

Planning Statement

Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

**Agricultural Prior Notification application for the construction of a
general purpose agricultural building**

on land at Worth Hall Farm, Turners Hill Road, Turners Hill

Prepared for

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Planning Statement is submitted in support of an Agricultural Prior Notification application for the proposed construction of a general purpose agricultural building to serve the agricultural activities at Worth Hall Farm, Turners Hill Road, Turners Hill.
- 1.2. The agricultural holding extends to some 297 acres (120 hectares). It predominantly comprises farmland that is used for arable production, together with areas of woodland. The holding is also used for seasonal visitor attractions, that operate under the name 'Tulleys Farm'. In addition to land owned, a further 50 acres (20ha) is rented and under arable production at Home Farm, Rowfant.
- 1.3. The application relates to an existing group of buildings that form the longstanding farming centre at Worth Hall Farm. This comprises existing general purpose agricultural buildings and grain stores (including in silos). These are no longer practical for the purposes of modern farming, largely due to the changes in internal floor level and limited height across the rear (north) part of the main building.
- 1.4. This application therefore envisages the demolition of the existing structures and the construction of a replacement general purpose building on the same site.
- 1.5. The application should be read in conjunction with the following plans and documents:
 - Drawing No. 2025-54-07 revision A - Site Location Plan and Block Plan;
 - Drawing No. 2025-54-01 - Elevations - as Existing;
 - Drawing No. 2025-54-02 - Floor Plan - as Existing;
 - Drawing No. 2025-54-03 - Roof Plan - as Existing;
 - Drawing No. 2025-54-04 - Elevations - as Proposed;
 - Drawing No. 2025-54-05 - Floor Plan - as Proposed;
 - Drawing No. 2025-54-06 - Roof plan - as Proposed; and
 - Application Forms.
- 1.6. This application seeks a determination from the Local Planning Authority (LPA) as to whether prior approval will be required as to the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed building, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO), and in particular Class A, Part 6 of Schedule 2. This sets out that certain development works associated with agricultural are 'permitted development', but require the submission of information to the LPA to enable them to determine whether prior approval is required with respect to specific details of the scheme.

- 1.7. This reports sets out a brief description of the site (Section 2); a summary of the background of of the farm holding (Section 3); summarises relevant planning history (Section 4); details the legislative background to agricultural permitted development rights (Section 5); describes the proposed works (Section 6); considers whether the works are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the unit (Section 7); assesses compliance of the scheme against the allowances and limitations of the General Permitted Development Order (Section 8); and sets out considerations of siting, design and external appearance of the building (Section 9). A summary is provided at Section 10.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. Worth Hall Farm is located east of Crawley, to the south of the village of Copthorne, and northwest of Turners Hill.
- 2.2. The farm centre is located on the east side of Turners Hill Road, which runs in a broadly north-south direction at this point. The farmholding extends to some 120 hectares (ha). This includes some 19ha of land immediately around Worth Hall Farm buildings, together with other land located on the east side of Turners Hill Road, to the north-west, and to the southeast.
- 2.3. The farm is principally in arable and horticultural production. The agriculture unit has diversified, over the last 35 years, and also entails a number of leisure uses. This includes the annual ‘Shocktober Fest’ which comprises temporary land uses focussed around Halloween that take place in and around Worth Hall Farm, together with leisure uses on land to the southeast. This includes the growing of pumpkins, which are then available around Halloween on a PYO basis. It also includes an annual event based around the main tulip growing season in the spring.
- 2.4. Worth Hall Farm centre comprises a range of buildings of mixed form and age. At its centre is a quadrangle of traditional brick and timber clad structures under plain tile roofs. The majority have been converted into leisure and recreational use which includes a tearoom. Beyond this to the south and east is land predominantly used in association with leisure uses. This includes hardstanding and car parking areas.
- 2.5. To the north of traditional former farm buildings is a steel-framed building, an integral timber lean-to and an associated machinery store. These are predominantly open fronted to the south, and clad to all other sides. They provide the predominant agricultural storage area for existing farm vehicles, machinery and equipment. Adjacent to these structures is a further agricultural building and 2 metal clad grain silos.
- 2.6. To the east of this building group is a modern structure. This was built in 2021 in replacement of earlier structures, to serve the operational requirements arising from the ‘Tulleys Farm’ leisure activities, including a workshop for the purposes of prop building etc.
- 2.7. To the north of agricultural buildings is a steel-framed machinery store. This is open fronted to the north, and enclosed to all other sides. Beyond this is ancillary hardstanding.
- 2.8. Access to the site is a shortway to the east, onto Turners Hill Road.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The application site of Worth Hall Farm falls within the ownership of the Beare family. It is part of a family run enterprise that dates back to 1937.
- 3.2. The agricultural activities have evolved over time from an initial dairy herd operation into a market garden. In the early 1970's, the family commenced operation of PYO fruit and vegetables, available to visiting members of the public. This has subsequently evolved into the provision of seasonal visitor attractions.
- 3.3. This includes the annual Shocktober Fest, that operates around Halloween. Large areas of the farm holding are used for the growing of pumpkins which are then available on a PYO basis to visiting members of the public, during this event.
- 3.4. Whilst the agricultural operation has diversified over the last 35 years to include a range of leisure activities, the land holding continues to operate as an agricultural business.
- 3.5. As part of this, there is a requirement to provide a replacement general purpose agricultural building for use, to serve the ongoing farming operations on the unit.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1. There is extensive planning history that relates to Worth Hall Farm and the wider Tulleys Farm agriculture and leisure enterprise.
- 4.2. The planning history primarily relates to diversification activities at Worth Hall Farm. This initially comprised the creation of a farm shop approved in April 1991 (LPA application reference TH/007/91), and was followed by applications to create tearooms (TH/047/92 and TH/051/95), together with the creation of an all-weather car park for PYO customers and overflow for the farm shop in October 1997 (TH/038/97). Further applications to extend the farm shop (TH/050/99), extend the all-weather car park (TH/01/01922/FUL), convert a boiler house to toilets and convert an open cattle shelter to barbecue and seating area (TH/02/1045/FUL) and convert a building to create a country craft gift shop (TH/05/00829/COU) were approved in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2005. Planning permission was then granted for the conversion of agricultural buildings, together with the construction and extension of the tearooms in 2010 (TH/2010/00251/COU). More recently, planning permission has been granted for the extension of the car park (DM/17/2105), and alterations and extensions of a building to create additional toilet facilities and weather shelter (DM/18/3877).
- 4.3. An agricultural Prior Approval application was granted in March 2005 for the construction of a replacement general purpose agricultural building (TH/05/00294/AGRDET) on the same site as the current application works. This scheme envisaged demolition of the steel-framed building

