

PLANNING APPRAISAL DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT BIODIVERSITY (PEA) STATEMENT

New Trading Unit for Abbey Glass & Windows Limited

**The Old Laundry Industrial Estate
Ivy Road
Chippenham SN15 1SB
For Mr R E G Iggulden - Openview Limited**

Introduction

This Statement forms part of the full planning application and should be read in conjunction with the planning application forms, certificates and associated plans. The Statement sets out the required background information and justification and examines the proposals against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Wiltshire Core Strategy/Local Plan and Regulation 19 Review (WCS), including reference to the “saved” policies of the North Wiltshire Local Plan (NWLP) and the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan together with other material considerations with the purpose of considering whether the proposed development is compliant with Planning Policy and Government Guidance.

The (NPPF) advocates a positive approach to decisions in accordance with the core principles of sustainable development.

The Core Strategy/Local Development Plan (WCS) is an economic led strategy that promotes the delivery of resilient communities with encouragement for the provision of new and expansion of existing businesses in a sensitive manner. The adoption of the Core Strategy replaced several of the NWLP “saved” policies.

This proposal seeks full planning permission for the erection of a new building that accommodates an existing tenant’s expansion plans allowing them to remain on the site, where they are well known. The proposal is for a 288 sq metre purpose design single-storey building within the existing commercial site. The proposal will have access from the existing commercial site already serviced by the main Ivy Road highway access.

The application site forms part of the remaining open area of land situated in the northwest corner of the commercial land holding, the development of which will not expand the curtilage of the site and will be seen alongside the adjoining built form and land uses. The land has been part of previous re-development planning permissions, under planning references N/08/00752/FUL and N/12/01204/FUL and so the principle of built form in this area of the site has been previously accepted.

The Site and Landscape Setting

The Old Laundry Site has been operated by Mr Robert Iggulden (Openview Limited) for many years and on the closure of the old laundry premises has diversified into a mixed used employment site covering a multitude of uses including blacksmiths, antique dealers, sales rooms, stationers, snooker/leisure halls, keep fit studios, offices, and for some 36 years or so Abbey Glass & Windows has occupied a Unit.

Historically the site has been used for employment purposes and in Wiltshire Development Plan terms the commercial site falls within the Chippenham Town boundary, being situated within and alongside built forms found in a town centre location including a substantial brick chimney associated with the former laundry use, residential dwellings and schooling uses.

Site land levels rise gradually from surrounding areas and there are well-established boundaries, the east formed by a natural bank with indigenous planting and trees. The remainder by built form usually associated with a town centre location. The exception is the northern boundary, which is more open in character adjacent to a right of way to a School, a casual car parking area owned by Mr Iggulden and some cottages. This boundary is mature in places with existing built form but in the north-western area has a poor timber fence line that has been left in-situ while redevelopment proposals have been considered over the years.

Although dominant buildings exist public views from the surrounding areas are obscured by the rising topography and existing built form, the exception being from the north where close-up views exist. From all directions the actual building site is unseen or seen as part of the existing development form, except from the northern aspect.

Planning Policy and Comment

Sections 70 (2) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 and 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and general understanding is that the determination of planning applications must/should be made in accordance with the "Development Plan" unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan is the Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted in January 2015, incorporated "saved" policies from former District Plans and there were a number of Strategic Objectives associated with this.

**comment. It is important to recognise that although the Review is at an advanced stage it is now subject to independent Inspector's consideration the outcome of which is unknown.*

Objective 1 seeks to deliver a thriving economy and the proposal accords with the purpose of this objective with related Core Policy 35 being concerned with existing employment sites, emphasising the retention of and enhancement of existing employment sites helping to deliver a thriving economy.

**comment. This Policy also stresses the importance of retaining employment uses and the proposal accords with this.*

Objective 2 addresses issues of climate change and the proposal accords with the purpose of this objective with related Core Policy 41 being concerned with sustainable construction and low carbon energy.

**comment. The purpose designed and constructed building will be energy efficient incorporating measures to reduce energy demand and the proposal accords with this.*

Acknowledging that Core Policy 1 and Core Policy 2 identify four tiers of settlement and the underlying principles of delivery there is an intention to allow a flexible approach, which would allow the Council to respond positively to opportunities without being inhibited by an overly prescriptive, rigid approach which might otherwise prevent sustainable development proposals that could contribute to delivering the strategic objectives of the overall Plan.

