

# Design & Access Statement

The Mill, Gurney Slade

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Revision: A



Prepared by:

Western Building Consultants

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# 1.0 Introduction

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## **1.1 Design and Access/ Planning Statement**

This Design and Access Statement has been written to form part of a detailed planning application on behalf of our Client, LKAB Minerals Ltd, for the site at The Mill, Gurney Slade. They are seeking planning permission to demolish the 2no. existing detached bungalows and replace them with a new office building, with associated external works around the site.

The scheme has been created by Western Building Consultants, working together with specialist consultants, to design a deliverable proposal for the redevelopment of a brownfield site.

### **Purpose of the Statement**

In May 2006, the Government formally amended the planning application process as set out in 'Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System' (June 2006) to require the submission of a Design and Access Statement to support most planning applications.

In a circular 01/2006, a Design and Access Statement is defined as a short report accompanying and supporting a planning application to illustrate the process that has led to the development proposal, and to explain and justify the proposal in a structured way. This document has been prepared in the context of the circular guidance. As such this document demonstrates how the physical characteristics of the scheme have been informed by the rigorous process of assessment – involvement – evaluation – design.

The statement sets out a contextual appraisal of the site as a basis for considering the site's opportunities and constraints, design principles associated with the scheme, and the design of the detailed proposal.

## 1.2 The Existing Site

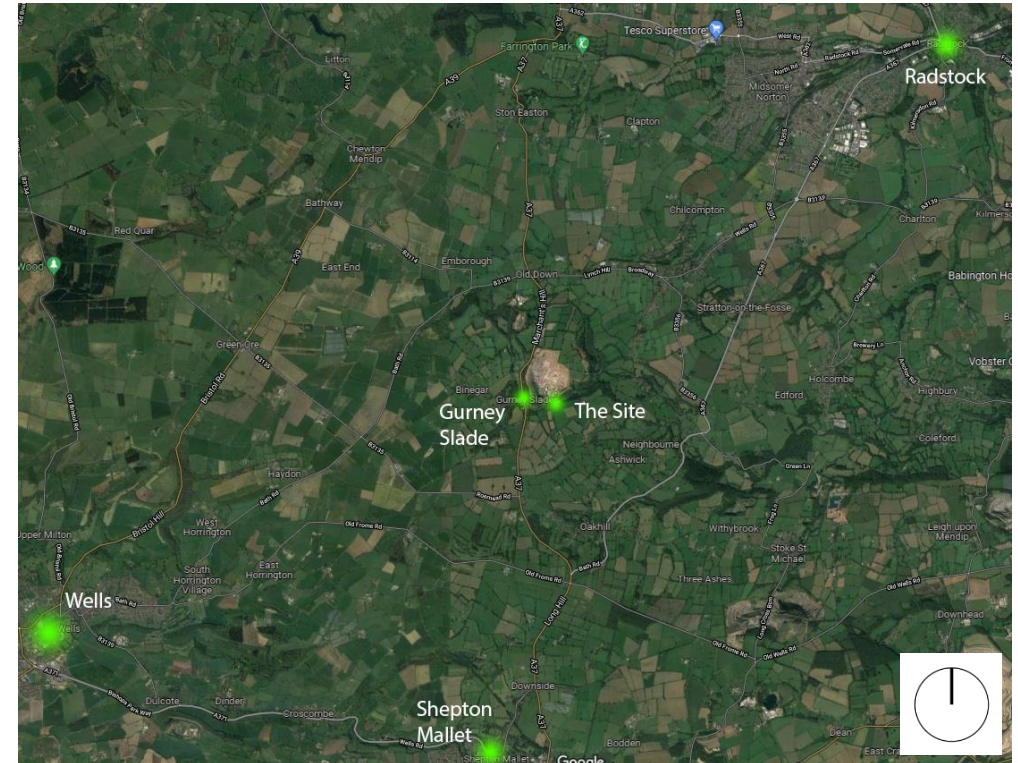
The site is located in Gurney Slade, which is located approximately 6 miles south-west of Radstock, approximately 6 miles north-east of Wells and approximately 4 miles north of Shepton Mallet.

Binegar/Gurney Slade is identified in the Mendip District Council Local Plan as a Secondary Village offering “some services and the best available public transport services making them appropriate for development aimed at meeting more localised housing, business and service needs.”

The application site is accessed from Tape Lane, which connects the A37 at its western end with Stock Hill, and then Green Lane at its eastern end leading to and connecting with the A367.

