



## Planning Application

Extension and  
reconfiguration of the  
weighbridge office and  
welfare block at the  
Robertsbridge Works,  
Mountfield, East Sussex

Design & Access  
Statement

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1	May 2012	Draft 1	Jake Barnes-Gott Senior Planner	Thomas Smith Principal Planner	Jake Barnes-Gott Senior Planner
2	May 2012	Final	Jake Barnes-Gott Senior Planner	Thomas Smith Principal Planner	Jake Barnes-Gott Senior Planner

URS  
6-8 Greencoat Place  
London SW1P 1PL

Telephone: +44(0)20 7821 4359  
Fax: +44(0)20 7798 5001

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

1.1.1 Section 42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires statements covering design concepts and principles, and access issues to accompany applications for certain types of planning permission. Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) 'Circular 01/2006: Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System' provides guidance on the application of these requirements.

1.1.2 The Guidance states that:

*“a design and access statement is a short report accompanying and supporting a planning application to illustrate the process that has led to the development proposal, and to explain and justify the proposal in a structured way.”*

1.1.3 The Guidance goes on to state that:

*“As set out in the GDPO design and access statements will be required for all planning applications except for:*

- *a material change in the use of land or buildings, unless it also involves operational development.*
- *engineering or mining operations.*
- *development of an existing dwelling house, or development within the curtilage of a dwelling house for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house, where no part of that dwelling house or curtilage is within a designated area. “Designated area” means a National Park, site of special scientific interest, conservation area, area of outstanding natural beauty, World Heritage Site and the Broads.”*

1.1.4 This Design and Access Statement relates only to the proposed weighbridge office extension and adjoining welfare block.

### 1.2 Scope

1.2.1 Design and Access Statements are intended to show how the five objectives of good design have been applied to a particular proposal or where they haven't to explain why. The five objectives are:

- accessibility;
- environmental sustainability;
- character;
- community safety; and
- movement to, from and within the development.

### 1.3 Referencing

1.3.1 For the purposes of this document and for the avoidance of confusion, the following definitions have been adopted:

- the Robertsbridge Works comprises the wider factory site (approximately 26 hectares (ha)), containing a Plasterboard manufacturing facility and associated development, as defined by the blue line boundary on plan **47059895.WBO.002** attached of the planning application Supporting Statement (SS); and

- the Application Site comprises site proposed for construction of the new weighbridge office and is defined by the red line planning application boundary on plan **47059895.WBO.002** and **003** attached to the SS.

## 2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The application for planning permission which is accompanied by this Design and Access Statement, seeks approval for extension and reconfiguration of the weighbridge office and welfare block at the Robertsbridge Works.

### 2.2 Site Location

2.2.1 The Robertsbridge Works is situated approximately 8 kilometres (km) to the north of the town of Battle and to the west of the A2100, comprising approximately 26ha (working area) in total.

2.2.2 The general location is shown on plan **47059895.WBO.001** attached to the SS.

### 2.3 Site Description

2.3.1 The Robertsbridge Works extends across a northeast to southwest axis, comprising a Plasterboard manufacturing facility, gypsum stockpiles, gypsum processing, two gypsum landfill sites, railway sidings, the closed Mountfield Mine head and former Ready Mixed Concrete site.

2.3.2 The Application Site comprises 55 square meters (m<sup>2</sup>) and is situated within the eastern section of the Robertsbridge Works, approximately 400m to the west of the site access – comprising the existing weighbridge office and a small piece of adjacent land.

2.3.3 The Application Site is bounded by the site access road to the north and south, beyond which dense woodland is situated.

2.3.4 The Robertsbridge Works and Application Site are shown on plans **47059895.WBO. 002** and **003** attached to the SS.

### 2.4 Surroundings

2.4.1 The Robertsbridge Works is surrounded by dense Ancient Woodland, including, amongst others, Limekiln Wood, Snep's Wood, Great Wood and Counsellor's Wood, Crowhurst Wood, Millham Wood and Castle Wood.

2.4.2 The closest residential properties, along Church Lane, are situated approximately 350m to the northeast of the Application Site. There are no public footpaths or other Public Right of Way providing access to the site through the surrounding woodland.

2.4.3 The features surrounding the Application Site are shown on plan **47059895.WBO.001 and 002** attached to the SS.

2.4.4 The Application Site and the wider Robertsbridge Works are situated within the 145,000ha High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the valley of the River Line, surrounded by dense Ancient Woodland. Aside from the AONB, the Application Site itself is covered by no further designations, although there are further designated sites in the area.

### 2.5 Detail of the Proposals

2.5.1 The existing weighbridge office is small and is not considered fit for purpose. The windows are small and weighbridge operators are positioned at a low level within the office, making interaction with drivers utilising the weighbridge, difficult.