The Local Plan 2023 Regulation 19 Review builds upon the original Core Strategy policies and is based upon current Government policies and being at an advanced stage all planning applications can be determined against the Local Plan.

The Local Plan Review from the outset states that it would not change or remove the strategic objectives and policies of the Core Strategy that remain in accordance with current Government Policy. In this respect having reached the Regulation 19 Stage then the Strategic Objectives and Spatial Vision for the period 2020-2038 reflect the Wiltshire Council's Business Plan and recent change to National planning policy.

There are six strategic, long term and interlinked challenges in Wiltshire and for each the Local Plan Review has an objective and a set of outcomes to address each one. Planning policies are organised into three thematic sections that cover economic, social and environmental considerations and advises that not all apply to every planning application, but stresses that it is important that the Plan must be read as a whole.

With this in mind where a development proposal will accord with some parts of the Plan, but conflicts with other parts, the decision maker will need to apply weight and judgment to the various matters, taking into account other material planning considerations that may not be contained within the Plan policies.

In delivering the spatial objectives Policies are arranged in three categories relating to Economic, Social and Environmental reflecting the structure of National Planning Policy. The Plan supports growth, retention and investment in employment provision. Policy 64 relates to additional employment land and reflecting adopted WCS Policy 35, new Policy 65 covers existing employment land and that proposals for renewal and intensification of employment uses will be supported with land retained for employment purposes to safeguard their contribution to the Wiltshire economy and the role and function of individual settlements.

**comment. It is important to recognise that although the Review is at an advanced stage it is now subject to independent Inspector's consideration the outcome of which is unknown.*

National Planning Policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and Reviews (NPPF). This retains the requirement that in accordance with Planning Law planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise and that the (NPPF) does not change the statutory status of an up-to-date development plan. The (NPPF), continues to emphasise that the "golden thread" is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

It sets out the Government's commitment to securing economic growth in order to create and sustain jobs and states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. Economic growth is to be supported in order to create jobs and prosperity.

Support is given to the promotion of sustainable development in rural areas where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of communities and advises that local planning authorities should approach decision making in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development.

**comment. It is important to recognise that there is an ongoing Government Review of the NPPF that is likely to set out the promotion of increased development requirements.*

The Old Laundry Site is long established and is well thought of in the local area as being of good quality and well managed. The proposal is a continued improvement and expansion of the business use within the land holding providing accommodation for an existing well-established business.

Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan (2024). The Plan has a number of cross cutting themes and is intended to guide and influence and its aspirations should be a material consideration in planning decisions. The application site is not within a Conservation Area, nor within any Article 4 Directions. However, the site is adjacent to the Chippenham Conservation Area boundary.

Policy TC4 relates to development within the Chippenham Conservation Area and supports development subject to a number of criteria and refer to the Chippenham Conservation Area Character Appraisal/s.

Briefly, proposals are supported if they preserve or enhance the character and appearance, the design makes a positive contribution, retains positive views and assets, reduces negative views and assets and is generally an enhancement.

Policy TC5 relates to buildings of local merit. Amongst these is The Old Laundry Chimney in Ivy Road, within the commercial development site. The Chimney is a non-designated heritage asset and its value is derived not only from its physical presence but also from its setting.

Briefly, proposals are supported if they avoid or minimise harm.

The Plan includes a number of Character Areas and in this respect the site relates to two of these.

Character Area 6: Bath Road and Ivy Lane. From a number of directions the Old Laundry Chimney is seen as a positive landmark or focal point

Character Area 9: Ivy Road and Lowden Hill. Again, from a number of directions the Old Laundry Chimney is seen as a positive landmark or focal point but, alas, areas of the site, including that adjacent to the application site is seen as being negative landmarks or focal points.

Within the general text, sadly, comment is made that the whole area is unattractive and in need of enhancement, amorphous and rejuvenation.

**comment. It is unlikely that the proposal will damage the aspirations of the Management Plan.*

Background & Design Concept

The starting point for consideration is that of genuine need.

Abbey Glass & Windows Ltd are seeking to modernise and expand their facilities in their present location. The development proposal is to make use of an area of land within The Old Laundry land holding in a convenient and sensible position.

