Design and access statement

Proposed polytunnel at Floral Media

The polytunnel is proposed to support the existing established horticultural nursery business ‘Floral Media’. Section 336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 defines ‘agriculture’ as including “horticulture, fruit growing, seed growing, dairy farming, the breeding and keeping of livestock (including any creature kept for the production of food, wool, skins or fur, or for the purpose of its use in the farming of land), the use of land as grazing land, meadow land, osier land, market gardens and nursery grounds, and the use of land for woodlands where that use is ancillary to the farming of land for other agricultural purposes, and “agricultural” shall be construed accordingly”, the proposal specifically falling within the definition of horticulture. The field within which the polytunnel would be sited is historically associated with Flaggs Farm, located approximately 650 metres to the northeast of Floral Media, but was purchased by the applicants in September 2021. The field itself covers an area measuring approximately 4.3 hectares.

Since September 2022 the site has been used to grow commercial cut flowers in a horticultural capacity , this side of the business is set to expand further due to the increased demand for local (British ) and sustainable produce . The aim is to provide a product with very low carbon impact . The reason for the polytunnels is to increase the season at both ends , making crops earlier in spring and later in autumn , it is impractical to produce in tunnels from December to march , hence removable covers to also reduce the storm impact on such structures and to allow the ground to have natural rainfall when possible.

The type of crops will be a mixture of cut flower varieties according to demand , the highest will be sunflowers that require a high tunnel , tractor access is also required , plus good airflow , hence the required height of the structure

We also enclose a photo of the existing polytunnels built in Spring 2023 , these will look identical.

It uses 50mm steel tubing as a frame , and is anchored by screwing the augered uprights into the ground which have been tested to withstand 120mph winds , the polythene is attached with tensioned ropes over the ridges or trapped between wooden lats at gutter height to create even tension.

Water will be collected from the gutter system into end tanks underground and reused for irrigation either in the polytunnels or the rest of the field being cropped , the rainy season in winter will not be collected as the covers will be removed

Access for employees is at the same ground level , the structure is more than 5meters away from the adjacent powerlines and more than 25 meteres from the road known as Norwell road

The hedges have been allowed to grow to 3 meters on the roadside , we are also planting more hedging to increase the thickness of this and create better security .

The polytunnels will mean we can produce better quality flowers with an extended season , and will lead to the employment of 1.5 equivalent full time new employees , with varying weather we have proven we can produce a more marketable crop in the tunnels built last spring

Steven Routledge (Floral media)