of benefits to the manufacturing process that would help secure the ongoing success of this important local employer. The development would help improve the environmental sustainability of the business by introducing newer, more efficient processes.
- 7.3.37 The assessments demonstrate that environmental risks and pollution have been considered and that the effects of the Proposed Development are considered to be acceptable and in several instances improve the environmental and safety performance of the site.
- 7.3.38 On the basis of the foregoing it is considered that the Proposed Development is in accordance with the national planning policies set out above.

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 23: Economic Development (2014)

- 7.3.39 TAN 23 provides advice on various aspects relating to economic development including developing high level economic planning objectives and assessing the economic benefits of new development.
- 7.3.40 Paragraph 2.1.1 states that *"It should not be assumed that economic objectives are necessarily in conflict with social and environmental objectives. Planning should positively and imaginatively seek such 'win-win' outcomes, where development contributes to all dimensions of sustainability"*.
- 7.3.41 Kronospan have recently released their investment strategy, Kronospan Vision 2020, which sets out their aim to make Kronospan a world leading wood-based panel production site. Kronospan envisage achieving this through the following measures:

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- investing in the business in order to reduce the environmental impact of the operations at the site;
 - improving operational efficiency through much needed equipment upgrades; and
 - offering new business and revenue streams.

7.3.42 The above measures will be achieved through the investment of £150 million over the next 3 years. As set out previously, Kronospan are an important local employer providing direct employment for over 630 people, the majority of whom live locally, and paying over £1.3 million in net wages every month. The business also makes a significant contribution to the local and national economy via business rates and corporation tax. Annually the business contributes over £1 million through business rates and since 1970 the business has paid £57 million in corporation tax.

7.3.43 The Proposed Development would contribute to Kronospan implementing its Kronospan Vision 2020, enabling the long term sustainability of the business to be secured, ensuring that the substantial economic benefits of the business continue to be realised.

‘People, Places, Futures’: The Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update (July 2008)

7.3.44 The Spatial Plan is a twenty year plan for the sustainable development of Wales. It comprises the overarching framework and integration tool and provides important underpinning in a whole range of matters, such as:

- *“Economic development and the long term goal of full employment at a rate of 80%; and*
- *Making the right decisions, and getting the most benefit from specific; and major investment decisions, affecting public services;”*

7.3.45 The final section of the Spatial Plan presents the Area Strategies for the six identified Plan Areas. The Kronospan site is located within the North East Wales Border and Coast Region. The overall vision for this region is: *“an area harnessing the economic drivers on both sides of the border, reducing inequalities and improving the quality of its natural and physical assets”*. The Spatial Plan recognises that this region is highly dependent on the

manufacturing sector both in terms of jobs provided and the gross value added to the local and national economy. Clearly the Kronospan facility, and therefore the contribution that the Proposed Development makes to the ongoing success of this business, makes an important contribution to meeting the aims of the Spatial Plan.

One Wales: One Planet, the Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government (May 2009)

7.3.46 The document indicates that sustainable development is the overarching strategic aim of all the Welsh Government's policies and programmes. The Sustainable Development Scheme includes strategies for sustainable resource use, sustaining the environment, a sustainable economy, a sustainable society and the wellbeing of Wales. Where the economy is concerned the vision is for a: *"resilient and sustainable economy for Wales that is able to develop whilst stabilising, then reducing its use of natural resources and reducing its contribution to climate change"*.

7.3.47 As identified previously, Kronospan is continually seeking to improve efficiency and reduce waste in order to improve the sustainability of the products it manufactures. The Kronospan facility makes a contribution to the development and growth of sustainable businesses in Wales, in line with the vision set out by the Welsh Government within *One Wales: One Planet, the Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government*.

Local Planning Guidance Notes

7.3.48 Wrexham County Borough Council has produced Local Planning Guidance Notes on multiple topics; these notes expand on the detail provided in the UDP policies and provide further indication of Council's approach to planning issues. The Local Planning Guidance Notes have been reviewed and two of these notes have been identified to be of relevance to the proposal, these documents are considered with regard to the Proposed Development below. It should be noted that whilst effects on the Chirk Conservation Area have been considered within this application, specifically in relation to Policy EC7 of the UDP, the Local Planning Guidance Note 4 (Conservation Areas) is not relevant to the application as it deals solely with development within conservation areas.

