



**Report of the Chief Planning Officer**

***PLANS PANEL EAST***

**Date: 13<sup>th</sup> May 2010**

**Subject: Application 10/00711/FU – Laying out of access road and erection of 4 buildings comprising of 1 single block of 12 start up units with 2 seminar areas and 6 workshop units in 3 blocks (all class B1(b) and B1(c)) with car parking at Holmecroft, York Road, Leeds LS15 4NF**

**APPLICANT**

Inca Holdings Ltd

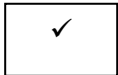
**DATE VALID**

17<sup>th</sup> February 2010

**TARGET DATE**

19<sup>th</sup> May 2010

**Electoral Wards Affected: Harewood**



Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

**POSITION STATEMENT:**

**Members are asked to note this progress report on the proposal and give views in relation to the questions posed in the conclusion to aid progression of the application.**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION:**

- 1.1 This application is reported to Plans Panel as it relates to a major development in the Green Belt, and as such would represent a significant departure from the development plan. This report aims to provide Members with background information relating to the application, the history of the site and the negotiations which have taken place with regard to the redevelopment of the site, and to seek Members' views on outstanding issues relating to the development.
- 1.2 The application relates to the redevelopment of an existing commercial site in the Green Belt, which is currently occupied by a number of uses, including a storage business and a stone sales business, and a vacant dwelling with outbuildings.

## 2.0 PROPOSAL:

- 2.1 Permission is sought for the redevelopment of the site with four new buildings. One of the buildings would be occupied by 12 start-up units and 2 seminar areas (Unit A), while the other three buildings (Units B, C and D) would each be divided into 2 small workshop units. The buildings are proposed to be of a single storey design with arched 'barrel' roofs, and would be constructed of blockwork with render and larch cladding, with metal roofs. All buildings are proposed to be used for purposes within classes B1(b) and B1(c) of the Use Classes Order (Research and Development, laboratories, studios and light industry). No B1(a) use (offices) is proposed. The buildings are proposed to be located within the central part of the site, and would be set back from the site frontage and from the boundary with the open land to the east.
- 2.2 Vehicular access and pedestrian access to the site is proposed via a single access point from the A64 York Road. A new right turning lane is to be provided within the A64 to facilitate access for vehicles visiting the site. 66 parking spaces are proposed for the 4 units. These will be laid out in a central parking courtyard between Units A, B and C, with a separate, smaller parking area to the front of Unit D in the eastern part of the site. Dedicated parking for vans is proposed to the front of Unit A. Additional pedestrian access points are proposed from Stockheld Lane to the west of the site, and directly from the bus stop on the A64 to the front of the site. Segregated footpaths for pedestrians are proposed throughout the site.
- 2.3 The applicant's supporting statement for the application confirms that the development has been designed with a view to minimising its carbon footprint, including measures such as:
- Sustainable construction methods
  - High standards of insulation
  - The incorporation of rooflights into the design of the buildings to allow natural light penetration and reduce the need for artificial lighting.
  - The use of ground source heat pumps and possibly other methods of on-site energy and heat generation.
  - Sustainable Drainage Systems with grey water recovery/re-use and the use of reed beds for filtration.
- 2.4 In addition to the measures outlined above, it is also proposed to significantly increase tree planting within the site and along the site frontage, replacing existing boundary treatments such as the high metal fencing which currently runs along the A64.
- 2.5 According to the details submitted by the applicant, the proposed redevelopment of the site would amount to a reduction of approximately 34% in the overall floor area of buildings and structures compared to those associated with existing uses of the site.
- 2.6 Details submitted with the application indicate that the site could provide employment for around 80 people, although this will obviously vary depending on the occupancy of the proposed units. The proposed operating hours are 7.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday and 7.30am to 4.30pm on Saturdays, with no opening on Sundays.

- 2.6 The applicant has submitted a Green Travel Plan in support of the application, and have confirmed that the following matters would be included in a Section 106 agreement for the development:
- Public Transport contribution – a sum of £17,991 has been agreed in this respect.
  - A payment of £10,000 for the upgrading of bus stop adjacent to the site.
  - Travel Plan monitoring fee of £2550.

### **3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:**

- 3.1 The application relates to an existing commercial site on the A64 York Road to the east of Leeds. The site is currently occupied by a variety of uses, including storage and distribution (including the storage of large containers within the site), a stone/garden ornament sales business, and a vacant residential bungalow, with a number of outbuildings. There are a variety of buildings and structures within the site, including brick buildings which appear to have been dwellings previously, and large metal storage containers, which are stacked up in parts of the site, and parts of the site contain large floodlights. An unsurfaced area to the front of the site, immediately adjacent to the A64, provides some informal parking and turning space. There are a variety of large signs along the site frontage, associated mainly with the stone sales business.
- 3.2 The site is triangular in shape, with its northern boundary running along the A64, where there are bus stops close to the site entrance. An unmade track, Stockheld Lane, runs to the west of the site. This is a public right of way which provides vehicular access to 2 or 3 dwellings, and pedestrian access from the A64 to Scholes village. A former railway cutting runs along the south eastern boundary of the site. The site frontage is enclosed by metal fencing over 3m high, with barbed wire on the top in places. While other parts of the site's boundaries also consist of metal fencing, these are more heavily screened by mature trees, particularly alongside the former railway cutting to the south east.
- 3.2 The site is the last site in a line of commercial ribbon development along the southern half of the A64, close to Scholes village, which also includes a garden centre and caravan sales and motorcycle spares businesses and, opposite the site, a carpet shop. There are a number of residential properties in close proximity to the site, along Stockheld Lane to the west and, slightly further away to the south, on Nook Road, which is within the village of Scholes. The site is in the Green Belt, and has open fields to the east and north.

