A.E. Planning Consultants.

PLANNING STATEMENT.

OLD BRIDGE FARM, BIDDULPH PARK ROAD, BIDDULPH MOOR, ST8 7SJ.

PLANNING APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY MR STEVEN NIXON.

PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL STORAGE BUILDING.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement is submitted on behalf of Mr Steven Nixon in support of a full planning application for the construction of an agricultural storage building at Old Bridge Farm, Biddulph Park Road, Biddulph Moor. The statement assesses the application proposals against the relevant policy tests set out in the Development Plan and National Policy guidance.

1.2 The application is part retrospective in that the walls and roof of the building are complete, but works have ceased following discussions with the Council in respect of the fact that the development requires planning permission.

2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

2.1 Old Bridge Farm is a detached dwelling situated in 9.2 acres of land to the north west of Biddulph Park Road. The property is well screened and set back from the public highway. Land levels fall away from Biddulph Park Road and the site is accessed by a long narrow driveway. The site is within the Green Belt and the Applicants landholding is shown on the submitted location plan.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 Staffordshire Moorlands planning web site indicates that the site has no relevant planning history.

4. THE APPLICATION

4.1 This section explains the design principles of the proposal under the following headings: Drawing List; The Proposal; Use; Amount; Scale; Layout; Access; Landscaping and Appearance

Drawing / Document List

4.2 The drawings / documents which accompany this application include: -

- ✓ OBF/01 – Location and site plan – 1:1250 and 1:500.
- ✓ OBF/02 – Proposed plans and elevations – 1:50.
- ✓ Google Earth Image from 2018.
- ✓ Animal Health Registration Details.

Use

4.3 Old Bridge Farm is a detached family home with garden and grazing land that extends to some 9.2 acres. The Applicant currently owns some 30 sheep and 27 chickens with the intention of increasing the sheep flock to 50+ over the next few months. The relevant Animal

Health Registration Details are submitted with the application. The Applicant is proposing to develop the site further for grazing and farming where the plan is to expand the existing sheep rearing business over the next few years. Drainage is to be improved with additional tree and hedge planting is appropriate. This can all only be achieved when there is a suitable place to store machinery, feed, and materials.

4.4 The application building is required to provide secure and weatherproof storage for tractors and machinery that are used to farm and maintain the 9.2 acres of land. These include: -

- ✓ 3.5 tonne JCB and associated buckets and pecker/post knocker
- ✓ Mini dumper
- ✓ Mini tractor
- ✓ Mower for tractor
- ✓ Hedge cutters for tractor
- ✓ Various tools to maintain the machinery
- ✓ Ramps to lift vehicles to service underneath/maintain
- ✓ Ground roller and aerator equipment
- ✓ Various feeds and chemicals for treatment
- ✓ Sheep fencing/dipping equipment
- ✓ Various other tools and equipment to maintain and farm the land
- ✓ Hay bails

4.6 The proposed development involves the erection of an agricultural building, which would provide a safe and secure environment for the storage of essential agricultural equipment and machinery. The approval of the proposed structure would enable the applicant to expand the sheep rearing business. There is a functional need to provide secure and dry storage space for the equipment e.g. sheep netting/pens, fence poles and rails, weed killer and fertiliser, bagged animal feeds, animal bedding, maintenance tools and small vehicles.

4.7 Essentially, there is no building on site to store the agricultural machinery that is used on the land and this means that it has to be left outside and subject to the elements. Prior to lambing there will also be a need to have covered storage for a small amount of bagged feed and a few bales of hay or haylage. The vehicles and machinery are expensive, and it is perfectly reasonable to seek permission for a building that would provide covered storage for what a small working farm. The outside storage is also very unsightly and not secure.

Amount

4.8 The application relates to the construction of a single agricultural building.

Scale

4.9 The proposed agricultural building would measure 12m in length, 12m in width and 5.2m in height (to the ridge). The proposed building would provide a functional floor space of 93m².

Layout

4.10 The agricultural building has been constructed to the south of the house and stands in the location of the former agricultural building recently demolished. This former building can be seen on the Google Earth Image that is submitted with the application. The proposal would be seen as part of the existing group of buildings and its position is both visually and functionally the most appropriate location on the site which is well screened from public views by trees, hedges, and stone walls.

Access

4.11 Access to Old Bridge Farm is via a private drive and this would remain as existing.

Landscaping

4.12 No landscaping is proposed.

Appearance

4.13 The proposed building would be constructed with facing materials of vertical timber cladding to the walls and a blue slate roof. The scale of the building would have a limited visual impact on the character of the surrounding area. The proposed materials are appropriate for buildings of this nature and would have a satisfactory appearance.

5. PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. It views delivery of sustainable development as a key consideration for the planning system. Indeed, within the Framework there is '*a presumption in favour of sustainable developmen*t'.

5.2 The Framework identifies and outlines three principle roles the Government considers the planning system should play in the delivery of sustainable development; these are:

- **an economic role** – by amongst other means, contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy;

- **a social role** – by amongst other means, supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high-quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

● **an environmental role** – by amongst other means, contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

5.3 The policies in the Framework, taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view on sustainable development.

5.4 The Framework addresses the plan-led system and states: '*Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise*'.

5.5 This is in line with the provisions of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which states: '*if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise'.*

5.6 The Framework also advises Local Planning authorities to approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way.

5.7 The Framework identifies a set of principles which should underpin both plan and decision-making processes of Local Planning Authorities. Those that are relevant to this application include:

- proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs;
- seek to secure high quality design;
- the continued protection of the countryside whilst ensuring development supports rural communities.
- the continued protection of the Green Belt.

5.8 Paragraph 80 of the Framework states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. Paragraph 83 (a) refers specifically to decisions enabling "*the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings."*

Development Plan

5.9 The Local Plan was adopted on 9th September 2020 and sets out the council's vision and strategy for the District until 2033. It also looks at the proposed locations for development, and policies which will be used in determining planning applications. The Local Plan covers the Staffordshire Moorlands area except for the part that lies within the Peak District National Park Authority. Relevant policies include: -

- SS1 – Development Principles.
- SS10 – Other Rural Areas Strategy.
- DC1 – Design Considerations.
- DC3 – Landscape and Settlement Setting.

5.10 Policy SS1 seeks to ensure that the development and use of land makes a positive contribution to the social, economic, and environmental improvement of the Staffordshire Moorlands. Particular refence is made to a well-designed and well-maintained environment with development being undertaken in a way that protects and enhances the natural and historic environment of the District and its surrounding areas.

5.11 Policy SS10 sets out the strategy for the countryside and the green belt where any development must have an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside. Strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.

5.12 Policy DC1 seeks to achieve good design and ensure that all development uses materials that are appropriate to the character of the area. Particular attention should be made to matters of scale, height, density, layout, siting, landscaping, character, and appearance.

5.13 Policy DC3 seeks to resist development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside.

6. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The principle of development in the Green Belt

6.1 The application site lies within the Green Belt. Paragraph 145 (a) of the National Planning Policy Framework confirms that the construction of agricultural buildings should not be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Local Plan (LP) Policies SS1 and DC3, amongst other thigs, seek to ensure that development does not harm the visual amenity of the landscape.

6.2 The land holding at Old Bridge Farm comprises of 9.2 acres of good quality grazing land. There are no other agricultural buildings and it is, therefore, appropriate to provide a small

building which would make provision for the Applicant to store the equipment that is necessary to maintain the land and develop the sheep farming business. The proposed building would allow for the farming operations to continue and would provide a suitable building for the storage of the equipment and items referred to in paragraph 4.4 above.

6.4 The proposed building would be an essential part of the agricultural use at the site and would provide the storage space for the materials and equipment that are currently stored outside. The sheep rearing business can only grow in an effective and cost-efficient manner when the agricultural building is in use Considering these facts there is a demonstrable need for the building.

The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the countryside.

6.5 Between them LP Policies SS1, DC1 and DC3 seek to ensure that the siting, design, scale, and materials of the proposal should harmonise with the existing landscape and any existing buildings and should not significantly harm or detract from the visual character of the site and its surroundings.

6.6 The proposed building is deemed appropriate to its rural setting, by virtue that it is to be constructed to a scale, size and appearance comparable to any standard agricultural building and will therefore not represent an unacceptably intrusive element when viewed in the context of the surrounding landscape. The footprint of the building is the minimum size necessary to satisfy the functional need of the existing and proposed level of farming activity.

6.7 The proposed building would be viewed in the context of the existing dwelling and is well screened by trees, hedges, and stone walls. There are no nearby residential properties to be affected and the site has an existing access. The proposal, therefore, satisfies LP Policies SS1, DC1 and DC3.

6.8 The Applicant is keen to ensure that the proposed building has minimum impact on the landscape, and they feel very strongly that the chosen position is the most suitable for the site. The building has been located in the position of the recently demolished agricultural building that can be seen on the Google Earth Image submitted with the application.

7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The proposed development would support the existing farming operation at Old Bridge Farm. The proposed building is not inappropriate and would not cause any harm to the visual amenity character of the countryside. It is therefore, requested that planning permission be granted for the proposed development.

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