

Erection of Pet Rabbit Breeding Unit on land to the north of Whale Drove, Crowland

Planning, Design and Access Statement on behalf of Mr Bruce



3D Planning Ltd.

Town Planning Consultancy

Planning, Design and Access statement in support of an application for full planning in permission for a Pet Rabbit Breeding Unit on land at Whale Drove Crowland.

Introduction

This Planning, Design and Access Statement incorporates statements in accordance with local and national planning guidance, and is to be read alongside the submitted plans and documents.

The role of this statement is to aid decision making. This is achieved by communicating the process employed to determine the developable areas and by illustrating the character, structure and impact of the proposed development 1 (as set out below).

This statement includes an assessment of the scheme against the policies of the adopted Development Plan and other material planning policy considerations.

The application should also be considered within the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The key principles of national government planning policy are set out in this document and surround the concept of creating developments that are sustainable and of high quality in terms of design, sustainability, socially inclusive and protect the environment.

1 This is in accordance with the requirements of Design and Access Statements, defined within DCLG Circular 01/2006 "Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System" as updated.

Note : SI 2013 No 1238 June 2013 updates requirements as follows .

"(3) A design and access statement shall—

(a) explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;

(b) demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;

(c) explain the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in relevant local development documents have been taken into account;

(d) state what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation; and

(e) explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed."



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Proposal

The application is a made for the erection of a single storey brick built building for use as a **pet rabbit breeding unit** on land to the north of Whale Drove, Crowland.

This is a re-submission of a revised scheme following a previous application and appeal in 2015.

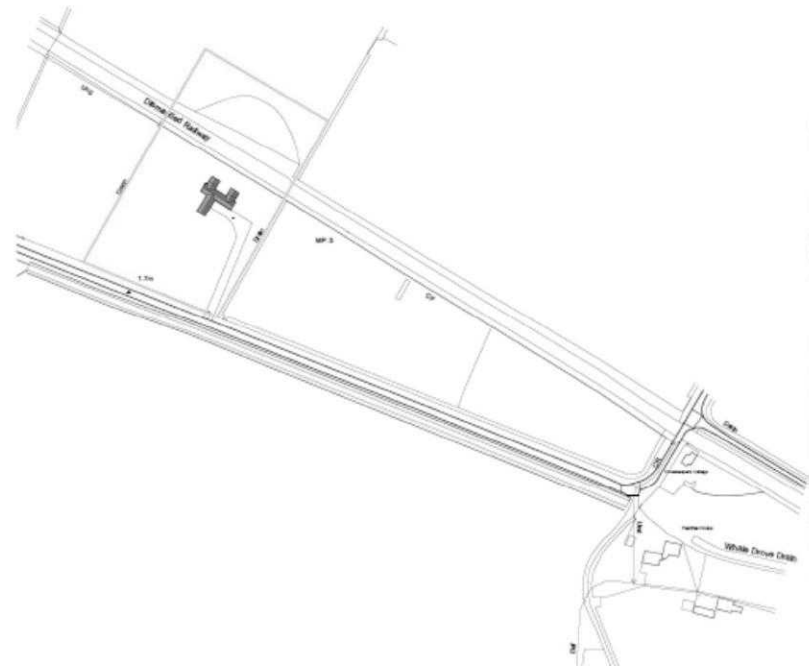
This application removes the residential element of the previous application and appeal that was considered unacceptable and retains the agricultural use which was deemed compliant with material policy.

Site

Location – Land off Whale Drove, Crowland, Lincs.



Site Area – approx. 2 ha (see location plan with building superimposed- opposite).



Existing Use – agricultural field.



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The site is bounded by existing hedgerows and field boundaries which will be retained.

Adjacent uses of note – the site lie within an open fen agricultural landscape and is surrounded by agricultural fields.

Site features – the site is an open field to the north of Whale Drove, Crowland. It is approximately rectangular in shape and it is dissected by the line of the former railway line.

Access is direct onto Whale Drove from the south eastern corner of the site utilising the existing field access.



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Planning history

Premises;

The previous planning application and subsequent appeal decision is directly material to the consideration of the current proposal.

