



KRONOSPAN, CHIRK

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF 2 NO. RAW MATERIAL SILOS, EXTENSION TO THE EXISTING CHIP PREPARATION BUILDING AND ERECTION OF 3 NO. SILOS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHIP PREPARATION BUILDING, AND ASSOCIATED WORKS

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

June 2022

The logo for axis, consisting of the word "axis" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font, centered within a dark blue square.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application made by Kronospan Limited (hereafter referred to as 'Kronospan') for the erection of 2 no. raw material silos, extension to the existing chip preparation building and erection of 3 no. silos associated with the chip preparation building, and associated works which are described in Section 2 (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development'). The Proposed Development would be located at the existing Kronospan Manufacturing Facility in Chirk (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').

1.1.2 This document is to be read in conjunction with the Planning Statement, planning drawings and technical assessments which accompany the Proposal. In particular, the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment provides analysis and commentary, which is relevant to the contents of this document.

1.1.3 The statutory requirement for the production of a Design and Access Statement is set out within Article 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (see details below). It requires that this application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement that sets out the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development, demonstrates how the development takes context into account, and how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with.

1.2 Structure of Design and Access Statement

1.2.1 This Design and Access Statement is divided into 7 sections. Following this Section:

- Section 2.0 describes the legal background and guidance that underpins the document.
- Section 3.0 describes the Site and its surroundings.
- Section 4.0 provides a description of the Proposed Development.
- Section 5.0 describes the design principles.
- Section 6.0 identifies policies and issues relating to access.
- Section 7.0 provides some concise conclusions.

2.0 LEGAL BACKGROUND AND GUIDANCE

2.1 Legislative requirements

2.1.1 The legal requirement to provide a Design and Access Statement is set out in Article 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (as amended). This is hereafter referred to as the “DMPO.”

2.1.2 A Design and Access Statement is required for development which is (*inter alia*) a major development. The Proposed Development is a major development as it would provide for greater than 1,000sqm of new floorspace, and accordingly a Design and Access Statement is provided.

2.1.3 Paragraph 4 of Article 7 requires that a Design and Access Statement must:

(a) explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;

(b) demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;

(c) explain the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in the development plan have been taken into account; and

(e) explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.

2.2 Design and Access Statements in Wales (April 2017)

2.2.1 This document provides guidance on how good design can be reflected in Design and Access Statements.

2.2.2 A Design and Access Statement “...communicates what is proposed and demonstrates the design process that has been undertaken to reach the final proposal” (page 5). It is recommended that a Design and Access Statement is concise.

2.2.3 This statement provides a description of the relevant design and access issues in respect of the development. The level of detail provided is considered to be appropriate and proportionate to the nature and complexity of the scheme.

3.0 THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1.1 The Proposed Development is within the existing Kronospan Facility, which is on land adjacent to Holyhead Road (the B5070).
- 3.1.2 The Proposed Development would be at the western extent of the existing Kronospan Facility and would be sited where existing hardstanding, which is used as open storage.
- 3.1.3 A planning application was recently submitted to WCBC for a covered loading yard on the site of the existing main reception building and external hardstanding. The covered loading yard application is pending determination by WCBC, and would provide a covered area for lorries to load and unload products on site.
- 3.1.4 A further planning application for proposed Engineering Stores, which includes a dedicated apprenticeship workshop has been submitted to WBCB and will be validated shortly.
- 3.1.5 The entirety of the Kronospan Facility covers an area of circa 40ha, with circa 14ha of this developed with industrial buildings and plant. Figure 1 shows the layout of the Kronospan Facility. A number of industrial process facilities are located in the western half which are used to process, sort and dry the raw wood materials used in the manufacture of MDF / particle board. These include a number of tall structures, including stacks, that emit clean process emissions to the atmosphere. The tallest structure within the Facility is the combined heat and power (CHP) biomass plant stack which is 70m in height.
- 3.1.6 A number of process buildings are located in the northern half of the Facility including: a sawmill, formalin plant and the secondary product manufacturing facility (*Kronoplus*) which produces laminate flooring and worktops.
- 3.1.7 In April 2022, planning permission was granted for a new warehouse building (application reference: P/2021/0725) located to the north-east of the Facility which will deliver a further 15,029 sq.m. of floorspace (GEA). This recently consented planning application also includes a new sprinkler tank located between the northern extent of *Kronoplus* and the site's northern boundary.
- 3.1.8 The western perimeter of the Kronospan Facility is formed by the Shrewsbury to Chester railway. Improved railway siding facilities have been constructed within the site to enable an increased volume of timber to be imported by rail. The Llangollen

