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**PROPOSED SALT PROCESSING  
FACILITIES**

**AT**

**LAND AT LONGWICK FARM  
JOYCES CHASE  
TOLLESHUNT MAJOR  
ESSEX**

**FOR**

**MALDON CRYSTAL SALT COMPANY LIMITED**

**PLANNING  
DESIGN AND ACCESS  
STATEMENT**

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REV.A

## CONTENTS

1.00	INTRODUCTION
2.00	SITE AND CONTEXT
3.00	USE
4.00	AMOUNT
5.00	LAYOUT
6.00	SCALE
7.00	LANDSCAPE
8.00	APPEARANCE
9.00	ACCESS
10.00	HABITAT AND ECOLOGY
11.00	PLANNING POLICY
12.00	CONCLUSION

## **1.00 INTRODUCTION**

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) is submitted under the provision of Circular 01/2006, Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System. The purpose of this statement is to ensure that the development proposal is based on a considered and sustainable design approach.

The development proposal consists of the erection of a single storey salt processing building, representing an expansion to the existing Maldon Crystal Salt Company Limited salt processing plant, which has operated successfully on the site since 2006.

The Maldon Crystal Salt Company Ltd was established at The Downs, Maldon, over 100 years ago. The premises at The Downs are currently used for both production and storage of salt, whilst the company's offices and packaging facilities are located at Wycke Hill Business Park, Maldon. The existing plant at Longwick Farm, Tolleshunt Major, to which the proposed development represents an expansion to its export business, constitutes the principal salt processing facility for the company.

Each facility currently fulfils a specific function, and it is intended that each of the three sites will continue to perform their separate roles in the future.

The salt production process is summarised as follows.

Sea water is pumped to the site via the existing pipeline and pump house located adjacent to the sea wall. The water is stored in external tanks, where it is allowed to settle and, after filtering, pumped to individual salt pans within the building. The seawater is then carefully evaporated to allow the brine to concentrate and salt crystals to form. The salt crystals are hand harvested daily and transferred to the adjacent area where they are allowed to drain and the moisture finally adjusted for onward transportation to the packaging facility at Wycke Hill Business Park, Maldon, where up to 70% is exported worldwide under the Maldon brand.

Due to economies of scale and increased production efficiency, it is proposed that just four additional saltmakers will be required to operate the extended facility at Longwick Farm. The staff at Longwick Farm currently operate a car sharing scheme, reducing motor vehicle journeys to and from the site. The existing arrangement would be extended to include any new members of staff.

## **2.00 SITE AND CONTEXT**

The site is located within the rural area and forms part of both a Special Landscape Area and the Coastal Protection Belt. The site and the surrounding area is generally flat, with sparse vegetation to field boundaries and open views in all directions. Ground levels within this site range between 10.25m AOD and 10.90m AOD, with a gentle east-west fall.

The proposed access to the site retains the current arrangement from Goldhanger Road (B1026) via Joyces Chase, a shared private road approximately 1060m long serving Longwick Farm, New Barn Cottages, Joyces Farm and Lauriston Farm Cottage, as well as the existing Maldon Crystal Salt Company Ltd salt processing facility.

## **3.00 USE**

The proposed development consists of a single building to accommodate a salt production facility to operate in conjunction with the existing facility that was created in 2006.

The accommodation consists of the following:

- Pan room (8 no. pans)
- Plant room
- Storage area

- Drying room
- Reception
- Staff room
- WC

#### **4.00 AMOUNT**

The proposed building is similar in size to that previously granted planning permission under FUL/MAL/05/00124 and constructed and commissioned in 2006.

The gross internal floor area is approximately 919 m<sup>2</sup> (9,892 sq.ft).

#### **5.00 LAYOUT**

The proposed building will be sited approximately 35m due north of the existing facility on the opposite side of what is currently the service yard. The siting provides access across the yard to both buildings, allowing fuel deliveries and salt collection to occur within the confines of the site. The siting provides the additional benefit of obscuring views of the water storage and fuel tanks (currently visible) from distant views into the site.

The yard area will provide turning and manoeuvring space for vehicles entering and leaving the site.

#### **6.00 SCALE**

The overall width of the building is approximately 16.4m and the overall length 57.8m. The height above ground level at the eaves is 2.95m and to the ridge 6.5m.

