

**DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR THE ERECTION OF AN
ANCILLARY SINGLE STOREY BRICK AND PANTILE BUILDING TO
PROVIDE OFFICE, SALES AREA, CAFÉ, ASSOCIATED KITCHEN AND
TOILETS AT BREEZY KNEES NURSERY, WARTHILL, YORK**

INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement is prepared to support an application for the erection of a single storey detached building to incorporate office, toilets, sales area and café as an ancillary facility to an established retail nursery, trading primarily in perennials, to the north of the village of Warthill on the west side of Common Lane and to the north of its junction with Northgate Lane.

The purpose of this Design and Access Statement (DAS) is to explain the process by which the design was arrived at and how the objectives of good and inclusive design have been achieved.

The statement will follow the four stage process of assessment, involvement, evaluation and design.

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1. **ASSESSMENT**

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Physical Context

This requires an evaluation of the site and its surroundings. Breezy Knees Nursery lies in open countryside on the unclassified road between the A64 Scarborough to York Trunk Road and Warthill approximately one kilometre to the north of that village and some three kilometres to the south east of the Hazelbush junction and service area on the A64. The site of the building is part of an existing developed complex in the south part of the nursery composed primarily of a 0.32 hectare security fenced area for the display and sale of plants and enclosing a 200 sq.m. footprint modern agricultural style sheeted portal frame general purpose building or barn. This building is primarily a store but also incorporates the office which is a desk within a wooden shed used as the staff restroom/eating area. It also incorporates a toilet without handwashing facilities in a separate smaller wooden shed. The sales area is a table with a till in a front corner of the barn. That complex is part of a larger nursery area of some 8 hectares of land. The remainder is primarily laid out in gardens as stockbeds with associated car parking. Access to the nursery is gained at the northern end of the block of land away from the complex and an internal drive serves the stockbed area and the developed complex to the south. The site of the proposed new building is on an area of land on the west side of the existing complex adjoining a stone surfaced car park on the southern boundary of the nursery and is currently used as an overflow car park as part of the developed area of the business. The site is rectangular in shape running north to south some 18m. wide and 30m long with an adjoining car park of 18m x 25. The north side adjoins an open

field, the west side adjoins the access road into the nursery which is backed by a tall mature hedge, the east side adjoins the fenced compound and the south side adjoins the access road as it turns into the compound with adjoining car park. In the wider context the overall complex adjoins agricultural land to the north, stockbeds for the production of plants to the west, the public highway Common Lane to the east and to the south the group of buildings forming East Carlton Farm. Overall the existing nursery complex and East Carlton Farm visually form a single group of buildings and the proposed building will be part of this in an inconspicuous position on the west side of the group. The nursery as a commercial use lies within open countryside where surrounding land uses are primarily agricultural but the nature and appearance of the business has clear open countryside connections based upon the production of plants. Indeed with the laying out of the stock beds and the high level of tree planting around and within the nursery the rural appearance and bio-diversity of the locality is enhanced over normal agricultural uses.

The site and the nursery in general is well screened by existing belts of trees and high hedgerows and the proposed building will not be seen from the public highway except from long distance views from the north and even from here will be seen against the backdrop of the existing group of buildings and associated mature and maturing landscaping.

The predominant building materials in the area consist of brick and pantile on the traditional buildings of farmsteads but also cement/asbestos and metal sheeted and timber clad portal frame more recent farm buildings.

Like the traditional grouping of farm buildings in the countryside the existing commercial complex is placed closely together along with the nearby East Carlton Farm and the site of the proposal is part of this.

There are no listed buildings in the vicinity and the site will not be seen in that context.

The site of the proposed building is on the western side of the existing complex away from the road and is a flat area at the same level as the land on which surrounding buildings sit and also the passing highway. In addition the well screened nature of the site makes the complex relatively inconspicuous from public areas. Existing hedges adjoining the highway will remain and additional landscaping is proposed to reinforce this natural feature. Access to the highway will remain in its present position but will be improved in accordance with highway requirements.