and associated lean-to, grain silos and machinery store, and the construction of a new general purpose agricultural building.

- 4.4. The building was however, not constructed, and the approval time expired.
- 4.5. In October 2019, an application for an agricultural determination was submitted in respect of a building immediately to the east of the application site (LPA reference DM/19/4218). This envisaged the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of a replacement structure for use as a general purpose agricultural building.
- 4.6. The LPA confirmed in a Decision Notice dated 28th October 2019 that prior approval was not required on the basis that the building was reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture and complied with the requirements of Part 6, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2018.
- 4.7. Furthermore, the planning Case Officer's report noted that:
- 4.8. *"... the siting, design and appearance are appropriate and that the building will respect the character and appearance of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty."*
- 4.9. Due to a change in circumstances, there became a more pressing need for the delivery of new floorspace to the serve the diversified leisure activities on the holding. On this basis the approval was not implemented and instead a full planning application was submitted for the construction of a building for use for the storage of technical equipment, and a workshop for the creation of props, predominantly associated with the annual Shocktober Fest. Planning permission for this structure was granted in December 2020 (LPA reference DM/20/3808), with minor amendments to the scheme design approved in August 2021 (LPA reference DM/21/2534).

5. LEGISLATION

- 5.1. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO) came into force on 15th April 2015.¹
- 5.2. It has subsequently been amended, including on 6th April 2018, by Statutory Instrument 2018: No.: 343, and most recently by Statutory Instrument 2024: No.: 579 which came into effect on 21st May 2024.
- 5.3. Part 6 of Schedule 2 relates to agricultural and forestry development. Class A relates to agricultural development on units of 5 hectares or more. This notes that permitted development includes the carrying out on agricultural land comprised in an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more in area (Part 6, Class A (a)) works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building, which is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit.

¹ Statutory Instrument 2015: No.: 596

- 5.4. Class A.1 sets out a series of limitations to the permitted development, while Class A.2 sets out a series of conditions which must be adhered to, for the works to be considered permitted development.
- 5.5. Part 6, Class A.2(2)(i) states that in relation to the 'erection, extension or alteration of a building' that before beginning the development, an application must be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the Authority will be required as to the siting, design and external appearance of the building.