### **4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:**

- 4.1 Application 07/03348/FU for the erection of a 2 two storey block of 2 business units, 2 single storey blocks of 2 business units and 1 single storey block of 10 office units with shared facilities and laying out of new access was withdrawn in October 2007. This application proposed a more intensive development of 5 buildings, some of which were two-storey, and 112 car parking spaces, and was withdrawn following concerns regarding the scale of the proposed development and the lack of justification in terms of Green Belt and town centre policy.
- 4.2 A revised application (08/00198/FU) for the laying out of access road and erection of single block of 12 start up units, with 2 seminar areas, and 8 workshops units in 4 blocks, (all B1) with car parking was submitted in January 2008. This application sought permission for 5 buildings in a similar layout to that previously proposed, but with reduced footprints and heights in some cases, although some of the buildings

still included mezzanine floors. The applicant was advised that these proposals were still not considered to be acceptable in terms of their scale and resultant impact on the Green Belt, and that insufficient justification had been provided with regard to the impact on the Green Belt and the out of centre location of the site. This application remains undetermined.

- 4.3 Application 32/238/01/FU, approved in June 2002, gave permission for the change of use of a former scrap yard at the site to commercial storage within container units.
- 4.4 A certificate of lawful use for a vehicle dismantlers at the site was granted in May 1994 (application 32/163/93/CLU).
- 4.5 There have also been various applications for security fencing at the site in the early 1990s.

## **5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS:**

- 5.1 The current application, which was submitted in February 2010, is the result of extensive discussions which have taken place between officers and the applicants, and seeks to address the concerns previously raised. While acknowledging that the proposed development is 'inappropriate' within the Green Belt, the applicant has put forward a number of points which they feel that, together, constitute 'very special circumstances' which would bring positive benefits to the site and outweigh the harm to the Green Belt resulting from the development's inappropriate nature.
- 5.2 At the suggestion of officers, one of the proposed buildings has been deleted from the scheme, and the proposed mezzanine floors have been removed from other units where they were proposed. This has resulted in a reduction in the height of the proposed buildings, and a significant reduction in the amount of parking and hardstanding within the site. The applicant has now also provided a supporting statement comparing the existing and proposed uses of the site, which seeks to demonstrate that the proposed development would have benefits in terms of reducing the amount of development and improving the appearance of the site. The supporting statement also seeks to address issues relating to sustainability in terms of access to the site and the incorporation of measures within the proposed development such as sustainable drainage and on-site heat and power generation.
- 5.3 Following concerns from the highways officer regarding the internal site layout, including its width and parking layouts, revised plans have been received.

## **6.0 PUBLIC/LOCAL RESPONSE:**

- 6.1 The application has been advertised as a major development by site notice and press notice. Owing to an error in the description on the application form, the application was originally advertised as including B2 uses. The agent has subsequently confirmed that this is not the case, and the application has been readvertised with a revised description, with references to B2 uses deleted.

### Parish Council

- 6.2 Barwick-in-Elmet and Scholes Parish Council have made the following comments on the application:
- The current application is preferable to the previous scheme as the scale is more modest and will result in fewer vehicle movements.

- Although the site is in the Green Belt, there are existing commercial operations taking place at the site, which are not appropriate to a rural setting and that redevelopment of the site could be seen as a benefit. The Parish Council agrees with the applicant that the site can be improved, and as employment is likely to be created, the exceptional circumstances required to met PPG2 are met.
- B2 uses would not be appropriate, but the proposed B1 uses would be better.
- Suggest that Unit B be located closer to the A64 and further from properties on Nook Road.
- Extensive landscaping is required across the site, a detailed landscaping scheme should be provided before determination.
- Suggest that improvements to the site access road or to Stockheld Lane, or other benefits within Scholes village should be included in the Section 106, and request that the Parish Council are involved in this process.
- The proposed operating hours are considered acceptable with the exception of Saturdays, when the site should close at 1pm, in the interests of minimising noise and disturbance for local residents. Unless the use is restricted to B1, noise attenuation fencing should be provided along the southern boundary.
- Access arrangements should be in accordance with relevant highways standards.
- Any permission should be subject to a condition requiring appropriate decontamination of the site.

#### Other local response

6.3

7 letters of objection have been received from residents of Nook Road and Stockheld Lane, raising the following concerns:

- Not in keeping with the area – could be an eyesore.
- Change in character of area from rural to commercial. Business parks not appropriate in this setting.
- Noise and pollution for local residents.
- Unit B needs to be moved further away from existing dwellings.
- Although no objection to redevelopment for single storey offices, concerns regarding noise.
- Hours of operation are too long and too early in the morning.
- B2 units will result in unacceptable noise and air pollution. *The applicant has confirmed that no B2 use is proposed.*
- Noise from construction work.
- Potential traffic congestion on the A64 – problems for pedestrians trying to cross the road.
- Insufficient parking provision – likely to result in employees parking on local roads such as Nook Road.
- Existing difficulties accessing site owing to configuration of A64 at this point – proposals will make this more dangerous.
- Public transport to the site is limited.
- Further landscaping information is required, with additional planting along the south eastern boundary.
- The plans show a new pedestrian access to the site from Stockheld Lane, however there is no access from the Lane to the applicant's property. This lane is maintained at the expense of the three dwellings served by it, and there are concerns that additional cycle traffic along the Lane will increase wear and tear.

- New pedestrian access from Stockheld Lane could become a vehicular access – Stockheld Lane and junction with A64 not suitable for this.
- Safety concerns regarding potential conflict between increased numbers of pedestrians and cyclists using Stockheld Lane and vehicle movements associated with dwellings served by this road.
- There are a number of similar units in the immediate vicinity that are unoccupied and have been for some time. Is there a need for these new units? If left unoccupied they could attract vandals to the area.
- Need for this should be carefully assessed. If there is a need for such uses, they should be located closer to Leeds.
- Although site is currently in commercial use, this does not justify reclassification of the site as 'brown belt' and opening up the whole area for commercial use. Stone sales business does not have planning permission and the bungalow 'Windycroft' is believed to still be in residential/equestrian use. Site is not considered by neighbours to be a 'bad neighbour' use, contrary to claims by the applicant. Although site is currently untidy, it is not considered that the best way to tidy it up is to commercialise it further.
- Existing problems with drainage along former railway cutting and ditch along Stockheld Lane, site is liable to flooding – the proposed hardstanding, sewage treatment beds and pond will worsen this.
- No mains sewage facility, could be a health hazard.
- Reeds beds appear to drain across neighbouring residential property – no provision for this.
- Are there any plans in place to protect and safeguard the gas pipeline which crosses the site? Concerns regarding safety of workers on the site and householders. HSE have advised against the development.

