

PLANNING STATEMENT

Retention of Engineering Works on Land adjoining Swaines Centre at Harper Hill Business Park, SK17 9JL

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a retrospective planning application for the retention of engineering works undertaken on land at Harper Hill Business Park, Buxton.

The application relates to the regrading of land adjacent to Morland Way, resulting in the formation of a level platform for ancillary storage, together with the restoration and landscaping of the upper sections of the site.

The purpose of this submission is to demonstrate that the completed development represents a controlled, well-considered and acceptable form of development when assessed against relevant planning policy and material considerations.

2. Site and Surroundings

The site lies within the established commercial and industrial context of Harper Hill Business Park and is positioned adjacent to Morland Way. It sits alongside an existing go-kart track, with the applicant's main operational yard located to the west, which benefits from a recent planning permission for industrial units.

Prior to the works, the application site comprised a rising embankment with limited functional value, forming an unmanaged edge to the business park. As shown on Drawing No. 1309-002 (Existing Block Plan), the land did not contribute positively to the operation or appearance of the wider site.

The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of commercial and industrial uses, and the site does not fall within any sensitive landscape or environmental designation.

3. The Development

The development comprises the excavation and regrading of land to create a level platform adjacent to Morland Way, as illustrated on Drawing No. 1309-003 (Proposed Block Plan).

The resulting area is proposed for low-intensity ancillary storage associated with the established use of the site. The space will accommodate the storage of equipment, materials and vehicles in connection with this use, operating on an intermittent basis and without forming a primary area of activity.

The storage area will not function as a principal operational yard and will not give rise to intensive use. Its role is to provide a logical overflow and ancillary space, supporting the efficient use of land within the established commercial setting. The use of the area will remain subordinate to and functionally linked with the established uses within the immediate vicinity.

The extent of excavation has been controlled, with a maximum cut height of approximately 6–6.5 metres, as demonstrated on Drawing No. 1309-005 (Cross Sections). The areas beyond the cut face will not be used operationally and are to be restored through the placement of retained site-won material and imported certified topsoil.

There is no importation of waste material associated with the development. Any imported soils required for restoration will be certified or tested prior to use to ensure suitability.

4. Access and Highway Safety

Access to the site is taken from Morland Way via a newly formed opening, created through the removal of a short section of roadside barrier.

The position of the access has been carefully selected, being located directly opposite an established access serving a business on the opposite side of the highway. This alignment provides a logical and safe point of entry, ensuring clear visibility and predictable vehicle movements.

Drawing No. 1309-005 (Cross Sections) demonstrates that the access arrangement is safe and functional. The design allows vehicles to enter the site, manoeuvre within the storage area, and exit in a forward gear. A recessed gate is provided, set

approximately 8 metres back from the highway, ensuring that vehicles can be accommodated clear of the carriageway.

The proposed use of the site remains low intensity in nature, with vehicle movements limited to those reasonably associated with ancillary storage activities. These movements will be occasional and will not result in a material increase in traffic generation when compared to the existing lawful use of the wider site.

5. Drainage

The development incorporates a clear and effective drainage strategy, as shown on Drawing No. 1309-003 (Proposed Block Plan) and Drawing No. 1309-005 (Cross Sections).

Finished ground levels are designed to fall away from Morland Way, directing surface water towards a linear drainage channel located at the base of the cut face. This channel discharges into a soakaway system within the site.

This approach ensures that no surface water runoff is directed onto the public highway and represents an improvement over the previous unmanaged landform.

6. Landscape and Visual Impact

The visual impact of the development has been carefully considered and mitigated through a comprehensive landscaping strategy, as detailed on Drawing No. 1309-004 (Site Plan and Landscaping).

The upper areas of the site will be restored using retained material and imported certified topsoil, followed by wildflower seeding and native tree planting. This will soften the engineered landform and integrate the site into the surrounding landscape over time.

The exposed rock face will be treated with a dark-coloured mesh netting and will naturally weather and colonise with vegetation, reducing its visual prominence.

Importantly, the development results in a more coherent and managed edge to the business park, representing an overall visual improvement compared to the previous condition of the site.

7. Planning Policy

The proposal has been assessed against the relevant policies of the High Peak Local Plan.

Policy EQ5 (Landscape Character) seeks to protect and enhance the character and appearance of the landscape. The proposed restoration works, planting strategy and long-term naturalisation of the site ensure that the development conserves and enhances the visual qualities of the area.

Policy EQ8 (Design and Place Making) requires development to respond positively to its surroundings. The proposal represents a considered and proportionate intervention that improves the usability of the land while incorporating appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures.

The development also aligns with the overarching objectives of sustainable development by making effective use of previously underutilised land within an established commercial area.

8. Planning Balance

While the works have been undertaken prior to the submission of a planning application, the assessment must focus on the acceptability of the development in its completed form.

In this regard, the proposal delivers clear and demonstrable benefits. It creates a usable and functional area of land, introduces a controlled and engineered landform with appropriate drainage, and incorporates a comprehensive landscaping strategy that enhances biodiversity and visual amenity.

The use of the site is limited in nature, remains ancillary to the wider established uses, and does not result in an intensification of activity or harm to neighbouring uses.

There are no material harms arising from the development that would outweigh these benefits.

9. Conclusion

The development represents a well-considered and controlled form of engineering that integrates effectively with its surroundings and delivers both functional and environmental improvements.

The proposal ensures safe access, appropriate drainage, and a low-intensity ancillary use that remains subordinate to the wider commercial operations, while the landscaping strategy provides long-term visual and ecological enhancement.

The development accords with the relevant policies of the High Peak Local Plan and represents sustainable development in an appropriate location.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.