

3/09/0238/FP – Erection of detached agricultural grain store and hard standing and removal of existing earth bank at Stocking Pelham Hall, Stocking Pelham, SG9 0HT for Mr E Hitchcock

Date of Receipt: 17.02.09

Type: Full

Parish: STOCKING PELHAM

Ward: LITTLE HADHAM

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:-

1. Three Year Time Limit (1T12)
2. Materials of Construction (2E11)
3. Prior to the first use of the building hereby approved or in accordance with a timetable agreed with the Local Planning Authority, the landscaping scheme as detailed on drawing no. 8 shall be implemented. Any trees that within a period of five years after planting are removed, die or become in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced as soon as is reasonably practicable with other species, size and number as originally approved, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a reasonable standard of landscaping in accordance with the approved designs, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

4. The use of the building hereby permitted shall be limited solely to agricultural purposes.

Reason: To restrict the use of the building to one compatible with the surrounding rural area.

Directives

1. This planning permission gives no entitlement to affect, alter or obscure the public right of way which is located to the north of the site.

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (East of England Plan May 2008, Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular GBC3, GBC7, ENV1 and ENV2. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies is that permission should be granted.

_____ (023809FP.EH)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The application site is located to the west of the settlement of Stocking Pelham and is shown on the attached OS extract.
- 1.2 The application site is currently occupied by two large agricultural buildings. The largest barn is currently used for grain storage (capable of holding 2200 tonnes of grain), with the single storey lean-tos attached to the northern and southern elevations of the barn, being occupied by commercial users (see section 2 of this report). The lean to elements of the building due to their low eaves are not suitable for storing farm machinery or modern grain storage. The smaller barn to the south of the main barn on the site is used as a farm machinery store and workshop. Both of these buildings are of typical modern agricultural appearance with concrete/metal cladding.
- 1.3 This application seeks permission for the erection of a 585 square metre agricultural barn on the site, located to the west of the existing barns on an area of paddock which is currently occupied by farm machinery. The barn is proposed to be some 8 metres to the eaves and 10.2 metres to the ridge.
- 1.4 The Design and Access Statement submitted with the application comments that the new barn would provide additional grain storage necessary to support the viability of the farm business. The farm produces on average 3500 tonnes of grain per annum of which, 2200 tonnes is currently capable of being stored on the farm. The excess grain is currently being transported to the cooperative store in Linton and the proposed new barn will provide the additional 1300 tonnes of grain storage the farm needs to remain viable. The Statement comments that the farmer is finding it impractical to use part remote and part farm storage for both transportation and financial reasons, and the new barn will enable the grain to be managed in a more sustainable and economic way by removing the need for double handling and transportation before reaching its intended destination.

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- 1.5 The application also proposes the removal of an existing small earth bund within the site, and the construction of an area of hardstanding to the north of the proposed building.

2.0 Site History

- 2.1 The existing grain store on the site appears to have been granted permission in 1974 (ref. 3/74/0327). Other applications relevant to the consideration of this application are as follows:

- 3/06/0475/FP
Unit 1, Stocking Pelham Hall
Use of building for storage packing & distribution of flowers (Retrospective)
Approved with conditions 5 May 2006
- 3/06/0476/FP
Unit 2, Stocking Pelham Hall
Use of building for vehicle maintenance (Retrospective)
Approved with conditions 5 May 2006
- 3/06/0477/FP
Unit 3, Stocking Pelham Hall
Joinery Workshop (Retrospective)
Approved with conditions 5 May 2006
- 3/06/0478/FP
Unit 4, Stocking Pelham Hall
Storage & Distribution of Milk & Goods
Approved with conditions 5 May 2006

3.0 Consultation Responses

- 3.1 County Highways have commented that they do not wish to restrict the grant of permission. They have commented that the implication of the development in terms of traffic movements is difficult to precisely quantify. Based on the assumption that all traffic movements are concentrated over the relatively short period of harvest, with the grain being brought from the field by tractor and trailer and stored at the site before being transported away from the site by lorry as storage demands dictate, and also based on previous cases elsewhere in the County, they comment that there will be very little, if any, difference in actual numbers of vehicle movements. In these circumstances and despite the rural nature of the highway network, on balance County Highways do not consider that a highway objection to this agricultural needs based application would be justified. However, they do comment that they would not wish to see the establishment of further

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non-agricultural HGV generating activities on the site and in order to safeguard this position they recommend that a condition be included that prohibits the building from being used for any other reason than the storage of grain produced from within the land holding of Stocking Pelham Hall Farm. They also recommend that a condition is placed on any grant of permission requiring details of surfacing of all on site vehicle areas to be submitted prior to the first use of the building.

- 3.2 The Rights of Way Unit, HCC have commented that the development should not adversely affect or alter in any way the public right of way which runs to the north of the application site.

4.0 Parish Council Representations

- 4.1 Stocking Pelham Parish Council have commented that they have agreed to support the erection of the grain store on the condition that the building is only used for the storage of grain and is directly connected to the farm business.

5.0 Other Representations

- 5.1 The applications have been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.
- 5.2 No further representations have been received.

6.0 Policy

- 6.1 The relevant policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007 are:

GBC3	Appropriate Development in the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt
GBC7	Agricultural Development
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
ENV2	Landscaping

7.0 Considerations

- 7.1 The determining issues in this case are whether the principle of development is acceptable and the impact of the development on the character and appearance of the rural area.

- 7.2 Policy GBC3 of the Local Plan states that agricultural developments are considered to be appropriate in the Rural Area, and as such there is no objection in principle to the construction of a barn on this site.
- 7.3 There is an identified need for the building, and it is proposed to be located adjacent to the existing group of farm buildings. The building is of an appropriate design in relation to its intended use, and its appearance and materials of construction are also considered to be appropriate to its setting. It is acknowledged that due to the size of the proposed building it will be visible from the surrounding rural area, particularly from the open countryside to the south and west of the application site. However, the building is of a size necessary for its purpose and is an accepted development within the rural area. Furthermore, in officer's opinion as the building will be seen in the context of the other two buildings on the site, it will reduce the visual impact of the building within the rural area.
- 7.4 The application does propose a 6-8 metre wide landscaped buffer along part of the southern and western boundaries of the site. The plans submitted with the application indicate that a total of 25 trees are proposed to be planted of a mix of Field Maple, Silver Birch and Beech. When mature these trees can grow to a height of approximately 15-25 metre. It is considered that the proposed landscaping scheme is acceptable and will assist in reducing the prominence of the building from the open rural area. Having regard therefore to the above considerations, whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed building will be visible from the surrounding countryside, officers do not consider that its impact on the visual amenities of the area will be such that it would result in a significant detrimental impact that would warrant refusal of the application.
- 7.5 Turning now to the issue of traffic generation, having regard to the comments made in the submitted Design and Access Statement I am satisfied that the proposed development would not result in any significant increase in traffic generation, and would therefore not have a significant adverse impact on the local environment or highway safety. The comments of both County Highways and the Parish Council in respect of the request to condition the use of the building in connection with Stocking Pelham Hall farm only have been noted. However, having regard to Circular 11/95 and the test set out to consider the validity of conditions, it is considered that in this instance such a condition would not be necessary, and would also be very difficult to enforce. It is therefore considered that it would be unreasonable in this case to place such a condition on any grant of permission.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 Having regard to the above considerations, the principle of an agricultural building on this site is considered to be acceptable and the visual impact of the proposed building would not be such that it would result in a significant detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the rural area. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions outlined at the head of this report.