

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

page 1 of 4

To accompany

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION:

PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE of FORMER FARMHOUSE & FARM BUILDINGS to become COMMERCIAL DEALERSHIP for AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT & DWELLING at MILL HOUSE, EAST KNAPTON, MALTON, YO17 8JA for RYETEC LTD.

BACKGROUND SITUATION. Ryetec Ltd is a local Ryedale firm that was established by Mark Harrison 21 years ago as an offshoot of the established Harrison Hire business which in turn was established 45 years ago. Ryetec sell specialist machinery for farming, forestry and general amenity use and have recently seen very rapid growth especially in specialist agricultural and lumber processing equipment as the use of wood as a primary domestic heating source has dramatically expanded over the last few years. The business is currently located on a shared and congested site (with Harrison Hire) in the middle of Settrington Village. The physical limits and awkward shape of the current site have become a limiting factor on the growth of the business, the success of which also depends on being able to demonstrate the equipment on site to prospective customers. An opportunity to move arose when a large site at Mill House, East Knapton was offered as a distressed sale when the previous owner became insolvent. In 2010 this previous owner had obtained permission to change the use of the farm house and farm buildings to become a hotel, restaurant, leisure complex and managers flat and to improve the junction with the A64 trunk road. An addition planning approval was granted to further intensify this initial approval in 2011. Work had only just started, principally with regard to demolitions, site levelling and foundations, when the receivers were called in and the site was subsequently offered for sale. After marketing the site for more than a year there was zero interest and it was decided to take the property to auction where it failed to reach the reserve at two previous auctions, the third attempt was in April of this year. Mark Harrison took the precaution of speaking in outline terms with Ryedale Planners and Forward Planners to gain a degree of comfort that there was unlikely to be any great difficulties gaining permission to make the site the new home for his expanding business prior to purchasing the site which he subsequently did at auction the week after the enquiry having satisfied himself that RDC would be sympathetic to his proposals.

The Mill House site is in the open countryside and extends to 24,050 square metres. The farm buildings were/are set in the middle of the site some 100 metres back from the trunk road on ground which is gradually sloping down away from the road. The building line (such as it is) for Mill Farm and its two adjoining neighbours to the east is along this line. The vendor has demolished all the buildings on the site with the exception of a 2 storey barn, footprint 215 square metres, which was to be incorporated within the hotel design. In addition the foundations and floor slab for part of the hotel complex had been laid together with a compacted sub-base and kerbs for in site roadways and parking areas. This current application makes use of all this unfinished work and by implication this has informed the proposed overall layout of the site. There is no immediate plan to develop in front of the building line and the landscape plan approved as part of the hotel scheme and as partly implemented on site will be carried forwards with the new use and application. It is the intention of the applicant that the existing approved (but as yet unimplemented) vehicular access to the site will be kept as already designed and approved.

As stated above the Ryetec business is currently located in the middle of Settrington in a set of converted farm buildings and sheds. The nature of the activity of the business, the need to demonstrate equipment on site and store larger items outside (with consequent security and disruption implications) all mitigate against the current location and for the new location. In addition any further expansion on the existing site is not possible due to the physical

Cont... page 2

constraints of the site and this is proving a limiting factor on the expansion of the business and the desire to expand the workforce. The remote location of the application site will allow the business to grow unfettered by space constraints and without causing disruption to neighbours and will consequently improve the amenity for Settrington residents.

PROPOSAL. The application is for the conversion of the remaining building left on the site to become part office and part small parts storage for the commercial enterprise and for the development of a ground floor office building on existing foundations and floor slab attached to this existing two storey building. It is proposed that a second storey of this proposed new build is to become a residential apartment for an on-site manager who will be responsible for security. To the rear two new industrial buildings are proposed around the partially completed external hard standing area. To the west a detached steel framed storage building is positioned parallel to the east boundary. The space behind this building, together with the blank east boundary wall, will form two sides of a proposed secure external storage area. To the north a larger detached steel framed storage building is proposed. The existing approved highway junction and site road improvements are also used in the new scheme as are the allocated and partly made up car parking areas. This together with the existing approved site landscaping scheme (including an earth bund and planting between the highway and the site) are also adopted as part of the current proposals.