6.4 2 letters of comment have been received from residents of Nook Road who, although not objecting to the principle of the development, raise the following concerns:

- Units B, C and D should be moved further north, away from residential properties.
- Amount of parking spaces is fewer than number of employees proposed on the site – concerns that there may be overspill parking on Nook Road, which has easy pedestrian access to the site.
- Existing problems with access from York Road, and for pedestrians trying to cross York Road. Both problems could be alleviated by the provision of an island in the centre of York Road and street lighting. Would support the application if this was done.
- 'Lagoon' may be a health hazard – danger to local children who may be attracted to play there, and standing water can be a breeding ground for midges, mosquitos etc.
- At times of heavy rain, surface water can run down the former railway cutting and collect to the rear of properties on Nook Road. Further surface water drainage provision is required if all surface water is to drain into the lagoon.

## 7.0 CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES:

### Statutory:

#### Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

7.1 If there are fewer than 100 employees on the site, the HSE does not advise against the granting of planning permission on safety grounds. If there are more than 100

employees on the site, HSE advise that there are sufficient reasons, on safety grounds, for advising against the granting of planning permission.

#### Northern Gas Networks

- 7.2 A high pressure gas pipeline owned by Northern Gas Networks runs north-south across the western part of the site. This pipeline will be protected by means of an easement. In addition there is a minimum recommended building proximity distance of 8m. From the drawings provided, the nearest building appears to be 8m from the pipeline at the closest point. On this basis, there is no reason to object to the proposal.
- 7.3 It should be noted that there are restrictions on planting trees close to a pipeline. This may affect the wooded area proposed around the septic tank. It may be possible to mitigate this – further advice is provided in this respect.

#### Highways

- 7.4 No objections in principle, however the proposals cannot be supported in their current form, largely due to an inadequate internal layout. This does not conform to adoptable standards in terms of carriageway width, footway provision, forward visibilities and turning facilities. The loading areas for units B, C and D are shorter than the depths recommended in the Street Design Guide SPD, and Unit A appears to have no loading provision. The layout would therefore not provide safe/satisfactory access for pedestrians and vehicles, including service vehicles.
- 7.5 On the basis of the proposed B1(b and C) classification of the buildings, there is an overprovision of parking on the site (by approximately 20 spaces). The distribution of spaces also needs to be taken into account, as Unit D would have too few, which may lead to indiscriminate parking occurring on the site's internal roads, which may interfere with the free operation of roads within the development. The number of cycle spaces is adequate. Long term cycle parking should be provided in a secure enclosure, with some short-term parking in the form of Sheffield stands.
- 7.6 A Section 278 Agreement will be required in relation to the provision of the new site access and works to York Road (right turning lane, pedestrian island, new section of footway on the northern side of the road leading to the bus stop and improvements to the width of the footway on the southern side). Contributions towards the proposed cycle path to the east of the site and upgrading of a nearby bus stop are required.
- 7.7 In response to the highways officer's comments, a meeting was held with the applicant and their agent, and revised plans have been received, with the following amendments:
- Wider access from York Road.
  - Provision of a pedestrian footway along the western side of the vehicular access.
  - Reconfiguration of parking to provide more parking to the front of Unit D, and widening of parking spaces to the front of Unit A to allow vans to park for deliveries, resulting in an overall reduction in the number of parking spaces proposed.
  - Plan showing turning facilities for refuse collection vehicles and access for vehicles servicing the septic tank.
  - While there is a small reduction in the amount of parking provision, the agent has advised that, while sympathetic to the highways officers concerns regarding the overprovision of parking and the need to encourage alternative

modes of travel, they also note the concerns of local residents and the Parish Council regarding the potential for overspill parking on nearby residential streets, and therefore feel that on balance the level of parking proposed is appropriate for this location, and they would not wish to reduce this.

7.8 Comments from the highways officer on this revised plan are awaited.

**Non-statutory:**

Transport Policy (Travelwise)

7.9 Amendments are needed to the Travel Plan to reflect the current development proposals and relevant guidance. The Travel Plan and monitoring fee of £2550 need to be secured via a S106 agreement.

Public Transport

7.10 There appears to be an overprovision of parking within the site for the proposed use. Public transport services at this location fall short of the standard set in the Public Transport SPD, which states that development should be within a 5 minute (400m) walk distance of a 15 minute frequency service. While the combination of services detailed by the applicant do provide 3 or 4 buses an hour, the first buses are often after 9am (although there are less frequent services before this). In the light of this, a high trip generator such as B1(a) offices should be firmly resisted at this location however, in view of the site's existing use, obvious planning benefits in terms of visual amenity, and significant reduction in scale since the previous application, a light industrial use for the site would be more sympathetically viewed. Both the RSS and emerging core strategy add some weight to this, however the parking ratios should reflect this and be reduced. A contribution of £17,991 is required for public transport in accordance with the SPD.

Contaminated Land

7.11 No objections, subject to conditions.

Drainage

7.12 No objections, subject to conditions.

Environmental Health

7.13 No comments received to date.

Public Rights of Way

7.14 Public footpath No. 40 Barwick in Elmet abuts the site. In the background papers, the possibility of a cycle track connecting the site with Wetherby along the abandoned railway line in the future is mentioned. Is there a possibility that S106 monies would be available to contribute towards this?