The previous application was made for the rabbit rearing agricultural business (which forms the basis of this submission) but also included a residential unit for occupation in association with the business; ultimately the council refused permission for the reason set out below:

H23-0403-15

- 1 The applicant has failed to satisfactorily demonstrate that there is an essential need for a rural workers dwelling in this countryside location. Although now cancelled following publication of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012, previous guidance set out at Annexe A to PPS7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas remains relevant, being a long established and accepted series of tests against which proposals for new rural workers dwellings may be assessed, and has been taken into account here. Having considered all the submitted information, and having sought advice from an independent agricultural consultant, the Local Planning Authority concludes that there is no essential need for a rural workers dwelling in this location. The proposal is therefore contrary to national guidance set out in Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012, and to Policy HS7 of the South Holland Local Plan, 2006.

However within the officer's report it is noted that the principle of the rabbit rearing business is accepted in the countryside.

Addressing the above, the pet breeding enterprise does not fall within the definition of agriculture. Notwithstanding this fact, however, a countryside location is considered appropriate. Regard has also

been had to the National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, which promotes sustainable economic growth. Paragraph 28 specifically indicates that planning polices should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, LPAs should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings. No objections are therefore raised in principle to the rabbit breeding enterprise.

The proposed rabbit breeding building is considered acceptable in terms of design/appearance and reflects rural vernacular. It is fairly isolated with no immediate neighbours. Environmental Protection and County Highways have raised no objections in principle.

The officer confirms that the rearing unit is in accordance with material policy at both local and nation levels (there is no material change in policy in the interim) and that the refusal relates solely to the proposed residential unit which was not considered to be justified.

Appeal decision; the inspector accepted the council's position in relation to the rabbit rearing business as appropriate development and the appeal decision focused solely on the justification for a residential dwelling. Ultimately the inspector concluded on the evidence before him that it was not justified.

Extract from para 4 below;

APP/A2525/W/16/3141732

4. The Council has no objection to the new rabbit breeding enterprise but the proposal would create an isolated dwelling in the countryside. Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) aims to protect the countryside by encouraging housing to be located where it would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Isolated new homes in the countryside should be justified by special circumstances, such as an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.



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Current Application;

This application is a positive response to the outcome of the previous planning history in that it removes the residential element that was deemed unacceptable and re-proposes the agricultural element that both the LPA and the planning inspector considered to be acceptable.

Planning policies

Planning policy at both local and national levels promotes sustainable and appropriate development in rural areas to encourage a thriving rural economy.

The adopted plan remains in place pending the completion of the emerging new local plan and reference is made to the following policies as material to the consideration of the proposal.

Policy SG1- General Sustainable Development

Policy SG4 - Development in the Countryside

Policy SG14 - Design and Layout of New Development

Policy SG16 - Parking Standards in New Development

Policy SG18 - Landscaping of New Development

NPPF para 28.

28. Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To

promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

In general it is clear that policies are supportive of appropriate agricultural development in the open countryside.



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Design and Access

The section below addresses the key list of attributes required to be considered within the design and access statement, i.e.- the amount; layout; scale; landscaping and appearance of the scheme.

Amount; the application is made for a single building measuring 22.8m by 18m with a ridge height of 5.5m

Layout; the site layout is as indicated on the location plan below.

The building is located towards the north of the site in order to make best advantage of the existing screening and hedging adjacent to the railway line and to reduce visual impact from the road



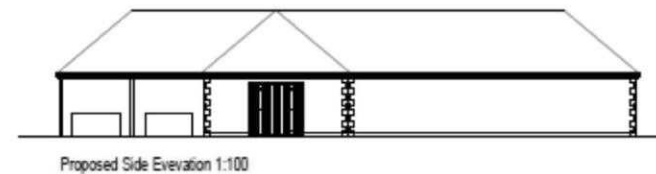
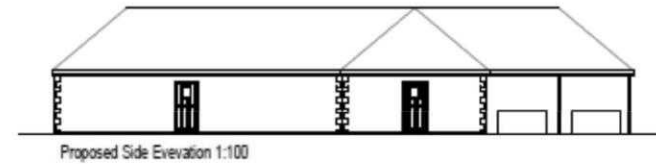
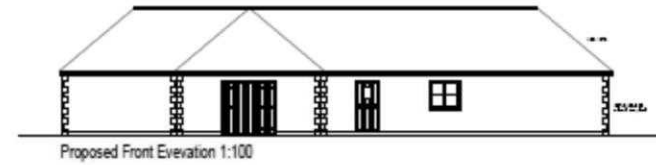
The application seeks permission for a single building; which is subdivided as shown opposite to incorporate breeding areas for the rabbits as well as food storage, administration area and wormery.



