

# Morton & Hall Consulting Limited

Consulting Structural Engineers and Building Design

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Your ref:  
Our ref: H6537/MH/rg  
Date: 24 May 2021

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT  
FOR  
PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL/OFFICE USAGE  
AT  
LAND SOUTH WEST OF MARINA DRIVE  
MARCH  
CAMBS  
PE15 0AH

1 Gordon Avenue  
March  
Cambridgeshire  
PE15 8AJ

Tel:01354 655454

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The proposal is for a Full Planning Application to be submitted to Fenland District Council for the change of use of land between two established commercial usage of the Middle Level Commissioners and Fenn Holidays office/depot.

Documents to be submitted with this application include an Ecological Report, Flood Risk Assessment, foul and surface water drainage design, Highways Report, Design & Access Statement, Topographical Survey, proposed floor plans, elevations & site plan together with street view, and company information.

## 2.0 EXISTING USE/SITE

The existing site is accessed off Whittlesey Road, which is a road owned by Cambridgeshire County Council.

There is an existing access leading to the Middle Level Commissioners which is a hard surface, tarmacked access drive which also accessed the existing site and this can be clearly be seen on site.

Along the front of the site abutting Whittlesey Road there is a drainage dyke. There is an existing access from Whittlesey Road into the site however, this is not large enough for the proposed usage and whereas existing has not been used for a number of years. This comprised concrete retaining walls but this has been temporarily closed.

V.A.T 876 0014 34

Reg : 5525923

Set back from the brink of the drain in the ownership of this land, is a native hedgerow which is to be maintained.

There is a further hedge along the right hand side boundaries as viewed from the front. There is also fencing along the side boundaries, some of which is a post and wire fence and some is a 2.4m high palisade fence.

At present this is an agricultural field.

3.0 ECOLOGICAL

An Ecological Report has been prepared for this site, which accompanies this application.

4.0 OVERALL AERIAL SHOT

Reference should be made to the aerial shot of this section of March which clearly demonstrates that the developments adjacent are in close proximity to this site. This proposal is not in isolation but abutting existing commercial/industrial usage and is in close proximity to the A141 Isle of Ely bypass.

5.0 FLOOD RISK

A separate Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out for this site by MTC Engineering Ltd and it accompanies this application.

6.0 CONSERVATION AREA/LISTED BUILDING

This site is not located within a conservation area or a listed building, and no historical assets would be affected by the proposal.

7.0 FORCE ONE LITERATURE

Force One literature has been provided for the application, to give an overview of the company practices.

8.0 HIGHWAYS

A separate Highways Report has been prepared by MTC Engineering Ltd for this site and accompanies the application.

It should be noted that the existing access it utilised by the Middle Level Commissioners who also have substantial vehicles utilising this junction, which was also previously used for farm vehicles that are also substantial.

9.0 TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

There are no tree preservation orders over this site. The mature tree to the front of the site is to be maintained.

The hedgerows along the front and side boundaries are also to be maintained.

Further soft landscaping is proposed to the front and left hand side boundaries as viewed from the front.

A planning condition can be applied to agree the landscaping details with the Planning Officer.

10.0 LAND & ALTERNATIVE SITES WITHIN MARCH, CAMBS

A survey has been undertaken of March, Cambs with regards to other existing industrial/commercial sites to base the existing business at.

At present the business is split between Unit 8 Thorby Avenue for office space and some vehicular storage at Longhill Road, March. For obvious reasons, the applicant wishes for the entire business including the training facilities to be set at one location while still being within the Fenland town of March, which is a growth town within the Local Plan.

We have undertaken a survey of the following areas for possible development for this use.

Martin Avenue

There is no land for sale both at Martin Avenue on Rightmove or commercial websites. On visiting Martin Avenue, there is no room for an access way or further expansion.

Thorby Avenue

Considerable development has taken place down Thorby Avenue in the last few years. This generally a mixture of industrial offices and commercial units. Planning Approval has been given for further units to the northern most point of Thorby Avenue. This land was sold and works are due to commence shortly for these industrial units, which are not suitable for heavy goods vehicles, a considerable amount of parking and the suction machine used by this company.

A Planning Application was approved at Thorby Avenue, reference F/YR19/0364/F for industrial usage and this land has also previously been sold as it unavailable.

On undertaking a site visit along Thorby Avenue, there are no sites for sales and also on viewing Rightmove as well as further commercial land websites, there is no further land for sale down Thorby Avenue.

On reviewing sites down Thorby Avenue, there did not appear to be any further places for commercial/industrial developments.

Hostmoor Avenue

On undertaking a site visit along Hostmoor Avenue, there is no land for sale.

Rightmove had also indicated that there is no land for sale at Hostmoor Avenue.

The site adjacent No30 Hostmoor Avenue is set considerably lower than the road and also water laid within this site in numerous occasions throughout the year. It is noted that no planning application has been submitted within the last five years for the development at this site.

This site also appears to not be large enough for this proposal.

Melbourne Avenue

There is no land for sale down Melbourne Avenue at present and on undertaking a site visit, a section of land adjacent to a pond where this also intersects with the roundabout of Hundred Road, is not for sale and no planning application has been submitted for the last five years.

