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Design and access statement

Planning application to change the use of an agricultural building into a B1 light industrial use
At Megcroft Farm, Onecote Road, Ipstones, Staffordshire. ST10 2NB



Photo courtesy of google earth

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Planning application to change the use of an agricultural building into a B1 light industrial use
At Megcroft Farm, Onecote Road, Ipstones, Staffordshire. ST10 2NB

Introduction/Context

The application proposes the change of use of a portal frame agricultural building into a light industrial B1 use.

The applicants sought planning advice via a pre-application PAD/2016/0033 when they were in the process of purchasing Megcroft Farm with a view to relocate their exotic hardwood specialist wood supply business to the farm and utilising the existing barn on the site for storing and cutting of the wood. They are only one of two people in the country providing this service, supporting British craftsmen keeping traditional woodworking alive.

The agricultural building was granted planning permission (SMD/2003/1347) in 2004, and has been used by the (now former) owners for a mixed use agricultural building, storing hay, farm machinery and sheep/lambs.



The farm has now been bought by the applicants and the farm building has been cleared out of agricultural residue and the floor scrubbed in preparation to bring the pallets of materials from their unit in Chapel en-le Frith, Unit 3, Bowden Hey Road.

The applicants would require a change of use from the present agricultural use to a light industrial B1 use. The have an established business currently based in a small industrial estate on Bowden Hey Road, in Chapel en le Frith in the High Peak. The Landlord of the Industrial Unit are RTG Developments LTD under the terms of Light Industrial Use, as granted by the planning permission HPK/2004/0350

Their business is internet based with very little footfall of customers by appointment limited generally to an average of 2 per week. The remainder of the sales are internet based delivered out by a UPS collection once per day using a standard brown 3.5 tonne van, 6 metres x 2m wide, therefore the relocation of their business would not affect trading to any extent.

The exotic hardwood is imported to the country and brought to the premises using a 15 tonne lorry, delivered on average every 6 weeks, and brought into the building for storage. Due to the nature of the timber and business there will be no timber stored outside.

The timber when imported is initially sent to a saw mill for cutting and sizing to suit the overall end use and sent in palletised loads to the applicants for storage and distribution to the end user.

The applicants have a traditional woodworking business specialising in supplying hardwood for wood turning, English Longbows, Snooker Cues, musical instrument maker, antique restorers and cabinet makers. The building would be used solely for storage and sawing the timber in the required length's. Customers will purchase the timber in 'plank' form so they can carry out the further working required at their own premises to produce the items noted above.

The existing premises has numerous storage racks and pallets of timbers in small lengths, most generally light enough to handle manually, but some are bundled together and moved with the forklift truck.

The following images are taken inside the existing unit at Chapel en-le Frith.



Australian Burr



General photo of the existing unit



General photo of existing warehouse



Ziricote



Birds eye Maple



Guitar pieces



More Guitar piece



Australian Burr



English Ash



English Yew

The business is a family run business with only 3 staff, (applicants husband and wife, together with their son.) They intend to live in the farmhouse as a family and have the business on the doorstep to reduce and avoid long commutes to and from work.

During business hours of 9am to 5pm, it will be necessary to use a fork lift truck for moving timber within the store, on average around an hour per week, except when the large delivery is being unloaded every six weeks or thereabouts when it is used during the time to carry the timber from the lorry to inside the building. The forklift boom is 2.4m when the forks are resting on the floor, as the forks are raised to lift or carry a pallet load, the boom is also raised.





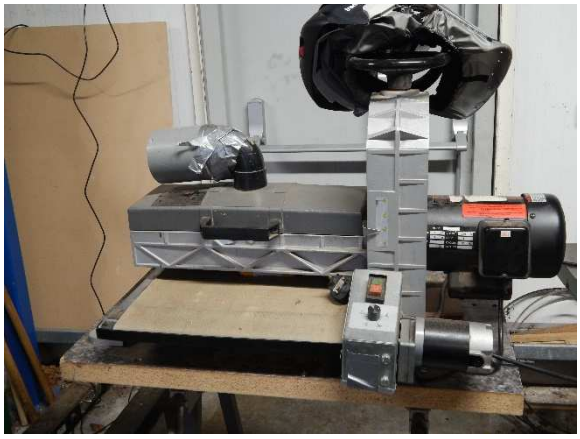
During the past 3 months the applicants have receive 2no wood deliveries.

Within the building as well as the timber store, there would be a Wadkin C7 band saw with a 5hp motor. Wadkin officially rate the saw as producing 84 decibels of sound. The applicants have had this independently tested, next to the machine, it does produce 84db, and whilst sawing, it varies between 86 & 87Db. The noise decreases to 73DB at 6m away (average volume of kerbside traffic), and reduced further to 66Db at 12m distance, which roughly equates to the volume of conversational speech. The sound produced by the saw is less than a Black and Decker type circular saw used generally by DIY enthusiasts. It is therefore deemed to be suitable for use within a light industrial B1 use within a residential area.

They also use a sanding machine periodically, however most of the products are sent out to end users for sizing, finishing, sanding and polishing for the end product(s).



Wadkin C7 band saw



Sanding machine

The existing building is of a portal frame construction, the frames of which form 5no equally sized 'bays'. The building has a large sliding door located roughly centrally within the 4th bay along the north elevation from the house. The 3no bays closest to the house would be used for the timber store and warehouse using shelving for the smaller items and racking for the larger items placed using the forklift on pallets.



