

F DRING AND SONS LIMITED

rdc
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Planning, Design and Access Statement
Change of Use of Agricultural Buildings to Flexible
Commercial Uses.
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town planning



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by the Robert Doughty Consultancy Limited on behalf of F Dring and Sons Limited in relation to a Full Planning Application for the change of use of an existing range of agricultural buildings to a flexible commercial use to include uses classes E g) iii) (Industrial process), B2 (general industry) and B8 (storage and distribution).
- 1.2. There are two glasshouses on site together with 4 other agricultural buildings that will remain in agricultural use.
- 1.3. There is an existing worker's welfare building (toilets and canteen) used as part of the existing agricultural use which will continue to operate as such for the intended commercial use.
- 1.4. Access into the site will be gained from the existing access onto High Road with the access onto Hockney Hole Lane .
- 1.5. The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment which has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF.
- 1.6. The proposal accords with the provisions of the development plan and national guidance and is acceptable in all other respects.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1. The application site is located to the north of the A151 (High Road), approximately 1km from Moulton village and immediately west and north west of the Chandlers Farm Equipment premises. There is also another commercial premises north of Hockney Hole Lane east of the application site which was formerly a horticultural business.



Location Plan showing the extent of the application site
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- 2.2. The application site consists of a range of mainly steel framed portal buildings which form the farming base for F Dring and Sons Ltd. Due to a change in the farming structure of the business, the yard and buildings will no longer be needed in their entirety for agricultural use and so the

decision has been taken to repurpose them for flexible commercial uses by way of farm diversification.

- 2.3. Access into the site is from both the A151 (High Road) and from a relatively new access onto Hockney Hole Lane which was constructed to serve the Chandlers Farm Machinery premises to the north-west.
- 2.4. The north-western boundary of the site is characterised by a number of mature trees which will remain, and the existing track to the site from Hockney Hole Lane has a landscaped bund on the northern edge between it and Hockney Hole Lane.
- 2.5. There are five dwellings on the northern side of Hockney Hole Lane together with a horticultural business. There is a dwelling immediately adjacent to the application site fronting High Road which is in the ownership of the applicant company.

3. PLANNING POLICY

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.1. The NPPF sets out Central Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

3.2. Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the NPPF confirm the commitment to sustainable development based on three dimensions:

"an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible local services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' the community's health, social and cultural well-being; and

an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."

3.3. This is followed by a commitment to a presumption in favour of sustainable development and at paragraph 11,

"For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or,

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i) The application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or

ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

3.4. Paragraph 12 confirms that applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan and that, in such cases, Local Authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable

development. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan permission should not normally be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

- 3.5. Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that planning policies and decisions should enable the expansion and sustainable growth of all types of businesses in rural areas through the conversion of existing buildings. In addition, there should be recognition that sites to meet local business needs may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements.

Development Plan

- 3.6. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that, "If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."
- 3.7. The development plan consists of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2019 ('the local plan') and the following policies are considered relevant in the determination of this application.
- 3.8. Policy 1: Spatial Strategy - identifies that in the countryside, development will be permitted that is necessary to such a location and/**or** (our emphasis) where it can be demonstrated that it meets the sustainable development needs of the area in terms of economic, community or environmental benefits. The Reasoned Justification sets out that there are types of development that require a Countryside location, either because it is the location of an existing building or use of land.
- 3.9. Policy 2: Development Management – this is a positive policy which indicates that development will be permitted where sustainable development considerations are met specifically in relation to 9 areas; including impact on the character and appearance of the area, access and vehicle generation levels, impact on neighbouring land uses and the enhancement of natural habitats.

- 3.10. Policy 4: Approach to Flood Risk, requires applications be accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment covering all sources of flooding and include the impacts of climate change.
- 3.11. Policy 7: Improving South East Lincolnshire's Employment Land Portfolio – under the subheading "Other Employment Sites" identifies that new employment development/businesses will be supported provided that the proposal involves the re-use of redundant buildings. The Reasoned Justification sets out that national planning policy supports the conversion of existing buildings in the Countryside for economic development and also that the desire to promote rural employment must be balanced with the need to protect the existing character of the Countryside.

