

**Proposed Extension at
Westexe Forklifts
Unit 1
Poltimore Barton
Poltimore
Exeter
EX4 0BQ**

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

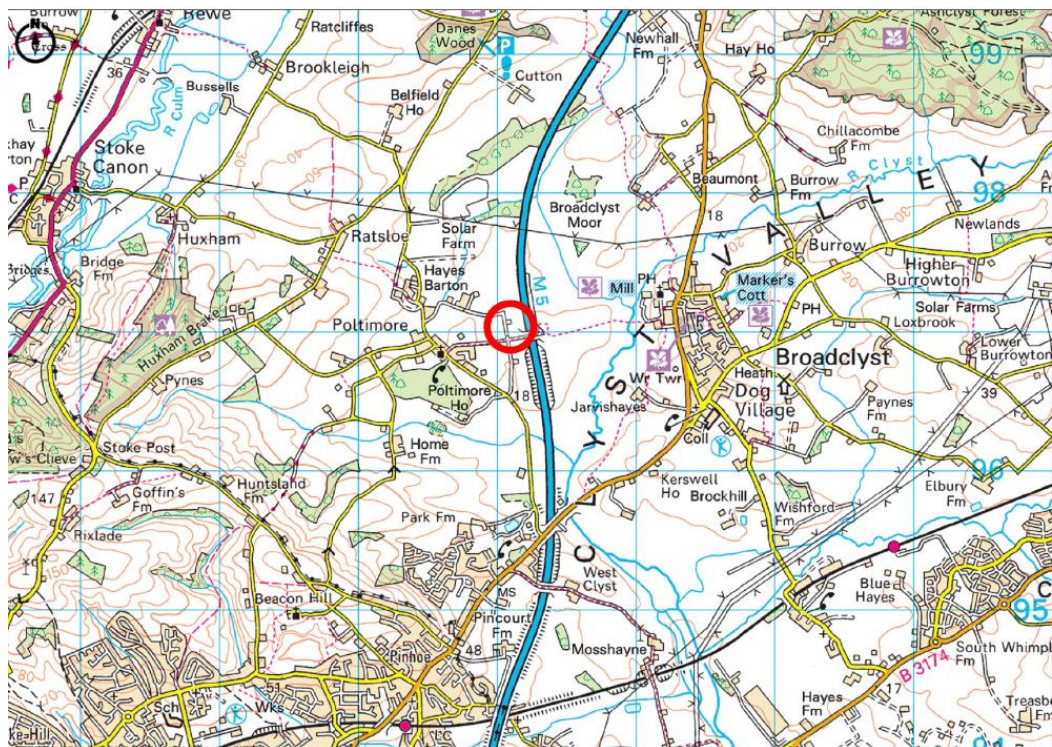
5 November 2021
ARA Architecture
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Planning Application seeks approval for an extension on the north elevation of the existing building, within the existing curtilage of the site of Unit 1 Poltimore Barton.

2.0 THE SITE

Unit 1 Poltimore Barton (EX4 0BQ) is located at Poltimore in East Devon, as shown on the below plan.



To the immediate east of the site is the M5 motorway, to the west is a private track leading to the adjacent Poltimore Farm, to the south is private track and public footpath to Broadclyst and to the north is agricultural land.

There are no local or national designations affecting the site.

The site is virtually level.

3.0 PLANNING AND SITE HISTORY

In July 2009, planning consent was granted (Ref 09/0808/COU) for a change of use Unit 1 Poltimore Barton from equestrian (prior to that the building and yard area was used as an equestrian arena) to a use falling under B2 (General Industry).

This consent was limited to Michael Thorne Construction and there were various conditions around the use of the surrounding yard areas and over working/operating hours. As a result of the economic downturn in 2008-2009, Michael Thorne Construction unfortunately went into Administration and were unable to take forward a license/lease once the planning consent was eventually granted.

Fortunately, another business was found in Westex Forklifts and since October 2009 they occupied the building and surrounding yard for primarily B8 (Storage and Distribution) uses, with ancillary portacabin offices (B1, now Class E) which served for a time as their Head Office. Some General Industrial processes (Use Class B2) also continued throughout this time and it is intended that the future use of the site will include both B8 and B2 operations.