A further view down Melbourne Avenue indicated that there is a large commercial building which we understand is owned by Cambridgeshire County Council, and there appears to be no scope for further industrial buildings together with offices to house this development.

At the time of the looking there was no land for sale in this area on Rightmove or other commercial land websites.

#### Gaul Farm Industrial Estate, Gaul Road

A planning application has been approved by Fenland District Council, reference F/YR19/067/F, for the expansion of the existing industrial units.

However on viewing the size of this site and with the existing units being utilised, there is insufficient room for this proposal in terms of both office space and the industrial element of the proposal.

There is also a high pressure gas main running through the entire site where no development could take place, and there is an easement either side of this high pressure gas main.

There is insufficient room for sheds of the size required and an office area.

#### Creek Fen Business Park, Creek Fen Road

On undertaking a site visit, there is not sufficient space within the confines of this site for the existing business use due to the size of the vehicles and offices required, in association with this.

#### Longhill Road/Foundry Way

On undertaking a site visit to this area, there is no further room for expansion within the confines of the industrial site usage. To the eastern side of the industrial usage, there is the Elm Road Playing Fields, which is still in use and therefore could not be developed. To the northern side of Foundry Way, there is a wind turbine and to the western side, there are disused railway lines and this would be in extremely proximity to HMP Whitmoor.

As can be seen from the detailed list above, there is no or extremely limited site within flood zone 1 or 2 for industrial expansion.

### 11.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The National Planning Policy Framework would apply to this project as follows.

Paragraphs 9, 11, 14, 17, 21, 28, 34, 56 & 58 would be relevant to this application.

This site is well located and consolidates the whole business operation in one location, where at present this is split between two locations.

The proposed site layout is for office/vehicle storage/servicing together with a separate dedicated training centre, and a separate storage HGV shed.

### 12.0 FENLAND LOCAL PLAN

The Fenland Local Plan is applicable to this application.

#### Policy LP2

This development will contribute to the Council's opportunities for employment in accessible locations. This site abuts an adoptable road which is Whittlesey Road. The proposal also creates further opportunities for employment in an accessible location, as the site is located on the perimeter of the market town of March.

#### Policy LP3

March is listed as one of the primary market towns, these being March and Wisbech where the council expects employment and retail growth. This proposal would clearly comply with this policy.

#### Policy LP6

This policy states created opportunities for jobs in the district together with urban extensions to the four market towns. March is one of the four market towns that the proposal provides employment growth for an existing business, location between two established commercial units.

### 13.0 CURRENT STAFFING LEVELS AT FORCE ONE LTD

At present there are 50 full time employees with no part time employees. There is a 7-days a week work all year round, this being not just confined to the UK but also Europe.

The hours of working on site are generally 7am – 6pm on Monday to Friday, including most weekends.

Vehicles will be accessing and leaving the site 7 days a week at various times.

At present there are the following vehicles under the company ownership.

18 x heavy goods vehicles  
2 x trailers  
15 x company vans  
8 x company cars

This does not include the personnel cars of employees that would be parked at the site at various times.

It is expected that 15 staff will be based full time at the site within the yard/offices and where there is essential maintenance required, there may be 2 persons on a night shift.

### 14.0 MARCH TRANSPORT PLAN/A141 BYPASS

At present the heavy good vehicles for this company enter March town centre through the High Street and Broad Street, continuing along Station Road and Elm Road to reach Longhill Road.

These are very large vehicles and the A141 bypass was built to remove traffic from the town centre, particularly larger traffic.

On reviewing the March Transport Plan, the ethos of this document is to remove traffic from the town centre and utilise the bypass, which what this proposal does.

This would remove a number of heavy goods vehicles and commercial vehicles from March town centre, utilise the bypass and the vehicles would enter the site via Whittlesey Road, which is already utilised by a number of commercial vehicles.

## 15.0 CONCLUSIONS

The site is located between two business uses, being The Middle Level Commissioners and Fenn Holidays office/depot. As can be seen on the location plan submitted with this application, there are further business usages beyond Fenn Holidays and on the opposite side of Whittlesey Road.

This site could then be considered infill between two commercial usages and not extending development into the open countryside.

The site already has an existing access which is to be improved. The site abuts an adoptable road which leads directly to the Peas Hill roundabout.

The site is located on the edge of the Fenland market town of March which is one of the main growth market towns listed within the Fenland Local Plan.

A number of biodiversity features are to be included within the proposal, and reference should be made to the Ecological Report in this regard.

The proposal is for an established business that requires space to expand for both office staff and heavy good vehicles.

The use for the offices and the industrial units is not a critical in terms of flood risk such as residential, although floor levels will be raised above the existing ground level.

The proposal is not within a conservation area or adjacent to a listed building.

There are no Tree Preservation Orders that would be affected by the proposal.

A thorough survey has been undertaken of the industrial areas of March which are all located within different flood zones, and a review of the internet has also been undertaken with regards to land availability.

The site would not affect any Middle Level Commissioner maintenance strips.

A Flood Risk Statement has been submitted together with an assessment of the Highways/access for this site.

A detailed drainage design has also been submitted and on site infiltration testing has been carried out.

The proposal would also remove large vehicles entering March High Street, Broad Street, Wisbech Road and Elm Road over the railway station, and they would all be located in a single location between commercial sites.