

British Gypsum

Robertsbridge Works : Weighbridge office extension

Planning Application : Supporting Statement : November 2012

Introduction

01 Robertsbridge Works occupies a site of about 26ha total area situated to the west of the A2100 approximately 8 kilometres (km) north of the town of Battle. Robertsbridge Works is a plasterboard manufacturing facility with ancillary mining, production, storage and logistics operations.

02 The Application Site, an area of 60 square metres is located adjacent to the access road at the eastern end of Robertsbridge Works, approximately 400 metres to the west of the Works access. The Application Site includes the existing weighbridge office and a small piece of adjacent land, bounded by the site access road and railway lines to the north and south, and is within woodland. The location is shown on plan 4566/004C

History

03 Planning permission RR/564/CM was granted for a weighbridge office extension at the location of the Application Site in November 2008 but never implemented. The extension then granted planning permission was of a similar size to that detailed within this Supporting Statement.

04 The Local Planning Authority granted planning permission in 2008 on the basis that: the extension would be important for the functioning of the Robertsbridge Works and not detrimental to the quality of the AONB being small-scale; within the Robertsbridge Works and isolated from public view; and the proposal complied with the Development Plan.

05 Following a review of the Works operating procedures the arrangement of the office was revised and a new planning application submitted in early 2012. Permission again was granted on 24 August 2012 (RR/690/CM). A further examination of the Works procedures established a requirement to re-orientate the extension. This new application refers to an extension of 25 square metres, an increase of 2 square metres from the previous.

06 The development proposed by this planning application in effect already has previously been judged acceptable at the Application Site.

Review

07 The existing weighbridge building is inadequate and not fit for purpose with driver communication laborious and inefficient. There are limited welfare facilities. Increased space and better welfare facilities for staff are obtained by extending the weighbridge office to the east. Also the extended office would separate the operational area from the welfare facilities as shown on plan 4566/003.

08 The weighbridge to the north of the existing office, is retained.

09 A larger administrative area and lobby gives less restricted working conditions. An elevated position within the office with windows on all sides provides an effective viewing/interaction platform for weighbridge operators as shown on plan 4566/003 and 005.

Construction

10 Internal walls of the existing building are altered to provide a secure electrical room. Also toilet facilities for use by visiting drivers are provided with access through the existing door in the west elevation. A new door for use by operators replaces a window in the north elevation, the two windows in the south elevation are blocked and the existing door in the east elevation is the operator access to the new facility.

11 A further access door is provided to the south elevation of the extension for use by visitors who are required to sign in on entry to Robertsbridge Works. Windows are provided on the north, east and south elevations of the extension; with an openable (sliding) section adjacent to the weighbridge for direct communication between operators and vehicle drivers.

12 The external walls of the extension and the existing building are clad with horizontal UPVC boarding. Construction details are shown on plan 4566/003 and 005.

13 Drainage details are shown on plan 4566/005;

- ◆ surface water drainage — 65mm downpipes on the extension connect into 100mm underground drains with discharge to an existing soakaway
- ◆ foul water drainage — water from basins and toilets discharges into 100mm diameter underground sewers which are connected to the existing foul water treatment system at Robertsbridge Works.

14 Any new external lighting on the proposed extension would comprise lights above points of access, angled downwards to prevent unnecessary glare and spillage to the surrounding area.

Provision for Disabled

15 All visitors are required to notify the weighbridge operator before the entry barrier is raised. At this time any person requiring assistance can alert the operator to take appropriate action which includes attending the vehicle in the adjacent parking area. The visitor's toilet area is arranged for access and use by disabled persons.

Working Hours

16 The weighbridge office shall continue to operate 24 hours each day, 7 days each week, as present at Robertsbridge Works.

Waste Control

17 Any suitable excavation material such as uncontaminated soil shall be utilised to restore other parts of the Robertsbridge Works. Building materials generated by demolishing the lobby shall be recycled or disposed of, offsite at a suitable licensed waste management facility.

Summary

18 The principle of the proposed weighbridge office extension has previously been established at the Application Site, as demonstrated by planning permission RR/564/CM and RR/690/CM; the circumstances at Robertsbridge Works have not changed since.

19 Having previously been developed the Application Site is not considered to be sensitive in environmental terms, and is enclosed within the site access road and railway lines. The proposed development would facilitate a new and improved weighbridge office and welfare facilities with no adverse impact upon the environment or amenity.

20 As the proposed development is compliant with the Development Plan there is no other significant consideration that would impact grant of planning permission.