The building has now been cleared of all agricultural residue from the previous owners and the floor power washed in preparation for the timber to be moved from Chapel light industrial unit

The saw would be located on the Northern side of the building, on the right after entering the building. The saw is used between 3 and 4 hours (not continuously) on average each week

The right side of the building and entrance area shall be retained for storing the goods in as delivered before unpacking, etc and transporting to the correct storage location. The entrance bay would generally be kept clear to allow access into the building using the forklift for loading and unloading, and also if the door height allows for the delivery/collection vehicle to reverse into the building during wet weather to retain the goods in a dry condition.

The Site

The site is located on the B5053 Onecote road between Bottom house and Ipstones within the national speed limit zone. There appears to be reasonable visibility in both directions for vehicles exiting the site, vegetation shall be cut back and maintained to maximise the visibility.







It is recognised that due to the placement of the gated entrance, there is not sufficient space for the UPS vehicle to leave the highway and park whilst opening the gate. It is proposed to move the entrance gates further onto the site to allow the delivery truck and UPS van sufficient space to park off the carriage way whilst the gate is being opened.

On the site are 3 significant buildings. Accessing the site from the road, to the right passing towards the farmhouse, is a traditional stone built barn, the stone farmhouse is on the left and beyond the farm house is the agricultural barn.

The stable block has been assessed for suitability for storing the timber, however the small doors suitable for horse and pedestrian access are limited in height at generally 2.1m high which would not allow the forklift truck to access the building, which would limit the stock inside to be moved by a manual pallet truck or carried. The larger bundles could not be brought in, and it would make deliveries difficult and may spoil timber in wet weather.





There is also a low floor inside the building which would need to be stripped out, if a larger doorway was formed for access.

The applicants will keep and raise some sheep and other farm animals, the stone barn would be allocated to its intended purpose of storing the feed/bedding and housing the animals during the winter/foul weather.

There is a large space in front of the barn which is deemed to be suitable for turning the delivery vehicle around, allow it to exist the site using forward gears.



A parking area to the side of the house almost opposite a stone barn which can easily park 4 cars/domestic vehicles for the family use, leaving the large space on front of the barn clear for the delivery vehicle, UPS courier and the occasional visitor parking.

There is an equestrian ménage on the site located adjacent to the agricultural barn (approved 04/00183/FUL) on 22nd March 2004, within a post and rail fenced enclosure. The applicants would remove this in time and restore the space to pasture, planted with native wild flowers to attract wildlife, which is their hobby.



The Building

The building is a typical portal frame building, original built by Ivan Cooper Ltd, who were one of the main suppliers of agricultural buildings at one time.

The building has a painted blockwork lower section approx. 1350mm high, then green metal cladding above, providing an internal floor space of approximately 295m2.

There are no proposals to alter the existing barn exterior appearance.



Proposal

The proposal is change the use of an agricultural building into a light industrial B1 use for the storing and sawing of wood. The building would not need to be physically altered to accommodate the proposed use. A small personnel door would be installed to the side of the building on the gable closest to the farmhouse to provide alternative means of escape in the event of a fire, which will also double up as pedestrian access to the building rather than using the main door by the owners. This would be a timber frame, timber panel door, painted to match the surrounding green colour.

Use/Amount

The proposed change of use would utilise an existing agricultural building for the storage of exotic hardwood, which would be brought to site using a small 15 tonne lorry around every 6 weeks. The wood is cut and stored within the building before being sold via internet sales to wood working businesses making musical instruments, furniture, etc. The sales are collected via UPS courier in the traditional brown van for delivery around the country.

There is adequate space within the building to allow stacking, and storage of the quantities of wood they generally turn over within a 6 week period between deliveries, and have space for safe manoeuvring and material handling.

The proposed business use for storing and selling exotic hardwood requires the wood to only be cut to manageable sizes as required by the customer to make their products, as such there is very little waste involved, generally limited to a bin bag of saw dust per week or so. Larger offcuts are generally set aside for sale to other customers requiring small timber sizes.

The business is a small family business with 3 staff, and very low vehicle movements and visitors to the site.

Layout

The proposals will utilise the existing layout of the building on the site. There is a large stone chip surfaced area in front of the building which is adequate for turning the delivery vehicle around to allow exiting the site using forward gears.

Scale

The scale of the existing building shall remain unchanged. The existing building has been previously used for agricultural use, for storing hay, etc requiring the use of a tractor with forks to stack the bales within the building. The existing height of the building will allow the timber planks to be stored near vertical, to avoid any bowing or bending of the timber.

Appearance

The key features of the building will remain.as existing, there are no proposals to change the appearance of the building

Landscaping

The landscaping will generally be as existing. The driveway shall be retained and stone chip parking/turning area in front of the agricultural building.

The existing gated access would be moved into the site a little more to provide around 10m off road space to the gate to allow the vehicles to exist the highway whilst the gate is being opened.

The existing ménage is not required by the applicant, this may be taken out after the settling in period has passed to return to meadow/pasture land with wild flowers planted to attract wildlife.

The building is generally painted in a green colour and does not stand out from the surrounding countryside, there are a number of trees and large hedges planted around the building providing screening from the roadside, etc. It is proposed to plant further native trees to complement the existing species on the southern boundary to provide further screening from road users travelling up from Ipstones.



Access

Level access exists from Onecote road, and there is a very gentle gradient across the site driveway

Planning Policy

It is recognised nationally there is a relaxation for the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings into other uses, to include light industrial, cafés, offices to allow diversification of rural businesses.