Canal is located to the west of the railway line, circa 30m from the boundary of the site at its closest point. The canal is designated as the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site and as a Scheduled Monument. Water is abstracted from the canal for use in the manufacturing process. The eastern perimeter of the site is formed by Holyhead Road (B5070). An earth bund, planted with trees, has been developed along the eastern perimeter of the site in order to reduce the visibility of the site operations from neighbouring properties on Holyhead Road.

- 3.1.9 A sewerage pumping station and one property, owned by Kronospan, are located to the immediate north of the site. To the immediate south of the site is the Cadbury's (Mondelez) factory, the Chirk AAA sports ground and the Chirk recreational ground.
- 3.1.10 Surface water for the majority of the Site currently drains to two lagoons located on the northern boundary of the Site, each of 2,033sqm in volume. A third lagoon was constructed to take surface water from the log yard.
- 3.1.11 The main residential area of Chirk is located to the east of the site with residential properties lining the majority of the eastern side of Holyhead Road. Chirk town centre is located approximately 500m to the south and south east of the site and parts of the town centre are designated as Chirk Conservation Area.
- 3.1.12 The wider area beyond the urban settlement of Chirk is dominated by agricultural fields and woodland. Chirk Castle (Grade 1 listed) and its grounds (Registered Park and Garden) are located circa 500m to the west of the site, beyond the canal. The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) also lie to the west of the site, the closest boundary of the AONB runs concurrent with the grounds of Chirk Castle.

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1.1 The Proposed Development would be sited on an area of existing hardstanding currently used as open storage.
- 4.1.2 The proposed two raw material storage silos general arrangement plan, floor plan, elevations and sections are shown on drawing 9000_88 Rev C. The proposed extension to the chip preparation building (and associated 3no. silos and air ventilation units) floor plan, elevations and sections are shown on drawing 7000_706 Rev C.
- 4.1.3 The Application Site is bound to the north, east and south by the existing Kronospan processing buildings within the Facility, and the Shrewsbury to Chester railway line and railway sidings to the west.
- 4.1.4 The chip preparation building is connected to the surrounding processing buildings which combine to make the chip material to process into particle board. The extension to the chip preparation building would create an additional 250sqm of floorspace. The extension to the chip preparation building has been designed to match the existing building's height, width and materials. The walls would be constructed of galvanised steel sheeting in a light grey colour (RAL 7035 – light grey) to match the existing building.
- 4.1.5 The proposed chip preparation building's three chip storage silos would be to the north of the chip preparation building and they would each store a volume of 597sqm each. These silos match the existing four concrete silos found to the south of the chip preparation building and would also be made of concrete.
- 4.1.6 Three existing air vents are proposed to be relocated to the north of the chip preparation building, and an additional air vent is proposed to accompany them.
- 4.1.7 To the east of the three new chip silos and four air vents is where the proposed two large storage silos are proposed. Each silo would be able to store 14,065m³ of raw material, and they would be positioned on a foundation and bucket elevator of 1,466sqm. The silos would be constructed of concrete to match the existing smaller silos located to the south of the chip preparation building.
- 4.1.8 The proposed large storage silos would be connected to the chip preparation building extension via new internalised conveyors to speed up the chip preparation process. These large silos would be made of concrete and constructed on site.