Social Context

The majority of the buildings in the locality outside village limits are agricultural businesses and associated dwellings but all, other than East Carlton Farm, are some distance away. The enterprise is a relatively low key operation and unlikely to effect adjoining properties

Economic Context

The proposed building would be a sustainable use ancillary to the existing overall business and help maintain the efficiency and viability of this important countryside based operation. The proposal makes use of an underused area of the business premises, will fit in with the appearance of it's immediate locality and will help maintain the current business's contribution to the local economy. An additional three full time nursery gardening jobs and three part time café jobs will be created as a result of the development.

Planning Policies

In respect of Government Policies, PPG 2 Green Belts, PPS 7 which is aimed at sustaining the rural economy and PPS 4 Planning for Sustainable Development are relevant. Only a small part of the York Green Belt falls in the Ryedale area and only some of the objectives of PPG2 apply. Those specified by Ryedale include

1. To preserve the setting and special character of the City of York
2. To prevent neighbouring settlements merging
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
4. To assist in urban regeneration

The proposal is not in conflict with any of these objectives. PPG2 recognises the need for business development provided this is not at the cost of a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the present use. PPG2 also advises that Green Belts have a positive role in providing opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation near urban areas and also that such uses can help to preserve the openness of the Green Belt. The proposal will not have a significant or material effect on the openness because of it's scale and location. In addition the existing nursery provides an important recreational function particularly in respect of the 6 hectares of stockbed gardens which are generally enjoyed for a significant period by visitors. PPS 7 stresses the importance of achieving a healthy rural economy in rural areas and states it is important to create jobs in rural areas to sustain communities. It considers that a healthy rural economy is one of the best ways of protecting and improving the countryside which, it is considered, the nursery is achieving. It also acknowledges that the expansion of existing businesses including the physical extension of buildings may often be appropriate. PPS 4 urges local planning authorities to encourage industrial and commercial development compatible with environmental objectives which the proposal is considered to be.

Relevant Ryedale Local Plan policies are as follows. Policy EMP 6 indicates that proposals for the expansion or redevelopment of existing businesses within existing sites will be permitted provided that

- 1 They do not have a significant effect on amenities of nearby properties
- 2 They are compatible with EMP 13 which requires that size and materials of the building are compatible with surroundings, satisfactory parking for vehicles, good landscaping provision and adequate space around the building is provided

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3 They do not conflict with policies designed to protect the countryside from non-essential development

4 They do not have a material effect upon the character of the countryside. It is considered that the proposal complies with all these requirements.

Policy ENV1 also applies and indicates that proposals for development outside development limits will be permitted provided that

1 They relate to agriculture or forestry or would benefit economic or social activity

2 Maintain or enhance the rural environment

In particular

- a) They are compatible with character of the locality and not on an adverse effect on the landscape
- b) They comply with Policies ENV 2 to 5
- c) A new building would not detract from the open rural character of the countryside and where the design, scale, siting and materials of the building would respect the local environment and reflect local character
- d) High quality landscaping to integrate the proposal into the landscape
- e) Adequate provision to ensure no detrimental effect on highway safety nor local amenity
- f) Services can be provided without significant disturbance to the locality
- g) Protects nature conservation and archaeological remains
- h) Avoids high quality agricultural land

The proposal occupying a site within the developed area using an existing vehicular access and of a simple but sympathetic design to complement adjacent buildings and reflect the rural setting of the business whilst having no adverse impact on local amenity or nature conservation interests is considered to completely comply with the policy.

2. INVOLVEMENT

The nursery is a popular venue and typically a customer will spend one and a half to two hours in the stockbed garden area and between half and one hour in the nursery. Most customers like some kind of refreshment and toilet facilities over such a long period and the most frequent question asked is for a café and or toilets. Customers often leave the nursery to have lunch elsewhere at such places as Vertigrow, Deans, Farmers Cart or Balloon Tree in most cases only 5 or 6 k. away but it does potentially double vehicle movement when they return in the afternoon. Provision of the proposed facilities will encourage them to stay on site for the whole visit and will be welcomed by customers. As far as the applicants are aware there are no local objections to a development that will take place within the developed site of the business.

3. EVALUATION

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Stages 1 and 2 have been evaluated and an opportunity for the development of the land clearly exists without detriment to the locality.

