

Introduction

This statement is made by the applicant in support of a prior approval application for a general-purpose agricultural / horticultural, building measuring 13.5 x 13.5 meters with an eaves height of 5.4 meters and total internal floor area of 169 square meters.

I am a young farmer aged 35 years, how has lived and worked on his parents farm gaining considerable experience in both the agriculture and horticultural business since studying at Rodbaston agricultural college in his teenage years.

Prior to buying this extra parcel of 15.5 acres of land almost two years ago, I already own and farm 27 acres at Big Southlowe Farm Cellarhead this bringing a total to 42.5 acres.

I am at present converting a derelict barn on this 27 acres with the intention of making it my family home, there are no other buildings on that land the barn being converted was not suitable for modern day farm vehicles.

The farm business at this location is a family partnership between my brother and me which is farmed jointly.

Business History

Before purchasing this further parcel of land I carried out a full in depth feasibility study along with a long term business plan which enabled me to borrow funds towards the purchase.

The purchase of this parcel of 15.5 acres gave me the perfect opportunity to continue the works of the previous owner and to expand my business into organic farming which forms the basis of much of my business plan.

At present the land at this location is mostly set to the growing of the organic clover lay mix crops which produce natural nitrate's which by carefully management allows the nitrate to be returned slowly into the soils, thus doing away with any need for artificial fertilisers, and chemicals.

Although it is recognised that the crops that are presently being grown, along with the planned organically grown horticultural crops do generally achieve far greater yields and therefore greater financial rewards, this is somewhat balanced by the substantial increase in working hours required

Although I have achieved the first part of my business plan it has been incredibly difficult having to work and manage my farming business without any building of my own to operate from, unfortunately due to that fact I have only been able to fulfill the first part of my business plan which has been restricted to production of growing mixed organically grown feeds for live stock and the farming of sheep at the tail end of the growing season.

A second and equally important part of my business plan is presently held up due to the lack of preparation area and secure covered storage of produce; this is the

growing of up to 3 acres of organically grown fruits and vegetables for human consumption which I have already established a local market waiting to be serviced.

Planning History

This 15.5 acres of land has previously been granted full planning permission for the build and operation of the present wind turbine along with a material roadway leading from Highway to turbine (planning reference number SMD/2013/0500)

There has also an approved prior approval application, granted for a building planning (reference DET/2019/0042). (to date this has not been built) Which at the time of purchase was very important as it gave me the security to build and operate my farming business from it, as I had experienced very strong opposition from many of the neighbouring houses when it was suggested that I was wishing to apply for a building at my land at Cellarhead.

Change of Location

having farmed this 15.5 acres for nearly two years I have become convinced that the approved building position is totally disjointed from the natural areas of the farming activities carried out which would also necessitate travelling to almost the furthest point of the farmland.

Whilst discussing this with my land agent he pointed out that the present approval has been inappropriately sighted due to elements that he considers were not made clear within the previous owner's application. Those being the potential effects on wildlife within the natural stream located very close to the eastern end of the approved development. He also states that due to the natural fall of the land towards the stream poses two further significant threats which are the volume of water runoff during heavy rainfall from the impermeable surfaces created by the development.

Also the likelihood of any accidental spillage of contaminates finding its way down into the stream.

I do have two other concerns of my own:- first of which is my reluctance to construct the required roadway right across two of my fields again in close proximity to the stream and on a completely different point, my desire to be neighbourly and not risk disturbing families staying at the adjacent camp site that could quite possibly be sleeping whilst I am unavoidably having to work using tractors and machinery during unsocial hours

Proposed Location

After considering these points I have reconsidered the sighting of the existing application. So after a full appraisal of my land and consideration of the desire to site the proposed building in the position that achieves the lowest visual impact possible, whilst having to negotiate the following restraints:-

Suitability of ground conditions for any such building.

Avoidance of interruption to the present stream and other water courses

The avoidance of already present installed energy equipment above and below ground.

The minimum imposed distance between the wind turbine and any proposed building, in order not to cause disruption in wind flows which can impact on the operation of the turbine.