Local Planning Guidance Note No. 26 – Landscape and Industrial Development

- 7.3.49 This note aims to improve understanding of the landscape and environmental issues which the Council will take account of when determining applications for industrial development. It advocates that high-quality design can improve the image of a business, attract high-quality staff and encourage investment.
- 7.3.50 As described in Section 5, the Proposed Development would typically result in only a minor change to the arrangement of elements within the wider site. 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.
- 7.3.51 Furthermore, a Long Term Landscape Strategy for the Kronospan site has been submitted to the Council. This document provides a comprehensive analysis of the opportunities for landscape mitigation within the surrounding area and sets out a programme of landscaping management and planting that would help mitigate views of the wider facility, including views of the Proposed Development.
- 7.3.52 As described in Section 2.2 above and within the Design and Access Statement the Proposed Development would reflect the existing design principles and aesthetics of existing structures at the site.
- 7.3.53 On the basis of the foregoing it is considered that the principles of Local Planning Guidance Note 26 have been adopted.

Local Planning Guidance Note No. 33 – Pontcysyllte Aqueduct & Canal World Heritage Site

- 7.3.54 The stated aim of the guidance note is to ensure the integrity of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, its buildings, structures and landscape are maintained. It sets out the need to consider the impact of Proposed Development on the World Heritage Site and its setting.

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- 7.3.55 Appendix C to this Planning Statement contains a Heritage Assessment that considers the effect of the Proposed Development on the character of the WHS that accords with the *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales (May 2017)* guidance and the matters raised within Section 6 of Local Planning Guidance Note 33.
- 7.3.56 It demonstrates that views of the Kronospan Site from the canal are restricted, reflecting the fact that the canal runs through a tunnel and a deep cutting adjacent to the site, and the stretch of canal further to the north is lined with mature trees. The tallest existing structures at the Site are intermittently visible for an approximately 1km stretch of canal north of the cutting.
- 7.3.57 The photomontages contained in Appendix B illustrate the limited visibility of the wider Kronospan site from the WHS itself, with the Proposed Development wholly screened from many views.
- 7.3.58 The Kronospan site is more clearly visible from elevated viewpoints within the WHS buffer zone west of the canal. The Proposed Development would be visible, but would be located within the existing complex of industrial structures and would always be viewed as part of this. It is concluded that the visual extent of the Kronospan site would not change significantly, nor would its influence upon the character of the WHS.
- 7.3.59 On this basis it is concluded that the Proposed Development would not harm the integrity of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, its buildings, structures and landscape. As such the Proposed Development would meet the stated aim of Local Planning Guidance Note No. 33.

7.4 Planning Policy Appraisal - Summary

- 7.4.1 Table 7.1 gives a detailed breakdown of all national, regional and local policies against which the proposal is assessed and provides a conclusion of whether the proposed development accords with the relevant policies.

Table 7.1: Assessment of the Proposal against Planning Policy and Guidance

Policy No	Policy Thrust	Development aids policy	Development is neutral to policy	Development does not accord with policy
<i>Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011 (UDP)</i>				
Policy PS2	Seeks to prevent development that would materially detrimentally affect the countryside landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.	✓		
Policy PS3	Directs development to previously developed brownfield land comprising vacant, derelict or underused land in preference to the use of greenfield land.	✓		
Policy GDP1	Sets a series of general requirements/criteria all new development should comply with.	✓		
Policy E4	Employment development on un-annotated land within settlement limits will be permitted subject to compliance with Policy GDP1.	✓		
Policy EC6	Development either within or close to sites of biodiversity interest will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the need for the development outweighs the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site.		✓	
Policy EC7	Within, and in close proximity to, conservation areas, the priority will be to preserve and/ or enhance those buildings, structures, streets, trees, open spaces, archaeological remains, views, and other elements which contribute to the unique character of the area.		✓	
<i>Material Planning Considerations</i>				
<i>Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028 'Preferred Strategy'</i>				
Objective SO2	Support a vibrant, diverse and competitive local economy that provides a range of job opportunities to enable new and existing businesses to grow in Wrexham County Borough.	✓		
<i>Planning Policy Wales (Edition 9, November 2016)</i>				
Chapter 4 - Planning for Sustainability	Sets targets for carbon and greenhouse gas emissions reductions which are to be achieved	✓		