As a result of this historic use and operation of the site, two separate applications were submitted to regularise the additional B8 (Storage and Distribution) (with ancillary offices) use across the site (alongside the existing B2 (General Industrial) use), via a Certificate of Lawfulness application (Ref 20/2307/CPE) and a separate retrospective application for the two end extensions (Ref 20/2389/FUL).

Following consultations and discussions between the applicant and planning officers, these applications (Ref 20/2307/CPE & Ref 20/2389/FUL) were withdrawn and a new application to combine the two applications was submitted and consent was granted in May 2021 for change of use to include additional B8 (Storage and Distribution) (together with ancillary offices) use and retain existing B2 (General Industrial) use, approval for two historic extensions to the existing building and for a new proposed loading/docking bay building, replacement site offices and loading/docking canopy (21/0312/FUL).

4.0 PROPOSALS AND DESIGN

As set out in the introduction, this application seeks approval for an extension on the north elevation of the existing building, within the existing curtilage of the site of Unit 1 Poltmore Barton.

The proposed extension is needed due to the demand and further expansion of the Westexe business to provide additional storage space on the existing site. The proposed extension has been designed to improve the efficient and effective operation of the building for the long term providing a more increased efficient use of this established building for storage racking and forklift access.

The ridge and eaves height of the extension roof will be approximately 1.5m higher than the existing to provide additional space for the racking and storage of goods and access to them by forklifts.

Overall, the proposed extension will increase the footprint of the existing building by approximately 1,295m² utilising existing hard surface area with no physical impact.

The extension will be on the north side of the existing building away from the main public vantage points and therefore will cause minimal visual impact on the local area.

There will be an increase of employment generated from 9 existing staff to 14 proposed staff as a result of this proposal.

The impact of the proposed extension will only be visual (not physical) and any negative visual impact of the extension will be outweighed by the economic gain.

The proposed extension will be designed with matching green cladding and grey/green roof sheets to match the existing building.

One external door is proposed on the west elevation to provide necessary escape for occupants in the event of a fire and to comply with current Building Regulations.

In terms of drainage, all surface water run-off will connect into the existing ground soakaways serving the site.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

The Policies and Strategies of the East Devon District Council Local Plan 2013-2031 that relate to the proposals the subject of this application are as follows:-

- **Strategy 7:** **Development in the Countryside**
- **Strategy 31:** **Future Jobs and Employment Land Provisions**
- **Policy D1:** **Design and Local Distinctiveness**
- **Policy E5:** **Small Scale Economic Development in Rural Area**

- i. **Strategy 7** supports developments in the open countryside that do not have a detrimental impact on local settlement patterns, important natural or manmade features or the local character of the area.

None of the proposals set out in this application increase the outline of an existing and established industrial unit and yard and as such, it is perceived that no detrimental impact could be caused.

It is our view that the proposals set out in this application should therefore be supported under this strategy.

- ii. **Strategy 31** supports developments which provide new jobs and employment land.

This application will very much act to preserve jobs and also increase the prospect of further employment creation in the future.

Therefore, it is again our view that the application should be supported under this strategy.

- iii. **Policy D1** relates to the design and conceptual impact of the proposals on the surrounding character area and adjacent properties.

Fundamentally, the proposed materials and building proportions within this application have been designed with this in mind, to cause as little visual impact from the building and site as is possible.

No material changes are proposed under this application and therefore, it is concluded that views to the site from surrounding properties and vantage points will remain largely identical to the existing approved building.

Screening is already established to prevent the building being visible from neighbouring properties.

- iv. **Policy E5** supports small scale economic developments within rural areas if it involves the conversion of an existing building.

The proposal set out within this application involve the use of an existing building and yard and act to ensure employment preservation and prosperous economic activity at this site, at a very challenging economic time.

6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The following measures will be introduced to mitigate the environmental impact of the extension.

i. Sustainable Energy:

Low energy light fittings were/will be used throughout the building.

ii. Construction Materials:

All of the timber used throughout the building was/will be softwood from sustainable replenishable sources.

7.0 FLOOD RISK

The site is not within an area identified by the Environmental Agency or the Local Plan as at being risk of flooding, therefore no flood precaution measures are required.

Clean water drainage can be delivered using existing historic surface water drains and soakaways, thus having no impact on any adopted surface water drains.

8.0 ACCESS

Access to the site is un-changed, served by the existing private track that links to the adopted highway between Poltimore and the B3181.