

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 24 MAY 2017

Application Number	3/17/0041/FUL
Proposal	Erection of two new agricultural buildings
Location	Tile Kiln Farm, Standon Road, Little Hadham, SG11 2HP
Applicant	Mr R Barclay
Parish	Albury CP
Ward	Little Hadham

Date of Registration of Application	11 January 2017
Target Determination Date	12 April 2017
Reason for Committee Report	Major application
Case Officer	Martin Plummer

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions set out at the end of this report.

1.0 Summary

1.1 The development proposal is for agricultural buildings located in an agricultural and countryside setting where existing and emerging Rural Area policy allows for such development. The proposed buildings are of an appropriate size, scale, form and design such that there will be no significant harm to the rural setting or landscape character. The proposal will not materially increase traffic movements and is located where appropriate visibility can be provided. The development is acceptable in respect of the impact on a public right of way, drainage matters and neighbour amenity impact.

2.0 Site Description

2.1 The application site is located approximately 250 metres north of the A120 and to the north east of Tile Kiln Farmland and the A120 Veterinary Hospital. Little Hadham village lies approximately 0.5km to the east. The site comprises of an open meadow with a woodland (Alburyend Wood) to the immediate north and a ditch/hedgerow to the south. The site is surrounded by agricultural fields and is located in an agricultural setting.

2.2 There is a farm track to the west of the application site which links to Tile Kiln Farm to the south west of the site and to the north of the site to other agricultural fields. A public right of way (No21) starts from the A120 to the south and follows a northerly direction passing through the application site.

3.0 Background to Proposal

3.1 Tile Kiln Farm is located to the south west of the application site and comprises the grade II listed farm house and various agricultural buildings. Those buildings are not currently used as part of the farming enterprise by virtue of their inadequate size for modern farming practices. They have therefore become derelict and are of a very poor and dilapidated appearance.

3.2 The applicant has agricultural land surrounding Tile Kiln Farm (141 acres) and at Albury (1380 acres) to the north. The wider farm business operates from three separate farms, Beaches and Cole Green in Brent Pelham and Hixham Hall in Furneux Pelham – all of which are some distance further to the north. The combined size of buildings used as part of that operation at Brent Pelham and Furneux Pelham is 2650 square metres.

3.3 Two of these farms are rented and one is in the ownership of the applicant. The primary reason for the application is to amalgamate the farming operation to one location which will save on rent and reduce vehicular traffic movements between the site at Tile Kiln Farm and Albury and Brent Pelham/Furneux Pelham (estimated to be approximately 2000 traffic movements in one year).

3.4 The development in this application seeks planning permission for a new entrance off the A120 leading to a site for two detached agricultural buildings. The site for the proposed buildings is located approximately 250 metres to the north of the A120. One of the proposed buildings is a storage unit with a footprint of 756 square metres and a height of 9.7 metres. The other building is larger and will contain drying facilities with a footprint of 1800 square metres and a height of 11.2 metres. Both buildings have a utilitarian type design with a brick plinth, metal sheeting and a shallow pitched roof.

4.0 Key Policy Issues

4.1 These relate to the relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adopted East Herts Local Plan 2007:

Key Issue	NPPF	Local Plan policy	Pre-submission District Plan
The principle of development	Para 28	GBC2, GBC3	GBR2
Impact on the character and appearance of the rural setting and landscape features	Section 7	GBC7, ENV1	DES1-3
Highway safety and access		TR2, TR20, LRC9	TRA1-2, CFLR3.

Other relevant issues are referred to in the ‘Consideration of Relevant Issues’ section below.

5.0 Emerging District Plan

5.1 The District Plan has been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. The view of the Council is that the Plan has been positively prepared, seeking to ensure significantly increased housing development during the plan period. The weight that can be assigned to the policies in the emerging plan can now be increased, given it has reached a further stage in preparation. There does remain a need to qualify that weight somewhat, given that the Plan has yet to be examined.

6.0 Summary of Consultee Responses

6.1 HCC Highway Authority comment that they do not wish to restrict the grant of planning permission subject to planning conditions. The proposed access as shown in the submitted drawing is acceptable and appropriate visibility is achievable given the low volume of traffic that is proposed to use the access.

