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PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

relating to:

PROPOSED BARN AND AQUAPONIC FISH SHED WITH GREENHOUSE.

on:

**Land at Bob Lane / Wineham Lane,
Wineham,
West Sussex.**

March 2026.

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1. The Property.

2.1. The property comprise agricultural land located adjacent to Bob Lane and Wineham Lane, Wineham, West Sussex. The land extends to approximately 4.5 acres (1.82 hectares).

2.2. The land lies to the east of Wineham Lane and is accessed through an existing track off the public highway. The land is currently unutilised for agricultural purposes, having been left to naturally regenerate over recent years.

2.3. Although not designed to be a field scale assessment, the Provisional Agricultural Land Classification (1983) identifies the land as predominantly as Grade 3. Grade 3 is described as good to moderate quality land, with moderate limitations that affect the choice of crops to be grown, timing and type of cultivation, harvesting or yield.

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2. Proposed Development.

2.1. The applicant proposes the construction of one agricultural building for an aquaponics business. The building will be constructed of steel and timber frames of vertical posts and roof beams, covered with part timber cladding, part plastic coated metal roof sheeting, green mesh and uPVC plastic sheeting.

2.2. The application is being submitted with the following drawings, plans and reports:

Planning Design and Access Statement.

Location and Block plans – drawing no. **8536-LBP.**

Elevations and Floor Plan - drawing no. **8536-1-B.**

Landscaping Plan - drawing no. **8536-2.**

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

Biodiversity Net gain – Design Stage Assessment.

Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

2.3. The applicants propose to introduce an aquaponic business onto their property. This was originally proposed in 2018, following which the applicants were approached by third parties to acquire the land for a proposed energy storage system. This did not materialise. The applicants would like to progress their original proposal and this application seeks to address some of the concerns that were forthcoming in 2018.

3. The Proposed Rural Business.

3.1. Aquaponics Business.

3.1.1. Aquaponics is a method of food production involving Aquaculture and Hydroponics which is the cultivation of fish with fruit and vegetables without soil. Aquaculture is the rearing of fish and Hydroponic is growing plants without soil. These combined together and re-circulating water becomes Aquaponic farming.

3.1.2. There are two types of Aquaponics, high-tech and low-tech. High-tech takes place inside a sealed building and uses exotic fish such as Tilapia who need strict temperature monitoring. Low-tech, the method to be undertaken

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takes place in a much less enclosed space and uses native species. Minimal energy is required for this method as it only requires a pump combined with gravity.

3.1.3. Low-tech aquaponics works with the local climatic seasons and utilises the use of purpose-built hybrid greenhouses complimenting natural biological chemistry. Tanks containing fish, in this case Rainbow Trout, will be fed with an organic certified fish food to provide a balanced diet for their species. Their waste will then be pumped through grow beds and provide food for floating plants such as salad crops and herbs. The process involves ‘nitrification’ which is where nitrites convert into nitrates. The water will be monitored several times a day to ensure that this process is proceeding and that nothing harmful makes its way into the fish tanks.

3.1.4. Salads will be harvested with their roots left on to enable the purchaser to keep them fresh as they eat them. Bio-filters will collect any surplus nutrients and can be used as a fertilizer on crops grown on the land. The food produced is very high yielding on the space that it uses and is of exceptional quality. The flavours are more intense and the health benefits very high. It is environmentally healthy for agricultural land and specifically there is no need for synthetic fertilisers.

3.1.5. The proposed business involves two partially buried fish tanks for the hydroponic part of the operation. The method is clean and the height of the grow-beds can be utilized by someone using a wheelchair. The fish grow for 6 to 8 months from their original size of a fingerling (very young fish). The fingerlings will be sourced from chalk stream fisheries in Sussex and Hampshire.

3.1.6. Fish processing and plant preparation areas will be housed within the barn. Fish tanks that serve as isolation tanks during normal operations will be housed inside the barn and utilised for any harsh seasonal conditions. Isolation is used to climatise new fish stocks, quarantine and livestock protection purposes.

3.1.7. There is an opportunity to utilise the remaining land in the manner of a ‘Forest garden’. This will mean keeping the plants, bushes and trees that are already on the land plus growing tomatoes, cucumbers, cabbages etc. in the gaps.

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3.1.8. The existing invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals will not be affected and indeed their habitat and environment will be greatly enhanced. Please refer to the **Preliminary Ecological Appraisal**.

3.2. What is the product and where is it sold.

3.2.1. The products will be Rainbow Trout, salad crops, herbs, fruit, vegetables and eggs. We have an offer from an organic wholesaler in Brighton to purchase as much as we can provide for them. It would be preferable to sell locally direct to customers.