The site is bordered to the east by detached residential properties, and to the south the site is bordered by fields. To the west of the site lies a car park that is also owned by the applicant, and to the north (on the opposite side of Tape Lane) is Gurney Slade Quarry.

Beyond the immediate site boundaries lies a predominantly rural setting, with residential dwellings and farm buildings found generally along the main connecting roads, with a more concentrated area of development, including commercial premises, found along (and accessed from) the A37 at Gurney Slade, such as The George Inn and Gurney Slade Post Office.



Background image courtesy of Google Maps

## 1.3 The Existing Buildings

The site comprises two detached dwellings, with a combined floor area of 305.9m<sup>2</sup> over the ground and first floors of the properties, plus there is a single storey garage building to the south of the site with a floor area of 181.2m<sup>2</sup> and a stable building to the west of the detached dwellings, and to the north of the garage building, which has a footprint of 29.4m<sup>2</sup> bringing the total floor area of all existing buildings on the site to 516.5m<sup>2</sup>.

There is existing car parking to the north of the existing garages on the site, accessed via the access road from Tape Lane, and with a turning space for vehicles within the external car parking area. There is currently on site car parking available for 6 Cars.

The existing dwellings were constructed in approximately the 1950/60s, as detached dwellings, and the garage and stable buildings appear to be later additions to the site, although no date is available for their construction.

There have been no recent planning applications in relation to the site.

The photographs to the right show the current condition and form of the buildings.

Aesthetically, the buildings are all designed as relatively low structures, with the detached dwellings (comprising two storeys) being positioned at a lower level than the surrounding land- achieved via the use of retaining walls to the earth around these buildings.

The dwellings appear as traditional vernacular of domestic residential properties, complete with dual pitched roofs, bay windows at ground floor and dormer windows in the roof. The stable and garage buildings, are also relatively traditional in their design, albeit of a style that reflects their use. These buildings therefore have flat roofs and a more orthogonal overall building form.



## 2.0 The Vision

### 2.1 Design Vision - Key Principles

Our Client's brief and vision is to provide a high quality new office building to this brown field site in Gurney Slade.

Although not a prominent location, and not visible from the road, there is an opportunity to improve the built environment on the site, improve the parking layout and rationalise the landscaping around the site.

A new, purpose built, office building would be designed to balance the aesthetics, the thermal and environmental performance and the wellbeing of the occupants in the design, creating new workspaces designed to suit office working.

Further detailed principles are:

**Environment:**

Environmentally aware architecture throughout, from first concepts, generated from site analysis.

**Flood Risk:**

The site lies within flood zone 1- an area with a low probability of flooding.

**Orientation:**

Orientation of the building to continue the existing adjacent street elevations, as well as to minimise solar gains for the office spaces.

**Envelope:**

New building materials, with external timber cladding, which reflect the surroundings.

**Entrances:**

DDA compliant entrances into the new office.

**Office Spaces:**

New offices spaces, designed to allow for flexibility of layout.



Image courtesy of Google Earth



## 3.0 Site Analysis

### 3.1 Boundaries

The site area shown by the red line occupies approximately 4817.7m<sup>2</sup>.

### 3.2 Topography

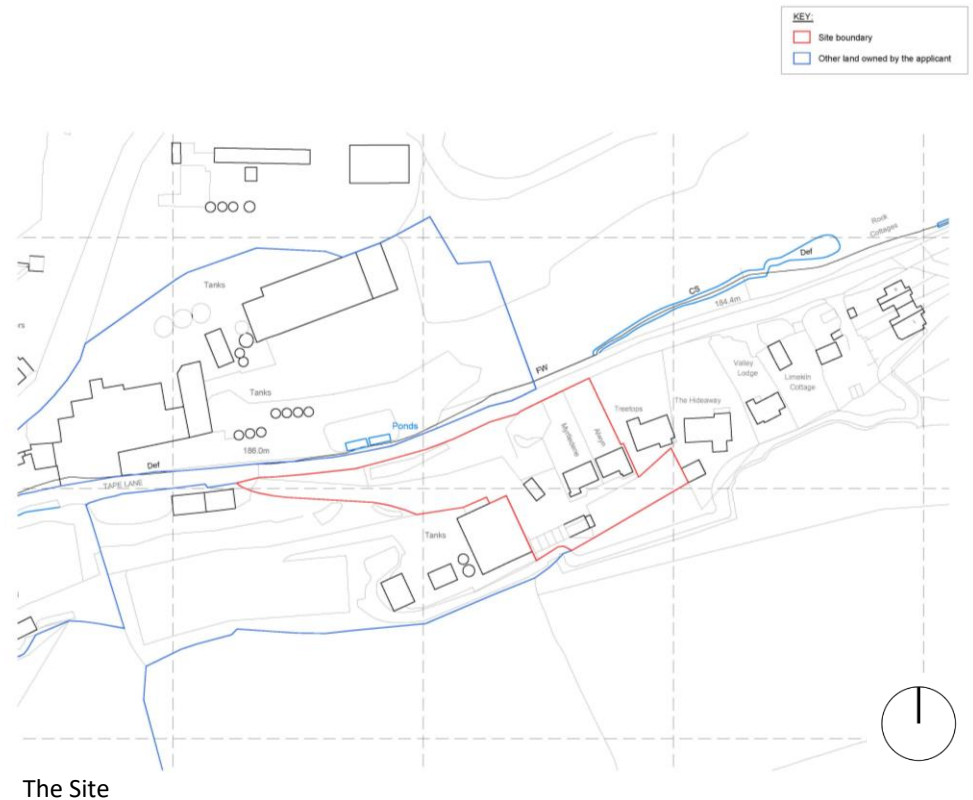
The site lies at a higher level than Tape Lane to its north, and is accessed via an inclined road that leads south-east from Tape Lane, past existing office buildings on the applicant's land adjacent to the application site, and which leads to the car parking area in front of the garages at the south of the site.