6.2 Lead Local Flood Authority recommends that planning permission be approved subject to planning conditions requiring the implementation of the approved drainage scheme. It comments that the proposed development can be adequately drained and mitigate any potential existing surface water flood risk.

- 6.3 EHDC Engineering Advisor comments that the site is situated within flood zone 1 (low risk) where there are no records of historic flood incidents. The proposals would increase the area of impermeable land at the site and he comments that the construction of the development as currently detailed is not considered as a sustainable construction and would be contrary to policy ENV21 of the Local Plan.
- 6.4 EHDC Landscape Advisor recommends approval subject to a condition requiring landscape design proposals.

The retained woodland restricts views within the undulating landscape and provides screening and containment for the development. The proposals include an indicative 'green link' by way of tree planting along the western site boundary linking the watercourse to Alburyend Wood - providing an ecological corridor in the interests of increasing biodiversity. There needs to be a management plan for the existing and proposed woodland that promotes locally indigenous species, a diverse age structure and a species rich ground flora.

There may need to be some cutting back or removal of scrub to provide sight lines for the access but this will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the landscape character of this section of the A120 as sufficient vegetation will be retained.

- 6.5 Countryside Access Officer comments that there are concerns in respect of users of the public right of way and vehicles using the access to the buildings. If vehicle movements are likely to be significant, the public footpath should be surfaced and fenced off to a width of 3 metres.

7.0 Parish Council Representations

- 7.1 No representations received.

8.0 Summary of Other Representations

- 8.1 None received.

9.0 Planning History

- 9.1 There is no relevant planning history for the site.

10.0 Consideration of Relevant Issues

Principle of development

- 10.1 The site is located within the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt wherein policy GBC3a) allows for the erection of development for agricultural purposes. The principle of the proposed development is therefore acceptable.
- 10.2 That is supported by national planning policy and, in addition, paragraph 28 of the NPPF sets out that planning policy should support economic growth to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable development through the provision of well-designed new buildings.
- 10.3 In accordance with those policy considerations, there is no objection in principle to the provision of an agricultural building in this location, subject to the building having an acceptable visual impact and having regard to all other relevant planning considerations.

Character and appearance

- 10.4 Policy GBC7 of the Local Plan sets out the criteria to be considered in relation to proposed agricultural development in the District. This policy sets out that agricultural development should be located within or adjacent to an existing group of buildings. A landscape scheme should be submitted with the application and the building should be of a design which is appropriate for its use and sympathetic to its surroundings in terms of scale, materials, colour and architectural detail.
- 10.5 The proposed development is not consolidated with other built form and is located in open rural countryside. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is submitted in support of the application which concludes that the proposed development will have a slight adverse effect on the landscape and various mitigation measures are proposed to help reduce the impact further. The mitigation measures include the creation of additional woodland planting, hedgerows to the south and along field boundaries together with enhancement of Alburyend wood to the north. Once those mitigation measures have been implemented, the LVIA concludes that there will be a moderate adverse to negligible effect.

- 10.6 The Councils Landscape Officer recommends approval and comments that the undulating landscape and existing landscape features will ensure that the development is contained in the landscape. Opportunities for mitigation as set out in the LVIA are recommended to be included as conditions. The Landscape Officer does not consider that the provision of an access onto the A120 and the associated landscape works will result in harm to the character of the A120, where there are various openings.
- 10.7 In the short term the proposed buildings will have some impact in views from the A120 and more significantly, the public right of way which runs through the site. Views from the A120 will be limited by the distance to that road, the undulating landscape and existing landscape features including woodland and hedgerow which can be reinforced as set out above. Agricultural buildings are a form of development which is expected to be seen in rural countryside settings such as the application site and the detailed design, materials of construction and height of the buildings will, having regard to the advice from the Landscape Officer and considering the LVIA, not result in significant harm to landscape character, countryside setting or views of the site from public vantage points.

