

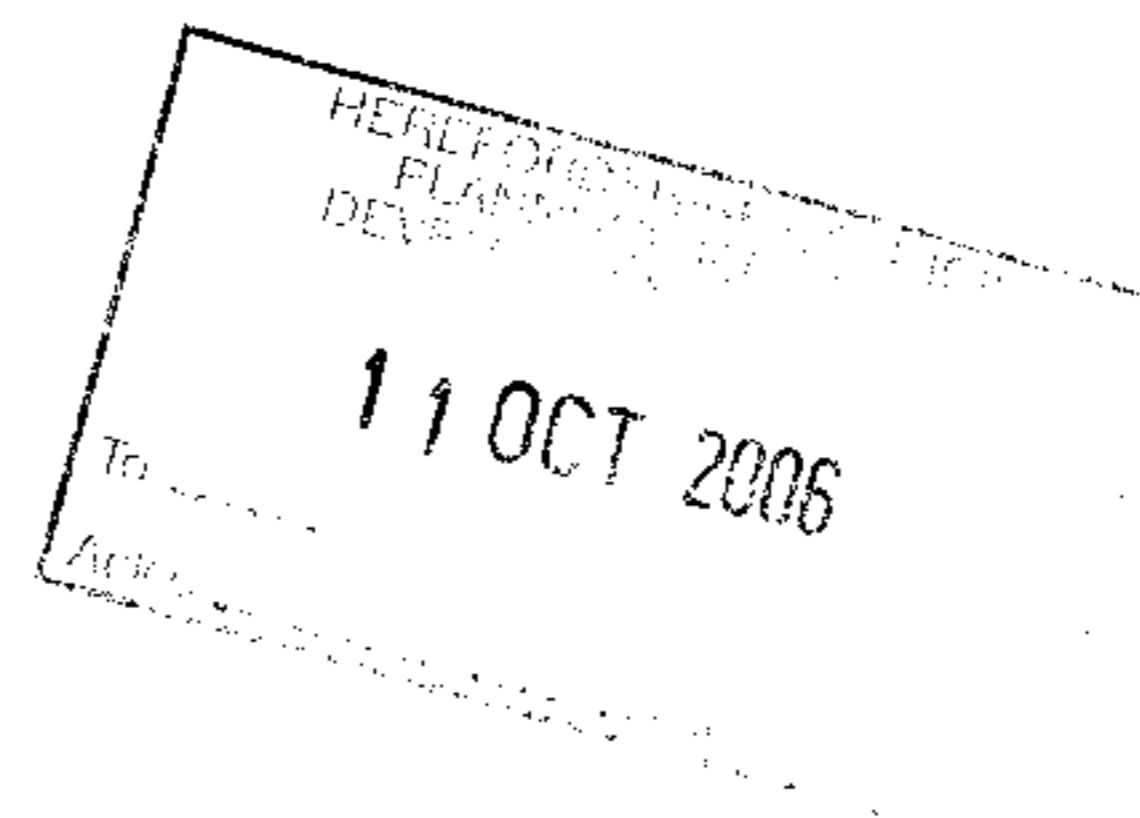
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**TOWN & COUNTRY
PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS
AMENDED)**

**PLANNING APPLICATION:
ERECTION OF (SPANISH)
POLYTUNNELS TO BE
ROTATED AROUND
FIELDS AS REQUIRED BY
CROPS UNDER
CULTIVATION**

**PENNOXSTONE COURT,
KINGS CAPLE,
HEREFORDSHIRE,
HR1 4TX**

**DESIGN & ACCESS
STATEMENT**



1.0 Introduction

1.1 This is a Design & Access Statement under Section 42 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (which substitutes a new Section 62 of the T&CPA 1990). It is intended to accompany a planning application for the erection of (Spanish) polytunnels to be rotated around fields as required by crops under cultivation at Pennoxstone Court, Kings Caple, Herefordshire HR1 4TX.

1.2 This Statement has been prepared to comply with the strict provisions of the legislation although it is the Applicant's view that such a statement is clearly incompatible with and inappropriate to development of the type the subject of the Planning Application in question. The underlying rationale for Design & Access Statements, their scope and the format they are normally required to take are clearly not amenable to this type of development.