The existing detached dwellings are situated east of the car parking area and are positioned lower than the surrounding land, with retaining walls positioned to the south of the properties that extend to either side of the dwellings (east and west).

To the north of the dwellings is a sloped area of trees and vegetation leading down to Tape Lane, which provides screening from the road.

To the south of the site is a further incline in the landscape (sloping up towards the south), again with trees and vegetation that further screen the site from its surroundings, and to the east of the site are further detached residential properties. Immediately to the west of the site are buildings in the applicant's ownership which do not form part of this application.

A topographical survey has been undertaken and is included within the planning application drawings for reference.



The Site

## 4.0 Design Development

### 4.1 Use

The existing dwellings on the site are currently vacant, and their last use was residential (Use Class C3).

### 4.2 Amount

It is proposed to demolish the existing dwellings and the existing garage and stable building and construct a new, single storey office building.

The total floor area, over all floors, of the existing buildings on the site is 516.5m<sup>2</sup>, and the total floor area of the proposed new office building is 223.4m<sup>2</sup>. Therefore this application is proposing a 293.1m<sup>2</sup> reduction in floor area.



Existing Site Plan





### 4.3 Layout

The buildings have been designed to achieve the required internal accommodation specified by the applicant to meet their business needs. This includes the need for a combination of individual offices and open-plan office space.

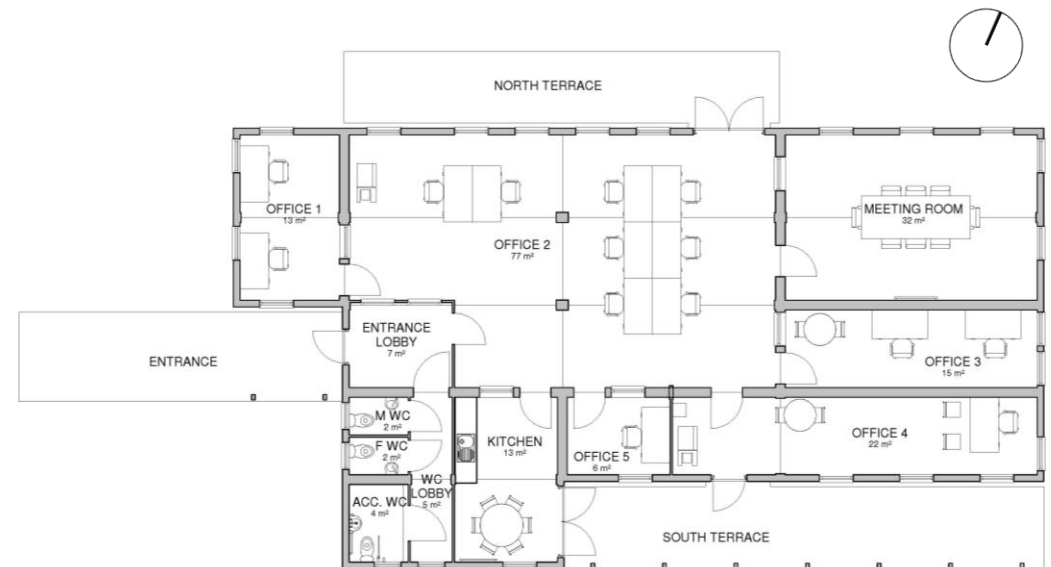
The principal entrance is from the front elevation facing west, where a level threshold will afford Building Regulation Approved Document M compliant access. From here, an entrance lobby will allow for the staff and any visitors to enter the building without directly opening into any office space. This is designed to reduce the thermal impact on the office spaces of the external door being opened, as well as to provide a lobby to the WCs so that the toilet doors do not open directly onto the office spaces. Within the entrance lobby is also an internal glazed partition to allow natural light to enter the building as well as provide good visual links between the entrance and the internal spaces.