An assessment of the current use indicates that a rural business related use is the most appropriate use of the site and its relationship to existing development constrain and dictate that any development must be associated with the existing and its surroundings. The development should acknowledge the relationship to adjacent buildings and the proposed form reflect the nature of the development. National and Local Planning Policies recognises that expansion of existing businesses in open countryside can be acceptable.

4. DESIGN

Potential design solutions are led by the sites location in a rural area close to traditional farm buildings. The site in open countryside requires a simple but sympathetically designed building which will contribute to the group and its countryside location. The scale of the building is relatively minor in the context of adjacent buildings but requires to be able to accommodate coach parties and although this would not necessarily be a regular occurrence and would be no more than one coach at a time there would however be an expectation for the majority to be served together consequently the Café has been designed to accommodate 40 covers as a realistic minimum to provide for such a situation.

It should be noted that because the nursery is only open for 6 months and the Café is intended purely to provide a facility for visitors it also will only be open for the same period.

Individual issues that are considered as part of the DAS are:-

(A) USE

The proposed development will consist of a single story detached building to provide an office, sales area café, kitchen and toilets with associated parking and turning area.

(B) AMOUNT

The building provides a floor area over a single floor of 150sq.m in a plot of 540sq.m with an additional area of 450sq.m. dedicated to car parking.

(C) LAYOUT

The building is laid out to provide an office of 20sq.m. a sales area of 18sq.m. a café of 60sq.m. a kitchen of 13sq.m. toilets of 27sq.m. with the remainder of the floor area taken up with storage and corridors.

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Access to the new office continues to be from the public highway
Pedestrian access to the new office can also be gained from the public highway.

The site is considered to be secure and to have reasonable levels of surveillance over access and activities from adjacent properties and public areas a fact considered to be important in relatively isolated developments.

(D) SCALE

As a single storey building with a height to ridge of 5.2m. and a floor area of 150 sq.m. the size and scale of the buildings is modest and comparable to a traditional farm building such as a cart shed with associated stores or loose boxes. It is subordinate to the modern barn building and in keeping the adjoining traditional buildings of East Carlton Farm . The new building is considered to complement the group of buildings. Respecting the context of the site is important to maintaining its relationships and its character.

(E) LANDSCAPING

The site will be developed from within the existing site and existing site structural landscaping will remain undisturbed thus maintaining the contribution which current landscape features make to the locality.

The applicants have already planted thousands of trees and allowed hedges to grow and in some cases planting secondary hedges alongside to increase depth. Further additional planting of indigenous species will be carried out in accordance with a scheme to be agreed with the local planning authority. Parking areas will be surfaced with permeable materials to allow rainwater to soak away naturally and will be screened by native species hedge which will be allowed to grow to full height.

(F) APPEARANCE

The offices will be built using reclaimed local brick and a clay pantile roof to harmonise with and improve the general appearance of the locality. External materials and detailing are intended to reflect the rural location of the development.

Lighting will be restricted to a low level and any external lighting will be subdued but sufficient to illuminate walkways to entrance doors and to aid personal safety.

(G) ACCESS

The site is located within open countryside but is close to main routes with public transport. The majority of visitors however arrive by private transport, a number in organised groups by coach. The stockbed gardens already have good parking facilities under a previous planning permission.

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Additional on-site parking is provided for the new building with turning within the site. Bicycle and motor cycle parking will also be provided.

The site has good level pedestrian access within the site and from the public highway and the development has been designed to facilitate access for both able bodied and disabled alike.

The existing access from the highway is metalled and provides a good quality level smooth surface. In accordance with North Yorkshire Highways advice, improvements will be made to the access' junction with the public highway. These will consist of widening the first 20m. of the access to 5.5m and forming an improved crossing of the highway verge with radii kerbs of 6m. all in accordance with NYCC specification. Three equally spaced passing places of 12m. long with tapered ends to widen the internal access drive to 5m. at these points will also be formed.

CONCLUSION

It is considered that within the constraints, an economically viable and sustainable scheme has been prepared that proposes design solutions in keeping with the nature of the site.

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