Cycle Officer

7.15 A contribution of £37,500 towards the provision of a cycle track along the railway cutting adjacent to the site has previously been requested, however it is understood that this may be difficult to insist upon, as it relates to the design fees of the whole track rather than construction costs of the section adjacent to the site, and there is no indication that the track is likely to be constructed in the foreseeable future, owing to other priorities elsewhere, and issues relating to the ownership of other parts of the track, which cast doubt on the certainty that the scheme will be developed.



## 8.0 PLANNING POLICIES:

### Development Plan

8.1 The development plan includes the Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026 (RSS) and the adopted Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review 2006) (UDP). The RSS was issued in May 2008 and includes a broad development strategy for the region, setting out regional priorities in terms of location and scale of development. The following RSS policies are relevant to the proposed development:

ENV5 – Relates to renewable energy. Encourages the use of combined heat and power and states that developments of over 1000sqm floorspace should secure at least 10% of their energy from renewable or low carbon sources.

E1 – Economic development. Encourages provision for business start-up units, amongst other priorities.

E2 – New commercial development should be focused on existing centres.

T1 – Transport. Encourages measures to reduce personal car-bound travel and encourage shift to other modes of travel (public transport, facilities for pedestrians and cyclists).

8.2 The site is in the Green Belt as designated in the UDP. The following UDP policies are relevant to the consideration of the application:

GP5 – General planning considerations

GP7 – Use of planning obligations.

N33 – Green Belts

N12 – Design principles

N13 – Design and new buildings

N23 – Open space around new development

N24 – Landscaping to improve transition between development and open land

N25 – Site boundaries should be designed in a positive manner.

N51 – Enhancement of wildlife habitats and provision of new areas for wildlife.

T2 – New development and highway safety.

T2B – Requirement for transport assessment;

T2C – Requirement for travel plan;

T2D – Public Transport contributions;

T5 – Access for pedestrians and cyclists;

T6 – Provision for disabled people and those with mobility problems.

T7 – Development of new and improved cycle facilities.

T7A – Provision of secure cycle parking.

T24 – Parking should reflect the guidelines in Appendix 9 of the UDP.

E5 – Development of employment uses on unallocated sites.

BD5 – New buildings and amenity

LD1 – Landscaping

### Relevant supplementary guidance

8.3 The following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are relevant to the consideration of the application:

Public Transport Improvements and Developer Contributions

Street Design Guide

Travel Plans

### Government Planning Policy Guidance/Statements

8.4 The following Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) are relevant to the consideration of the application:

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development  
PPG2: Green Belts  
PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth  
PPG13: Transport

## 9.0 MAIN ISSUES

1. Principle of development/Green Belt/PPS4 issues
2. Visual amenity and impact on the character of the area
3. Highways
4. Residential amenity
5. Trees and landscaping.
6. Planning obligations
7. Other issues

## 10.0 APPRAISAL

### Principle of development/Green Belt/PPS4 issues

- 10.1 The site is in the Green Belt, where PPG2 advises B1(b and c) development is inappropriate and therefore harmful by definition. Details have been submitted with the application which seek to demonstrate that there are very special circumstances to justify the inappropriate development, and that these circumstances would outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt by the inappropriate development.
- 10.2 The first aspect of the very special circumstances put forward by the applicant compares the proposed development and the existing uses of the site, which include a container storage facility and stone sales business, as well as an existing vacant residential bungalow and outbuildings. The proposed development has been scaled down significantly since the first application for the site's redevelopment was withdrawn. The applicant has provided calculations which compare the existing site uses with the proposed scheme in terms of the footprints of all buildings and structures (including containers) on the site. These calculations demonstrate that the proposed redevelopment of the site would result in a reduction of 'developed area' of 34% compared with the existing uses on the site. When the existing and proposed areas of hardstanding on the site are included in the calculations, the proposed development would result in an overall decrease in 'developed area' of approximately 46%.
- 10.3 In addition to the significant reduction in buildings and hardstanding proposed on the site, the proposals would also refocus the siting of buildings and parking areas into the western part of the site, moving them further away from the boundary with the open land to the east and closer to existing buildings and commercial uses to the west. Extensive tree planting is proposed along the site frontage and particularly in the north eastern part of the site, which seeks to soften the appearance of this part of the site, screen the development from views along the A64, and provide a transition between the built development and the adjacent open land, as required by UDP policy N24. The proposed buildings have also been reduced in height from those proposed in previous schemes, with the aim of further reducing their visual impact.
- 10.4 The second aspect of the applicant's 'very special circumstances' relate to their intention to provide a development which would be highly sustainable and would have a minimal impact in environmental terms. This includes proposals to use sustainable construction methods in the building, the use of rooflights to maximise the penetration of natural lights and reduce the need for artificial lighting, improved

pedestrian and cycle access to the site, tree planting, grey water harvesting and re-use, and sustainable drainage systems. The developer has also advised that they intend to generate some of the heating and energy requirements for the site from renewable/low carbon sources, as required by Policy ENV5 of the RSS. Further information has been requested from the agent as to the precise methods of heat and power generation proposed, and will be reported to Members once they are available.

