



Mike Sibthorp Planning
Logan House, lime Grove, grantham, NG31 9jd
TEL: 01476 569065

Planning Services
Newark & Sherwood District Council
Castle House
Great North Road
Newark
NG24 1BY

04 January 2024

Our ref: MSP.225

Dear Sir / Madam

PLANNING PORTAL REF: PP-12710703
PROPOSED TURNING AREA AND LONG-TERM STAFF PARKING (INCLUDING
ELECTRIC CHARGING POINTS) TOGETHER WITH ADDITIONAL TREE PLANTING /
LANDSCAPING BELT TO THE SOUTH OF THE PROPOSED TURNING AREA;
HUTCHINSON ENGINEERING SERVICES LIMITED, GREAT NORTH ROAD, WESTON

This letter accompanies a planning application for the provision of a turning area and a dedicated staff parking area for drivers; to include electricity charging points, at the above site. This application is a resubmission following application ref: 23/O770/HFUL, for the same turning area with the addition of an additional 6m deep landscape and tree planting belt, set directly to the south of the tuning area (This comprises an additional parcel of land that has been secured from the adjoining land owner for the purposes of providing additional landscaping, in response to issues raised in the earlier decision).

The application was refused by Committee on 11 August 2023 for the following reason.

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority the proposal does not represent a small scale or proportionate expansion and further expansion into the countryside is considered to be unsustainable and would unacceptably harm the open flat landscape. Whilst it is accepted that the applicant has an economic need to expand their growing business, it remains that no proper evidence has been advanced to demonstrate why it needs to be in this rural location or demonstrate why the existing site could not be made more efficient to allow for business expansion without the need for further land take. In any event, the visual and landscape harm is considered to outweigh any such need taking into account the amount that the business has already expanded over time and given the level of hardstanding that has been laid without meaningful mitigation in the form of landscaping. This application would also result in the inability to mitigate existing visual harm to the countryside, resulting from and required for planning application 18/00251/FUL, through an approved soft landscaping scheme in 2018.

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The proposals are therefore considered to be contrary to Core Policy 6 (Shaping our Employment Profile), Core Policy 13 (Landscape Character) and Spatial Policy 3 (Rural Areas) of the adopted Newark and Sherwood Core Strategy and policies DM5 (Design) and Policy DM8 (Development in the Open Countryside) of the Allocations & Development Management Development Plan Document which together form part of the Development Plan as well as being contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, a material planning consideration.

Planning permission was refused primarily on the grounds that the proposed development was not considered to represent a *small scale* or *proportionate* expansion and that the proposals would *unacceptably harm the open flat landscape*. The Council contends that it has not been demonstrated why this rural location is required for the expansion or why the existing site cannot be used more efficiently, and that in any event, the landscape and visual harm of the site enlargement outweighs any such need taking into account the amount that the business has already expanded over time. Policy conflicts are alleged to flow from these claimed harms.

The applicant's view is that the proposals represent a reasonable and necessary expansion of the existing enterprise. In the context of the existing undertaking, the enlargement of the site is considered to be modest and will not give rise to a level of harm that outweighs the identified need. In the context of relevant national planning policy, the development may be seen to represent a sustainable growth of the existing enterprise. There are no opportunities to expand elsewhere, and the existing site is operating at capacity. The reason for refusal implies that the business has already been allowed to expand, and should not now be allowed to expand further, because the harm to the landscape outweighs the need to expand. In its particular site context, that position is in our view unsustainable. The limited expansion proposed in this case will not give rise to any significant or material harm to the local landscape and there will be tangible business and employment benefits. There is a genuine need for the business to expand and there is compelling policy and local support for this. Refusal of planning permission is not justified. As has been demonstrated, other large enterprises around Sutton on Trent – including other Hutchinson Engineering sites - have been allowed to substantially expand their operations, within a not dissimilar landscape and policy context.

However, in response to the issues raised by the Committee the applicant is now making a further submission to try and address the claimed landscape and visual impact concerns. The evidence from Committee, both in respect of the previous application and application 22/02086/FUL which preceded, would suggest that the issues in this case are finely balanced and that with some further revision the overall balance of considerations may weigh in favour of the proposals.

Following the refusal of planning permission, the applicant has secured an additional parcel of land located immediately to the south of the enclosed yard area. The additional parcel of land has a depth of 6m and runs the complete width of the site. Incorporation of this parcel of land within the application site enables the applicant to undertake additional tree and shrub planting (whilst retaining the existing boundary hedge), that will offer additional screening of the site when viewed from the A1 to the south.

The plans submitted with the application identify this additional parcel of land included within the site (the applicant has control over this piece of land) and is shown to be planted with 14(no.) extra heavy standard trees. The proposed trees comprise a native mix, with species drawn from the identified species for the Mid Nottinghamshire Farmlands within the Council's landscape Character Assessment. The existing hedge is shown to be retained (this already screens the concrete panel wall that surrounds the site), and the land is to be planted with a wildflower rich grass seed. To ensure appropriate definition between the landscape strip and the adjoining farmland, a 1m post and wire fence will be installed on the three sides of the area. Whilst the

proposed planting is considered to represent an appropriate scheme of planting for this additional area of land, the applicant is content to increase the density of planting, or to vary the species mix if the planning authority consider this would make the proposals more acceptable to them.

The applicant has been prompted to take the step of acquiring this additional parcel of land by earlier discussions with the Planning Officer when additional landscaping and tree planting was suggested. The space that has been acquired is appropriately located to provide additional screening for the site and of a sufficient depth to enable trees to grow and establish. Appropriate planning conditions can be imposed to ensure the planting and subsequent maintenance / replacement of the trees.

Whilst the applicant considers that the site extension has a very limited visibility from the A1 to the south, particularly bearing in mind that the site, where seen, is seen across its shorter width, the proposed planting proposals in this case will provide an additional layer of screening to the site from this direction.

This significant change to the proposals, which the applicant is willing to discuss further with the Planning Officer, is felt to be sufficient in this instance to shift the overall balance of considerations in favour of support of the proposals.

Other than these additional submissions and a revised block plan, showing the additional tree planting and landscaping and a revised site location plan, the same documents are submitted as for the earlier application, including the Landscape and Visual Assessment, Planning Statement and the Business Plan documents. The submissions in support of the proposals are comprehensively set out within these documents and it is not considered necessary to rehearse those arguments as part of this covering letter.

Yours sincerely

Mike Sibthorp BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI
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