

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT TO SUPPORT PLANNING APPLICATION

For

Erection of building for the purposes of food retail (A1 Use)
with associated car parking

at

**Former Pioneer Mill Site,
New Wellington Street,
Mill Hill,
Blackburn,
BB2 4DY.**



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application for the erection of a building for the purposes of food retail (A1 Use) with associated car parking, to the vacant land on the site of the Former Pioneer Mill, Mill Hill, Blackburn.

1.2 Reference should be made to drawings and supporting reports that are accompanied to the Planning Application.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The applicant site is part of the former Pioneer Mill site, which has been demolished and cleared with the site lying vacant for a number of years. Historic mapping (see reference page 8 of the Ground Investigation Report prepared by Works Eye Limited) indicates that the site has previously been occupied by a church and some residential dwellings, which were demolished in the 1970's.

2.2 The site is a vacant brownfield site, fronting New Wellington Street to the north, Queens Street to the west, and is adjacent Kelly Street to the east and some existing industrial buildings under separate ownership. To the south is the remainder of the vacant site of the former Pioneer Mill whilst beyond the southern boundary lies the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.

2.3 The application site is approximately 0.18 hectares, which forms part of the larger vacant site of approximately 0.62ha. The section of vacant site to the southern boundary of this application has recently received planning consent with conditions (application referenced 10/17/1084) for proposed electrical generation units, although these are not related to the subject retail store.

2.4 The remainder of the site will remain vacant, although consideration is being given by the applicant to its development potential for other uses.

2.5 The existing site access is via small vehicle access gates off New Wellington Street. The existing access will be altered and widened to meet the requirements of the highway standards, and has been designed and justified in the attached Traffic Assessment Report.

2.6 An existing electrical sub-station is located to the north east corner of the site. This is to remain in-situ and will not be affected by this proposed planning application. Existing access of Kelly Street will remain. There are no other buildings on the site.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The proposed site is the subject of a historic planning application, referenced 10.91/0848, which was approved in July 1991. There is no information available on the application, following a search of the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's online planning records.

3.2 The approved planning application with conditions, referenced 10/17/1084, is within the former Pioneer Mill site, but is outside of the applicant site for the propose retail store. The application has been submitted by a separate applicant, who propose to utilise the area for the installation of new electricity generation support units, to connect to the national grid.

4.0 PROPOSAL

4.1 The proposal is for the erection of a new retail building (to be used by Heron Foods Limited), with associated car parking, landscaping and alterations to the existing site access with new internal access road.

5.0 DESIGN

5.1 Use

The proposal is for a new retail foodstore, which will be operated by Heron Foods, whose primary sales are frozen and chilled foods, with some dry / packaged foods and other non-food products. The new store will be used by the general public from the local area, with shoppers likely to travel from within the Mill Hill area.

5.2 Scale

The proposed building will have a footprint approx. 22.3m in length x 18.4m in width to give a total floor area of 410sq.m (GEA).

Internally, the building will provide a total internal floor area of 370sq.m, with 280sq.m of retail floor space, with the remaining 50sq.m reserved for stock storage and staff areas.

The mono-pitch roof will comprise of an eaves height to the highest point of approximately 5.47m to the north east elevation. The roof falls towards the south west elevation, with an eave height of approximately 4.05m.

5.3 Layout & Access

The siting of the proposed building is to be located alongside the north west boundary, adjacent Queen Street, with the site orientated North East / South West. The new building will front the accompanying car park to the North East.

Site access will be provided utilising the existing site entrance point via New Wellington Street, which has been redesigned so that it will be safe for both pedestrians and motorists. The alterations have been designed to meet the required sight lines, road width and radii to provide sufficient vehicle access onto and away from the site, for the proposed site uses.

A Swept Path Analysis is included within the Transport Assessment, undertaken by DTPC. The report confirms the proposed alterations to the access road are fully adequate.

5.4 Appearance

The design seeks to deliver a simple, modern structure. The building will have its own identity, but also complement the existing buildings within the area. The single-storey store will be constructed of a range of contemporary materials, with low mono pitch roof, wall cladding panels and facing brick piers and plinth course.

Externally the building will have a brick plinth course from ground level to cill level (facing brick – colour to be approved). Facing brickwork will continue via masonry piers, with insulated wall cladding panels (Kingspan KS1000 MR), colour “Moonstone” (RAL 7035), providing the wall detail / finish.

The proposed roofing materials will be insulated/composite roofing sheets (Kingspan KS100 RW), colour “Merlin Grey” (RL 180 40 05), and contrasting external soffit, fascia, gutter and rainwater pipe detailing to be anthracite grey (Ral 7016).

All windows and external doors are proposed to be aluminium – colour anthracite grey (Ral 7016), with double glazed units.

6.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

6.1 S38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires development proposals to be determined in accordance with the statutory Development Plan for the area and other applicable policy guidance and material considerations. The relevant policy framework is summarised below.