6. PROPOSED WORKS

- 6.1. The application envisages removal of the existing agricultural buildings and grain silos.
- 6.2. These would be replaced by a single general purpose agricultural building. This would be the main building serving the agricultural enterprise, in particular for the land-holding on the west side of Turners Hill Road, and land immediately to the east.
- 6.3. The building would have a footprint measuring 45m in length (east-west) and 25m in width (north-south). The building would have a shallow pitched roof formed of 3 ridge lines aligned north-south, each measuring 9m and with eave heights of 6m.
- 6.4. The building would be of steel framed construction, externally clad in block work to the lower walls and profile sheeting above (colour finished in Anthracite Grey (RAL7016)). The roof would also comprise profile sheeting (also colour finished in Anthracite Grey (RAL7016)). Timber cladding would be added between in the gable apexes, to match the neighbouring building.
- 6.5. The building would have 3 roller shutter machinery doors and 2 personnel doors in both the front (south) facing elevation and rear (north) facing elevation. The side (east and west) elevations would be blank.
- 6.6. The building would be used primarily for the storage of agricultural machinery and associated equipment, to replace the existing structure. This has a low roof line toward the rear (north) of the building, and a change in floor level between the main steel framed structure and leant. This limits the practical use of the building.
- 6.7. The application is primarily to provide the floorspace envisaged in the 2019 application, taking account of current and future agricultural vehicle and machinery inventory.
- 6.8. The vehicle and machinery inventory includes: Massey Ferguson Tractors (MF5610, F3090, 1140, 5711, 5713, 6480), tele handlers (TH8043T4, TH7030), Kubota Tractors (L1452), Bobcat telehandlers (TI25-60's), and general purpose all terrain vehicles (such as Kawasaki Mules). It also includes extensive plant and machinery, including Harrow Seeder, Opico Interrow Weeder, Seed Drill, Crop Sprayers, Bale/ Pallet Trailer, Furrow Plough, Flail Mower, Spreader etc. The building would also be used to store items such as seed and fertiliser etc.

7. ARE THE WORKS REASONABLY NECESSARY FOR THE PURPOSES OF AGRICULTURE

- 7.1. Class A of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO requires that the works proposed to be carried out under permitted development, must be “*reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit.*”
- 7.2. The definition of ‘agriculture’ as set out in Section 336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is:

“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 purposes of its use in the farming of land), the use of land as grazing land, meadow land, osier land, market gardens and nursery grounds, and the use of land for woodlands where that is ancillary to the farming of land or other agricultural purposes, and ‘agriculture’ shall be construed accordingly.”

- 7.3. The agricultural holding is well established and has been operated by the Beare family for some 88 years. It comprises arable production, together with small areas of woodland, that extends to some 120ha. The farm holding is also used for seasonal events, that underpin and support the viability of the holding. A further 20ha is is rented in the local area and used for arable production.
- 7.4. The existing buildings on the application site comprise the main base for the farm centre. These structures are no longer practical to meet the modern farming needs of the holding.
- 7.5. The proposed building will provide a modern, fit for purpose, building to serve the agricultural needs of the holding, predominantly storage of the extensive agricultural machinery and equipment that is owned and used by the applicant in the arable management of the holding. This includes pumpkins, which are then made available on a PYO basis to visiting members of the public each year.
- 7.6. The building is required to support the existing agricultural enterprise. The use falls within, and is reasonably necessary for, the purposes of agriculture.

8. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED WORKS AGAINST ALLOWANCES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE GPDO

- 8.1. Class A.1 sets out the limitations of development that comprise permitted development under Class A of Part 6 of Schedule 2. Each of these are now considered in turn below.

A.1(a) Development is not permitted if it would be carried out on a separate parcel of land forming part of the unit which is less than 1 hectare in area.

- 8.2. The works relate to a part of the holding that is some 19ha of a contiguous land parcel, with further land immediately to the east beyond Turners Hill Road, and a shortway to the north-west.

A.1(b) Development is not permitted if it would consist of the erection or extension of an agricultural building on an established agricultural unit (as defined in Paragraph X of Part 3 of this Schedule) where development under Class Q or S of Part 3 (Changes of Use) of this Schedule has been carried out within a period of 10 years ending with the date on which development under Class A(a) begins.

- 8.3. The proposed works comprise the erection of a building on an established agricultural unit. There has been no development under Class Q or S of Part 3 on this unit with the period of 10 year preceding the date of this application.

A.1(c) Development is not permitted if it would consist of, or include the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling.