- 10.5 While it is noted that the site is in the Green Belt and that the proposed development is therefore inappropriate by definition, it is noted also that the site is currently occupied by a range of sprawling and unattractive uses, to which regard must also be given. It is considered that the proposed redevelopment would bring significant benefits in terms of reducing the amount and scale of built development on the site and therefore improving openness, enhancing the visual appearance of the site by removing existing unattractive commercial uses, improving the quality of buildings and boundary treatments, and increasing areas of soft landscaping, thereby further improving the appearance of the site and providing a more appropriate transition between the commercial development along this part of York Road and the open land to the east. The benefits of the proposed development in terms of its sustainability are considered to add further weight to this. On balance therefore, it is considered that the proposed development would result in a significant improvement to an existing commercial site, and that the details provided by the applicant, as discussed above, are sufficient to demonstrate in this instance that there are very special circumstances which would outweigh any harm caused by the inappropriate development. A condition removing any permitted development rights for mezzanine floors in the proposed buildings would be recommended as part of any permission, to allow the local planning authority to control any future development which may take place at the site.
- 10.6 It could be argued that insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that such a development is needed in this area, or why it could not be delivered in other existing employment locations, and that further information is required in this respect, to address the sequential test requirements in PPS4. The developer has been made aware of this request. While some weight must be attached to this, it is again noted that the application site is not a vacant or Greenfield site but has an existing and established commercial use, and therefore this also needs to be taken into consideration.
- 10.7 In response to concerns from local residents regarding the need for the proposed buildings and the potential for them to be left vacant if no end users are found, further information has been sought from the developer in terms of the demand for and likely occupancy of the proposed units. They have advised that although they have had informal discussions with a number of potentially interested parties, this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> application for the redevelopment of this site, changes which have had to be made in terms of the nature and scale of the development in response to the concerns of officers and local residents have resulted in uncertainties for future investors. However, they have advised that the developers has extensive contacts in the UK and abroad, and that they are optimistic that there will be a demand for units of the nature proposed.
- 10.7 PPS4 supports some economic development in rural areas, and Policy EC6 of PPS4 advises that most new development in rural areas should be located in or on the edge of existing settlements where employment, housing and other services and facilities can be provided together. Policy EC10 of PPS4 advises that 'local planning authorities should adopt a positive and constructive approach towards planning

applications for economic development' and that 'planning applications that secure sustainable economic growth should be considered favourably.' The policy specifically refers to the need for new developments to limit carbon dioxide emissions and promote access via a range of methods, including public transport, cycling and pedestrian access.

- 10.8 While it is noted that the site is not within an existing centre, it is a previously developed site on the edge of Scholes village and, as detailed above, the redevelopment would bring significant benefits in terms of enhancing the appearance of the site and improving its long term sustainability. Population figures from the 2001 census indicate that 2/3 of the population of Barwick and Scholes Parish are of working age, and that the average age of residents was in the mid-40s. It is therefore likely that some of the workforce could be drawn from these villages, which are within walking or cycling distance of the site. It is also considered that the redevelopment of an existing commercial site such as this could also have benefits in terms of protecting other sites in the countryside from development. On balance therefore, and particularly in view of the fact that this is an existing developed site rather than a Greenfield, undeveloped site, and the relatively small scale of the proposed development, it is considered that the benefits of the proposed development are sufficient to overcome concerns regarding the site's out of centre location in this instance.
- 10.9 Members' thoughts on the issues discussed above, and on the acceptability of the proposed redevelopment in terms of Green Belt policy and PPS4 would be welcomed.
- 10.10 It is noted that a high pressure gas pipeline runs through the application site. Northern Gas Networks, who own the pipeline, have raised no objections, and the HSE have advised that they would not wish to object provided that there are no more than 100 employees working at the site. The applicant has confirmed that although employee numbers are likely to vary depending on the occupancy of the proposed units, there would be no more than 100 on site at any one time, and numbers are more likely to be in the range of 80 employees, even if all units are occupied. Subject to a condition to this effect, it is therefore considered that the proposed development is acceptable in this respect.
- 10.11 **Do Panel Members feel that there are very special circumstances to justify this development in the Green Belt?**
- 10.12 **Do Members feel that the use proposed is a sustainable use for this location?**
- 10.13 **Do Members feel that sufficient information has been provided to justify the proposals in terms of the requirements of PPS4 in relation to out of centre developments?**

Visual amenity and impact on the character of the area

- 10.12 For the reasons discussed above, it is considered that the proposed redevelopment of the site would result in a significant improvement in the visual character of the site, and would minimise its visual impact, particularly when viewed from the A64 and adjacent open land.
- 10.13 The scale of the proposed buildings has been reduced in comparison to those proposed in previous applications, with second storeys and mezzanine floors deleted. While the buildings would be of a relatively commercial appearance, the proposed use of blockwork with timber cladding and metal roofs would mean that

the buildings would have some similarities to certain types of agricultural buildings in terms of their materials. The proposed increase in soft landscaping and tree planting throughout the site, and the removal of unsympathetic boundary treatments, particularly along the site frontage, would help to further incorporate the development into the rural surroundings.

10.14 On balance, it is considered that the proposed development would significantly improve the visual appearance of the site and the wider area, and it is considered that the proposals are acceptable in this respect.

10.15 **Do Members feel that the architectural treatment and appearance of the buildings is acceptable?**

#### Highways

10.16 It is proposed to provide a single vehicle access point into the site, and to provide improvements to the A64 in the form of a right hand turning lane, a pedestrian island, and improvements to footpaths leading from the site to nearby bus stops. A contribution of £17,991 towards public transport improvements, and a further £10,000 towards the upgrading of a nearby bus stop have been agreed.

10.17 The highways officer has raised concerns regarding the internal layout of the site, but has raised no objection to the principle of the proposed development. Revised plans have been received which seek to address the concerns which have been raised, and comments from the highways officer on these are awaited.

10.18 Both highways and public transport have advised that the level of parking proposed on the site is excessive for the uses provided. However the Parish Council and local residents on Nook Road and Stockheld Lane have raised concerns that there is insufficient parking proposed, and that employees and visitors to the site may instead park on local streets within Scholes village. It is noted that access to the site for pedestrians, provision of parking for cyclists, and access to the bus stops close to the site are to be improved as part of the proposals, and it is recommended that the amount of parking, which exceeds Leeds City Council's maximum parking standards, should be reduced in order to further encourage the use of alternative methods of transport, or car sharing. However, concerns regarding public transport accessibility to the site and the potential for overspill parking on nearby residential streets are noted, and Members' views on this issue are therefore sought.

