

# PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT



<b>Site address:-</b>	<b>Replacement storage building</b>
<b>Proposal:-</b>	<b>Hillcroft Turf Supplies, East Lane, Merstone, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 3DP</b>
<b>Applicant:-</b>	<b>Mr &amp; Mrs P Colson of Hillcroft Turf Supplies</b>
<b>Date:-</b>	<b>March 2024</b>

## INTRODUCTION

Andrew White Planning Consultancy is instructed by its clients Mr & Mrs P Colson to submit a planning application for a proposed replacement storage building at Hillcroft Turf Supplies, East Lane, Merstone, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 3DP.

The concept of replacing the existing collection of storage buildings with a single purpose built, “U” shaped storage building has recently been explored with the local planning authority (LPA) via the pre-application submission process. The response was supportive and will be referred to as relevant in this statement.

The proposal now submitted is essentially the same scheme considered by the LPA as a pre-application enquiry although it has been moved slightly (by 1m) southwards away as the applicant’s architectural designer felt it was too “tight” to the NW corner of the site.

As requested in the pre-application advice, a landscaping scheme has been drawn up to accompany the suite of application plans.

## SITE LOCATION, DESIGNATIONS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

The site occupies a corner location on the western side of East Lane and the northern side of Bury Lane at the crossroads with Budbridge Lane which is some 250m east of Merstone Lane.



*Image 1 – aerial view of the site’s location*

The site is rectangular in shape and currently comprises a surfaced yard with two outbuildings. Additional storage is provided by a shipping container. Vehicular access is onto East Lane. The boundaries are provided with screen hedging.

The site is located within the Wider Rural Area. It is within the SPA buffer but has no other landscape designations.

The existing buildings comprise (1) a rectangular shed constructed of profiled steel sheeting with a pitched roof of the same material and (2) a former Nissen hut building constructed of corrugated tin sheeting.



*Image 2 – Location and access into site looking north west*



*Image 4 – existing building no 2*



*Image 3 - Existing building no 1*



*Image 5 – existing buildings as a group*

**PROPOSAL**

**Design and appearance**

It is proposed to demolish the existing buildings and to construct a “U” shaped building around a central yard. The building will be sub-divided into specific and individually securable storage sections to comprise:

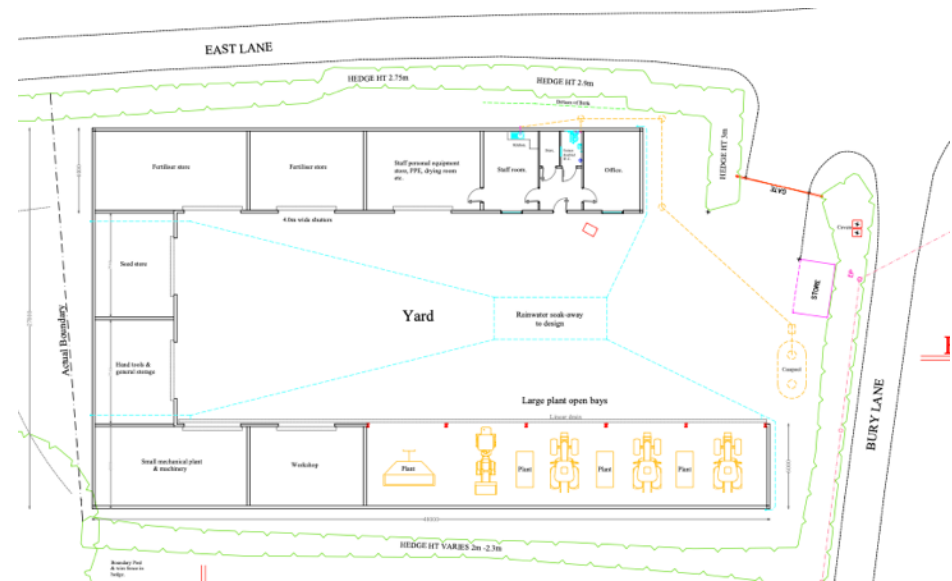
- Workshop
- Small mechanical plant and machinery
- Hand tools and general storage
- Seed store
- Fertiliser store
- Staff personal equipment store/drying room
- Staff rest room
- WC
- Office

There will also be five bays of open fronted storage for the large items.

