

Planning Statement

Proposal:

Erection of a roof over an existing farmyard manure storage area

At:

Oxhay Farm, Meerbrook

1.0 Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the erection of a roof over an existing farmyard manure storage area at Oxhay Farm, Meerbrook.

The proposal represents an environmental improvement to existing agricultural infrastructure and has been designed to improve the storage and management of farmyard manure generated by the holding. It does not seek to increase livestock numbers, manure storage capacity or the scale of the farming enterprise.

The proposal is being delivered with financial assistance through the Catchment Sensitive Farming Grant Scheme and is specifically intended to reduce rainfall entering the existing manure store, thereby reducing dirty water generation, nutrient loss and the potential for diffuse agricultural pollution.

The application follows consideration of the development under the agricultural permitted development provisions of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). A full planning application is now submitted so that the development can be considered through the conventional planning application process.

2.0 Agricultural Holding

Oxhay Farm is an established agricultural holding extending to approximately 72 acres, all of which are within the applicant's ownership.

The holding currently supports approximately 150 breeding ewes plus followers together with 80 pigs. Alongside the commercial farming enterprise, the holding continues to work in partnership with Trading Standards by providing temporary

accommodation for pigs requiring emergency welfare housing whilst animal welfare investigations are undertaken.

The livestock enterprise generates farmyard manure throughout the year which requires appropriate storage before subsequent application to the applicant's agricultural land.

The proposal is directly associated with the agricultural operation of the holding and represents an improvement to existing farm infrastructure rather than an expansion of the agricultural enterprise.

Agricultural Holding Number: 37/067/0177

3.0 Existing Manure Management

Farmyard manure generated by the existing sheep and pig enterprises forms an important agricultural resource and is retained for subsequent application to the applicant's own agricultural land in accordance with good agricultural practice and crop requirements.

The existing manure storage area has served the holding for many years and is appropriately located within the established farmyard. However, as an uncovered facility it is exposed to direct rainfall, resulting in unnecessary volumes of contaminated dirty water and the loss of valuable nutrients from the stored manure.

The accompanying photograph demonstrates the existing conditions following periods of rainfall, with standing water surrounding the manure store, and clearly illustrates the environmental issue that the proposal seeks to address.



Providing a permanent roof will prevent clean rainfall entering the manure store, significantly reducing dirty water generation and improving manure management. The proposal therefore represents an improvement to existing agricultural infrastructure rather than the creation of a new agricultural use or additional storage facility.

4.0 Proposed Development, Scale and Appearance

The proposal comprises the erection of a simple steel portal framed roof structure directly over the existing manure storage area.

The structure will measure approximately 15.0 metres long by 9.0 metres wide and will be open-fronted, with profiled metal cladding above concrete panel walls. The open-fronted design will provide suitable ventilation whilst protecting the stored manure from direct rainfall.

The scale of the development is dictated by the dimensions of the existing manure storage area and is proportionate to its agricultural function. The simple design and materials are characteristic of agricultural buildings and will assimilate naturally alongside the existing buildings within the farmstead.

The proposal does not create additional manure storage capacity but provides weather protection to an existing operational facility. Its modest scale, agricultural appearance and location within the established farmyard ensure that it will remain subservient to the existing buildings and will not appear as an isolated or incongruous feature within the wider landscape.

5.0 Agricultural Need

The proposed development is reasonably necessary for the efficient and sustainable operation of this established livestock holding.

The existing sheep and pig enterprises generate farmyard manure throughout the year which must be stored safely until suitable weather and ground conditions allow its application to agricultural land.

Covering the existing manure store will improve storage conditions, preserve nutrient content and significantly reduce the generation of contaminated runoff. The proposal represents good agricultural practice and will improve both the operational efficiency and environmental performance of the holding without altering the scale or nature of the existing farming enterprise.

6.0 Catchment Sensitive Farming

The proposal is being delivered with financial assistance through the Catchment Sensitive Farming Grant Scheme, recognising the environmental benefits that will be achieved through improved manure management and the reduction of diffuse agricultural pollution.

The existing uncovered manure storage area is vulnerable to direct rainfall. Providing a permanent roof will substantially reduce the volume of rainfall entering the stored manure and consequently reduce the amount of contaminated runoff requiring management.

The proposal also improves the retention of valuable nutrients within the manure, allowing these to be recycled back onto the holding at an appropriate time having regard to weather, soil and crop or grassland requirements.

The development therefore represents an investment in the environmental performance of the existing agricultural enterprise and contributes towards wider objectives of improved water quality, reduced diffuse agricultural pollution and sustainable land management.

Importantly, the proposal does not increase livestock numbers, manure production or the operational capacity of the holding. The Catchment Sensitive Farming improvements relate to the better management of the existing agricultural operation.

7.0 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework, August 2026, provides strong support for sustainable agricultural development and investment in the modernisation of farming enterprises.

