

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT IN RELATION TO

*PROPOSED SIDE AND FRONT EXTENSION TO EXISTING
INDUSTRIAL UNIT*

at

SWITCHGEAR HOUSE

THE COURTYARD

GREEN LANE

ROCHDALE

OL10 2EX

for

R & B SWITCHGEAR SERVICES LIMITED

August 2022.

Prepared by;

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INTRODUCTION.

A.J.Cocker Associates have been instructed by R & B Switchgear Services limited to prepare a planning application for the construction of an extension to their existing portal framed industrial unit area to the front and side and provide HGV turning area and alterations to car park. The company continues to grow and develop new markets and products worldwide.

To service this growth, the company needs additional manufacturing/assembly floor space and increase staff to service this expansion. The proposal is to extend the unit to the South side and infilling a recessed area to the easterly (front) side of the existing building

to create a rectangular floor plan to enable overhead cranes to traverse the full length of the production area maximising efficiency of handling.

To enable these improvements, part of the scheme is to re-site the mezzanine office area from the middle of the unit and reconstruct new office floor area at the northern end adjacent to the existing main offices. This part of the scheme is not only necessary to meet the requirement of the production facilities, but to also enable greater collaboration between all team members especially the design and management. To attract and retain the very best personnel in a very competitive jobs market, you need to create the right working environment, and this is the aim of the company.

It is very important to the business that the company head office is located within the Rochdale area as there is a very long association with the area through the former Castleton switchgear manufacturer, Whip & Borne who have installations worldwide, many of which are maintained and upgraded by former Whip & Borne engineers who now work at R & B Switchgear Services Limited.

It is envisaged that staff numbers will increase by about 25%. in addition, there will be even greater opportunities for young people to join the company's apprenticeship scheme. These are skilled jobs not only in manufacturing, mechanical and electrical design but also across all levels of office and ancillary staff necessary to support this growth.

R & B have provided a statement which explains the origins of the business, its strong relationship with Rochdale and why it is necessary to extend and reorganise the premises at Heywood.

DESIGN.

The proposed extension to the South is on land that was earmarked for expansion purposes when the building was first built. It has laid vacant, and gravel covered for many years and has been used for overspill parking on occasions. This extension and internal reorganisation provide an opportunity to relocate the goods inward (materials and components) to be off loaded at the far end of the building into a secure stores area and distributed internally using the overhead cranes and FLT's.

The goods out will share the same new loading facility, in part, however the infilled recess to the front will become the main despatch area with FLT loading vehicles side on generally.

The design of the extensions is to match the existing building with glazing, doors, cladding and all trims matching. The extension matches the design of the existing modern factory unit and from the side will appear as a continuous elevation with the existing. All materials used will match those of the existing main building. Whilst noise levels in the building are generally low and the owners are unaware of any complaints from neighbours regarding noise, it is not anticipated that noise generation in and around the premises will be any greater than exists are present. In fact, the extension of the unit will effectively screen noise activities on the car park and loading area from the residential property nearby.

Lighting on the Westerly elevation will be limited to low level, not exceeding 2.5m above footpath level and only sufficient for security and for means of escape along the rear footpath. Lighting on the carpark and loading areas will be a mixture of utility lighting in car parking areas and flood lighting at loading areas as is existing.

SETTING, ACCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY.

The building is an extension of the existing factory within a mainly industrial area of Heywood. The infill extension is at the same floor level as the existing building, however the extension on the South side is at a lower floor level following the lower ground level here. Access between the different floor levels internally will be by short flight staircases, lifts and hoists to move people and goods between the levels. Externally ramped access will be available between the two levels.

At present there is only staircase access between the floor levels in the office area. As part of the project, full disabled access will be provided in the offices with the provision of a suitable lift and disabled facilities to meet the requirements of Approved Document M and DDA regulations. Additional disabled car parking spaces will be provided as the need arises; however two spaces will be provided close to the main office entrance for visitors and staff use.

The building is situated in an established industrial area of Heywood with good access to public transport, the motorway network and the proposed mainline railway link between Heywood and Rochdale. With the proposals, employee numbers will increase and that will add additional car parking requirements. It is anticipated that the business initiatives will reduce the reliance on private car use, nevertheless, the proposals incorporate additional parking spaces and a defined HGV turning facility.

CONCLUSION.

The proposal is an extension of an existing industrial unit of similar design and within an established industrial area. The use is that of specialist engineering with its roots in Rochdale. The site of the extension is industrial and previous developed vacant land. The extension continues the design and detailing of the existing building and against the backdrop of the existing industrial premises will not be visually intrusive. The area is a well-established industrial area surrounded by similar buildings so the proposal is not out of keeping with the area. The proposed extension and alterations are essential to service the business needs of this world class company and are key to maintaining the business in Rochdale. There are a significant proportion of the employees who are local people, and the business wants to stay true to its roots and maintain its long connection with the Town.

As the impact of these proposals is minimal in this location but the gains for the Borough in terms of employment gains and retaining a world class business far outweigh any perceived detrimental outcome, we would respectfully request that this application is determined positively at your earliest opportunity.

Tony Cocker
A J Cocker Associates
August 2022