

Your ref: PP-11794855
Our ref: JB73462
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Date: 22nd December 2022

Planning and Development Control
Lincolnshire County Council
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Newland
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Dear Sirs

**PROPOSED NEW AGRICULTURAL BUILDING
D E BRAND & SONS – LAND AND BUILDING AT BIRDS DROVE**

Please find enclosed a Prior Notification under Part 6 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended 2018 for a proposed agricultural storage building at Birds Drove, Surfleet, Spalding, PE11 4BE.

The application is submitted online via the Planning Portal (Ref: PP-11794855).

The Site

D E Brand & Sons (the applicant) are situated Birds Drove, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Location of Birds Drove



Bidwell House, Trumpington Road, Cambridge CB2 9LD
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The farm extends to approximately 315 hectares (778 acres) comprising 312.57 hectares (772.36 acres) of agricultural land, with the applicant looking to take on further land in the area. This application relates to the combinable arable farming enterprise, which centres around the farmyard to the north of Birds Drove.

Figure 2 – Aerial image of site



The land has been farmed by the applicant and his family for many years, with farming operations primarily comprising arable and horticultural farming, alongside glasshouse growing and packing activities. The land is all classified as Grade 1 on the former Ministry of Agricultural Land Classification Series. These soils are some of the best in the country, capable of growing a variety of crops including sugar beet, potatoes, field vegetables, horticultural crops, cereals and grassland. The arable rotation comprises potatoes, cereals and other root crops. The average cereal production of the holding is increasing, accounting for 540 acres as of the end of 2022. However, the applicant is currently unable to increase the combinable arable area due to a lack of suitable storage provision for grain and produce.

The land occupied by the applicant is suitable for the growth of a number of high value crops which require specialist machinery. Growing these crops in rotation is also essential for soil health and productivity.

Given the range of high value crops growable on the holding, and the size of the farm, this means that the applicant has an increasing requirement for crop storage as well as a large amount of machinery in the yard which is required for agricultural operations throughout the year. There is an area of hardstanding due north of the site across Birds Drove, which is also the site of an existing grain store which is already fully utilised, but as evidenced below, this is in full use and does not have any further space for machinery or crop storage.

Proposal and Agricultural Justification

The existing agricultural buildings and hardstanding at Birds Drove are fully utilised for the storage of cereals and crops. However, there is a significant deficit of storage space for cereals, which are encompassing an increasing share of the applicant's crops, with the applicant currently farming 540 acres of cereals. This has increased from 300 acres, which was the scale of the cereal enterprise in 2020 at the time of construction of the adjacent grain store. The existing grain store is able to hold two different cereal varieties but cannot be adapted to accommodate additional varieties. It is essential that different

varieties are kept separately and there is no risk of cross contamination between crops and varieties as this will impact on the ability to sell the produce and the price achievable.

Moreover, the applicant has the opportunity to expand the cereal enterprise to 850 acres in total, in the 2023/4 season, as well as looking to grow an additional crop/variety, which would require additional and separate storage, the storage provision for which cannot simply be incorporated into the existing building.

As such the current productive capacity of cereal crops exceeds that which is available within the existing grain store and, as such, storage capacity is the limiting factor for the productivity of the applicant's arable operations.

Furthermore, the upscaling of farming operations and additional crop varieties incurs a need for more under cover agricultural machinery storage, where currently much of agricultural machinery is stored open to the elements causing greater rate of dilapidation to machinery. This can have a significant economic impact on the farm business, as machinery stored outside will have a shorter operational lifespan and requires more frequent repairs. Moreover, with incidences of organised rural crime on the rise, the provision of secure storage for high value arable machinery will reduce the incidence of having to store valuable farm machinery in open fields where it is vulnerable and unprotected.

Storing grain and other cereal crops indoors in high quality, moisture managed storage is vitally important for preserving the crop by preventing mould and fungi growth, which are a product of moisture penetration, as well as protecting the crop from spoilage by mites and other pests. Consequently, the provision of high quality storage fit for purpose is essential to both the crops safety and enabling the applicant to store sell the crop outside of peak harvest periods and subsequently obtain a better price and increase the profitability for the farm business.

In providing secure, high quality agricultural storage immediately adjacent to the existing storage building and hardstanding, this will reduce the need for off-site storage reducing farm traffic in the immediate area and will allow the farm business to expand, supporting a prosperous rural economy. As evidenced in the attached plans, the building also provides self-contained farm office space to compliment the increased agricultural activity at the site to the north of the lane. Through incorporating the situation of the new building adjacent to the existing unit with contiguous associated hardstanding, this negates the need for additional access and limits disruption to the traffic flow at the site, while improving manoeuvrability for farm traffic at the new building.

The Location

We enclose the Site Plan and Block Plan which show the proposed location of the building.

The location for the new building and hardstanding adjoins along the northern edge of the existing agricultural building and concrete hardstanding directly to the north of Bird's Drove, to the extent that the proposed building forms a mirror image of the existing building along the existing building's northern wall.