10.19 **Do Members feel that the amount of parking proposed is appropriate or excessive, taking into account the policies and maximum parking standards in the UDP?**

#### Residential amenity

10.20 The closest residential properties to the site are those on Stockheld Lane to the west, and Nook Road to the south east. The nearest of the proposed units to these residential properties is Unit B, within the southern part of the site. According to the submitted plans, this unit would be some 50m from the western site boundary, between the site and 'The Willows' – the nearest property on Stockheld Lane – and over 70m from the rear boundary of the nearest property on Nook Road. In view of the existing uses on the site, it is likely that the proposed development would result in a less intensive and less intrusive use in terms of the impact on neighbouring residents. Furthermore, it is noted that the proposed uses would all be within the B1 use class and are therefore, by definition, uses which can be carried out in residential areas without harm to amenity. Detailed comments from Environmental Health are awaited in this respect.

10.21 **Do Members feel that the proposed redevelopment of the site would be acceptable in terms of its impact on neighbouring residents, particularly in view of the existing uses of the site? Do Members require any additional details in this respect?**

Trees and landscaping

10.22 Additional planting is proposed both within the site and around the boundaries, particularly along the site frontage and in the eastern part of the site, adjacent to the open land. Detailed comments are awaited from the landscape officer in this respect.

10.23 **Are there any further landscaping issues which have not been identified, and are Members satisfied with the overall proposals for the landscaping of the site, subject to the receipt of revised details as requested?**

Planning Obligations

10.24 Although no draft Section 106 has yet been submitted, the applicant has confirmed that they are agreeable to providing the following contributions as part of such an agreement:

- £17,991 for public transport improvements in accordance with the Public Transport SPD
- £10,000 towards the upgrading of a nearby bus shelter as requested by Metro.
- Travel Plan and monitoring fee of £2550 in accordance with the Travel Plan SPD.

10.25 It has been suggested by highways and by the Travelwise team that a contribution of £37,500 be provided towards the provision of a cycle path which is proposed along the railway cutting which runs to the south east of the site. It is noted that the figure quoted relates to the estimated cost of designing the route in its entirety (from east Leeds to Wetherby), and that although the route is identified in the UDP, it is unlikely to be constructed in the foreseeable future for various reasons, including land ownership issues and other priorities elsewhere.

10.26 ODPM Circular 05/2005 on Planning Obligations advises that such obligations must be, amongst other things, necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development, as well as being reasonable in all other respects. It is considered that the request for an imprecise 'estimated' sum, which relates to the cost of designing the entire track from east Leeds to Wetherby would fail to meet these tests, since it would not be fairly related in scale and kind to the proposed development, which borders only a very small section of the proposed track. In addition, it is considered that to require a payment for the design of the scheme at such an early stage, when there is little assurance that the track would be constructed in the foreseeable future, would not be reasonable. It is therefore considered on balance that it would not be possible to insist on such a contribution at this stage.

10.27 The proposed off-site highway works and footpath improvements would be covered by a separate Section 278 agreement.

10.28 **Do Panel Members feel that the proposed Section 106 agreement covers all relevant issues?**