Abbey Glass commenced trading in 1985 and took up residence of a unit at The Old Laundry site in 1989/90, some 37 years ago. Their Unit is around 500 sq ft in size and this local firm has been successful in surviving several UK and world-wide recessions serving predominantly Trade customers but with some infrequent DIY customers. The Unit accommodates one full time employee (Glazier/Office Manager) and four subcontractors (one administrator, one technical consultant and a lead installer and installers mate) in very tight working circumstances with increasingly limited space for storage and display of sold/ordered Upvc frames, composite doors, glazed units etc.

The proposal is to meet Abbey Glasses expansion plans allowing them to remain on The Old Laundry site in a purpose designed building, hopefully to provide confidence to other small businesses that they can grow too. The proposal is seen as investment into Chippenham Town with the desire to keep a long-standing business at The Old Laundry site providing the ambition of growth and to continue to support old and generations to come.

Currently, window installers in the local area are taking multiple deliveries from suppliers in Swindon and nationally. By creating a new centralised hub at The Old Laundry site Abbey Glass anticipate a reduction of carbon miles into the town and surrounding areas, through providing them with greater accessibility of materials and sundry items like silicone, fixings and cleaning materials only available from limited stockists through providing a “one stop shop” for window installers.

Through the proposed expansion, additional employment will become available for Chippenham with the potential increase in business reaching suppliers and installers enabling additional employment beyond Chippenham.

As a result of the development employment levels will be increased. It is expected to be three full time employees (Trade Counter Manager, Salesperson and Warehouse assistant) and four subcontractors (one administrator, one technical consultant and a lead installer and installers mate) and one delivery driver.

Hours of opening will be 8:30am - 4:30pm Monday to Friday, Saturdays by appointment only and closed Sunday and Bank Holidays.

The existing commercial site and access reaches the chosen site, upon which a built footprint of 288sq.m (3100 sq ft) Net, is proposed and this will improve the working standards, safety and well-being of existing and future staff with modern staffing amenities. There is an intention that the new building will be energy efficient.

Notwithstanding the previous planning permissions given, the proposal will expand new built form into the remaining area of the land holding but from many views the new development will be unseen because of surrounding built form, land levels and landscaping. The visual impact on the general landscape is of a subjective nature but considered to be negligible.

Use

The existing use of the application site itself is the last remaining open area of land situated within The Old Laundry commercial site, immediately adjacent to the commercial yard and buildings and parking areas. The building will provide 288 sq m (3100 sq ft) Net of floor space to include storage and display areas and office, kitchen, toilet and rest room for the employees. It is considered of sufficient size to accommodate any increase in staffing levels as not all staff are on site at the same time because of the business nature.

Access

The commercial site vehicular highway entrance and on-site road layout and parking arrangements are retained with slight reconfiguration. There is no increase in on-site parking and turning areas required.

Access to and within the new building and the facilities/accommodation provided will be fully compliant with Regulations associated with disabilities.

Biodiversity Considerations

Site Context. The application site is situated within a town centre location. The site is hard surfaced with either concrete or tarmac finishes. There are no boundary hedgerows nor is there any tree planting around the impact zone, the site being actively used for open storage commercial purposes. Consequently, as bare ground, is assessed to be of negligible value and low distinctiveness, having low quality natural habitats in the impact zone.

In regards to protected and notable species the site has limited opportunities for low numbers of common species as a foraging resource with negligible potential to be used by night roosting or night feeding bats within buildings. Similarly, the site is assessed to be of low value to common, NERC and schedule 1 bird species with limited resources for bird species as a foraging and breeding site.

In regards to hedgehog, reptile and amphibian species the site has low value for foraging, sheltering and breeding of species, as there is very little cover, ponds etc, although opportunities may exist in the wider area.

Policy Context. The “3 Tests” have been assessed against Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) and Annex 2 Habitats Directive. The proposal is not considered to affect the integrity of the site. The site is not within any areas that carry a high risk of impact to smaller wildlife habitats.

- The application site is not protected under International Importance
- The application site is not protected under National Importance
- The application site is not protected under Local Importance

Tree and Hedge Protection. The application site does not contain any protected or notable species of trees and there are no mature or protected hedgerows within the curtilage. Consequently, an Arboricultural Survey is not required for the application.