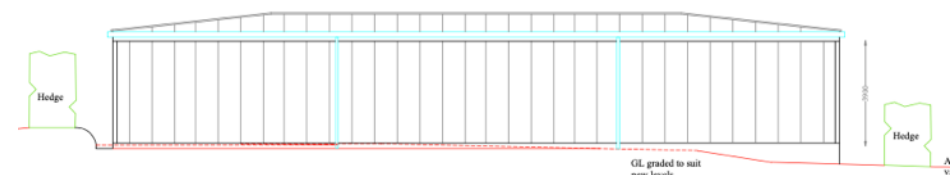
Each storage section will be provided with a steel roller shutter doorway opening into the yard. The staff room and office will be provided with a window overlooking the yard and a shared entrance doorway.

The ground levels will be graded to provide a uniform floor level. The eastern and western side wings will have a mono pitch roof whilst the connecting northern wing will be flat roofed. The internal height will be 4500mm above FFL and the external height of the eaves will be 3900mm above FFL.

The building is to be constructed of a steel frame and finished in dark green profile sheet cladding. It will be agricultural in design and appearance.

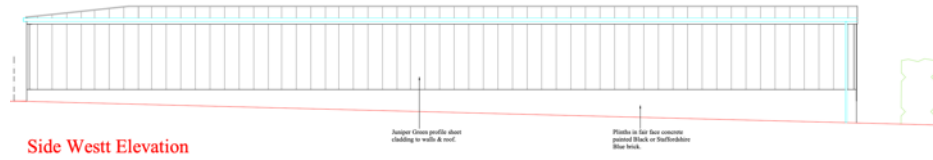


**Image 6 – proposed site plan/floor plan**

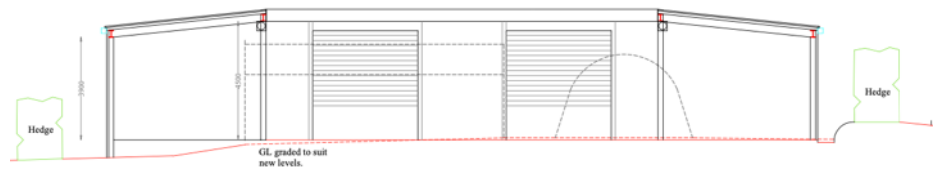


**End North Elevation**

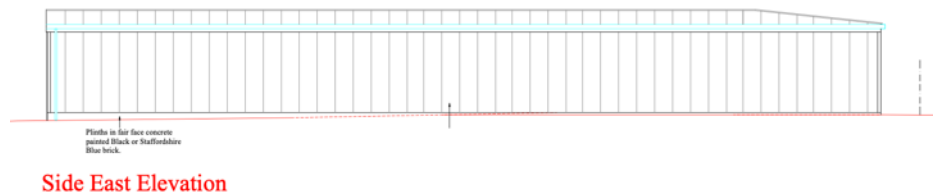
**Image 7 – north end elevation**



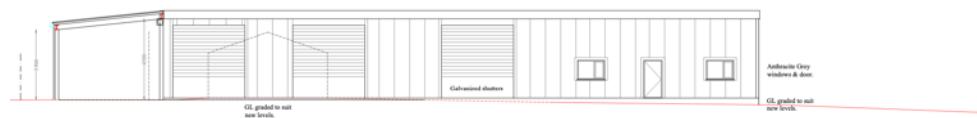
**Image 8 – west side elevation**



**Image 9 – south end elevation**



**Image 10 – east side elevation**



**Image 11 – west courtyard elevation**



**Image 12 – east courtyard elevation**

### Landscaping

Included within the suite of planning application documents is a landscaping enhancement plan. The pre-application advice from the LPA recognised that the site is bounded along the roadside by a hedgerow which it not only wished to see retained but also strengthened in places to assist with screening the building from the surrounding landscape, although it was acknowledged by the LPA that the existing buildings are visible.