- 2.5.2 The existing weighbridge office and welfare facilities are contained within a single building, as shown on plan **4566/002** attached to the SS. There is very limited space for welfare facilities and, at present, only toilets, sink and a small mess area are provided.
- 2.5.3 BG wishes to provide more space and higher quality welfare facilities for staff; therefore, there is a need to extend the weighbridge office to the east, in order to provide space and reconfigure the existing welfare facilities.
- 2.5.4 The weighbridge itself, to the north of the existing office, would be retained.
- 2.5.5 It is proposed to extend the weighbridge office to the east, effectively splitting the office/administrative area and welfare facilities into two blocks. The proposed layout, identifying the two blocks, is shown on plan **4566/003** attached to the SS.
- 2.5.6 The extended weighbridge office would provide a larger administrative area and lobby, allowing for less restricted working conditions. An elevated position would be provided within the office for weighbridge operators and windows included on all sides – providing an effective viewing/interaction platform, as shown on plan **4566/003** and **005** attached to the SS.
- 2.5.7 The internal layout of the welfare block would be re-configured to provide a shower, additional toilets, locker room and a larger mess area.

### 3. DESIGN AND ACCESS

#### 3.1 Accessibility

- 3.1.1 The Robertsbridge Works is served by a private access road that is approximately 2km in length, running directly from the A2100. This private road runs from east to west through the Robertsbridge Works, providing access to the weighbridge office.
- 3.1.2 Staff parking is provided in allocated car parks within the Robertsbridge Works.
- 3.1.3 Two personnel access points would be provided to the proposed weighbridge office extension and welfare block, as follows:
- access (door) to the extension would be provided at the south-western corner of the building; and
  - an existing window on the northern elevation of the welfare block would be converted into a new access (door).
- 3.1.4 The existing access on the western elevation of the welfare block would be blocked up.
- 3.1.5 Windows would be provided on the northern, eastern and southern sides of the new extension; with a suitable sliding window on the north-western corner adjacent to the weighbridge – allowing for interaction with drivers.
- 3.1.6 The proposed provision of access point and windows is shown on plan **4566/03** and **005** attached to the SS.
- 3.1.7 Appropriate access for disabled persons would be provided, as follows:
- all installations for access for the disabled would be undertaken in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations;
  - paths from pavement to entrance door to be ramped with level landing at the door entrance;
  - entrance door to have clear opening width minimum 775mm and flush threshold; and
  - disabled persons toilet to be set out and supplied with grab rails, as shown on plan **4566/003** attached to the SS.

## 3.2 Environmental Sustainability

- 3.2.1 The proposed development is considered to be an efficient use of the land, as it utilises previously developed land within the Robertsbridge Works and includes appropriate management measures, e.g. appropriate drainage for surface foul water.
- 3.2.2 The small amount of demolition and excavation arisings would be utilised for restoration of other parts of the Robertsbridge Works, where appropriate, or transported off site for recycling.

## 3.3 Character

### Amount

- 3.3.1 The planning application relates predominantly to of a small-scale extension of the weighbridge office within the Robertsbridge Works. It is considered that the amount of development and the proposed use is an efficient use of the land, and in keeping with surrounding uses within the Robertsbridge Works, some of which are of considerably larger scale.
- 3.3.2 The proposed development would not give rise to any additional vehicle movements and operations would remain the same as existing.

### Layout

- 3.3.3 The proposed layout is shown on plan **4566/003** attached to the SS. The layout has been designed so as to ensure safe and efficient working within the proposed extension, as well as providing adequate access for disabled persons.

### Scale

- 3.3.4 The extended weighbridge office would adjoin the eastern elevation of the newly reconfigured welfare block, measuring:
- 4.4m wide;
  - 6.0m long; and
  - 3.4m high.
- The extension would only be slightly higher than the existing building, which is approximately 2.9m high.
- The footprint of the existing building is 22.8m<sup>2</sup> and the extension would be 26.4m<sup>2</sup>. The total combined footprint would be 46.2m<sup>2</sup>.

- 3.3.5 Details and elevations of the proposed development are shown on plan **4566/003** attached to the SS. The scale – including height, width and length – is considered to be appropriate and in keeping with the surrounding land uses.

#### Design

- 3.3.6 The design and construction details are provided below and are shown in more detail on plan **4566/003** and **005** attached to the SS. The design and external finished is considered to conform to the industrial nature of other structures within the Robertsbridge Works.

### **3.4 Community Safety**

- 3.4.1 The Robertsbridge Works has a perimeter fence, CCTV and security office/guards.

### **3.5 Movement To, From and Within the Development**

- 3.5.1 Users of the proposed development would be subject to the same established management and safety requirement as the remainder of the Robertsbridge Works.

- 3.5.2 Please refer to Section 3.2 for detail regarding movement to, from and within the proposed development.