PLANNING HISTORY. The previous applications for this site 10/01047/MFUL - 26 Nov 2010 and 11/00194/MFUL – 13 June 2011 were for the part demolitions and change of use of the existing farm house and farm buildings and the formation of a hotel and leisure complex with on-site manager's residential accommodation together with landscaping and highway junction improvements. This venture floundered when only partly implemented. Work had started on site and consequently these approvals are still current. The applicant bought the site at auction following a brief pre-application discussion with Gill Thompson and Rachel Smith (both also involved in the initial hotel applications). For the purposes of this application I have assumed (on advice from RDC) that this application is for change of use from the previous farm and farmhouse use rather than from the approved and partly implemented hotel use.

POLICY BACKGROUND. The recently adopted Local Plan Strategy forms the policy background to the proposed scheme. The following policies are relevant:

Policy SP6: Delivery and Distribution of Employment/Industrial Land and Premises – the site is in the wider open countryside and the policy supports appropriate rural economic activity. The proposed agricultural commercial use is a perfect fit with these aspirations.

Policy SP9: The Land Based & Rural Economy – supports the provision of new buildings to support farming and forestry and promotes the rural skills of woodland management.

Policy SP14: Biodiversity – The site is subject to an extensive landscape plan including the planning of native species and an earth bund forming a visual separation between to development on the site and the trunk road.

Policy SP16: Design - requires that new buildings should respect local distinctiveness and that the materials, details and form of the development should respect the context of the surroundings. The conversion of the existing retained building on site and the extension to this forming the new office and residential accommodation are achieved in a sympathetic manner. The new portal shed buildings appear as modern agricultural buildings in terms of scale, materials and design. The tight grouping of the buildings minimises the overall impact of the development in the countryside.

Policy SP18: Renewable & Low carbon Energy – The office incorporates solar thermal water heating, the large sheds are unheated.

Policy SP19: Sustainable Development – The proposals uses the existing foundation and drainage work already implemented on the site as the basis for the new buildings. The business is based on the sale of equipment which promotes a more sustainable future. Policy SP20: Generic Development Management Issues – restates these requirements. All the various relevant parts of these policies have been considered in generating the proposals. NPPF sections 1 & 3 are relevant in that the proposals will boost employment in the area and have a positive effect on the wider rural economy.

USE. The use of the proposed development is to be a commercial dealership for agricultural equipment together with a single dwelling for a site manager.

(This is not a new dwelling - there has always been a permeant dwelling on the site, initially the farm house and subsequently through approvals 10/01047/MFUL - 26 Nov 2010 and 11/00194/MFUL – 13 June 2011 a manager's flat in association with the hotel business.)

AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT. The floor area of the existing retained brick farm building is 450square metres and the footprint of the foundation and floor slab left as a consequence of the failed hotel venture is 260 square metres. It is proposed to develop a two storey building (as originally approved) on the unused floor slab. These two elements combined will form a 150 square metre dwelling in the first floor of the new build element and the ground floor of the new build element and part of the converted building will yield a 370 square metres office and the balance of the conversion is to become a 180 square metre small parts storage area for the business. In addition two single storey new portal framed steel warehouse type buildings are also proposed. The first orientated north south is 540 square metres, the second orientated east west is 1,050 square metres. In addition car parking for 21 vehicles is proposed in two parking areas and together with a vehicular hard standing area and secure external equipment storage area is also proposed. The improvements to the highway junction and on site landscaping are already approved as a consequence of the previous current approvals 10/01047/MFUL 26.11. 2010 & 11/00194/MFUL 13.06. 2011. The total amount of floor area development on site is 15% less than previously approved.

SCALE PERAMETERS. The retained brick agricultural building is almost the tallest building on site taking into account the falling away of the ground level into the site to the north (5 metres over the depth of the site). This two storey brick building is 15.5 x 15 metres, 5 metres to the eaves and 7.8 metres to the apex. The proposed new extension to this building forms the office (at ground floor level) and dwelling (at first floor level). This two storey brick and timber clad building is 18.5 x 8.1 metres, 5 metres to the eaves and 7.8 metres to the apex. The smaller of the two new industrial building is 15 x 35 metres on plan, 5.9 metres to the eaves and 8 metres to the apex. The larger of the two new industrial building is 25 x 42 metres on plan, 5.9 metres to the eaves and 8 metres to the apex.