Policy E2 states that substantial weight should be given to benefits for domestic food production, animal welfare and/or the environment which can be demonstrated through proposals for farm and agricultural modernisation.

The proposal directly accords with these objectives. It represents the modernisation and improvement of existing agricultural infrastructure, improving manure management and delivering demonstrable environmental benefits through reduced dirty water generation, improved nutrient retention and reduced potential for diffuse agricultural pollution.

These environmental benefits are further demonstrated by the financial assistance provided through the Catchment Sensitive Farming Grant Scheme.

Policy E4 supports the sustainable growth of businesses in rural areas, including agricultural businesses, together with development which maintains and enhances farm viability and sustainability and supports domestic food production.

The proposal does not represent an expansion of the farming enterprise but an environmental and operational improvement to infrastructure required for its continued efficient and sustainable management.

The proposal therefore represents the type of farm and agricultural modernisation supported by the National Planning Policy Framework and, in accordance with Policy E2, the demonstrated environmental benefits should be afforded substantial weight in the determination of the application.

8.0 Environmental Benefits

The proposal will deliver a number of environmental benefits through improved management of the existing manure storage facility.

Preventing clean rainfall from entering the manure store will reduce the volume of contaminated water requiring management and minimise the potential for diffuse agricultural pollution. It will also retain valuable nutrients within the manure rather than allowing them to be lost through leaching.

The retained manure can subsequently be applied to the agricultural land when weather, soil and crop conditions are appropriate, improving its value as an organic fertiliser and potentially reducing reliance upon imported fertilisers.

The development therefore provides a practical environmental improvement to the operation of the existing holding whilst supporting more sustainable agricultural practices.

9.0 Biodiversity Net Gain

The proposed development is exempt from the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement.

The application site falls below the 0.2 hectare threshold applicable to planning applications submitted on or after 6 August 2026. The development relates solely to the erection of a roof over an existing operational manure storage area within the established farmyard and does not impact upon any onsite priority habitat.

The proposal does not involve development of the surrounding agricultural land or the removal of existing habitat.

Accordingly, the proposal falls within the statutory exemption for development sites not exceeding 0.2 hectares and a Biodiversity Gain Plan is not required.

10.0 Siting

The proposed roof will be constructed directly over the existing manure storage area within the established farmyard.

The development makes efficient use of an existing operational area and does not extend agricultural activity into the surrounding countryside or result in the loss of productive agricultural land.

Its position adjacent to existing agricultural buildings ensures that the development will be viewed as part of the established farmstead rather than as an isolated structure within the surrounding landscape.

The proposed siting is therefore logical for its intended agricultural purpose and minimises the visual impact of the development within the wider countryside.

11.0 Heritage

Oxhay Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building, National Heritage List for England List Entry No. 1374746.

The significance of the listed farmhouse principally derives from its architectural and historic interest as a traditional rural dwelling, together with its relationship with the surrounding agricultural holding and working farmstead.

The proposed development is situated within the established working farmyard and comprises a modest agricultural structure erected directly over an existing manure storage area. It does not involve alteration to the listed building itself or introduce a new agricultural use into its surroundings.

The simple agricultural form, modest scale and relationship with the existing farm buildings ensure that the proposal will continue to be experienced as part of the established working agricultural character of the site. Covering the existing open manure storage area will also provide a more contained and orderly appearance within the farmyard.

Having regard to the significance of the Grade II Listed Building and the contribution made by its agricultural setting, the proposal is considered to preserve that significance and would result in no harm to the significance or setting of the designated heritage asset.

12.0 Access and Highway Considerations

The proposal will utilise the existing farmyard access and established internal circulation routes.

No alterations are proposed to the existing vehicular access arrangements and the development will not generate any increase in traffic movements associated with the holding.

The proposal therefore has no material implications for the operation or safety of the surrounding highway network.

13.0 Conclusion

The proposed development represents a proportionate improvement to an existing agricultural facility that is reasonably necessary for the efficient and sustainable operation of Oxhay Farm.

The proposal will improve the management of farmyard manure already generated by the existing livestock enterprise, reducing dirty water generation, nutrient loss and the potential for diffuse agricultural pollution. These environmental benefits are recognised through financial assistance provided under the Catchment Sensitive Farming Grant Scheme.

The development accords with the support provided by the National Planning Policy Framework for farm and agricultural modernisation and, in accordance with Policy E2, substantial weight should be afforded to its demonstrated environmental benefits.

The development is modest in scale, appropriately located within the existing farmstead and will preserve the significance and setting of the Grade II listed farmhouse. It will not increase livestock numbers, manure storage capacity or traffic movements associated with the holding.

Overall, the proposal represents sustainable agricultural development which will support the continued efficient operation of the holding whilst delivering clear environmental and water quality benefits.

It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.