The location has been identified as being in close proximity to the existing operations and is entirely contained within the existing farmstead. The proposed location will provide considerable benefits both in terms of sustainability and minimising costs to the farming operation. It will substantially improve the operational effectiveness of the unit.

It is considered that the proposed location will be of no detriment to the landscape, character or appearance of the site, being contained within the existing line of buildings. The building will be accessed from the existing access routes and internal hardstanding, with minor provision of additional hardstanding to provide a suitable access and turning area.

The barn will allow for the storage of cereals and associated machinery to be located on one site, thus reducing movements on the local highways network. The proposed site is accessible via the existing farm tracks and the farms landholding. The proposal will reduce transport costs and there will be no unnecessary transportation movements and no impact on the highways network.

The Design

The design of the proposed storage building is typical of modern agricultural buildings and reflective of the adjacent grain store. The building will be steel portal framed, comprising 8 bays at a width of 6m, and will be designed to BS5502 Class 2 standard.

The elevations will be clad in concrete block and insulated composite panel cladding, which will be fully weatherproof. The roof is to be clad in insulated composite panel cladding, which will ensure that the building will be dry and weatherproof, and therefore suitable for the storage of grain and machinery.

The eaves will extend to a height of 7.5m and ridge height of 9.53m, with two bay roller shutter doors. The dimensions of the building will be 48m by 20.7m.

The proposed design is considered to be appropriate for the use of the building and is in keeping with the adjacent agricultural buildings. It reflects the design of the adjacent building and is considered to be appropriate for the character of the area.

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended 2018 – Part 6 Class A

Part 6 Class A allows for:

“The carrying out on agricultural land comprised in an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more in an area of

(a) works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building; or

(b) any excavation or engineering operations,

Which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit”.

It has been demonstrated above that the proposal is reasonably necessary (and arguably essential) for the purposes of agriculture on the agricultural unit. The proposal fully complies with the criteria set out within Part 6 Class A, as set out in Table 1 below.

DEVELOPMENT IS NOT PERMITTED BY CLASS A IF -	CRITERIA COMPLIANCE
(a) the development would be carried out on a separate parcel of land forming part of the unit which is less than 1 hectare in area;	The parcel of land within the unit subject of the proposal exceeds 1 hectare.
(b) it would consist of the erection or extension of any building on an established agricultural unit (as defined in paragraph X Part 3) where development under Class Q or S of Part 3 (changes of use) of this Schedule has been carried out within a period of 10 years ending with	No such permitted development rights have been implemented within the unit.

the date on which development under Class A(a) begins;	
(c) it would consist of, or include, the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling;	The proposal does not consist of, or include, the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling.
(d) it would involve the provision of a building, structure or works not designed for agricultural purposes;	The building has been designed entirely for agricultural purposes, as demonstrated above.
(e) the ground area would be covered by – (i) any works or structure (other than a fence) for accommodating livestock or any plant or machinery arising from engineering operations, or (ii) any building erected or extended or altered by virtue of Class A, would exceed 1,000 square metres	The proposed floor area of the building is 994 square metres.
(f) the height of any part of the building, structure or works within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 3 metres;	The proposal is not within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome.
(g) the height of any part of the building, structure or works not within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 12 metres;	The proposed ridge height of the building is 9.53 metres.
(h) any part of the development would be within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk or classified road;	The proposal does not fall within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk or classified road
(i) it would consist of, or include the erection or construction of, or the carrying out of any works to, a building, structure or excavation used or to be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge where the building, structure or excavation, or would be, within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building;	The proposal is for an agricultural storage building. It will not be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge. The very nature and design of the building ensures this is not possible.
(j) it would involve excavations or engineering operations on or over article 2 (4) land which are connected with fish farming; or	The proposal does not involve excavations or engineering operations on or over article 2 (4) land which are connected with fish farming.
(k) any building for storing fuel or waste from a biomass boiler or an aerobic digestion system –	The proposal does not involve the storing fuel or waste from a biomass boiler or an aerobic digestion system.

(i) would be used for storing waste not produced by that boiler system or for storing fuel not produced on land within the unit, or (ii) is or would be within 400m of the curtilage of a protected building.	
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Summary

There is an essential requirement for the provision of a new agricultural building at Bird's Drove for the storage of cereals and other crops, which are produced on the agricultural unit by the applicant.

Currently grain and cereals must be sold directly from the field or stored at a cooperative which is inefficient and uneconomical and creates unnecessary additional vehicle movements, particularly during harvest time. With the applicant's plans to take on further land for cereal production, this will only compound these issues in the future

The provision of a new storage building will therefore significantly enhance farming operations, benefit the farm financially and provide a safe, secure location for the storage of grain and machinery.

The proposal fully complies with all of the criteria set out under Part 6 Class A, as demonstrated within this statement and it is considered prior approval should therefore be granted for the proposal.

Application Documents

The application is submitted online via the Planning Portal and comprises the following documents:

- Application Form
- Covering Letter and Statement
- Site Plan
- Block Plan
- Proposed Elevations
- Proposed Floor Plan

If you wish to arrange a site visit or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



Louise Newton MRICS

Associate, Rural

For and on behalf of Bidwells LLP