From the entrance lobby, an internal door leads into the open-plan office space, designed with sufficient space for 8 desks and office equipment such as printers, but also with flexibility to allow for a change in layouts. The open-plan office has an external double door to the north-east corner of the room, which leads onto an external paved area to the north of the building.

Around the relatively central open-plan office area are internal doors leading to: a meeting room in the north-east corner of the building; an office to the east of the building; a larger office to the south-east corner of the building, with its own external single door to enable the user of this office to enter without walking through the other offices; a smaller office to the south elevation; a kitchen with seating area also on the south elevation, with an external double door leading to a paved area to the south of the building; and an office to the west of the building.

As far as possible, the offices have been designed to face north to minimise solar gains and glare within the office spaces, with offices also located along the east and west elevations. Where offices are located on the south elevation, an external paved area with a timber pergola over has been designed immediately in front of their windows in order to provide solar shading to minimise solar gains.

There are a variety of windows on the north, east and west elevations including taller, fixed, windows to provide views and larger amounts of natural light into the spaces, and smaller, openable, windows to provide natural ventilation. On the south elevations, the windows have been designed as relatively small and openable to improve ventilation and reduce solar gains.



#### 4.4 Scale

The existing buildings on and to the east of the site are a mixture of single storey and two storey, (with the dwellings positioned below the adjacent ground level), with a combination of flat and pitched roofs. The office buildings on the applicant's land to the west of the site are taller and again have a combination of flat and pitched roofs.

In keeping with the locality and with direct reference to the existing building on the site, the proposal is for a single storey building with a flat roof to keep the apparent scale and mass to a minimum.

#### 4.5 Landscaping

The north and south of the office building is proposed to have paved external terraces, with a pergola designed to the south terrace in order to minimise solar gains into the building through the windows on that elevation.

To the west of the building is proposed a paved entrance approach to the level threshold main entrance, which is also proposed to incorporate a pergola both to provide shading from solar gains to the south facing window in the office located to the west side of the building, and to act as a focal point, indicating the position and direction towards the main entrance for users and visitors to the building.

The existing retaining walls on the site around the south and west external elevations of the detached dwellings are proposed to be removed and the gradient of the land in these areas is proposed to be adjusted to slope up towards the south and west of the site. The slope up to the west of the site (the approach to the main entrance) has been designed to achieve a gradient less steep than 1:20.

The paved terrace areas to the north and south of the building are proposed to be level to allow more comfortable use of these spaces. This is to be achieved by positioning the new building at the same ground level as the existing dwellings, and by removing the retaining walls to the south and west as described above, and as shown on the existing and proposed site sections.

An arboriculturalist has been appointed to provide an assessment and recommendations for the trees to the north of the site.



#### 4.6 Appearance

It is intended to create a building that integrates with the adjacent and neighbouring buildings, as well as to the landscape around it, to create a more harmonious overall appearance. To achieve this, the building has been designed to be orientated to reflect the nearby buildings and is proposed to be clad externally with timber.

The architectural language of the building has been developed based on the applicant's intended use of modular cabins as the principal building elements- which can be joined together in specific configurations.

##### External Walls –

The cabins have galvanised steel external finishes (grey) to the roof and the walls, and it is proposed to clad the external walls with timber.

##### External Doors and Windows –

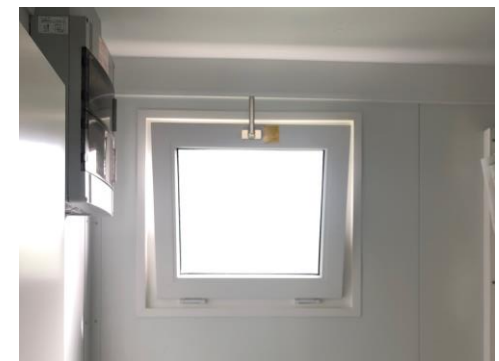
The windows are proposed to be uPVC (white) and the external doors are proposed to be steel external finished (grey).