National Planning Policy Framework (2011)

6.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development through the balanced consideration of economic, social and environmental factors. Further to this, it maintains a presumption in favour of sustainable development, meaning that proposals for development which are sustainable should be approved without delay.

The sections of the document specifically relevant to the development proposal include:

- Section 1: Building a strong, competitive economy
- Section 2: Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Section 4: Promoting sustainable transport
- Section 7: Requiring good design
- Section 8: Promoting healthy communities

Local Planning Policy – Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan 2

6.3 Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan Part 2 is the local document that provides specific development management policies relating to the proposal.

6.4 The site is immediately adjacent to the Mill Hill District Centre and consequently policies 27 and 29 of the Local Plan are relevant.

Policy 27: District Centres – a Framework for Their Development

Within and adjacent to the District Centres as shown on the Adopted Policies Map, development will be supported where it encourages mixed uses, and where it responds to the scale and function of the centre in question. Proposals which fulfil these requirements and which comply with other relevant policies, will be permitted in the following circumstances:

- I. New build proposals should be proportionate to the scale and function of the centre. New retail, leisure, office and service use developments should demonstrate that they cater for local needs, and should be accompanied by an impact assessment if they involve the creation of new floorspace above the thresholds set out in Policy 29. The assessment should consider the impact of the proposal on existing, committed and planned public and private investment in the centre and other nearby centres.*
- II. Proposals involving conversion and adaptation of premises or involving changes of use should take place within existing buildings and frontages in order to consolidate and strengthen the vitality of the centre. They should retain or provide traditional shop fronts in order to maintain active frontages and retain the character and vitality of the centre.*

6.5 The proposal accords well with the requirements of Policy 27, sitting immediately adjacent to the Mill Hill District Centre.

6.6 The subject application is of an appropriate scale, such that it will not unnecessarily detract from the existing centre. Conversely, it should strengthen the retail offer for the benefit of both current businesses and consumers alike.

Policy 29: Assessing Applications for Main Town Centre Uses

Policy 29

Scale

1. Retail development will be permitted provided that the development, in terms of the overall magnitude of additional floorspace proposed and the size of individual units within it, is appropriate to the position of the centre concerned within the hierarchy of centres in Blackburn with Darwen. In making its assessment on this issue the Council will refer to all available evidence including but not limited to the indicative maxima for these factors set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Indicative maximum development and unit sizes for centres at different levels of the retail hierarchy.

Position within hierarchy	Centre	Indicative maximum unit size
1	Blackburn town centre	No limit
2	Darwen town centre	4,000 sq m as food store, otherwise 1,000 sq m
3	District centres	500 sq m

Source: Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan 2, 2015. Pg. 95.

The Sequential Test

Planning permission for retail development outside the Primary Shopping Areas of Blackburn and Darwen town centres or the District Centres as identified on the Adopted Policies Map, or for other main town centre uses outside Blackburn and Darwen town centres or the District Centres, will only be granted if the proposal complies with the remainder of this policy and with other relevant policies, and one or both of the following criteria are met:

- I. The development is specifically supported by another policy in the Local Plan; or*
- II. It is demonstrated that no sequentially preferable site is available or likely to be available within a reasonable timescale to accommodate the development; and that in discounting any*

sequentially preferable site, the developer / operator has applied a sufficiently flexible approach to their requirement in respect of scale, format and car parking provision.

Where an edge or out-of-centre development is justified under this policy, preference will be given to locations which are well connected to an existing town centre; and appropriate measures will be required to maximise connectivity between the development and the centre.

6.7 The proposal falls below the maximum unit size for District Centre retail units and therefore complies with the specific requirement of Policy 29.

6.8 In addition, as demonstrated by the Retail Impact Assessment that accompanies this application, the proposed store is of an appropriate scale for the application site, such that it improves the facilities available to local shoppers but does not provide direct competition for the larger retail centres. As such, it is considered that the proposal conforms well with the relevant planning policy in relation to retail uses.

7.0 RETAIL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Policy 29 of the Local Plan Part 2 also details the parameters where a Retail Impact Assessment is required in order to enable the determination of an application.

Policy 29 Table 2: Floorspace thresholds and geographical areas for Impact Assessments in relation to out-of-centre development.

Location of development	Floorspace threshold	Centres required to be assessed for potential impact
Within 500m of any district centre boundary or a local centre / parade of shops	250 sq m	All district centres or local centres / parades of shops within 500m
Darwen urban area (south of the M65)	500 sq m	Darwen town centre plus all district centres / local centres / parades of shops within 500m
Blackburn urban area (north of the M65)	1,000 sq m	Blackburn town centre plus all district centres / local centres / parades of shops within 500m
Any location outside the defined urban area	100 sq m	To be determined on a case by case basis

Source: Blackburn with Darwen Local Plan 2, 2015. Pg. 95.

