Mr G Franklin

Planning, Design and Access Statement
(includes Heritage Impact Assessment)
Full Planning Application
Proposed Agricultural Produce Store
Mill House Farm, Roman Bank, Fleet

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1. THE PROPOSAL

1.1. This application is a resubmission of a similar application (H05-0851-20) that was withdrawn in October 2020. That application was the subject of positive pre-application advice from the local planning authority, specifically in relation to the impact on the setting of the adjacent Listed Building. Following the submission of the application and despite amendment to the siting of the proposal (doubling the distance to the boundary), the application was recommended for refusal.

1.2. After the original application was withdrawn, an application under Section 191 (H05-0063-21) was submitted to establish lawful use of the site (at the request of the local planning authority) for the continued storage of essentially third-party agricultural produce. Application. This was granted and so the use is now essentially akin to a B8 warehouse, storage and distribution site.

1.3. Following the grant of the application under Section 191, an application was submitted under Section 192 (H05-0474-21) to establish whether an extension to the existing building could be constructed under Permitted Development rights. This application was approved and the applicant can construct the building in accordance with the approved details. The importance of this decision is that the applicant can construct a building no closer than 10m with the boundary with the adjacent Listed Building whereas the local planning authority had recommended refusal of a largely similar building some 16m away from the boundary which also included tree planting.

1.4. This resubmitted planning application is therefore for a slightly smaller building to be constructed behind the building to be constructed as permitted development.

1.5. Mill House Farm is a large modern agricultural produce storage base consisting of an existing of range of purpose made buildings which provide cold storage for third party agricultural produce and for the applicant's own produce, together with grading equipment.

1.6. The existing buildings are at capacity and therefore the need has arisen for additional agricultural produce storage.

1.7. The production of agricultural produce, and in particular potatoes, necessitates the need for storage facilities to cater for seasonal production together with storage for out of season demand.

1.8. It is therefore proposed to construct an extension to the existing buildings to create an additional 2,217sqm of floorspace consisting of 1460sqm of storage and 757sqm of service 'corridor' linking the existing and proposed buildings.

1.9. The site of the new storage buildings was until recently occupied by glasshouses as can be seen from the aerial photograph below.



1.10. Access to the new building is to the north via the existing entrances off Roman Bank, together with the secondary access off the private road serving QV Foods.

1.11. There are no immediate plans to refrigerate the buildings, however, should that become a requirement, the applicant is prepared to accept a planning condition that would require details of the necessary plant and equipment to be submitted and approved prior to installation.

1.12. In order to provide appropriate surface water drainage for the new building, a correctly sized underground crate system will be provided to ensure surface water is attenuated on site to ensure greenfield run-off rates are maintained.

2. AMOUNT AND SCALE

2.1. The proposed building covers an area of approximately XXXX sqm with parking and turning for tractors, trailers and HGV's within the existing yard. The building is approximately 57.5m long (max), 37m wide, 6.8m to the eaves and 10.1m to the ridge (max).

2.2. The height of the building is dictated by the need to ensure maximum internal storage of 1.1m high potato boxes and to ensure machinery can operate safely inside.

2.3. It is proposed to locate the new building behind the building that is being constructed under permitted development rights. The building to be constructed under permitted development rights is 10.5m from the southern site boundary and the building that is the subject of this application is 29m from the southern boundary. The scale of the site is commensurate with other agricultural industry in the area and reflects the scale of modern agricultural operations. The proposal is, therefore, commensurate with Local Plan Policy 3.

3. LANDSCAPE AND APPEARANCE

3.1. The site lies in open countryside to the north of the A17 in a region characterised by areas of mature trees and hedgerows that serve to reduce long-distance views across the agricultural landscape that is usually commonplace on this part of south Lincolnshire. The approach to the farmstead is via winding roads such that there are no distant views of the site.

3.2. The proposal will eventually be glimpsed behind the building currently under construction under permitted development rights. The proposed building will be constructed in the same materials as those used for the existing group of buildings.

