



PLANNING STATEMENT

Submission to Mid-Sussex District Council for Full Planning Permission

ERECTION OF SINGLE STOREY AGRICULTURAL BUILDING



Bacons Farm

Sloop Lane

Scaynes Hill

Haywards Heath

West Sussex

RH17 7NP

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This planning statement is to be read in conjunction with the planning application and the following drawings:
- NFP194P001 BUILDING ELEVATIONS AND PLANS
 - NFP194S002 BLOCK PLAN
 - NFP194D003 SITE ELEVATIONS
 - NFP194S004 SITE PLAN
- 1.2 Bacons Farm is located off Sloop Lane, approximately a mile and a half North-East of Scaynes Hill.
- 1.3 Bacons Farm is a mixed enterprise of 24.71 hectares made up of approx. 11 hectares of grassland, 3.5 hectares of existing woodland, 2.5 hectares of new tree planting and 5.5 hectares of vineyard.
- 1.4 The vineyard is anticipating a harvest of 40 tonnes of grapes, which would produce around 30,000 bottles of wine.
- 1.5 As it stands the harvest will be taken off site to be pressed, fermented, bottled and stored by contractors, increasing the cost of production per bottle significantly.
- 1.6 To improve the sustainability of the farming enterprise, a winery is required to allow the pressing, fermenting, bottling and storing wine on site, reducing the overheads and carbon footprint of the final product.
- 1.7 The agricultural unit currently only has access to the machinery store, a low height open-sided timber frame and field shelters for Alpacas.
- 1.8 This statement is to support the application for full planning for the erection of a fully enclosed winery building for the production and storage of wine.

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 The relevant historic planning applications for Bacons Farm are as follows:

1	DM/23/0743	Proposed new 3 bay steel frame Agricultural storage building to support grazing land and vineyard. Approved March 2023.
2	DM/22/3650	Proposed new 3 bay steel frame Agricultural building. Withdrawn
3	DM/19/3788	(1) Install new LV underground cable (approx. 120m) as shown on the attached plan. (2) Dismantle LV pole 625506 with associated overhead line and stay. (3) Dismantle LV span between pole 625505 and 625506 (4) Reposition LV stays on pole 625505 for the new angle
4	09/03354/FUL	Construct hard tennis court with 2.75m high chainlink enclosure
	07/01998/FUL	Erection of replacement dwelling. Demolition of existing dwelling, garage, outbuildings and two large storage barns.

3.0 Proposed Development

- 3.1 The building will be a clear span steel frame portal, with an offset ridge and doors on the side facing the adjacent building.
- 3.2 The building will be roofed in plastisol coated insulated sheeting, in anthracite grey colour, and clad in natural timber castle boarding on the sides to reflect the existing machinery store.
- 3.3 The building will have a perimeter concrete panel at floor level to contain the concrete floor and offer secure protection to the cladding when the building is in use.
- 3.4 The building will have a roller shutter doors and personnel doors on the East elevation, facing the existing building. The roller shutters will have a height of 3m making it suitable for use with modern vineyard machinery.
- 3.5 The total building measures 30m x 13.7m to allow the space for storage and winemaking equipment. A total of approx. 411m².
- 3.6 The eaves height of the new building will be 4.27m to the front and 3.2m to the rear, which gives the practical clearance needed whilst also minimising the visual impact.
- 3.7 The access to the proposed location is a via wide concrete track, shared with Scaynes Hill Water Treatment Works with a good splay and clear lines of sight along Sloop Lane.
- 3.8 The vineyard is primarily accessed from Sloop Lane, with the holding extending round to Nash Lane. The land is in a single block, formed of a number of distinct field parcels.
- 3.9 The 3.9 hectare field parcel in which the new building is to be located is surrounded by mature trees to the North and West, the existing machinery building to the East, with the ground rising to the South.
- 3.10 The proposed location of the building keeps the building on the edge of the agricultural unit, but also puts it within a reasonable distance of the residential unit, helping to keep the building more secure than an isolated position elsewhere. It keeps the building in close proximity to the existing buildings.
- 3.11 The proposed location of the building is screened from neighbouring properties by the existing building and falls within an area surrounded by trees, meaning the building will barely be visible to neighbouring properties, again reducing the impact on the landscape.