We confirm that all the existing boundary screening is to be retained. The existing roadside hedge to East Lane is formed primarily of laurel (with leylandii wrapping around the corner to Bury Lane). It is proposed to extend this existing laurel hedge along East Lane (on top of the bank) with an additional length of laurel planting. These will be planted densely using 5ft tall established laurels planted 3ft apart to give an instant effective screen.

Along the northern boundary, between the replacement building and the neighbouring field, it is proposed to plant a line of 12 Italian Cypress trees. These trees will be a minimum of 2m in height and planted 7ft apart. This particular species has been chosen because it is good for nesting birds and it will ensure that the branches will not encroach over the roof of the barn or the neighbour's land.

## Access

The proposed development will utilise the existing access. There is ample parking and turning provision within the site.

## PLANNING POLICIES

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

**Paragraph 86** – supports rural economy and all types of business in rural areas through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.

**Paragraph 135** – sets out the design criteria for all new development.

### Island Plan Core Strategy

**Policy SP1 (Spatial Strategy)** – development within the WRA will be supported where there is a rural justification.

**SP5 (Environment)** – seeks to protect, conserve and/or enhance the Island's natural and historic environment.

**DM2 (Design Quality for New Development)** – seeks to ensure new development is of a high quality design that protects, conserves and enhances the existing environment whilst allowing change to take place. Proposals are expected to optimise the potential of a site whilst having regard to existing constraints; to be appropriately landscaped to provide an attractive setting for the development that integrates with the surroundings and to complement the character of the surrounding area.

**DM8 (Economic Development)** – supports rural economic development opportunities.

**DM12 (Landscape, Seascape, Biodiversity and Geodiversity)** – supports proposals that conserve, enhance and promote the landscape.

## PLANNING ASSESSMENT AND JUSTIFICATION

### Overview of the rural business

The Hillcroft Turf Supplies business has been established since 1991 and specialises in growing and supplying lawn turf which is grown locally in fields at Merstone. For the past 30 years the business has been operating out of the existing yard at East Lane with its collection of old buildings. These buildings are in a poor state of repair and are no longer sufficient or suitable for the needs of the business in terms of storage capacity, security and staff welfare.

In addition to the owners, this rural business provides employment for their five members of staff.

### Policy and principle

Policy SP1 supports development in the WRA where there is a rural justification.

Over its time at this site, the business has grown and acquired a significant level of expensive plant and machinery. The existing buildings have insufficient capacity to provide secure indoor storage or under cover storage for it all with the consequence that expensive equipment

is being kept outside with limited protection (provided by tarpaulins) from the weather and no protection whatsoever against theft or vandalism which thankfully has not been a significant problem for the owners up to now but they are mindful that rural crime is on the increase and they need to take steps to protect their investment.

Below is a list of all the machinery used in connection with the production of the turf which is currently being stored in the open yard:

- 4 tractors
- Fertiliser spreader
- Sprayer
- 3 mowers (go on the back of tractors)
- Grass vacuum
- Topper
- Roller
- Rotavator
- Turf seeders
- Irrigation reels
- Various other field preparation equipment

Some the above items of machinery are only needed seasonally and they deteriorate and depreciate rapidly when left outside.

The grass seed must be stored in a dry environment which is protected from mice; the existing buildings are barely adequate to achieve this. Due to lack of indoor space, fertilizer is having to be stored outside in the yard with tarpaulin being the only means of weather protection which is less than ideal.

The business carries out its own repairs and maintenance of machinery and equipment (one employee is a trained mechanic). At present, this

work has to be carried out in the open in the yard with the only weather protection being afforded by the erection of a gazebo which is barely adequate.

Small items of equipment have to be locked away as they are easy targets for theft. These include items such as turf cutter, pedestrian rollers, chain saws, strimmer's, rotavators and hedge cutters.