5.0 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The following sub-sections provide an explanation of the design principles and concepts that have been applied in formulating the proposal scheme.

5.2 Design Principles and Concepts

Use

5.2.1 The Proposed Development would not constitute a change of use at the site, but instead would add additional floorspace to the existing industrial facility. This would complement the existing operations at the manufacturing facility. The Planning Statement provides a detailed assessment of the land use policies, but as a summary there is support for locating an engineering store building in this location. Policies PS1 and PS2 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1996 – 2011 direct development to within the defined settlement limits / employment areas, which includes the Site as part of the wider settlement of Chirk. Policy PS3 also encourages development on previously developed land, which the Kronospan Facility is considered to be.

5.2.2 The policies of the Local Development Plan, which are not adopted but are at an advanced stage, strengthen the approach of the UDP: Policy SP2 continues to direct new development to settlements and employment areas, although the draft Proposals Map proposes to demarcate settlement limits and employment areas so providing a stronger and more focussed indication of where employment uses should be located than the existing UDP. In addition, the Kronospan Facility is within one of 25 designated employment areas in the County of Wrexham which are safeguarded from a change of use, with the rest of Chirk identified as a settlement with defined boundaries. The Proposed Development accords with both the existing and proposed planning policy approach.

5.2.3 The Kronospan Facility covers an extensive area on the western side of Chirk. It has been a manufacturing site for over 40 years, and so is well established. The Mondelez site is also to the south, so the industrial context is an established feature of the western side of Chirk. The remainder of Chirk is predominantly residential, and there is a clear demarcation between these two land uses, with Holyhead Road forming the

boundary. The Proposed Development would respect this by being entirely within the existing Kronospan site and within the area identified for employment uses.

- 5.2.4 Therefore, the immediate and wider context has been considered in determining that the proposed building would be appropriate when considering the Site and also the wider context of Chirk.

Layout

- 5.2.5 The siting of the Proposed Development is linked to the existing chip preparation building. The layout of the Proposed Development has been carefully considered with regard to the buildings and spaces which make up the existing Kronospan Facility, whilst ensuring large vehicles can enter and exit the space using swept path analysis.
- 5.2.6 The proposed chip preparation building extension and silos would sit within the curtilage of the existing processing buildings at the Facility and would blend into the existing backdrop of these group of structures and buildings. The Site has limited visibility outside of the Facility.
- 5.2.7 The existing activities to be removed on the Site to make way for the Proposed Development are external storage areas. The intention is to ultimately improve the productivity of Site by using this previously developed land to allow the facility to operate more efficiently and effectively.
- 5.2.8 Overall, the Proposed Development's layout has responded to the constraints of the Site and the operational requirements. It is a logical position for the Proposed Development and integrates into the pattern of existing buildings which form the existing Kronospan Facility and which constitute the immediate context.

Scale

- 5.2.9 The extension to the chip preparation building would create an additional 250sqm of floorspace. The extension to the chip preparation building has been designed to match the existing building's height (29m), width (26m) and materials (insulated galvanised steel sheets in RAL 7035 - light grey).
- 5.2.10 The proposed chip preparation building's three chip storage silos would be sited to the north of the chip preparation building and they would each store a volume of 597sqm each. These silos match the existing four silos found to the south of the chip preparation building and are approximately 24m in height and made of concrete.

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- 5.2.11 To the east of the three new chip silos and four air vents is where the proposed two large storage silos are proposed, positioned on a foundation and bucket elevator of 1,466sqm. Each silo would be c. 34m in height and c. 25m wide, and would be able to store 14,065m³ of raw material. The size of the silos reflects the amount of storage required.
- 5.2.12 The scale of the Proposed Development is substantial but reflects its use. This part of the Facility is occupied by the main processing buildings, and the Proposed Development would not detract from the existing buildings collective scale and complex of connected and adjacent buildings and structures. As a whole, the existing warehouses and structures within the facility are well in excess of the Proposed Development.
- 5.2.13 The conclusion is that although the scale of the Proposed Development would be substantial it would be proportionate to other buildings within the Kronospan Facility. The Proposed Development would be an unremarkable addition that is unlikely to be clearly visible from outside of the Kronospan site boundary, and which would result in little or no appreciable change to existing influence of the Kronospan site upon its surroundings.