- 3.12 The proposed location takes into account the flood risk and, as per the separate Flood Risk Assessment, is suitable for the proposal.
- 3.13 The design of the building is functional and utilitarian. It is not an uncommon or unfamiliar form or sight in the rural landscape on working agricultural holdings. It is a low-pitched portal steel frame building allowing for a division of the internal space to meet the functional needs of the making of wine.

4.0 Agricultural Justification

- 4.1 The grapes at the holding are picked by hand and would be brought to the winery in 250kg bins to enable handling and transfer to the pressing machines. The aim is for grapes that are picked to be processed on the same day, unless the grapes are too warm, in which case they would be stored overnight and allowed to cool. There may be up to 10 x 250kg bins (each some 1m²) stored within the winery during harvest, which are typically stacked two high.
- 4.2 The grapes would be loaded into the press, which will be 2m x 5m. There is a requirement for some circulation space around the press, for access and working to load the grapes into the press, via forklift. It is likely the press will be stored most of the year and brought out into the working space at harvest to minimise the floorspace required.
- 4.3 The press is some 2m in height with a hopper above. There is a requirement for some 1.5m height clearance above this to enable the forklift to rotate the bin of fruit. In the interest of health and safety, there is then a requirement for a 1m clearance space above this operating area. The vertical space for the press machines therefore needs to be 4m (internal) between ground and roof level.
- 4.4 Following pressing, the grapes are pumped into 'settling tanks' and the dry skins and stalks are removed by tractor and trailer for composting.
- 4.5 Following settling, the juice is pumped into a second tank for fermentation and inoculation. The juice/wine remains in the 'fermentation tank' for circa 7 months.
- 4.6 Following fermentation, some of the wine is pumped to wooden barrels for maturation, whilst the remainder is pumped to blending and bottling tanks.
- 4.7 The settling/fermentation tanks are stainless steel. Their form directly impacts on the quality of the wine. Bacons Farm makes high quality sparkling wine. As such, there is a requirement to use smaller tanks to vinify the grape batches separately to control and create the complexity of the wine. This also reflects the number of grape varieties grown at Bacons Farm.
- 4.8 The ratio between the diameter and height of the tank also affects the wine quality, and as such there is a requirement to use taller tanks to achieve the best quality. Around the tops of tanks access is required for winemaking procedures. The tanks are 3m in height, and with space for access above, there is a requirement for vertical

clearance of 4m (internal) between ground and roof level for the larger tanks.

- 4.9 Following blending of the wine, it would be moved to the bottling area.
- 4.10 The wine would be bottled and following the addition of secondary yeast and capped.
- 4.11 The bottles would then be placed into a stillage (metal cage) and into cold storage, for the secondary bottle fermentation process, required to make sparkling wine. This must be for a minimum period of 9 months, but is more typically for circa 3-4 years, to achieve better quality product, with some varieties stored up to 10 years.
- 4.12 With periods of maturation lasting several years and the yield of 30,000 bottles per year, storage space within the winery is required for some 100,000 bottles, both for the second fermentation process and finished product.
- 4.13 The stillages are broadly 1m³ in size, and each holds 504 bottles. It is therefore anticipated there would be some 189 stillages in coldstore at the winery. Stillages can be stacked three high. This generates a requirement for some 130m² of cold storage space within the building, including access and finished product storage.
- 4.14 Following the completion of the second fermentation process, the bottles are removed from cold storage and are riddled in a mechanised gyropalette. This process historically took place by hand and required turning bottles over a long period of time to turn them vertically, so that the dead yeast cells fall, through gravity to the top neck of the bottle. This now takes place over a shorter period of time via machine. These gyropalettes complete the riddling process while the bottles are in stillage.
- 4.15 Allowing for up to 6 stillages to be riddled per week, there is a requirement of one machine, capable of riddling 6 cages. This requires an area of some 3m x 6m = 18m².
- 4.16 Following riddling, the remnant yeast is 'disgorged.' This comprises placing the top neck of the bottles into a machine where it is frozen, the wire cap removed from the bottle and the 'ice plug' removed. The bottle is then topped up, corked, wired, capsuled, labelled and packed into boxes on to pallets. The bottles can then be dispatched from the winery to storage.
- 4.17 Some compartmentalised areas require temperature control as change can affect the quality of the end product. If air temperature changes, then juice can be spoiled during the fermentation process. Wine bottles are stored separately and in a different way to barrels which is why there are two storage areas. The storage areas do not require windows. The environment needs to be controlled and consideration taken of the fact that Sparkling Wine takes 7 or more years to mature. Other wines take 10 or more years.