Highways access matters

- 10.8 The application is supported by a Transport Statement which has been reviewed by the Highway Authority. The existing site at Tile Kiln Farm is not used for agricultural purposes but the access is used to access the farm's three other sites for drying/storage of crops referred to above (understood to be via agricultural tracks, farm access and other rural roads to the north of the site). Existing traffic generation as a result of this operation are a total of five two-way HGV (Heavy Goods Vehicle) movements and an additional 5 two-way traffic movements of tractors with trailers. Traffic movements are evenly distributed amongst the day and likely to occur outside of peak hours.
- 10.9 The development will ensure provision of storage and drying facilities on site and will require no additional traffic movements to that outlined above. The Transport Statement sets out that, the development will result in the a reduction of traffic movements to the other farms in Furneux Pelham and Brent Pelham as a result of the new storage and drying facilities at the application site.

- 10.10 Having regard to the comments from the Highway Authority, Officers consider that there will be no material increase in traffic movements accessing the site onto the A120 and there will be a reduction of traffic movements along rural roads to the north of the District. Appropriate visibility is provided at the proposed junction and the development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of highway safety and traffic generation.
- 10.11 The comments from the Rights of Way Officer are noted – the proposed access will follow the route of the public right of way. However, such an arrangement is not dissimilar to that as currently exists where traffic movements are not generally significant. It is not uncommon for public rights of way to share a track or farm access used by agricultural traffic and Officers do not consider that there will be any significant harm to users of the public right of way in accordance with policy LRC9 of the Local Plan.

Neighbour amenity impact

- 10.12 The nearest neighbouring property is Tile Kiln Farmhouse itself which is approximately 200 metres to the south west with various landscape features, hedgerows and trees between that dwelling and the application site. Other residential dwellings are located further away from the application. Having regard to the siting and nature of the development proposal in relation to residential properties there will be no significant or harmful impact on the living conditions of neighbouring properties.

Drainage and flood risk

- 10.13 The site is located within an area of low risk in terms of fluvial flooding and partially within a low risk area in terms of surface water flooding. A drainage ditch is located to the immediate south and just outside of the application site – the plans submitted show that surface water will be directed into that water course through a mixture of drains and a swale. The LLFA comment that such an arrangement is acceptable in flood risk terms subject to the submission of more detailed information which can be secured by a planning condition. Having regard to the advice received, Officers are of the opinion that the site will not result in significant or harmful flood risk and can be appropriately drained through provision of sustainable drainage systems.

11.0 Conclusion

- 11.1 The proposal represents an appropriate form of development in the Rural Area and will provide an economic form of development which is encouraged in the NPPF. Although the proposed buildings are not consolidated with existing development, the overall siting, size, scale, form and design will not result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and its visual impact can be mitigated by appropriate landscaping. Officers are also satisfied that there would be no loss of amenity to neighbouring residential properties, the associated traffic movements will not be detrimental to highway safety and that there will be no significant harm in flood risk terms.
- 11.2 Officers therefore recommend that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions.

Conditions

1. Three Year Time Limit (1T12)
2. Approved plans (2E103)
3. Materials of construction (2E11)
4. Landscape design proposals (4P12)(a, b, c, e, l, j, k, l)
5. Landscape works implementation (4P13)
6. Lighting details (2E27)
7. The development permitted by this planning permission shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drainage scheme and drainage scheme layout produced by Sworders, dated January 2016 with drawing no. 215407DWG002, the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA:
 1. Providing discharge to the ditch on the development site.
 2. Implementing appropriate SuDS measures as shown on the drainage plan, drawing no. 215407DWG002, based on discharge to the ditch.

The mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements

embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority.

Reason: To prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory disposal and storage of surface water from the site and to reduce the risk of flooding to the proposed development and future occupants in accordance with policy ENV20 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. No development shall take place until a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development has been provided and approved by the LPA. It shall include ownership evidence and other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding, both on and off site in accordance with policy ENV20 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. Visibility splays of 2.4 metres x 160 metres shall be provided and permanently retained in each direction within which there shall be no obstruction to visibility between 0.6 metres and 2 metres above the carriageway level.

Reason: To provide adequate visibility for vehicles leaving the site.

10. Wheel washing (3V251)
11. The existing public right of way crossing the site shall remain undisturbed and unobstructed at all times unless otherwise stopped up or diverted prior to the commencement of the development hereby granted. The alignment of any public right of way shall be protected by temporary fencing/signing which shall previously have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and access.

Summary of Reasons for Decision

East Herts Council has considered the applicant's proposal in a positive and proactive manner with regard to the policies of the Development Plan; the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies is that permission should be granted.