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Scale/ appearance; the proposed building is an attractive single storey structure to be built from brick built in a simple agricultural style to reflect its location and the open character of the surrounding area.

It provides only the level floorspace and accommodation necessary to house the planned number of rabbits and ancillary feeds etc. necessary to fulfil the business model proposed.

Landscaping; the site lies within an open Fen agricultural landscape however some on site landscaping may be appropriate and it is requested that this be secured by condition to comply with SG18.



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Accessibility; the site is in a relatively isolated rural location, however as an agricultural operation it is considered entirely appropriate in a rural setting.

The business will not generate significant new traffic movements.

Planning issues

Principle of development / development plan Policies;

Para 2 of the NPPF confirms that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

It is an accepted aim of the planning system to restrict new development within the countryside to offer protection of the countryside for its own sake.

As an exception to this general restriction agricultural development is deemed acceptable, this approach has been confirmed within the officers delegated decision notice and subsequent appeal decision both of which confirmed that the rabbit rearing operation is an appropriate use for the countryside and this element did not raise conflicts with other policy constraints such as visual or environmental constraints.

Business model;

The rabbit rearing unit is for the pet trade and this requires the highest standards of space and rabbit management it is intended that the operation will comply with the welfare standards set out by the RSPCA guidance as this provides appropriate standards to maintain health and quality of the rabbits.

Initially the proposal will introduce 120 breeding does as the basis of a new herd. It is essential to maintain health and quality of the herd as this creates their reputation for quality important to the ongoing business success.

The proposal will also incorporate a wormery which will utilise the rabbit droppings to produce high quality fertiliser through vermiculture. Both the fertiliser and the worms form saleable products which contribute to the financial sustainability of the overall operation. The symbiosis of these uses is important as an overall concept for the operation.

The sale of the rabbits alongside the fertiliser and worms combine to create a viable and sustainable financial business within the rabbit breeding /farm operation

With proper management the proposal will not give rise to any adverse environmental impacts and will not cause amenity issues to any nearby residential properties. It is of course noted that given the location of the site it is remote from any residential units.



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Flood risk;

It is noted that the site is in an area at nominal risk of flooding, however the site specific FRA submitted to accompany this application confirms that the actual risk is very limited. Subject to a number of conclusions as set out below;

The proposed development is in a Defended Floodplain. It is located in the Passive Floodplain of The Wash tidal defences and fluvial River Welland protected by defences to both a 1 in 100 and a 1 in 200 year return periods.

. The site is in Flood Zone 1 with the actual risk of site flooding from any Environment Agency river system being very low (less than 0.5%).

. Although the site is located within an Internal Drainage District with a minimum standard of drainage of 1 in 50 years, this accords with Defra guidelines for rural development. Freeboard to design water level of 900mm to lowest land level is available for events greater than 1 in 50 years providing further storage within the drainage channels.

. On site rainwater from the development will be discharged via soakaway drainage to BRE365 design requirements.

. Floor level of the breeding unit will be 300mm above existing ground level with flood resilient construction incorporated up to 300mm above finished floor level.

Conclusions

Following the refusal of planning permission and unsuccessful planning appeal the current application is made as a positive response to the decision reached over the last year.

Neither the local council of the Planning Inspectorate objected to the agricultural (rabbit breeding) element and it is that which forms the core of this submission.

It is considered that the application proposal is consistent with the provisions of the development plan (both adopted and emerging) and the NPPF.

The proposal is considered to be an appropriate agricultural type use and as such is acceptable within the open countryside. There are no policies or environmental constraints that would constrain the development and as such it is requested that planning permission be granted.

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