

Design and Access Statement

Introduction

The proposed development is for the erection of a commercial building on land at West Barn, Old Dairy Lane, Norton. This statement is intended to address the design aspects of the proposal and should be read in conjunction with all other drawings and reports.

Site Location

The application site is located to the west of Norton Lane and is located within the parish of Aldingbourne. The site measures approximately 0.22ha and currently consists of an existing commercial building known as West Barn. The site is accessed via a private road known as Old Dairy Lane that connects to Norton Lane itself. Directly to the north and west of West Barn is a grass field boarded by established planting. Car parking is located around the existing building and a redundant private tennis court lies opposite, of the site. A barn was previously in place where the tennis court is located.



Location of site – Image courtesy of Google Maps

The eastern edge of the site falls partially within the Norton Conservation Area. There are Listed Buildings to the east at Norton Farmhouse and Letterbox Cottage which are both Grade II Listed. Immediately to the north, south and west is open countryside with residential dwellings located along its eastern boundary fronting along Norton and Old Dairy Lane.

Use

The existing commercial building currently present on site is split into three business units. Biodot UK occupy one of the existing units which is used for showcasing their range of testing equipment, along with admin, accounts, training and storage.

BioDot was incorporated on 13th December 1989 through the establishment of pregnancy testing kits. It now provides systems for the manufacture of Point of Care Diagnostic Tests and during the Covid Pandemic were a significant provider in the manufacture of lateral flow tests. All work performed at BioDot uses non-hazardous reagents in a “showroom laboratory”.

The business is now seeking to expand and does not have sufficient space within the existing building. It is therefore proposed to provide a new building for Biodot and expand their existing facility to accommodate additional showroom space to adequately display and provide training for their increasing core product range. This will include additional space for a new range for Oncology Testing and a system for freeze drying of vaccines. Space will also be provided to train sales and support staff who will operate this new ground-breaking equipment.

Amount

The site is approximately 0.22ha in size and sits to the west of Norton Lane which historically was agricultural in nature. The proposal seeks to provide approximately 1,080sqm of new employment space which will be located on the site of an existing redundant tennis court.

Layout

The eastern edge of the site lies within the Conservation Area. This is located adjacent to the existing tennis court and is undeveloped. This part of the site is not visible from the Conservation Area and provides a neutral contribution to the areas significance.

The rest of the site is located outside of the conservation area, and forms part of the setting to the west which has evolved over time, previously consisting of agricultural buildings with a courtyard formation, historically associated with East Norton Farm. These were replaced with two large agricultural buildings. Over time one of these buildings was destroyed by a fire and replaced with the existing tennis court and the other was replaced with the existing commercial building known as West Barn.

The layout of the site respects and enforces the agricultural past of the site. The building will be sited opposite West Barn on the siting of a previous barn structure, allowing the reinstatement of the courtyard area which will serve as the parking area for both units. Development also remains outside of the Conservation area retaining its neutral contribution to the area.

Scale

The scale of the building is approximately 36m in length and 15m in width, creating 1080sqm of additional floorspace, expanding Biodots existing business which currently resides onsite. The buildings footprint is smaller than the previous barn which was present in this location and is no bigger than the existing commercial building, known as West Barn which is currently occupied by Biodot and two other businesses.

Landscaping

Appropriate landscaping has been proposed and located to ensure that the development sympathetically integrates with the surrounding area. Additional planting is proposed, with trees located along the eastern boundary to help maintain a verdant character and assist in defining the commercial area as a sperate character area from that of the historic development on the Lane.

Appearance

The building entails a high standard of design, incorporating the use of high-quality materials throughout. Timber cladding is specifically proposed on the eastern elevation of the building to soften and integrate the building into the landscape when viewed from Norton Lane and from within the Conservation Area. As discussed above, the building is designed to reflect West Barn, with its low-pitched roof, replicating a barn structure in the countryside