

3/11/1339/FP – Side extension to an existing agricultural building at Alswick Hall, Hare Street Road, Buntingford, SG9 0AA for Alswick Hall Farms Ltd

Date of Receipt: 05.08.2011

Type: Full – Major

Parish: BUNTINGFORD

Ward: BUNTINGFORD

RECOMMENDATION

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

1. Three year time limit (1T12)
2. No external lighting (2E26)
3. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved drawings, no development shall take place until full details of soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and these works shall be carried out as approved. These details shall include a) planting plans; b) schedules of plants noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities c) a timetable for implementation and d) a schedule of landscape maintenance for a period of five years.

Reason: To ensure the provision of amenity afforded by appropriate landscape design, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

4. All soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the details approved pursuant to Condition 3. The works shall be carried out prior to the use of any part of the development or in accordance with the programme agreed with the local planning authority. Any trees or plants that, within a period of 5 years after planting are removed, die or become damaged or defective shall be replaced with others of the same species, size and number as originally approved unless the local planning authority has given written consent to any variation.

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.

5. Details of earthworks/mounding (4P16)
6. Hard Surfacing (3V21)
7. Approved plans (2E102) (insert 11189A and 11189B)

Directives:

1. Other legislation (10OL1)
2. Discharge of conditions (ZDC)

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 policies GBC2, GBC3, GBC7, ENV1, ENV2, TR20 and LRC9. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies and the other material considerations relevant in this case is that permission should be granted.

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 The application site is located to the west of Buntingford along the B1038. Access is achieved off that road to a collection of agricultural buildings set some 200m or so from the road. Views of the site are obscured from the main road by a large landscape belt/mound and other mature planting to the north west of the farm buildings.
- 1.2 The proposal involves an extension to an existing agricultural building creating 1400 square metres of additional floor area. The proposed extension follows similar proportions, scale and design as the existing agricultural buildings.
- 1.3 Within the supporting information submitted with the application, the applicant sets out they have secured a contract which increases the area farmed to over 1100 hectares. The applicant now requires storage space for 1000 tonnes of produce, seed, fertilisers and other bulk items required to operate the farm business.

2.0 Site History

- 2.1 Planning permission was originally granted for an agricultural building on the site within LPA reference 3/02/2137/FP. Later, planning permission was granted within LPA reference 3/02/2137/FP for an extension to that agricultural building. That resultant building is located immediately to the south east of the site for the proposed extension within this application.

3.0 Consultation Responses

- 3.1 Hertfordshire County Highways comment that they do not wish to restrict the grant of planning permission. The Highways Officer comments that, given the extent of the existing farming enterprise and the existing level of traffic movements, the development proposal is considered to be acceptable in a highway context. The Highways Officer does raise some concerns regarding the impact of additional HGV movements. However, that Officer acknowledges that such movements already take place on the highway network and are outside of peak harvest period and the increase in daily trips will not therefore be significant.

4.0 Town Council Representations

- 4.1 Buntingford Town Council comment that they have no objection to the proposed development.

5.0 Other Representations

- 5.1 The application has been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.
- 5.2 One letter of representation has been received which sets out that the development should have a broken skyline and should only be for agriculture. In addition, it comments that the impact of traffic on the B1038 and within Buntingford should be considered.

6.0 Policy

- 6.1 The policies of the adopted East Herts Local Plan that are most relevant to the consideration of this application are as follows:

GBC2	The Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
GBC3	Appropriate Development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
GBC7	Agricultural Development
TR20	Development Generating Traffic on Rural Roads
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
ENV2	Landscaping
LRC9	Public Rights of Way

7.0 Considerations

7.1 The main considerations in the determination of this application are as follows:-

- The principle of development;
- The appropriateness of the proposed size, scale, form and design in relation to the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt;
- Impact on amenity of neighbouring premises;
- Highways matters.

Principle of development

7.2 Policy GBC3 identifies that, in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt permission will be given for the construction of new buildings for the use of agriculture. The principle of the development is therefore acceptable, subject to compliance with policy GBC7 - Agricultural Development and policy ENV1- Design and Environmental Quality.

Appropriateness of the proposed building

7.3 Policy GBC7 requires that agricultural buildings are located in a consolidated position within the context of other rural development. A landscape scheme should be submitted with any application to ensure that the proposal reflects the landscape character of the area. Also, policy GBC7 requires that the proposed building is of a design appropriate to the intended use and sympathetic to its surroundings, in terms of size, scale, materials, colour and architectural details.

7.4 The building is to be located immediately adjacent to an existing group of agricultural buildings. The proposed building is significant in terms of its scale. However, it is well consolidated with other, similarly designed, buildings and the plans propose to re-site the existing landscape/earth bund further to the north of the site in order to screen the development from views from the B1038 and the public rights of way to the north of the site.

7.5 There is however limited information regarding the movement of that landscape feature. However, subject to appropriate planning conditions relating to the specification of soft landscaping and the associated earth bund, Officers are of the opinion that this element, in association with the provision of additional landscaping in the form of a new native hedge to the east of the building, and the provision of additional tree planting on the field to the west of the driveway, will adequately screen the development from public view. The grain store would have a functional agricultural

appearance, which is not considered to be out of character with the surrounding agricultural environment. The mass and scale of the building and related agricultural buildings will be well screened by the proposed landscaping and will result in a form of development which is in keeping with the rural and agricultural setting.

Public Right of Way

- 7.6 There is a public footpath which runs to the north of the site. However, the proposed development and relocated earth bund/landscaping are set to the south of that footpath. Accordingly, the proposal will not, in Officers opinion, result in significant harm to that right of way and so accords with policy LRC9 of the Local Plan.

Neighbour amenity

- 7.7 The proposed building is located in a remote, rural location. The nearest neighbouring properties are in excess of 300 metres to the west with additional planting proposed to further screen the development from the west. Having regard to those considerations and, taking into account the existing location of the agricultural buildings, Officers do not consider that the proposed building will result in significant harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties.
- 7.8 It is recognised that an increase in the size of the building may result in additional traffic movements – as indicated in the consultation response from Highways. However, given the location of the site in relation to neighbouring properties, this is not considered to raise significant concerns in relation to the amenities of the occupiers such as to warrant refusal of the application.

Highway matters

- 7.8 Hertfordshire Highways do not raise any objection to the development, taking into account the existing farm enterprise and the existing level of traffic movements. The site is located within a rural locality but is well accessed via the B1038, a classified road which links the site with the main distributor road, the A10. Officers note the concerns of the Highways Officer with the impact of additional HGV movements. However, this is not considered by the Highways Officer to warrant refusal of the application and it should be noted that no other representations raising concern with this matter have been received. Accordingly, Officers do not raise any objection.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 It is considered that the size, scale, form and design of the proposed grain store would be acceptable with respect to policy GBC7, subject to appropriate conditions. Furthermore, Officers are of the opinion that there will not be a significantly detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties by way of noise or related amenity issues or on highway safety. Officers therefore recommend that planning permission be granted.