3.3. Business Plan.

3.3.1. Although it is not a requirement for the planning authority that financial information needs to be provided to support a planning application for an agricultural building, we do provide some data to demonstrate that the proposed business has been planned on a sound financial basis. Below we provide some basic financial information on the following:

Establishment Costs.

Operating Costs.

Products for sale.

3.3.2. Establishment Costs.

1. Estimated Fees	£ 10,000
2. Building including fish tanks	£ 35,000
3. Hardstanding and Landscaping	£ 3,000
4. Materials for flow-beds	£ 4,000
5. Installation of electricity power supply	£ 20,000
Initial estimated establishment costs	£ 72,000

3.3.3. Operating Variable Costs (before labour) per annum.

1. Annual cost of electricity, water, maintenance, feed, repairs, etc	£ 5,000
2. Feed and seeds	£ 2,000
3. Capital Return on Establishment Costs at 5.50% approx. (Rate of interest source The Agricultural Mortgage Corporation)	£ 4,000
Estimated variable costs per annum	£11,000

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3.3.4. Anticipated Income per annum.

Fish sales; 3000 at £6.00 each	£ 18,000
Salad plants; 3000 at £4.00 each	£ 12,000
Packets of herbs 3500 at £2.00 each	£ 7,000
Tomatoes, cucumbers, cabbages	£ 3,000
Eggs from 300 hens, less feed costs	£ 4,000
Total sales	£ 44,000

3.3.5. Labour Requirements.

The aquaponic business will initially employ two people. Once fully established the business will require additional workers. Further jobs will be created in the wider community in distribution and cooking. At least one of the jobs will be for a disabled person.

3.3.6. After two years of establishing the business, food packs will be made up for sale. Additional fish tanks could be installed and more growing beds added as the business develops. On this assumption it is anticipated that packs of fish, salad and herbs could be sold at £12 each.

4. Planning Assessment.

4a. Agricultural Need.

4a.1. The land adjacent to Wineham and Bob Lane, as shown on the application plan, has been allowed to regenerate and rewild naturally over the last eight years. The land is currently underutilised for agricultural purposes.

4a.2. The proposed development will reintroduce an agricultural business onto a small part of the land holding. Most of the land will be allowed to remain as naturally rewilded and regenerated land, with some additional planting of trees and shrubs, as recommended by the ecologist.

4a.3. The proposed use of the land will create a balance between productive agricultural use and the preservation of nature.

4b. Siting.

4b.1. Location of Proposed Building.

4b.1.1. The building is proposed at the western end of the land holding near to an existing access off Wineham Lane. The proposed building is to be located near to the northern and western boundaries, yet far enough away to not affect any trees. The building is proposed near to mature hedgerows and trees to limit its impact on the landscape. The proposed building is far enough away to neither affect nor be visible to any residential dwellings.

4b.2. Heritage.

4b.2.1. The National Heritage List for England (NHLE) has been consulted, and this shows that there are no listed buildings within the application site. The nearest listed building is The Royal Oak Inn, Wineham Lane, which is situated approximately 500 m to the southwest.

4b.3. Flooding.

4b.3.1. As shown on the “Flood Map for Planning”, the site is situated within Flood Zone 1 (lowest probability). The same mapping also shows the site as being outside of any areas subject to surface water (pluvial) flooding.

4c. Design and Appearance.

4c.1. The proposed building is designed specifically for the aquaponics business. The barn will be constructed of a steel frame with timber side cladding under a double pitched roof clad with profiled plastic-coated metal sheeting. The barn is designed specifically for the storage of machinery and equipment to be used on the business. The greenhouse and fish tanks will be constructed of timber posts covered with green mesh and plastic sheeting.

4c.2. During a previous pre-application site visit, an area of Ancient Woodland was identified at the eastern end of the land holding. The proposed building will not be located near this woodland. It was agreed that a buffer zone of 15 metres would be sufficient to not affect any existing trees or hedgerows. The positioning of the proposed building is more than 15 metres from the northern and western boundary trees and hedging.

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4c.3. The proposed building will be of a low profile set with a mature hedgerow and mature trees to the north and west. The proposed building will not affect the trees whilst having a very low impact upon the landscape.

4c.4. Additional hardstanding will be laid between the existing access off the public highway and the proposed building for vehicles.

4d. Services.

4d.1. Energy – Electricity.

4d.1.1. The aquaponic fish sheds and greenhouse use minimal power and make use of biochemistry and gravity. Where electrical pumps are used, they will be timed and of new low energy use type. Due to magnetic technology, they are also of low noise output. Low energy lighting will be used when necessary.