The existing buildings are unable to provide adequate staff welfare or office facilities.

The existing buildings are beyond economic repair. The size, design and layout of the proposed replacement building will maximise the amount of suitable under cover storage for all the equipment and needs of the business and staff members whilst retaining sufficient central open yard space to enable the larger items of machinery to manoeuvre in and out of the site.

The above information clearly demonstrates a rural need for this development in this rural location which is in full accord with IPCS policy DM8. Therefore, it must follow that the development as proposed is acceptable in principle and thus in full accord with IPCS policy SP1.

### **Impact on character of the area**

The site is located on a quiet country lane and is well screened from the road by the perimeter hedges. As indicated in the Introduction chapter of this statement, the proposed development has been reviewed by the LPA through the pre-application process.

The LPA acknowledged that the proposed replacement building would be relatively large but would replace a variety of older structures which are close to the end of their lifespan. The LPA also accepted that whilst the proposed new building would have a larger footprint officers accepted from the submitted information that the space was required for the running of the business. The written response stated:

*“Officers are satisfied that the proposed building would be commensurate to the size and use of the site and as such, would not result in overdevelopment of the site.”*

The LPA also acknowledged that the existing buildings are visible within the rural surroundings and that the proposed building would retain the appearance of an agricultural structure, in keeping with the rural landscape. The written response stated:

*“As such, subject to an appropriate landscaping scheme, officers are satisfied that the proposal would be in keeping with the character of the area.”*

Having regard to the above, it is clear that the proposed development will not conflict with the aims and objectives of policies SP5 and DM12 in terms of its impact on the character and appearance of its rural location and that its design and appearance is in full accord with policy DM2 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF which both seek to ensure new development of is a high standard of design appropriate to its locality.

### **Impact on neighbouring properties/uses**

This is a relatively undeveloped rural area. The nearest residential property is over 30m from the proposed building. The proposed

replacement building will not result in any change of use of the site which has been operating for some considerable time. The LPA acknowledged these factors and confirmed it raised no concerns with regard to the impact of the scheme on neighbouring residential amenity.

### **Highway considerations**

There is no change to the use of the site or to the existing access arrangements. The proposed scheme continues to provide ample on-site parking and manoeuvring space. Accordingly, there are no adverse impacts on highway considerations.

## **CONCLUSION**

Hillcroft Turf Supplies has been operating out of this site and surrounding land for over 30 years. It is now a well-established business providing employment for seven people. The company has invested in significant machinery and equipment over the years which the existing outbuildings simply cannot accommodate, resulting in some items having to be stored outside. This makes them vulnerable to theft.

The existing buildings are past economic repair. The proposed replacement building will provide secure and undercover storage for all the equipment, machinery, plant, seed and fertiliser. It will also provide an office and facilities for staff comfort and welfare which currently cannot be catered for from the existing buildings.

The proposed replacement building has been designed to maximise storage space plus retain a yard area which will enable ease of circulation and movement of the larger items of plant and equipment as required.



The site is well screened from the surrounding area and the proposed replacement building will not be overly visible from outside of the site. Furthermore, it is of a design which will be entirely appropriate to its use in this rural location. The application submission includes an appropriate landscaping scheme which demonstrates appropriate additional planting to augment the existing level of boundary screening.

The scheme fully accords with IPCS policy SP1 in terms of the principle of the proposed development and DM8 with its support for growth in rural economic development opportunities. The development is in full accord with DM2 in terms of design and appearance and SP5 and DM12 in terms of protection of the rural landscape. The scheme fully complies with NPPF policies 135 in terms of design and impact and 86 which supports growth and expansion of businesses in rural areas including new buildings.

Through the pre-application process, the LPA has indicated its support for the proposed development.

In conclusion, we would reiterate there is a genuine rural business need for the building as proposed in this location and that we have been able to demonstrate it is in full accord with both national and local development plan policies.

We trust that planning permission can be granted without delay.