Retail Impact Assessment (RIA)/ Sequential Test – DPP Planning Limited

7.2 In accordance with the requirements of Policy 29, DPP Planning Limited were commissioned to undertake a Retail Impact Assessment (RIA) and Sequential Test to support the planning application and demonstrate the suitability of a retail store at the proposed location.

7.3 The RIA also includes an extensive review of the relevant planning policies, including the National Planning Policy Guidance, Local Development Plan Core Strategy and Local Plan.

7.4 The RIA and Sequential Test review the relevant retail stores that are in proximity to the proposed Heron Foods site. The report confirms that due to the nature of the proposed store, and the products available on sale, the impact will be minimal to competitors and will provide a needed service to the local area.

7.5 The Sequential Test concluded that no sequentially preferable available units / site within the application site area have the potential to support a store of this scale and therefore this site is ideally suited.

7.6 The report states that the provision of a food store on the application site will provide economic benefits through the creation of jobs in the local area, and the generation of business rates.

7.7 The assessment ultimately concludes that the proposed development will not have a significant impact upon the vitality and viability of the existing centre and shopping parades.

8.0 GROUND INVESTIGATION

8.1 Worms Eye Limited has been commissioned, as part of the planning application, to undertake a review of the site, and consider ground contamination, landfill gas and geotechnical issues. The assessment is undertaken as a desk study with a walk-over study of the site. A coal mining desk study has also been undertaken and reported on.

8.2 The report has identified that the site has had previous mixed uses, with a church and houses occupying the application site during the 19th and 20th century, and the former Pioneer Mill. Engineering works have also taken place on the site during the 20th century.

8.3 Ground contamination is thought likely, due to the history of the site, although it is considered that there is likely to be a low risk to the development considering the proposed use. On-site ground investigations are recommended and planning conditions to that effect are anticipated by the applicant.

8.4 The presence of filled ground / made ground on the site has identified the need for a gas testing programme to be undertaken. Similarly, appropriately worded planning conditions are anticipated to address any gas issues.

8.5 The report confirms that in review of the Environment Agency flood risk maps, the area is clear of flooding from rivers, and no further action is required.

8.6 The coal mining assessment has identified a geological fault close to the Leeds-Liverpool canal, which falls within the blue edged ownership of the applicants lane, but does not affect the site of the proposed retail development. Therefore no further action is required to be taken.

9.0 TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT

9.1 DTPC have been instructed to provide transport and highway advice in relation to the proposed retail development.

9.2 The report demonstrates that the proposed development will incorporate good linkages to local facilities and infrastructure, which will promote sustainability by reducing the number of car trips as a

consequence of providing a new store for the local community to easily access, via pedestrian, cycle and public transportation services.

9.3 The application site is proved to be accessible by existing public transport, foot traffic and cycling movements in accordance with planning policy guidance for the local area. Extensive data is provided to highlight the local bus services, with a stop immediately outside the application site on New Wellington Street. For pedestrians the local area is typical of an urban area, with adequate pathways and crossing points. The use of cycles to the application site is acceptable, as the site is within the existing area of cycle networks. No improvements to the local network would be required to facilitate the proposed retail store.

9.4 The report confirms that the existing road network has a speed limit of 20mph. The sight lines required on the site based on this are 25m, which is achievable. With the introduction of suitable radii and footpaths, the existing site access can be altered and widened, thus providing the required access. A swept path analysis has been undertaken and is included within the report to confirm this.

9.5 In regard to car parking, the report states that for size of the proposed retail building, 24 spaces should be provided. 17 spaces are shown on the proposal, which although less than the guidance suggests, is justified when considering the short nature of visits to this type of retail store. The relatively fast turn-over of visitors / customers means that the lower number of spaces can be accommodated for.

9.6 The report includes a detailed trip generation and traffic flow assessment. The findings state that the traffic flow within the area and the existing road network are typical for an urban area, and the proposed retail building will have little or no discernible impact on the local network.

10 CONCLUSION

10.1 This statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application for the erection of a retail unit, to the vacant land on the site of the Former Pioneer Mill, Mill Hill, Blackburn.

10.2 The site is currently vacant, and with the approval of this application the site can be brought back into use, providing a substantial economic boost to the local area. The proposal would sustain a number of jobs through the construction phase, followed by employment opportunities when the store is completed. The store will also provide a retail service to the local community, along with revenue through business rates to the Local Authority.

10.3 The proposed building has been designed and is to be constructed in materials to be sympathetic to those of the surrounding buildings, to have minimal impact to the surrounding area, whilst providing a modern and contemporary structure.

10.4 The proposal demonstrably accords with the adopted planning policy in relation to retail uses. In the wider context, it provides an opportunity to bring forward development on brownfield land, in a well-connected, accessible location, for a use where there is a demonstrable need.

10.5 Therefore the proposal accords well with the requirements for sustainable development and is therefore suitable for support.