The ability to utilise and share the existing service road to the present wind turbine, along with the existing hard standing that was introduced during the preparation of the wind turbine development

The desire to site upon the lowest area of suitable lying land available,

And to fulfill the requirements of section 6 permitted development with regards to minimum distance from a public highway.

After taking the above factors into account I have shown the proposed sighting on the accompanied plans.

Streamlining

Although having a building of the substantial size of the approved building (ref DET/2019/0042) might be considered advantageous, that is not my objective, I have carefully assessed the required building size to fulfill my farming needs and believe that I am able to operate my farming business within the substantially smaller building which is shown within my application.

It is therefore proposed that provided the application now being asked for can be approved I am very happy for the application numbered DET/2019/0042 to be rescinded by the planning department or a condition to be added to this present application making it subject to it being a replacement building rather than a new application.

Justification for planning

I recognise and consider that it is vital for my business' future success to be able to build and operate from a building of the size within my application, thus enabling for the safe storage and maintenance of my farm machinery along with storage of fuels and of equal importance the storage of the crops that are produced from this parcel of land which then would enable the crop to be produced and processed in the most convenient and cost effective ways, then stored and supplied to the market over a more lengthy period or until market prices are at their highest.

At the present time I tend to leave most of my machinery out in the open tucked away behind the hedges hoping that it doesn't get noticed by anyone wishing to steal it or anything from it.

I am presently having to purchase all fuels via the pump as it is highly risky storing fuels in tanks outside as theft of fuels is an enormous problem not only due to the loss of fuel but the perpetrators take no care of how they steal the fuel often allowing hundreds of litres to spill causing enormous pollution issues. This not only adds extra expense due to the cost of purchasing small amounts of fuels but also adds many unnecessary road miles having to drive my tractors to and from the fuel stations.

So far the crops that have been produced have all had to be bailed in big round bails then individually wrapped (single use plastics) and then having to be sold direct from the fields at the discounted rate.

I desperately need to change from present process of big bailing and wrapping of my crop and start to follow my business plan which is to change to the traditional small rectangle bales which would then be stored inside the shed, rather than the existing process of large wrapped bails that are either stored outside or sold discounted direct from the field.

The necessity would allow for a far wider market for my produce with many more sale opportunities available along with commanding a greater market price for the feeds along with a far greater shelf life if required.

Whilst it is recognised that the business has been successful to date this has not come without high risks along with many extra costs, financially and also for the environment.

It is extremely difficult and at times very unsafe carrying out the general maintenance required on his machinery, as it is vital for many of these works to be carried out on a level solid floor for the safety of anyone maintaining the machinery, thus causing several standard maintenance jobs that would have normally been carried out by his own labour having to be contracted out adding extra costs to his business.

It has also proven to be a basic requirement that most insurance companies require tractors and machinery to be stored inside locked buildings, so this has meant that I am limited to a small number of insurers that would provide cover thus having to pay much higher premiums for my insurance cover.

Presently all the crops grown on this parcel of land this season have all been sold direct from the field at discount due to the fact that the previous year's bales were stored out in the open which created too much wastage.

This has required a totally separate extra process to the harvest which is the single use plastic wrapping of the bales.

That not only adding substantial extra costs in both time and money, but it is also very wasteful with resources, along with the environmental issues regarding the production and then the disposal of the plastics that are then required which as a keen environmentalist is extremely difficult to accept and further frustrates the

business as this process is totally avoidable by the making of the traditional small hay bales.

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Proposed Construction and Design

It is proposed that the building will consist of two equal bays with a central internal wall constructed between the two bays.

It is proposed that the first bay will have lockable sliding doors to the south end and a single roller door to the east side of that bay. Any remaining wall areas within this bay will have masonry for the 1st meter in height with box profile metal sheeting thereafter to the eaves finished in slate grey colour.

It is proposed that the second bay is designed in the same way as the first bay but with an open end similar to traditional hay barns.

The roller doors to west and east sides of that bay will match the door on the east of the first bay.

The corner posts to the north end of this bay will be finished to match the design of the Southern end of the building.

The purpose of these two doors on the second bay is to protect any bailed crops within the building against the elements whilst being able to be opened during harvest and also to allow them to be opened if required to reduce the risk of build up of heat from the crop which in extreme cases can become combustible.