Landscape and Visual Effects

- 5.2.14 The application is accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which identifies sixteen viewpoints and identifies the potential impacts of the Proposed Development. There is a separate assessment of heritage provided.

Construction

- 5.2.15 Construction activity associated with the Proposed Development would be experienced in the context of the operational Site and would have little or no influence upon the character of the surrounding landscape or upon views, both of which are already influenced by the extensive and sometimes tall industrial structures present. As such, construction stage effects would not be significant.

Landscape Effects: Operational

Effects on Landscape Fabric

- 5.2.16 The Proposed Development would comprise an extension to an existing building, and several new silos. The Proposed Development would be sited wholly within the

wider Kronospan site where similar structures, buildings and materials stockpiles are already present. The Proposed Development would be located wholly within an existing area of hardstanding. No vegetation loss would be required.

- 5.2.17 Hardstanding is not a sensitive landscape element, and its replacement with new structures would clearly not result in significant effects upon landscape fabric. Given this, a detailed assessment of effects upon landscape fabric is not considered to be necessary.

Effects on Landscape Character

- 5.2.18 A detailed assessment of effects upon the character of LCA5a: Chirk Estate to Froncysyllte and LCA7a: Chirk is set out in Appendix 3. In both LCAs, the effects of the Proposed Development would be similar.

- 5.2.19 In summary, the Proposed Development would comprise a limited addition to the existing assemblage of structures within the wider Kronospan site. Whilst the new structures would be large in their own right, they would be in keeping with the size and scale of existing structures and be very similar to these in form and materials. From within much of Chirk, the existing structures at the wider Kronospan site, and vegetation cover within the town would screen the new structures. Similar screening would be provided from along much of the canal corridor, and from the more formal areas of the Chirk Castle estate. The underlying landscape characteristics of the two LCAs within the Study Area would remain as at baseline, with only very limited, localised and incremental change in the visual context of the landscape occurring. The effects of this would be negligible and would not be significant.

Visual Effects: Operational

- 5.2.20 The Proposed Development would be introduced into the wider Kronospan site where many large-scale industrial structures are already present and are often visible from locations in the surrounding area. The new structures would always be viewed in the context of the existing development at Kronospan and would appear as an extension to this, rather than as a separate feature.

- 5.2.21 From some locations the Proposed Development would be largely screened from view by existing structures. At others, chiefly north of the Kronospan site including along the canal corridor, the Proposed Development would wholly or partially screen views of existing structures (refer to Viewpoints C, F, K, M and N). In these cases,

the introduction of the Proposed Development would not appreciably increase the amount of built development visible, but rather would simply give rise to relatively limited change in what is visible, i.e. replacing one visible structure with another.

- 5.2.22 When viewed from locations more directly east or west of the Kronospan site, the introduction of the Proposed Development would result in a limited increase in the horizontal spread of large-scale structures in the view (refer to Viewpoints E, I and R). This would not give rise to any notable change in the nature of views available from these areas, where clear views of the Kronospan site are already available.
- 5.2.23 From some locations, the presence of vegetation cover in the intervening landscape would either largely (refer to Viewpoint Q) or wholly (refer to Viewpoints D, H and J) screen the Proposed Development from view. As such, there would be a negligible effect or no effect from some of the Viewpoints.
- 5.2.24 The Proposed Development would result in only a limited and incremental change to the assemblage of elements within the wider Kronospan site. Several of the existing structures are larger than the Proposed Development in terms of height or floorspace. The site as a whole has a well-established influence upon views across the surrounding landscape and the various structures are familiar features. The further presence of the new structures forming part of the Proposed Development would have little or no appreciable effect upon this influence.