Timber Cladding  
Image courtesy of  
<https://woodcladdingzashigen.blogspot.com>



Full Height uPVC (White) Windows



Hi level uPVC (White) Windows

#### 4.7 Access

The principal entrance is from the west elevation facing the access road leading to Tape Lane. A new paved path and level threshold will afford Building Regulation Approved Document M compliant access.

Currently, the existing detached dwellings are accessed via external steps which lead down to the lower ground area around the dwellings, with retaining walls to the south and west of the building. It is proposed to remove these retaining walls and introduce the new office building at the same level as the existing dwellings, and to adjust the gradients of the land to remove the need for a stepped access.

Externally, the land falls towards to north of the site, and rises to the south of the site. Where the retaining walls are to be removed, it is proposed that the land will be adjusted to slope up towards the south and west of the site, with paved terraces to the north and south elevations of the office building.

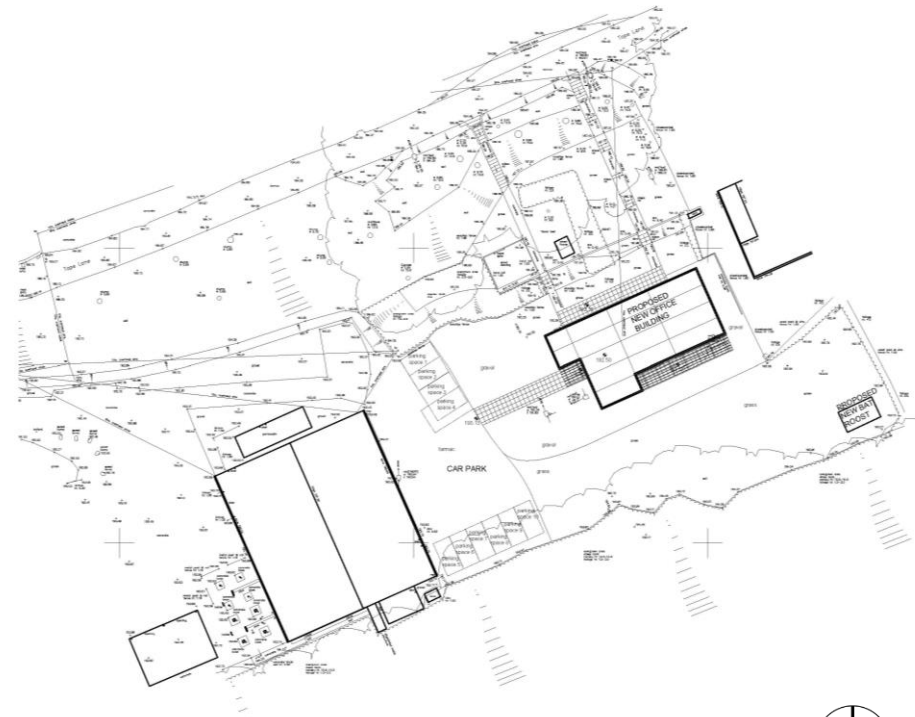
The paved areas to the north and south are proposed to be level, and the slope up to the west of the site (the approach to the main entrance) has been designed to achieve a gradient less steep than 1:20, with a level threshold into the building. This will provide accessible entrances and circulation within the building.

#### 4.8 Vehicular Access and Car Parking

Car parking for 10 spaces will be provided on the site, in the same location as existing- to the west of the proposed new office building. One of these spaces is to be accessible.

The existing access arrangement will be retained, with vehicles accessing the car park from Tape Lane via the access road at the north-west of the site.

Vehicle turning spaces are to remain in the same location.



Proposed Site Plan

## 5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion the proposal for The Mill, Gurney Slade has been designed in appearance, layout and scale to compliment and enhance the surrounding context.

The project will ensure the retention and continuity of employment in the area, through the use of a brownfield site.

The car parking and turning areas will remain as existing on the site, as will the access to the site from Tape Lane.

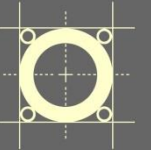
The proposal seeks to incorporate the following principles:

- To create a high quality development
- To provide attractive, well managed spaces for the building users.
- To implement an architectural language which complements the site.
- Ensuring suitable car parking and vehicle turning provision for the proposed development.

The principles will help deliver a sensitive regeneration of the site. They will facilitate the delivery of a high quality, sustainable development.

It is believed the proposals are an improvement on the current, existing buildings and the redeveloped site will enhance the natural and built landscape, within the capacity of the available infrastructure.





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