

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

**UNIT 19, BOLNEY GRANGE BUSINESS PARK, BOLNEY, HAYWARDS
HEATH, RH17 5PB**

REAR EXTENSION TO EXISTING INDUSTRIAL UNIT



PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT v.1

09 January 2025

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1. SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 1.1 The application site is a purpose built industrial unit plus its curtilage situated on Bolney Grange Business Park, half a mile from the A23 / A2300 junction, west of Haywards Heath. The business park is in a countryside location and comprises B1 light industrial (now Class E(g.iii)) and B2 general industrial units, arranged along a single spine road accessed off Stairbridge Lane. To the south is the Hickstead Hotel, to the north is Pilgrim Farm with numerous disused, abandoned poultry sheds. The land around the poultry sheds has become overgrown.
- 1.2 Unit 19 is located about half way down on the north side of the spine road. It comprises one half of a metal sheet construction industrial building. The premises are occupied by UK Helix,¹ a leading supplier of screw pile foundations to the construction industry.
- 1.3 Founded in 2017 by the applicants, UK Helix is a dedicated supplier of superior quality screw-piles to both the private sector and commercial markets. The company is the exclusive agent of screw piles manufactured in Finland by an established Finnish company with over 20 years of experience in the design, production, supply and installation of screw-piles. UK Helix is a highly successful Sussex-based company with a strong reputation in the construction industry.
- 1.4 Screw piles offer minimal soil displacement, a low carbon footprint, and re-useability, making them an eco-friendly alternative to concrete footings with minimal environmental impact. Screw piles will be used in this development (see later).
- 1.5 The premises at Unit 19 extends to 500sqm and comprises a forecourt with parking and turning, the industrial unit which measures 11. metres wide by 16 metres deep, and 5.2 metres high, plus a 12 metre deep open area at the rear of the unit that backs onto Pilgrim Farm.
- 1.6 The industrial unit is constructed of profiled metal walls over a brick plinth, with a metal sheet roof over. The unit is surrounded by other industrial units of similar scale and appearance.
- 1.7 There is a ditch traversing the open area at the rear of the unit, beyond which are some scattered trees and then a perimeter wire fence demarcating the edge of the applicant's land. This area has been colonised by ruderal vegetation, such as nettles and docks. See Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) by JWK Wildlife Surveys for further details.

¹ <https://www.ukhelix.com/>

1.8 The application site comprises the open land at the rear of the business unit.



Figure 1: The application site, showing the rear elevation of Unit 19. The external staircase serves the adjoining unit.



Figure 2: The application site, showing ruderal vegetation that colonised the disturbed ground



Figure 3: The east elevation of Unit 19, showing the unit material and massing.



Figure 4: The wire fence on the rear boundary of the premises, beyond which are the disused poultry sheds at Pilgrim Farm



Figure 5: Rear boundary



Figure 6: Vegetation, close up. The brick culvert is visible in the foreground

2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 The application proposes a rear extension to the existing industrial unit. UK Helix has experienced significant growth in recent years, driven by the increasing demand for sustainable alternatives to traditional concrete in building foundations. This surge in customer interest has created a need for additional space. To accommodate this growth, it is proposed to extend the building with a simple rear extension that replicates the existing industrial unit in scale, materials, and form.
- 2.2 The extension would be 10 metres deep and 11.3 metres wide, and 5.2 metres high, resulting in a 26 metre long industrial unit. The walls and roof would be composed of the same light green coloured, profiled metal sheeting. The brick plinth would be extended outwards and increased vertically to account for the change in levels across the site. The roof would be a continuation of the existing mono-pitch profile.
- 2.3 Inside, a small 20sqm mezzanine floor will be added to accommodate an upstairs office – see KD.1634/1_A.101 C by Krona Design.
- 2.4 The ditch crossing the site would be culverted, and the building mounted on screw piles and a raft foundation avoiding the use of concrete wherever possible. As one of the country's leading suppliers of screw-piles, the applicant aims to promote this sustainable solution, which minimises environmental impact while providing a robust and efficient foundation system.
- 2.5 The proposal has been designed in close collaboration with the applicant's Drainage Consultant, GTA Civils of Burgess Hill, to ensure no change to the hydrological regime or increased risk of flooding on or off site. The development includes two above ground attenuation tanks, shown on the proposed site plan KD.1634/1_A.101 C by Krona Design, and the drainage strategy dwg. 13413/1101 P1 by GTA Civils, in Appendix D of the FRA.