LAYOUT & DESIGN. As has already been mentioned the existing foundations, floor slab and road and vehicular hard standing areas from the failed hotel scheme form the basis for the site organisation of the proposed scheme together with the integration and re-use of the remaining building on the site. This has resulted in a tight cluster grouping around the central hard standing area. The smaller new industrial shed is carefully position so as to form a barrier (visual, acoustic and security) to the blank high boundary wall of the property to the east. This permits the formation of a secure external storage area with the minimum of 2 meter high security fencing. The second larger industrial building is located behind all the rest at the rear and lower part of the site. The buildings form a tight cluster and is inward looking onto the central hard standing area. The design is kept as simple and unpretentious as possible whilst appearing to be agricultural in nature. Already approved landscaping between the development and the trunk road will obscure the development from the highway.

APPEARANCE. The materials used in the proposed new office and dwelling are complimentary to those of the existing host building to which it is attached. The design is simple and horizontal in feel being built of rendered blockwork at ground floor level with horizontal timber cladding at first floor level. (as a nod to the principle activity of the business) The hipped roof is clad in clay pantiles and the roofs sweeps down to first floor level to signify the the office and dwelling entrances which are on opposite sides of the building thus keeping the uses and their external amenity spaces separate.

The industrial shed buildings are of simple pitched design mimicking agricultural sheds with fibre cement roof and corrugated steel sheet sides over block dado walls with roller shutter doors. The access road is tarmacked and the on-site roads and hard standing areas of compacted crushed stone.

EMPLOYMENT LEVELS & ON-SITE ACTIVITIES. The growth of the business is currently inhibited by the constraints of the site it currently occupies in Settrington where currently 8 people are employed on site. This new facility would allow them to immediately increase this number by 2 people to 10 full time employees on site. Mr Harrison anticipates at current growth rates that the business could reasonably anticipate growing by 2 employees per year for the next 5 years. The hours of business conform to reasonable national standards. The business sells specialist machinery for farming and forestry and amenity machinery to clients all over the UK. They require good road links for easy access, yard space for loading and unloading large machinery, workshop space for maintenance, service and repair, storage for plant and spares and most importantly external areas where the machines can be demonstrated to potential clients – yard space where timber processing machines can be run and demonstrated and grass surfaces, from fine turf to field pasture, where specialist grass cutting machinery can be demonstrated. These are all agricultural type processes similar to those that would have prevalent on the land were it to have remained a farm.

An appended Transport Assessment is appended to this statement which shows a great reduction (75%) in the projected traffic level for the application use over the proposed hotel use. There will be a degree of HGV vehicular movements which the hotel would not generate, these are itemized in the Transport Assessment and are certainly less than the initial farm use would generate. The approved Travel Plan for the hotel use is still relevant, it is proposed to adopt in full the consequential highway junction improvements which flowed from this more intensive leisure complex use as part of the current proposals.

ACCESS. The means of access to the site remains unaltered from the previous approved scheme which the applicant will implement in full. Within the site there is ample parking and turning areas separated for the residential and business uses.

CONTEXT & LANDSCAPE. The site slopes down to the north away from the trunk road and there is no proposed development within 100 meters of the highway. The previously approved landscape scheme, which called for an earth bund parallel to the truck road has already been implemented. The wooded area to the west boundary is retained and screen planting along the bund will be implemented as already approved. The impact on the landscape is minimal.

ECOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL & FLOODING. There are no ecology issues associated with the proposed development. A recently completed bat survey accompanies the application and the limited mitigation required is included in the proposals. There are no flooding issues relating to the site, the free draining sandy land is perfect for percolation of ground waters. The previously approved hotel scheme included a foul water treatment plant and the proposed new use will generate less than 10% of this approved volume of foul waste. The proposed dwelling and offices will be heated by oil with solar thermal backup hot water generation. The sheds are not heated.