J B ROBINSON & SON LIMITED

Planning, Design and Access Statement
Full Planning Application
Proposed Extension to Agricultural Building
Providence House, North Drove, Quadring Fen,
PE11 4QS

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1. THE PROPOSAL

1.1. This application is for the erection of an extension to the existing agricultural buildings at Providence House, Quadring Fen which is the main farming base for J B Robinson & Son Limited to provide additional produce storage grown by the farm.

1.2. Providence House is the main farming base for the company which grows a variety of flowers, vegetables and cereals across 554ha (1,368 acres) in the Quadring Fen area.

1.3. During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, three local farmers decided to leave farming and our client purchased the land which amounted to a further 110ha (271 acres). The buildings on the three farms were not purchased with the land as they were too old, in a poor state of repair and generally not up to modern standard. In addition, maintaining and running three farmyards in addition to the existing one at Providence House would be costly and difficult to operate efficiently. The decision was therefore taken to construct the additional stores at providence House to provide obvious economies of scale.

1.4. The new grain store will accommodate 2,500-3,000 tonnes of grain and the remaining floor space will be used to store potatoes and farming equipment.

1.5. There will be no third-party produce stored within the proposals. The recent part change of use of 15% of the existing floorspace at the farm to store third-party produce is unaffected because for the majority of the year that floor space is used for storing produce grown on the applicant's farm.

2. AMOUNT AND SCALE

2.1. The proposed building covers an area of approximately 5874sqm and is divided up into a grain store, a central corridor and manoeuvring areas and extensions to the existing stores together with a proposed hardstanding area at the rear. The building is approximately 66m long (max), 99m wide (max), 8m to the eaves (max) and 11.2m 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 such as grain trailers and elevators can operate safely.

2.3. It is proposed to erect the new building to the rear of the existing farmyard. The scale of the site is commensurate with other agricultural farmsteads across the district and reflects the scale of modern agricultural operations. The proposal is, therefore, compliant with Local Plan Policy 3.

3. LANDSCAPE AND APPEARANCE

3.1. The site lies in open countryside to the south of North Drove which has wide, well-maintained verges and a mature hedgerow on both sides. The hedgerows serve to screen the site from the limited views afforded from public vantage points along North Drove. There are no Public Rights of Way near the site.

3.2. 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 within the wider landscape.

3.3. The buildings will be clad in Juniper green plastic-coated sheeting to match the existing range.

4. ACCESS AND HIGHWAYS

4.1. Providence House has an existing access on to North Drove which will remain unaltered.

4.2. There will be some increase in traffic to the site, however, it should be remembered that the use of the buildings is largely seasonal (especially in relation to the grain storage) and the produce is already

being grown and transported, it is just that the final destination will now be Providence House as opposed to the farms that the applicant company has recently purchased. In addition, the movements attributable to the proposal are well within the daily fluctuation of existing movements in the area, often generated by non-agricultural businesses based along North Drove.

4.3. The proposed buildings cannot be based elsewhere due to the need for a centralised farming operation.

4.4. 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 site is located in Flood Zone 3a which is defined as a being an area with a high probability of flooding.

5.2. Agriculture is classed as 'less vulnerable' in table 2 of the NPPF and represents appropriate development in Flood Zone 3a.

5.3. The South Holland District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (March 20217) identifies that the application site has no flood hazard rating in the 2115 scenario.

5.4. The proposed buildings will essentially 'share' an existing concrete apron and the connection through to existing farm buildings requires the same finished floor levels to be maintained.

5.5. The buildings will be used to store produce and machinery and are not permanently manned or used for sleeping accommodation.

5.6. The buildings cannot be located elsewhere due to the requirement for them to form part of the existing farm complex.

5.7. Surface water will go to the existing surface water pond on the site.

6. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1. The proposal is to be erected at the rear of the existing building complex on an area of land used for the parking of agricultural machinery and potato boxes. There are no ecological issues associated with the development of the site and no impact on any known constraints on the site.

6.2. There are no sensitive receptors near the site that are not under the control of the applicant and it is not anticipated that the operation of the buildings will have any impact beyond the boundaries of the site.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Due to continued expansion in the form of additional farmland, the applicant requires additional agricultural produce and machinery storage.

7.2. The new building is located to the rear of the existing complex and will go largely unnoticed within the wider rural landscape.

7.3. Traffic movements will increase to and from the site but on the basis that the land the applicant has bought is already under agricultural production, it is essentially the same traffic just going to a new destination.

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