3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The local development plan for the area comprises the Mid Sussex District Plan 2018 (DP) and the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD). The Council is preparing a new District Plan for 2021- 2039, and the Regulation 19 Submission Draft (DDP) went out to consultation earlier this year and was submitted for Examination on 8th July 2024. Due to the advanced stage of preparation, weight can be given to policies in the emerging District Plan.
- 3.2 The site is in the countryside and in an 'Existing Employment Site' (policy SA34 in the DPD) as defined on the District Plan maps.
- 3.3 There is no recorded planning history for Unit 19.
- 3.4 Relevant adopted District Plan (DP) policies:
- DP1: Sustainable Economic Development
 - DP12: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
 - DP26: Character and Design
 - DP29: Noise, Air and Light Pollution
 - DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
 - DP38: Biodiversity
 - DP39: Sustainable Design and Construction
 - DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage
- 3.5 Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) policies:
- SA34: Existing Employment Sites – Protection, Intensification and Redevelopment
- 3.6 Draft District Plan (DDP) policies:
- DPS4: Flood Risk and Drainage
 - DPN1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery
 - DPN2: Biodiversity Net Gain
 - DPN3: Green and Blue Infrastructure
 - DPN4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
 - DPN7: Noise Impacts
 - DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside
 - DPB1: Character and Design
 - DPE1: Sustaining Economic Development

DPE2: Existing Employment Sites

3.7 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

Paragraph 85: "Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development."

4. CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING POLICIES

4.1 Principle of the Development

- 4.1.1 Policy DP1 of the District Plan seeks to support economic growth across the district to promote a place which is attractive to a full range of businesses. This will be achieved by, *inter alia*, "supporting existing businesses and allowing them room to expand". The policy continues, noting that it will permit appropriate intensification, conversion, redevelopment and /or extension for employment uses providing it is in accordance with other policies in the Plan.
- 4.1.2 The application site is located on an Existing Employment Site (DPD policy SA34) where existing business uses are protected. Policy SA34 states that proposals for intensification within the boundary of Existing Employment Sites will be supported providing it is in accordance with other development plan and national policies.
- 4.1.3 Draft DP policies DPE1 and DPE2 reiterate adopted policies DP1 and SA34.
- 4.1.4 The proposed development will enable this successful local business to stock a larger and greater range of products from their Finnish screw pile supplier, and then serve more customers with their high quality products and expertise.
- 4.1.5 Bolney Grange Business Park is ideally located for national and international logistics, being within quarter of a mile of the trunk road network. Extending the existing industrial unit will intensify the use of the site for employment purposes, giving the company room to expand, opening up the potential for further job creation.
- 4.1.6 Currently, the company employs two people, full time. With the proposed extension, operations will be able to expand and the applicant expects to take on two more employees: a warehouse manager and a marketing assistant. And that will be just the beginning, as further growth is anticipated and planned for.
- 4.1.7 The principle of the development is therefore supported, and should be approved subject to compliance with other Plan policies.

4.2 Design

- 4.2.1 The extension has been designed to match the existing building. It is simple elongation of the business unit, and will utilise the same pale green profiled metal sheeting over a brick plinth for the walls, and green metal sheet roof.

- 4.2.2 Policy DP236 of the District Plan states that development should reflect the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape. The design does just that, mirroring the current business park units and being appropriate for its function and place.

4.3 Drainage

- 4.3.1 The site is traversed by a drainage ditch. The ditch runs behind several of the industrial units on the northern side of the business park. A culvert will be built beneath the extension and an Ordinary Watercourse Consent applied for from the Local Lead Flood Authority.
- 4.3.2 The applicants have worked closely with their Drainage Consultants, GTA Civils, who have prepared a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy.²
- 4.3.3 The watercourse will be culverted beneath the proposed extension, and surface water run-off from the new roof directed to the ditch watercourse via a new outfall headwall on the north bank (details shown on the drainage strategy drawing in Appendix D of the FRA). Infiltration alone cannot achieve the required rates, so following the drainage hierarchy the use of the attenuation tanks and discharge to a watercourse is the next best option. With the attenuation tanks the post development run-off rate will be close to greenfield run-off rates.
- 4.3.4 Policy DP41 of the District Plan requires development to not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and be safe over its lifetime. SuDs are recommended to avoid any increase in flood risk and protect surface and ground water quality.
- 4.3.5 The implementation of the drainage strategy proposed in the FRA will ensure compliance with DP41.