4. DESIGN AND ACCESS

Use

- 4.1. The application proposes the change of use of the range of existing agricultural buildings on site to flexible commercial uses that fall into use classes E g) iii) (Industrial process) and B2 (general industry) and B8 (storage and distribution). There is also a building used as a farm office which will most likely stay as an office, together with three agricultural buildings and welfare facilities which will also remain as such. The buildings on site are all relatively simple portal frame structures which require little alteration to facilitate the changes of use proposed here.
- 4.2. A range of commercial uses is being proposed as there are no tenants yet and so specific uses for each building is not possible, however, there has been significant interest expressed to the applicant by companies interested in moving to the site.
- 4.3. It is likely that the range of uses will encompass everything from third party storage of agricultural produce, small-scale manufacturing, general storage and office use.
- 4.4. The sensitive receptors that are to the north of Hockney Hole Lane are largely protected by an earth embankment along the northern boundary of the site and having regard to the current unrestricted agricultural use of the site, it is unlikely that there will be any greater impact above that which already exists at present.
- 4.5. The proposed uses are commensurate with the national and local desire to facilitate diversification of the rural economy and it is likely that the reuse of this busy agricultural yard will go largely unnoticed other than for the proposed uses being less likely to operate outside of normal working hours and at weekends, unlike the unrestricted agricultural use. In addition, the changes to the permitted development rights has seen the ability to change up to 500sqm of floor space from agricultural use to flexible commercial uses without planning permission. This further underlines an intention to see redundant agricultural buildings reused with as little intervention as possible from the planning system.
- 4.6. Local plan policy 7 is a positive policy which promotes the change of use of buildings in the countryside and identifies how this will contribute positively to the economic portfolio of the district.

- 4.7. The proposed use accords with both local and national planning policy and guidance and is therefore acceptable in principle.

Scale

- 4.8. The existing buildings on site are typical of many other such buildings and save from some new doors and cladding, they will require very little alteration to facilitate the intended changes of use.
- 4.9. The submitted drawings show the range of proposed alterations.
- 4.10. Overall, the scale of the buildings will remain exactly as they are today and accordingly there will be no impact on the wider character of the area.

Access

- 4.11. The existing complex is a busy agricultural farmstead with a number of buildings, together with two glasshouses. A range of often large, slow-moving agricultural machinery frequent the site along with HGV's that distribute produce to the marketplace. The number of staff employed on site fluctuates with seasonal and customer demand. The use operates throughout the year, often at weekends and outside of the normal hours of the working day.
- 4.12. There is ample parking provision within the site and access onto the A151 at the junction with Hockney Hole Lane has good visibility in both directions.
- 4.13. A review of the Crash Map website reveals that in 2020 there was very sadly one road fatality beyond 20m of the junction with the A151 however, this was not associated with the junction itself. There are no recorded incidents attributable to vehicles using the two existing junctions in question.
- 4.14. **Other Material Considerations**
- 4.15. A Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF and policy 4 of the local plan.
- 4.16. The assessment concludes that the site is not at risk of flooding and there is no change to the existing surface water run-off arrangements.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. The principle of the reuse of buildings in the Countryside is supported by local plan policy 1, which identifies that in the countryside, development will be permitted that is necessary to such a location and/or (our emphasis) where it can be demonstrated that it meets the sustainable development needs of the area in terms of economic, community or environmental benefits. The Reasoned Justification sets out that there are types of development that require a Countryside location either because it is the location of an existing building or use of land. Equally, local plan policy 7 identifies that new employment development/businesses will be supported, provided that the proposal involves the re-use of redundant buildings. The Reasoned Justification sets out that national planning policy supports the conversion of existing buildings in the Countryside for economic development and also that the desire to promote rural employment must be balanced with the need to protect the existing character of the Countryside.
- 5.2. The proposal meets the sustainable economic needs of the area and, therefore, complies with local plan policies 1 and 7 and meets the guidance as set out in Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which sets out that planning policies and decisions should enable the expansion and sustainable growth of all types of businesses in rural areas through the conversion of existing buildings. In addition, there should be recognition that sites to meet local business needs may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements.
- 5.3. The proposal therefore accords with the development plan and national planning guidance and is acceptable in all other respects.

A design consultancy specialising in
Town and Country Planning,
Landscape Architecture and
Architecture