Wildlife Triggers. The application site is not within 400m of any ancient woodland, fresh water ponds or grasslands and is not situated within any known protected sites. Consequently, a Wildlife Trigger Report should not be required for the application.

Biodiversity Net Gains (BNGs). It is believed that this proposal does not currently fall within the requirements, but some measures could be included that promote local wildlife opportunities and enhancement.

Mitigation Measures. To avoid, mitigate, compensate, enhance and manage wildlife measures are taken the proposal will include:

- Maintaining the current environmental conditions, such as temperature, availability of natural light, prevailing winds and existing ground conditions
- Providing underpasses in boundary fencing and hedges to enable movement of small animals between habitat sites
- Removing any non-native species to the benefit of native species
- Installing 2 no bird or bat nesting boxes within the overall commercial curtilage. Installing 1 no hedgehog nest box in a secluded position within the overall commercial curtilage
- Creating suitable landscaping within the overall commercial site curtilage to encourage species such as small birds, butterflies and bees
- Use soakaways where possible for rainwater drainage

Measures to avoid and manage potential impacts on wildlife features during the construction phase/stages will be adopted. These will include but not be limited to:

- Prior to the commencement of any works, the existing property and its neighbouring properties will be inspected for the presence of protected species
- Should evidence suggest that there is likelihood of notable or priority species within the vicinity, a competent person with suitable qualifications, licences and experience will be engaged to determine if there are any likely impacts
- No works will take place until appropriate measures have been completed as recommended by the competent person

The proposal should therefore not adversely affect the integrity of the site for protection, enhancement or management of wildlife. In which case a further Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) or Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) should not be required for the determination of this planning application.

Green Infrastructure Considerations

The proposals contain investment in green infrastructure to adapt to climate change by reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. The construction of the building will be to the highest insulation standards available for commercial buildings. There is an intention that the new building will be energy efficient.

Material Considerations & Conclusions

The proposal needs to be judged against National and Local Development Plan Policy and in addition the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework states the Government's wishes. The need for accordance with up to date statutory development plans is highlighted unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is stressed that planning decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment. With this in mind it is considered that this proposal meets the criteria associated with the Government Planning Policy Advice and Guidance.

Development proposals will be examined for their performance against sustainability criteria.

This proposal is a necessary modernisation and extension of the existing commercial use for the benefit of Abbey Glass & Windows Limited, the employees and the local community in general.

This, in both the short and long term, will assist the promotion and maintenance of the economic health of this long established business and the local economy. The employees will almost certainly, live and shop locally.

Development proposals need to respect the local character in regards to size, scale, density, massing, materials, siting and land uses, including the amenity of adjacent landowners and services and infrastructure in general. This proposal meets the criteria associated with Wiltshire Development Policies. The new land use is entirely compatible with the existing uses. Services and infrastructure can accommodate the additional development.

Development Plan Core Policy is supportive in that it generally seeks to promote a diverse and robust economy, having regard to environmental impact and seeks to encourage appropriate job opportunities within to aid the creation of balanced and sustainable communities to maintain employment prosperity within the neighbourhood/community area.

The land is included within an urban area and is an existing commercial site and consequently support from Development Plan Policy can be found in this respect. The commercial site has a long established history and benefits from adjoining development and physical features surrounding the site.

Local Development Plan Core Policy aims to ensure that the character of an area is not damaged by development proposals. The change in this area of the land holding will have no detrimental effect on the character of the area. There are no significant views as the site is generally well screened and impact will be very limited.

In determining this application the Local Planning Authority is requested to carefully consider the particular circumstances of the Abbey Glass & Windows Limited business, its' historic development and the circumstances relating to the health and welfare of the business and employees. The proposed development will have a positive impact on the workforce.

It is considered that the proposal is an acceptable form of development. It is a modest, not an excessive proposal and it is an efficient use of land. The existing amenity of adjacent properties is retained and it is considered that the development proposal can be successfully integrated into the area, preserving the character of the area.

In determining the planning application the Local Planning Authority is invited to consider both the overall design and the principle of development and the starting point for consideration are National and Local Plan Policies. It is felt that a development in the manner proposed is acceptable in this location.

Ref: 2025-10 Date: December 2025

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