4.4 Biodiversity and Trees

- 4.4.1 Policy DP38 requires all development to contribute to, and improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity where possible. The development is also subject to 10% biodiversity net gain under the 2021 Environment Act.

² GTA Civils, Flood Risk and SuDs Assessment for Unit 19, Bolney Grange Business Park. Job No: 13413, December 2024

- 4.4.2 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been prepared by Jack Kellett of JWK Wildlife Surveys³. The site for the extension comprises recently felled mixed scrub habitat, described as “over-mature plants with limited ground flora”. There is also a dry ditch crossing the site and some immature blackthorn, hawthorn and oak close to the site (PEA, Table 3). The trees have been surveyed by Broad Oak Tree Consultants and an Arboricultural Implications Assessment (AIA) accompanies the application.⁴
- 4.4.3 The AIA concludes that the impact of the extension on the nearby trees will be minimal, as the screw pile foundations minimise ground disturbance and the floor of the extension being suspended above the existing ground level. The suspended floor also allows for gaseous exchange to tree roots.
- 4.4.4 Existing trees will be protected from damage to root systems, in accordance with policy DP37 of the District Plan. In addition, seven new trees will be planted on the off-site land – see below for details.
- 4.4.5 The PEA makes recommendations for mitigation during construction, e.g. avoidance of bird nesting season if possible and securing trenches at night. On-site ecological enhancement will comprise the installation of bat and bird boxes on the nearby trees, and insect boxes.
- 4.4.6 However, there is insufficient space on site to provide 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG). The Regulations stipulate that where 10% BNG cannot be provided on-site, developers can make off-site biodiversity gains on their own land outside the development site.
- 4.4.7 The applicant owns a pasture field near Findon, east of Roger’s Lane, Findon, BN14 0RE (co-ordinates 512102 E and 108011 N) – see Figure 7. The land is 12 miles south-west of the application site.

³ JWK Wildlife Surveys, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Unit 19, Bolney Grange Business Park ref 24/85, 4th December 2024

⁴ Broad Oak Tree Consultants, Arboricultural Implications Assessment for Unit 19, Bolney Grange Business Park, Ref J.66.12, 25th November 2024

- 4.4.8 It is acknowledged that a 10% gain is not possible onsite under the proposals and therefore offsite habitat creation and enhancement has been utilised to achieve the required gains.
- 4.4.1 Jack Kellett, the applicant's Ecologist, has surveyed this offsite land and prepared a Biodiversity Net Gain Report and pre and post development habitat plans. A total net gain of 15.23% habitat units and 11.66% watercourse units is achieved through the retention, enhancement and creation of on-site mixed scrub, lowland meadow, and ditch watercourse, and planting seven new trees – see Figure 1 of the BNG Report by JWK Wildlife Surveys for details.



Figure 7: Aerial Image showing location of the Off-Site Land (copyright Google Earth)

- 4.4.2 This will result in 0.0275ha of off-site habitat that can be managed with an appropriate Management and Monitoring Plan. The on-site bird, bat and insect boxes will further increase the overall biodiversity resulting from this development.
- 4.4.3 The proposal therefore provides the biodiversity net gain required under Schedule 7A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021)
- 4.5 Amenity
- 4.5.1 The proposed extension to the industrial unit will not encroach onto the adjacent units on the business park. Each unit is situated within its own plot with space to the rear for each unit to extend without intruding on the neighbouring units. Some of the units have been

extended in the past, without detriment to their neighbours. There are no windows in the rear elevation of the adjoining unit, Unit 18.

- 4.5.2 There are no residential dwellings within the vicinity of the application site that could potentially be affected by noise, air or light pollution. In any event, no noisy industrial activities are carried out at the premises by UK Helix; the premises is used for storing the screw piles and the business administration. The extension can therefore be implemented without a loss of amenity to adjoining occupants, in accordance with DP26 of the District Plan.
- 4.5.3 In summary, the proposed development will allow a successful local business to expand, with the potential for job creation and supporting the construction industry nation-wide. This can be achieved whilst simultaneously providing more than 10% biodiversity net gain through the utilisation of off-site land near Findon, which is owned by the applicant.
- 4.5.4 In light of the above, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is approved.