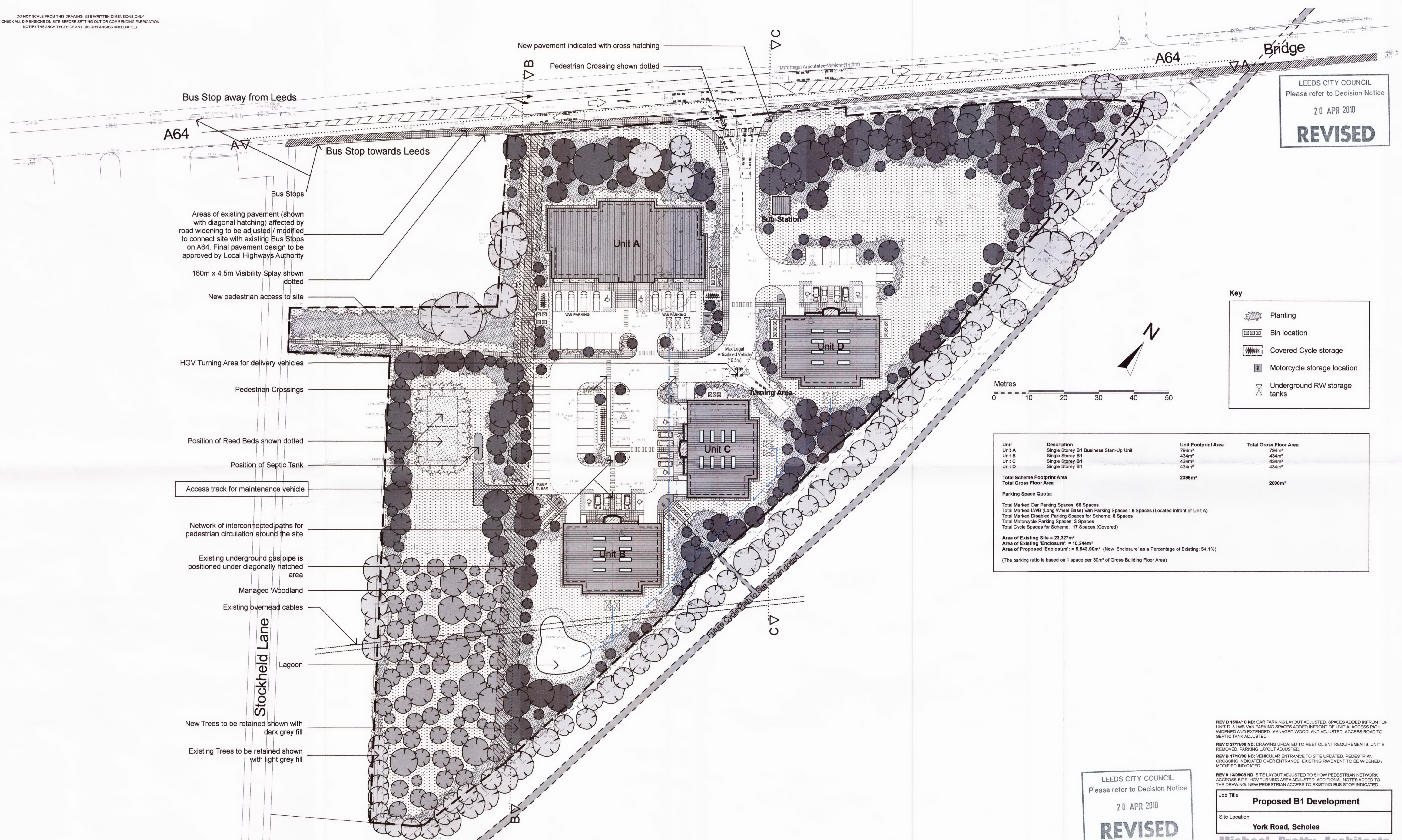
### Other issues

- 10.29 Concerns have been raised by local residents regarding flooding problems on Stockheld Lane and along the railway cutting, and regarding the proposed reed bed and on site water holding pond. The drainage officer has advised that they have no objections to the proposals, subject to conditions requiring details of surface water drainage and on-site balancing facilities and the use of porous surfacing where possible to be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. Subject to conditions to this effect, it is considered that the proposals are acceptable in this respect.
- 10.30 A resident of Stockheld Lane has advised that there is no right of access to the site from Stockheld Lane. Clarification has been sought from the applicant in this respect, as the plans do indicate a new pedestrian access point to the site from this road.
- 10.31 As the site is in the Green Belt, the application would need to be referred to the Secretary of State in the event that Members resolve to approve the application.
- 10.32 **Are there any other matters which Panel Members feel need to be addressed, or do Members require additional information on any issues?**

### **11.0 CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 At this stage of the application, Members' views on the proposals are requested, specifically:
- (a) Do Panel Members feel that the proposed development is acceptable in principle in the light of Green Belt policy and the requirements of PPS4?
  - (b) Do Members feel that the proposed use is a sustainable use for this location?
  - (c) Do Members feel that sufficient information has been provided to justify the proposals in terms of the requirements of PPS4 in relation to out of centre developments?
  - (d) Do Members feel that the architectural treatment and appearance of the buildings is acceptable?
  - (e) Do Members feel that the amount of parking proposed is appropriate or excessive, taking into account the policies and maximum parking standards in the UDP?
  - (f) Do Members feel that the proposed redevelopment of the site would be acceptable in terms of its impact on neighbouring residents, particularly in view of the existing uses of the site? Do Members require any additional details in this respect?
  - (g) Are there any further landscaping issues which have not been identified, and are Members satisfied with the overall proposals for the landscaping of the site, subject to the receipt of revised details as requested?
  - (h) Do Panel Members feel that the intended Section 106 agreement covers all issues?
  - (i) Are there any other matters which Panel Members feel need to be addressed, or do Members require additional information on any issues?

DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING. USE WRITTEN DIMENSIONS ONLY  
CHECK ALL DIMENSIONS ON SITE BEFORE SETTING OUT OR COMMENCING FABRICATION  
NOTIFY THE ARCHITECTS OF ANY DISCREPANCIES IMMEDIATELY



LEEDS CITY COUNCIL  
Please refer to Decision Notice  
20 APR 2010  
**REVISED**

**Key**

- Planting
- Bin location
- Covered Cycle storage
- Motorcycle storage location
- Underground RW storage tanks

Unit	Description	Unit Footprint Area	Total Gross Floor Area
Unit A	Single Storey B1 Business Start-Up Unit	784m <sup>2</sup>	784m <sup>2</sup>
Unit B	Single Storey B1	434m <sup>2</sup>	434m <sup>2</sup>
Unit C	Single Storey B1	434m <sup>2</sup>	434m <sup>2</sup>
Unit D	Single Storey B1	434m <sup>2</sup>	434m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Total Scheme Footprint Area</b>		<b>2096m<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>2096m<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Total Gross Floor Area</b>			
<b>2096m<sup>2</sup></b>			
<b>Parking Space Quota:</b>			
Total Marked Car Parking Spaces: 66 Spaces			
Total Marked LWB (Long Wheel Base) Van Parking Spaces: 8 Spaces (Located in front of Unit A)			
Total Marked Disabled Parking Spaces for Scheme: 8 Spaces			
Total Motorcycle Parking Spaces: 3 Spaces			
Total Cycle Spaces for Scheme: 17 Spaces (Covered)			
Area of Existing Site = 23,327m <sup>2</sup>			
Area of Existing 'Enclosure' = 10,244m <sup>2</sup>			
Area of Proposed 'Enclosure' = 5,543.90m <sup>2</sup> (New 'Enclosure' as a Percentage of Existing: 54.1%)			
(The parking ratio is based on 1 space per 30m <sup>2</sup> of Gross Building Floor Area)			

Bus Stop away from Leeds

Bus Stop towards Leeds

Areas of existing pavement (shown with diagonal hatching) affected by road widening to be adjusted/ modified to connect site with existing Bus Stops on A64. Final pavement design to be approved by Local Highways Authority

160m x 4.5m Visibility Splay shown dotted

New pedestrian access to site

HGV Turning Area for delivery vehicles

Pedestrian Crossings

Position of Reed Beds shown dotted

Position of Septic Tank

Access track for maintenance vehicle

Network of interconnected paths for pedestrian circulation around the site

Existing underground gas pipe is positioned under diagonally hatched area

Managed Woodland

Existing overhead cables

Lagoon

New Trees to be retained shown with dark grey fill

Existing Trees to be retained shown with light grey fill

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL  
Please refer to Decision Notice  
20 APR 2010  
**REVISED**

REV D 15/04/10 ND: CAR PARKING LAYOUT ADJUSTED. SPACES ADDED IN FRONT OF UNIT D. 8 LWB VAN PARKING SPACES ADDED IN FRONT OF UNIT A. ACCESS PATH WIDENED AND EXTENDED. MANAGED WOODLAND ADJUSTED. ACCESS ROAD TO SEPTIC TANK ADJUSTED.