3.3. Buildings of the scale of this current proposal are commonplace in this rural landscape and can be accommodated with little adverse impact. The proposal adds to the existing mass of buildings on the site and will go largely unnoticed behind the building being constructed under permitted development rights.

4. ACCESS AND HIGHWAYS

4.1. Mill House Farm is accessed from the east and west off Roman Bank which in turn links to the A17. As mentioned previously, there is an existing access from the site frontage off Roman Bank and a secondary access off the private road that serves QV Foods. These will remain unchanged.

4.2. There will be some increase in traffic to the site, however this will be off-set by avoiding the need to transport produce from the site to external third party and then bring it back for sorting and packing prior to being sent out to the customer. By centralising the operation, there will be a negligible impact on vehicle movements to and from the site. In addition, the movements attributable to the proposal are well within the daily fluctuation of existing movements in the area.

4.3. The current farming operation at Mill House Farm stores potatoes which are harvested and brought to the site using a mixture of agricultural tractors and trailers and bulk HGV's from September through to the end of October/early November each year. This volume of produce equates to approximately 40 vehicle movements into the site each week over this period. Once in storage, the potatoes are then taken out to customers on a demand basis throughout the year. Some of the potatoes arrive and leave the site using public roads and some (approximately one third) travel between the application site and the AH Worth site to the north using the existing private road that links the two sites. There is an access into the application site at the rear (north) off the private road.

4.4. The proposed building will have the capacity to store approximately 1,000 tonnes of potatoes but will also be used to store harvesting and grading equipment (there is no processing on site) when not in use. Again, the harvested potatoes will arrive by both agricultural tractor and trailer and by HGV bulker and some will be brought to and from the site via the private road that links the application site to AH Worth to the north. The additional vehicle numbers will equate to approximately 5-6 additional movements per week during the harvesting season and on average 1-2 vehicles per week leaving the site throughout the year. These numbers will be 'diluted' due to direct movements between the application site and AH Worth to the north, which do not impact on the local road network.

4.5. Overall, the increase above the existing operation is small. When compared to the volume of traffic that currently operates from the AH Worth site which equates to approximately 100 HGV movements in and 100 HGV movements out per day, the increase in traffic volume attributable to the proposal is negligible and certainly well within the daily fluctuation of traffic on the local road network surrounding the site.

4.6. The proposal is, therefore, compliant with Local Plan policy 3 and the general principles of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

5. SURFACE WATER RUN-OFF AND FLOOD RISK

5.1. The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment which identifies that the site is safe from flooding and a proposed surface water drainage strategy indicates that there will be no impact on adjoining land uses and land users from increased surface water run-off.

6. HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1. It is proposed to erect the extension to the rear of a building being constructed under permitted development rights. That building will be 10.5m away from the boundary of the adjacent dwelling to the south. The application building will be behind that, some 29m away from the southern boundary of the site. Mill House is Grade II Listed Building and was presumably once associated with the current application site. The photograph below is taken from within the site looking at the northern boundary of the curtilage of the Listed Building.



6.2. The impact on the setting of the Listed Building from the proposal is, we believe, minimal, having regard to the presence of the existing yard and buildings and the new extension being constructed under permitted development rights. The recent erection of the various extensions and outbuildings especially along the rear curtilage of the Listed Building have had an impact on the significance of the heritage asset.

6.3. In the event that the local planning authority considers the proposal results in "less than significant impact", there is a wider public benefit from the proposal in the form of facilitating continued efficient agricultural production and storage, and the continued expansion of the agricultural business that employs local people weighs in favour of the application.

6.4. The proposal therefore accords with local plan policy 29.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Due to continued expansion, the applicant requires additional agricultural produce storage and for incidental agricultural machinery storage.

7.2. The new building is set off the southern boundary and behind a building under construction which is the same height as the application building. The site was previously occupied by glasshouses which were close to the same boundary.

7.3. Traffic movements will be largely neutral with benefits in economies of scale.

7.4. Overall, the proposal will add to the existing mass of buildings on site and will have a light touch on the landscape.

7.5. The proposal complies with adopted policies in the local plan, the principles of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF and is acceptable in all other respects.

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