As the existing facility demonstrates, a building of this size and appearance can be satisfactorily accommodated within the landscape without detriment to the character of the Special Landscape Area. Notwithstanding the size of the building, the open character

of the area allows the structure to appear as an incidental and insignificant feature within the landscape.

#### **7.00 LANDSCAPE**

The landscape beyond the site is characterised by an open appearance typical of river and estuarine salt marsh, with sparse vegetation and few significant landscape features.

It is intended that the existing length of hedgerow situated within the site between the existing and proposed buildings will be retained.

It is not proposed to provide any additional planting around the new building, as it is considered this would represent an alien form of landscaping, since elsewhere in the landscape barns and other agricultural structures are found in isolation within the landscape, rather than being screened by planting.

#### **8.00 APPEARANCE**

The proposed building has been designed to have a simple and uncluttered appearance in keeping with that of other large buildings within the rural landscape, more usually agricultural barns and outbuildings.

The palette of materials reflects the local Essex vernacular and includes red clay brick to the plinth and expressed piers, black fibre cement, weatherboard cladding and terracotta pantiles to the roof, and replicates those materials employed on the existing salt processing facility.

The north elevation which faces towards Joyces Chase and the approach to the site incorporates two projecting gables, with "false" doors intended to create visual interest and to provide relief to the elevation.

## **9.00 ACCESS**

The site is located approximately 2.2 km from the village of Goldhanger and approximately 7 km from Maldon.

Due to the nature of crystal salt production, the facility is sited close to the River Blackwater and in a relatively remote location. However, due to the low level of staffing and amount of scheduled collections and deliveries to the site, sustainability issues in relation to its location in terms of traffic generation and access are not deemed to be an issue.

Access within the site and buildings are based on the requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations (Access to and Use of Buildings) and the objectives of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and provide level access and accessible toilet facilities.

Covered cycle storage will be provided within the building.

## **10.00 HABITAT AND ECOLOGY**

This proposal differs significantly from the earlier planning permission in that it relates to an additional processing and storage facility only, which will utilise the existing pipeline and extraction apparatus. As a result, the development will be contained within the curtilage of the existing processing facility and will not extend into the more environmentally sensitive areas to the south, between the site and the sea wall.

The construction of the pipeline and pump house as part of the original scheme raised issues relating to habitat and ecology, which were addressed as part of the planning process.

That application (and the subsequent discharge of planning conditions) provided a scoping habitat survey which recommended that further surveys be carried out to identify the following:

- i) Presence of reptiles in the immediate spoil areas and land adjacent to the sea wall
- ii) Presence of great crested newts in ponds, ditches and barrow dyke in the field areas adjoining the sea wall

In addition, it was stipulated that:

- iii) A further survey should be undertaken to identify the presence (or otherwise) of water voles in and around the pond (Longwick Farm) and the southernmost part of the site adjacent to the sea wall

and

- iv) a survey of the barn (identified for demolition) be carried out for evidence of barn owl occupation

The additional surveys identified above were carried out by licensed ecologists and submitted to the Planning Authority, with no evidence of habitation by protected species.

None of the areas of potential habitation identified in the scoping report are affected by the proposed development and, as a result, no further survey work is deemed necessary at this time.

## **11.00 PLANNING POLICY**

The design of the development proposal has been informed by the following policies from the Replacement Maldon District Local Plan:

### **5.2 Development Outside Development Boundaries**

BE1 Design of New Development and Landscaping

CC1 Development Affecting an Internationally Designated Nature Conservation Site

CC2 Development Affecting a Nationally Designated Nature Conservation Site

CC5 Protection of Wildlife at Risk on Development Sites



CC6 Landscape Protection

CC7 Special Landscape Areas

CC11 The Coastal Zone

CC12 Rural Diversification

and the following Government Guidance:

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

PPS25 Development and Flood Risk

## **12.00 CONCLUSION**

It is considered that the granting of planning permission for this proposal is acceptable in principle, on the basis that the development will cause no demonstrable harm to any interests of acknowledged importance, in particular, the Maldon and Blackwater Special Landscape Area.

Notwithstanding its rural location, the proposal represents a sustainable form of development. The process of salt production has a low carbon footprint and all efforts have been made to reduce this further through scheduled deliveries and collections to and from the site, car sharing by staff and the conservation of fuel and power in relation to the salt production itself.

The proposed development maintains the long history of salt production within the district, and furthers the aims and objectives of Maldon District in supporting and encouraging local business expansion and inward investment into the area.

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