REV C 27/11/09 ND: DRAWING UPDATED TO MEET CLIENT REQUIREMENTS. UNIT E REMOVED. PARKING LAYOUT ADJUSTED.

REV B 17/10/08 ND: VEHICULAR ENTRANCE TO SITE UPDATED. PEDESTRIAN CROSSING INDICATED OVER ENTRANCE. EXISTING PAVEMENT TO BE WIDENED / MODIFIED INDICATED.

REV A 13/05/08 ND: SITE LAYOUT ADJUSTED TO SHOW PEDESTRIAN NETWORK. ACCESS SITE. HGV TURNING AREA ADJUSTED. ADDITIONAL NOTES ADDED TO THE DRAWING. NEW PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO EXISTING BUS STOP INDICATED.

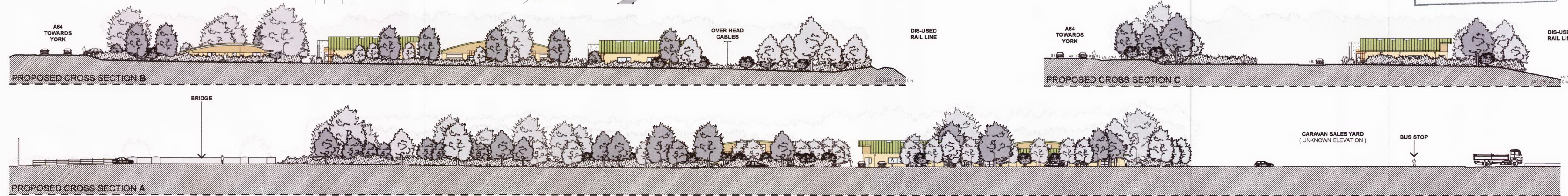
Job Title **Proposed B1 Development**  
Site Location **York Road, Scholes**

**Michael Pretty Architects**  
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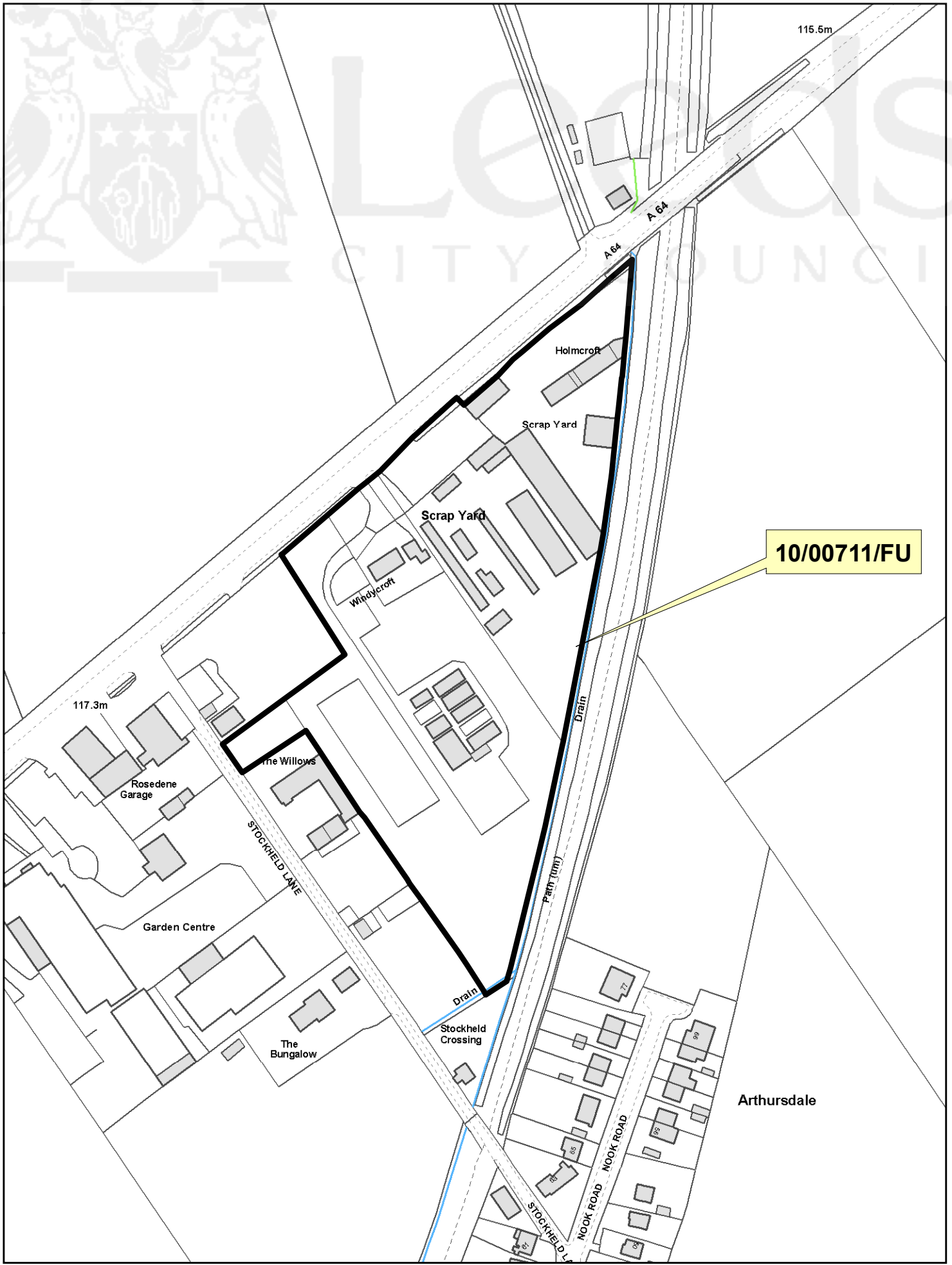
Date **15/04/10** Scale **1:500** Drawn **ND**

Drawing Title **Proposed Site Plan & Cross Sectional Elevations**

Job No **326** Drawing No **30** Revision **D**







# EAST PLANS PANEL

Scale 1/2000

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