The roof is proposed to be box profile metal sheeting finished in goose-wing grey colour. It is proposed that 10% sky lights will be included.

This is designed to allow for the first bay to be used for the storage and maintenance of the necessary farm machinery along with any processing of the planned horticultural crops.

Proposed Usage

List of current farm machinery that is currently owned by myself, much of which needs to be stored inside the building, with some of the smaller implements being stacked on top of the trailers when out of season, several more robust and less valuable equipment might still be left outside

1 x John Deere 6210 tractor//1 x JCB farm special 530/70 loadall/1x 6 ton 16ft tipping trailer/1x 18ft bail trailer/1x slurry tanker/1 x 2 drum hay mower/1 x tractor hay

rake/1 x hay bailer/1 x 8ft pastor topper/1 x set of 12ft chain harrows/ 1 x Howard 5ft Rotavator/John Deere farm buggy /1 x Lister bail elevator/General farm tools and fuel tank.

The second bay is primarily for the storage of Bailed crops along with any leftover space to be utilised to store haymaking implements and equipment.

The crop produced and taken from this parcel of land during the year 2023 totalled 232 big round bails, which following research would have been approximately 2552, conventional small bales

The crop produced and taken from this parcel of land during the year 2024, totalled 237 big round bails which using the same formula would have been 2607 conversational small, bales.

It has been assessed that the above average yield of crop will comfortably store within the second bay allowing for up to a 10% extra capacity for any previous seasons unused crop to be stored.

The inclusion of the proposed side doors to this bay is to protect the fodder from the elements which can be opened during harvest or when extra cooling is required.

The general design of the building represents the standard form of most farm building of today.

The colours have been chosen to allow the roofline to better blend in with the skyline and the side cladding to best match in with the surroundings and existing nearby buildings.

I am happy to use timber castle type boarding for the side sheeting if that is the planning department's preference along with any variation in colours of the roof or side sheeting if required.

The design allows for sufficient height for storage of bales, which has enabled for a reduction of the footprint of the proposed building, whilst also allowing for the requirement of tipping of my trailers internally.

There will be no need for any extra hard standing since the proposed location of the building, would be situated on the northern edge of the existing hard standing area, which lies to the south. Which was constructed during the original excavation works for the wind turbine.

Environmental Savings

Any power required will be provided using 100% renewable energy coming direct from the wind turbine within the applicant's adjacent field through underground ducts that already supplies the transformer box located on the existing hard standing.

This application also benefits from the inclusion of high level skylights to reduce the need for artificial lighting during daylight hours.

Any lighting that is required will be of LED low energy lighting.

The ease of maintenance and along with the ability to store the equipment out of the elements massively prolongs machinery life span.

Further positive gains will be substantial due to the fact that the crops would then be stored almost on the spot that they are grown and cropped from, creating a further reduction in tractor usage.

The undercover storage of small unwrapped bails would allow substantial savings in two important ways; it cuts out the complete process of the current need of wrapping the bails.

This also eliminating the use of the single use plastic wrap that is currently having to be used.

All imported hardcore will be sourced from local recycled concrete suppliers

All materials where ever possible will be sourced from renewable sources.

The close proximity of the proposed building to the existing track greatly reduces the need for an additional track.

A water harvest system will be installed to capture rainfall and be used for watering livestock and for washing off machinery etc thus reducing any need for piped water.

Landscaping and Screening

New wooden entrance gates and posts off Dilhorne lane will be installed to replace existing unsightly metal ones along with extra hedge planting.

The historical hedge to the west of the proposed building will be planted with native species where ever it is missing.

I am happy to conform to any requirements set by the authority with regards to any additional landscaping.

Conclusion

It is considered that this application conforms to and meets all the requirements set out in the guidelines under section 6 of the general permitted development rights.

Despite the challenges I have faced due to the lack of a building, I have succeeded in creating a successful business, providing high quality produce to the local community. However, as I have shown, it is essential for me to have a building to

base my operations from in order to further my move towards farming in a sustainable manner. Although there is approval for a building on the land already, it is not fit for purpose and in an unsuitable location both for my operation and for the local environment. Replacing this approval with one for the proposed building would be mutually beneficial for my business and for the natural environment greatly reducing visual impact.