1.3 Given these above-cited limitations, the Statement seeks to encompass only those matters that can be effectively addressed. It should be noted, however, that the Application is also accompanied by a full Town Planning Statement (contained in the supporting letter attached to the Application), a Landscape & Visual Appraisal and an Economic Assessment all of which contain additional information that is relevant to this Statement and these should be read in conjunction with and as amplifying this Statement.

2.0 The Development

2.1 The Planning Application to which this Statement relates to so-called 'Spanish' polytunnels. These tunnels are already erected on the site over crops and, currently have the status of permitted development, because of, amongst other things, their temporary and transitory nature. The Application arise purely because of the Applicants wish to have them erected over the same crop during the harvesting period thereof for more than two successive years.

Land Use

- 2.2 The polytunnels are an agricultural structure, physically and functionally related to the agricultural use (the growing of soft fruit) of the land upon which they are erected. Their lifespan and the duration of their coverage is directly related to the life of and harvesting period of the crop beneath it.

Design & External Appearance

- 2.3 Spanish polytunnels are designed to be temporary structures which can be moved from one crop to another. After removal, the field can be cultivated and farmed as normal, with no evidence of the tunnel remaining.

- 2.4 The tunnels consist of a tubular steel, galvanised framework made up of:-

- Y-shaped legs of 1.5 to 2.0-metre length, with a flighted end, which are wound into the ground (usually by machine) to a depth of 0.6 to 2.0 metres.
- Semi-circular hoops which slot over the legs and thus form blocks of tunnels several bays wide.
- Bracing bars known as end kits to secure the first and last hoops.

The size of tunnel varies according to the crop and other considerations, but the bay width typically varies between 6.5 and 8.0 metres and the height between 3.0 and 3.7 metres.

- 2.5 The hoops are covered in clear polythene and secured by means of ropes, leaving a small gap over the unplanted areas between the tunnels.

- 2.6 The polythene covering is only in place for the duration of the harvesting of the particular crop being covered. This may be up to six months in any one year, usually during the period April to November, but in practice the covering for any particular crop bed will be less than six months. The crops are uncovered by the removal of the polythene sheeting as soon as the harvesting finishes in the autumn, but during the harvesting season, tunnels may be moved from one crop to another several times.

The tunnels are designed to be moved easily, for operational reasons, so are not strong enough to withstand the British winter. Snow, hail, very heavy rain and high winds can all result in considerable damage. Additionally the plants require a sufficient period of cold weather to ensure normal growth in the spring – this is termed ‘winter chilling’. These are the principal reasons for removing the polythene coverings. If, however, the crop is to be harvested again in the following season, at least the Y-posts and usually the hoops are left in place over the winter period. In these cases, the polythene is rolled up and stored within the tunnel or affixed to the hoops. The polythene typically has a life of 3 years at the end of which time it is baled and sent to a recycling plant.

- 2.6 The polytunnels have been designed to perform a specific agricultural function and follow a standard mass-produced format for ease of use. There is no aesthetic element of the design as this would be incompatible with their function and temporary nature.

Amount, Scale and Layout of Development

- 2.7 It is not possible either in this case, or indeed in any other operational agricultural use of Spanish Polytunnels to quantify the ‘amount’ of development, or define the layout or overall dimensions (other than the height) or the spatial extent of polytunnels because this is constantly changing. Individual tunnels will be grouped into multiple parallel rows. The number of rows and their length will vary according to the dimensions of the fields in which they are sited from season to season and within the season as harvesting progresses and according to the needs of the crop they cover.

Context

- 2.8 The issue of context is addressed in the Landscape and Visual assessment.

Landscape & Visual Impact

- 2.9 The landscape and visual impact implications and the proposed landscape mitigation of the development are self-evidently addressed in the Assessment of that name.

Access

2.10 The development comprises 'in-field' operational development connected with agriculture. Access to the tunnels is, therefore, confined to able-bodied agricultural workers employed by the farming enterprise. There is no need for access by the general public and/or for those with mobility, therefore.