

Furniture firm's expansion plans rejected over loss of mature trees

A luxury furniture firm's bid to expand its Midlothian industrial estate site has been rejected by planners over the proposed loss of mature trees.

Midlothian Council's planners rejected the application from local company Charlotte James Furniture to build a storage warehouse next to their workshop and showroom in the Pentland Industrial Estate, Loanhead.

They said the new warehouse, which would be built at the edge of the estate, would be 'very prominent' and detract from the 'character and appearance of the surrounding area'.

And they said the proposals would see the removal of nine trees which because of their age would require three new tree to be planted for each one lost adding: "the proposal would result in the loss of mature trees with inadequate room or scope for replacement planting within the site".

The company, which employs around 40 staff, has now appealed to the council's Local Review Body to overturn the decision of their planners which they describe as "disappointing".

Representatives for the trustees of Charlotte James say the company is at capacity and requires additional space.

In their appeal to the review body they say the company faced

two options – seeking new suitable premises within the industrial estate or another suitable location in the wider Edinburgh or surrounding area, or adding additional building space at their current site.

The representatives say: “Due to the lack of suitable vacant premises within the existing industrial estate and given Charlotte James have occupied the site for a decade, alongside local employee considerations, it was concluded the preferred option was to seek permission to build the required additional space within the existing development site.”

They add that the new building proposed had already been designed to be as far away from the landscaping and trees as possible to reduce impact and expressed disappointment planners did not hold further talks with them before refusing planning permission.

The appeal states: “The applicant is disappointed that a decision was reached without the opportunity to provide further information to clarify and assist the assessment of concerns raised.

“Given the importance to the future expansion and growth plans for the associated business the applicant would welcome the reconsideration of this decision.”

No objections to the planned warehouse were lodged and the appeal will go to the Local Review Body next week.

by Marie Sharp, *Local Democracy Reporter*.

The Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) is a public service news agency. It is funded by the BBC, provided by the local news sector (in Edinburgh that is Reach plc (the publisher behind Edinburgh Live and The Daily Record) and used by many qualifying partners. Local Democracy Reporters cover news about top-tier local authorities and other public service organisations.