Effects on Landscape Designations

- 5.2.25 The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB was extended in 2011 to cover the area west of the wider Kronospan site, and the wider Kronospan site was present when this extension took place. The presence of large-scale industrial structures at Kronospan did not preclude the inclusion of land a short distance west of the Site within the AONB.
- 5.2.26 As noted above, neither the landscape effects nor the visual effects of the Proposed Development would be significant. As such, it follows that the presence of the Proposed Development would not have a material effect upon either the statutory purposes or the special qualities of the AONB. The presence of the Kronospan facility is an established part of the context of the south-eastern edge of the AONB (i.e. the area around Chirk). The addition of the Proposed Development would not materially increase this influence upon the designation.

Landscape and Visual Summary

5.2.27 In summary, the Proposed Development would be introduced into an existing large-scale industrial site that is an established influence upon the town of Chirk and the surrounding rural area. Views of existing tall, bulky structures at the Kronospan site are commonplace from within the study area and their presence is an established part of the character of the landscape. The further presence of the Proposed Development would not result in only very limited and incremental to this established influence upon the landscape and upon views. Neither the landscape effects nor the visual effects of the Proposed Development would be significant. Therefore, no further specific mitigation measures are deemed necessary.

Appearance

5.2.28 The proposed elevations illustrate the Proposed Development's appearance. The extension to the chip preparation building would be constructed of galvanised steel, and it is proposed for all elevations to be light grey in colour (RAL 7035), which would match the existing chip preparation building's colour. The appearance would reflect the use of the building as a warehouse forming part of an industrial facility.

5.2.29 The silos would be constructed of concrete which would also be a light grey colour to blend-in against the existing structures and warehouse buildings at the Facility.

6.0 ACCESS POLICY

- 6.1.1 This section of the Design and Access Statement explains the relevant access policies and sets out how policies relating to access have been considered.
- 6.1.2 The legal basis for Design and Access Statements within the DMPO includes the need for an explanation of how the approach to access has been defined with reference to relevant policy in the development plan.
- 6.1.3 The adopted development plan document of relevance in this case is the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 (UDP), which was adopted on the 14th February 2005. Local Planning Guidance Note 6, *Access to and Use of Buildings*, supports it. This is dated September 2004, updating the original document of February 1993. The Guidance Note seeks Access Statements for developments which are accessed by members of the public or residential developments of 3 or more homes (which does not apply to the Proposed Development).
- 6.1.4 The emerging LDP contains SP12 (Transport and Accessibility) which seeks to improve accessibility of new developments to existing public transport facilities and the walking and cycling network. This principle is reflected in policies DM1 (Development Management Considerations) and T1 (Managing Transport Impacts) which seek to maximise sustainable travel choices.
- 6.1.5 The existing arrangements for accessing the Site would remain unchanged. Those persons travelling to the Site for work would be able to use existing public transport or cycle storage at the Site.
- 6.1.6 The Site is not publicly accessible, and there is a controlled gated access near to the main entrance to prevent unrestricted access to the operational part of the Facility. Access within the Facility is heavily controlled for safety reasons, with protocols to ensure the safety of employees and visitors. Once within the site vehicles and pedestrians have clearly demarcated routes.
- 6.1.7 The Proposed Development would accord with Part M of the Building Regulations. When approaching and entering the buildings there would be level access with a finished floor level of 0.15m above the adjacent ground. This is necessary to accord with Part C of the Building Regulations as well as Part M. Within the building sufficient clear widths would be provided to door openings to meet current Building Regulations and level door thresholds would be incorporated throughout.

6.1.8 The Proposed Development has been designed with access as an important consideration.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1.1 The details submitted with the application show that the Proposed Development would provide a high-quality development utilising existing industrial land in a sustainable location.
- 7.1.2 The design has been considered carefully and responds to the context of the Site and its constraints. Access to and within the site has been considered and the form of the development reflects this.
- 7.1.3 As such, there are not considered to be any unresolved design or access matters which should prevent the grant of planning permission.