4d.1.2. The aquaponic process requires no supplementary heating nor cooling.

4d.2. Water.

4d.2.1. Mains water will be connected to the proposed building, and all sanitary and water facilities will be of the latest efficient type. Rainwater harvesting techniques will be utilised to further prevent unnecessary use of mains water.

4d.2.2. Once the aquaponic system is charged the facility does not require further water consumption other than to replenish any loss due to natural evaporation. Any further water used on site for cleaning or maintenance purposes will be recycled and used via the mineralisation process on site.

4d.2.3. Additional minerals will be produced from organic waste created on-site. These will be combined with water harvested on-site and used as feed for additional planting.

4e. Waste Disposal.

4e.1. This system of agriculture is known as “Closed Loop” whereby there is no waste. Once the system is charged the loss of water from evaporation is no more than 10% per year.

4e.2. There will be some waste from the fish when they are ethically slaughtered. For welfare reasons this will be carried out on site and the remains, after filleting will be disposed of in a bio-digestor installed on the site. This will be used as a natural fertilizer.

4e.2. The aquaponic farm is to be connected to an onsite drainage system for foul water disposal. None of this will have an impact on any existing mains drainage or water courses.

4e.3. No pesticides will be used with monitoring and sacrificial cropping used to keep down pests. It is planned to keep up to 30 hens who will be allowed to move through the sheds and surrounding land to also keep pests at bay on the ground and soil level.

4f. Ecological Appraisal.

4f.1. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been commissioned for submission with this application. The report summarises the land holding and proposed development as follows:

- The proposed development site is a former agricultural field.
- The proposal is to construct an agricultural building with associated access and parking.
- There are no protected sites within 500m of the site.
- There are priority habitats within 500m of the site. The nearest are a block of ancient woodland c. 165m to the east and a block of deciduous woodland c.75m to the south-west.
- The habitats within the red-line boundary are limited to ruderal habitat, bramble scrub and poor-quality grassland.

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- The site lies within a red impact risk zone for great crested newts.
- There is habitat suitable for reptiles and common breeding birds.
- There were no signs of badgers on site.
- Hazel dormice and bat roosts may be present in the wooded areas along the boundary of the landholding, but the proposed development would have no adverse impact on this habitat or these species.

4f.2. The Conclusions and Recommendations from the appraisal are as follows:

- No further ecological surveys are required, unless eDNA testing of the nearby pond for great crested newts is preferred rather than opting to enter the District Licencing scheme.
- The habitats that would be lost are of limited ecological value and their loss can be compensated for and overall ecological enhancement through habitat creation on site and in the wider landholding.
- Potential harm to reptiles and breeding birds can be avoided through implementation of standard precautions and enhancing habitat elsewhere on site.
- The proposal is subject to mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain. This can be delivered on-site and is addressed in a separate report.

4f.3. The remaining land will be kept as a 'Forest Garden'. The plants, bushes and trees on the remaining part of the land will be used to grow tomatoes, cucumbers, cabbages, etc., in the gaps. Vines grow up larger bushes and trees, provide shade for other crops etc. This method has been proved to work very well and produce high yields without mono-cropping.

4f.4. The existing invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals will not be affected and indeed their habitat and environment will be greatly enhanced. Please refer to the **Preliminary Ecological Appraisal**.

4f.5. Additional planting of trees and shrubs will be undertaken as recommended by the ecologist and shown on the Landscape Plan, drawing no. **8536-2**.

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4f. Access and Traffic Movements.

4f.1. It is anticipated that the proposed business will receive some deliveries of food and materials albeit they will be minimal. The applicants working on the holding will make two journeys per day.

4f.2. It is calculated that the weekly movements of the applicants to and from the site, plus occasional deliveries will equate to approximately 40 to 50 journeys to and from the site per week.

4f.3. The traffic movements detailed above include the transportation of fish, salad produce and eggs by the applicants to retailers as part of their daily trips to and from the site.

4f.4. There is an existing access from Wineham Lane, as shown on the Block Plan drawing no. **8536-LBP**. The access is adequate for the proposed use of the land holding.

4f.5. No alterations are proposed to the existing access nor are there any considered necessary. The access will not need to be widened for the proposed use, and the existing hedgerow will not be impacted.

5. Summary.

5.1. The proposed agricultural building is reasonably necessary for the proposed aquaponics business.

5.2. The building responds to a site-specific agricultural need and presents no conflict with landscape character, biodiversity or heritage settings.

5.3. Traffic movements to and from the site will be minimal and equate to the field being used for any other agricultural purpose.

David Hall.

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