4.18 The proposed building would extend to 411m² floorspace and comprise of:

- Access and pressing area of grapes, including space for 1 No. press at 2m x 6m and access and movement space around the presses for tipping, pumping and clearing – 45m²
- 6 x 15,000 litre settling/fermentation tanks, plus additional small batch tanks, with working space. – 130m²
- Bottling, riddling and disgorging area, including cage machine, riddling machine and bottling line - 55m²;
- Barrel area for maturing in up to 12 barrels - 25m²;
- Cold storage space for 100,000 bottles in circa 189 stillages including forklift manoeuvring space and access corridor - 130m²;
- Lab for product testing and analysis - 25m²;

Having regard to all the above, it is reasonably necessary for 411m² of winery floorspace to be provided.

4.19 The lab and testing room requires natural light as it is within this space that wines are sampled, where blending and tasting takes place and colour is checked. This is a visual, sensory, and olfactory process. Natural light and air are vital to this process and thus the need for windows. Sufficient space is also required for the retention of samples to meet records with Food Standards Agency regulations.

4.20 On this basis, the provision of a winery building of the size and height proposed, is demonstrably necessary to process grapes, whilst being considerate of the local amenity, and this represents an ancillary activity to the wider agricultural operation. It is considered that the building is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the unit.

5.0 Foul Water

5.1 Whilst the winery is situated adjacent to the Scaynes Hill Water Treatment Works, there is no mains link to enable the foul water to be discharged to the works.

5.2 On that basis, a cesspit tank would be utilised for the removal of foul water and wash down water from the new winery, which would be emptied when required, to the adjacent water treatment works.

6.0 Biodiversity Net Gain

6.1 Following the erection of the machinery store, the applicant planted a number of saplings in the location now proposed for the winery.

- 6.2 These will be replanted elsewhere on the site and have been included in the BNG calculations submitted.

7.0 Planning Policy

- 7.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Para 14 of the NPPF confirms that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and that development that accords with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. (See paras 11, 12, 13 of NPPF.)
- 7.2 The site is located in the Lindfield Rural planning area in the Mid-Sussex District. Therefore, the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (MSDP) is the policy that applies to this application.
- 7.3 According to the MSDP the policies that apply specifically to this site are DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside and DP17: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 7.4 DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside states *“The countryside is a working environment that needs to be managed in a way that enhances the attractiveness of the rural environment whilst enabling traditional rural activities to continue. It seeks to enhance the countryside, support the rural economy by accommodating well-designed, appropriate new forms of development and changes in land use where a countryside location is required and where it does not adversely affect the rural environment”*.
- 7.5 The policy states *“Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and: it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; .”*
- 7.6 The definition of ‘agriculture’ as set out in Section 336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990:
- “Includes horticulture, fruit growing, seed growing, dairy farming, the breeding and keeping of livestock (including any creature kept for the production of food, wool, skins or fur, or for the purpose of its use in the farming of land), the use of land as grazing land, meadowland, osier land, market gardens and nursery grounds, and the use of land for woodlands where that use is ancillary to the farming of land or other agricultural purposes, and ‘agricultural’ shall be construed accordingly.”*
- 7.7 The growing of grapes is thus an agricultural activity, so the proposal meets the criteria set out in DP12 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.
- 7.8 DP17: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) relates to minimise the impact of new residential development

within the zone, and as the proposal will not have a significant effect, there are no measures necessary under DP17.

- 7.9 Additionally, DP14: Sustainable Rural Development and the Rural Economy states *“development within the countryside (defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries as per the Policies Map) will be permitted provided: it supports sustainable growth and the vitality of the rural economy”*

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 The proposal is necessary for the purposes of agriculture as it is required to support the growing of grapes and meets the conditions set out in the NPPF and Mid Sussex District Plan.
- 8.2 The proposal will support the local area and ensure continuation of rural activities and support growth in the rural economy.
- 8.3 The siting is functional and practical, on land that is accessible, and minimises wider infrastructure works, whilst offer the best security and will have no undue impact on visual amenity or landscape character.
- 8.4 The design is considered appropriate to its setting, related to the function and agricultural purpose.
- 8.5 For the reasons stated above, the council is requested to look favourably on this application.