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Our ref: 4477-26

**CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL TO LAND FOR HOLIDAY LETS, INCLUDING THE SITING
OF 4 NO SHEPERDS HUTS & 1 NO LODGE (PART RETROSPECTIVE)**

HILLGATE FARM

STATION ROAD

GEDNEY HILL

SPALDING

LINCS

PE12 0NP

FOR

MR G COLE



FUNCTIONAL LINK ASSESSMENT

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The application is to acquire Change of Use of part of the existing agricultural land to the rear of the agricultural farm enterprise for the siting of 4 No shepherds huts and 1 No lodge for holiday lets for the benefit of Mr Cole.

Policy 9 of the SELLP sets out that outside settlement boundaries “small-scale” development to support the visitor economy, including farm diversification, equine development and fishing lakes, will be supported provided that proposals:-

1. Do not conflict with neighbouring land uses
2. are in keeping with the character of the locality: and
3. demonstrate a functional link with an existing rural attraction or farm enterprise.

The existing site has acoustic and visual buffering to the North and East of the site by earth banking and mature planting to ensure privacy for both neighbours and the guests. To the West of the site is the existing farm enterprise along with proposed planting to the South.

Visitor vehicles will utilise the farm’s existing established access point off the main road, which already handles very large agricultural machinery safely. The minor addition of occasional holidaymaker vehicles will have a negligible impact on local highway capacity and safety.

Shepherds Huts are traditional agricultural structures. Their design incorporating timber cladding, curved roofs and iron wheels inherently harmonise with a countryside farm setting far better than modern caravans and lodges.

The huts sit on wheels and require no permanent concrete foundations. This means that development is entirely reversible: the land can easily be restored to its original agricultural state in the future, preserving the long-term integrity of the soil and the lake’s edge.

The huts will be subtly integrated into the lakeside landscape. They intend to complement the setup with sensitive, native landscaping to ensure the structures blend seamlessly into the environment while actively supporting local biodiversity.

The proposed countryside project created an acceptable functional link as the holiday lodges are positioned as farm diversification to supplement a multi-generational agricultural business. Also, the private fishing facility has utilised existing natural water topography and farm structures to expand outdoor recreation.

The above evidence satisfies the requirements and demonstrates how this low-impact project supports sustainable rural tourism while safeguarding the countryside.

G R Merchant Ltd

August 2026