Policy No	Policy Thrust	Development aids policy	Development is neutral to policy	Development does not accord with policy
	through the facilitation of new and more sustainable forms of energy generation. Sets out the criteria and requirements for achieving sustainable development.			
Chapter 7 – Economic Development	Sets out WAG's objectives for creating a strong and vibrant economy.	✓		
Chapter 13 - Minimising and Managing Environmental Risks and Pollution	Sets out how to minimise the adverse effects of any environmental risks from future land uses.	✓		
<i>Other Relevant Government Policy / Strategy Documents</i>				
People, Places, Futures. The Wales Spatial Plan (2008 Update)	Provides a 20-year plan for sustainable development in Wales including a vision for the North East Wales region.	✓		
One Wales: One Planet, the Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government (May 2009)	Sets out the Welsh Government's vision of a sustainable Wales.	✓		
<i>Local Planning Guidance Notes</i>				
Local Planning Guidance Note No. 26 – Landscape and Industrial Development	Aims to improve understanding of the landscape and environmental issues which the Council will take account of when determining applications for industrial development.		✓	
Local Planning Guidance Note No. 33 – Pontcysyllte Aqueduct & Canal World Heritage Site	Aims to ensure the integrity of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, its buildings, structures and landscape are maintained		✓	

7.4.2 It can be seen from the assessment of the statutory Development Plan and other material planning considerations in Table 7.1 above, that the Proposed Development is either in conformity with, or supported by, all facets of the identified, relevant planning context.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1.1 The Proposed Development would form part of an ongoing improvement programme to deliver environmental improvements at the site and ensure the long term economic viability of the manufacturing facility.
- 8.1.2 The log offloading and handling facility would deliver benefits in terms of efficiency enabling the business to move to a 'just in time' delivery model, which introduces benefits by avoiding the double handling of materials and reduces the need for onsite storage, which has benefits in terms of logistics, air quality and water quality. The facility would also reduce the number of vehicle movements in the log yard. This will lead to improved safety for operatives working in this area and reduce noise from the movement of vehicles.
- 8.1.3 The Proposed Development would enable Kronospan to improve the quality of particleboard manufactured through the introduction of newer, more efficient debarking, chipping and flaking equipment. This will ensure the continued ongoing success of the business in the competitive market of board production, sustaining this important local business which provides employment to circa 630 staff and in turn the circa 6,000 plus people in the UK indirectly supported by its operations.
- 8.1.4 An extensive Pre Application Consultation exercise has been conducted. This included provision of a draft set of planning application documents for inspection by the public, the local Council Member, Chirk Town Council and a number of Statutory Consultees. A public exhibition was also held where details of the Proposed Development were presented. No in principle objections were raised by members of the public or statutory consultees and feedback during the public exhibition was positive in terms of the potential benefits offered by the Proposed Development. This application has responded fully to all of the comments raised during the Pre Application Consultation process.
- 8.1.5 An assessment of the proposals against the relevant planning policy and guidance has demonstrated that the scheme meets the test of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and paragraph 3.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales as it fully complies with the provisions of the statutory

Development Plan. Furthermore, it has been established that the Proposed Development constitutes Sustainable Development as defined within PPW and therefore there is a presumption in favour of granting planning permission for the development.

- 8.1.6 In addition, a comprehensive assessment of relevant material considerations has not revealed any justification for determining this application other than in accordance with the development plan. In fact, the proposals have also been found to strongly accord with, and be supported by, a range of material planning considerations. Accordingly, planning permission should be granted without delay.