- 8.4. The works relate to the erection of a building for agricultural use. They do not relate to a dwelling.

A.1(d) Development is not permitted if it would involve the provision of a building, structure or works not designed for agricultural purposes.

- 8.5. The application envisages the construction of a general purpose agricultural building. The structure is clearly designed for agricultural use. It is of functional utilitarian design and uses materials appropriate for its intended use.

A.1(e) Development is not permitted if the ground area which would be covered by (i) any works or structure (other than a fence) for accommodating livestock or any plant or machinery arising from engineering operations would exceed 1,000m²; or (ii) any building erected or extended or altered by virtue of Class A, would exceed 1,500m², calculated as described in Paragraph D.1(2)(a) of this Part.

- 8.6. The proposed works envisage the construction of a building that would have a footprint of 1125m².
- 8.7. Paragraph D.1(2)(a) of Part 6 of Schedule 2 sets out that for the purposes of Class A, an area 'calculated as described in Paragraph D.1(2)(a)' comprises the ground area which would be covered by the proposed development, together with the ground area of any building (other than a dwelling), or any structure, works, plant, machinery, ponds or tanks within the same unit which are being provided or have been provided within the proceeding two years and any part of which would be within 90m of the proposed development.
- 8.8. There are no other structures works, plant, machinery, ponds or tanks that are being, or have been within the preceding two years, undertaken within 90m of the proposed development on the agricultural holding.
- 8.9. On this basis, the total area of the works of the proposed development for the purposes of calculation as detailed in the GPDO is therefore 1125m². This is below the 1,500m² limit.

A.1(f) Development is not permitted if the height of any part of any building, structure or works within 3km of the perimeter of any aerodrome would exceed 3m.

- 8.10. The proposed building would be a maximum of 9m in height. The site is not located within 3km of the perimeter of an aerodrome.

A.1(g) development is not permitted if the height of any part of the building or structural works, not within 3km of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 12m.

- 8.11. The proposed building would be a maximum of 9m in height.

A.1(h) Development is not permitted if any part of the development would be within 25m of a metalled part of a trunk road or classified road.

- 8.12. No part of the development is within 25m of the metalled part of Turners Hill Road which is located to the north-east of the proposed building. The building would be a minimum of some 35m from this road at its closest point (north-east corner).

A.1(i) Development is not permitted if it would consist of, or include, the erection or construction of, or the carrying out of any works to, a building, structure or any excavation used or to be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge where the building, structure or excavation is, or would be, within 400m of the curtilage of a protected building.

- 8.13. No part of the proposed works are designed for the accommodation of livestock, slurry or sewage sludge.

A.1(j) Development is not permitted if it would involve excavations or engineering operations on or over Article 2(4) land which are connected with fish farming.

- 8.14. No part of the proposed works relate to fish farming.

A.1(k) Development is not permitted for any building for storing fuel or waste from a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system (i) that would be used for storing waste not produced by that boiler or system, or for the storing of fuel not produced on land within that unit; or (ii) is or would be within 400m of the curtilage of a protected building.

- 8.15. No part of the proposed works relate to a building that is to be used to store fuel or waste in association with a biomass boiler, or an anaerobic digestion system.

A.1(l) Development is not permitted if the erection or extension of a building would be carried out on land or a building that is, or is within the curtilage of, a Scheduled Monument.

- 8.16. The proposed siting of the building and associated works is not on land that is, or is within the curtilage of, a Scheduled Monument.

- 8.17. Works that are permitted under Class A of Part 6 of the GPDO are also subject to a number of Conditions as set out in paragraph A.2. Considerations in relation to these Conditions are set out below.

A.2(1)(a) Where development is carried out within 400m of the curtilage of a protected building, any building, structure, excavation or works resulting from the development are not

used for the accommodation of livestock except in the instances described in Paragraph D.1(3) of this part or for the storage of slurry, or sewage sludge, for housing a biomass boiler, or an anaerobic digestion system for storage of fuel or waste from that boiler or system, or for housing a hydro turbine.

- 8.18. The proposed works do not relate to the accommodation of livestock, the storage of slurry or sewage sludge, for housing a biomass boiler, an anaerobic digestion system, or a hydro-turbine.

A.2(1)(b) Where the development involves (i) the extraction of any mineral from the land (including removal of any disused railway embankment); or (ii) the removal of any mineral from a mineral working deposit, the mineral is not moved off the unit.

- 8.19. The development does not involve the extraction of mineral from the land or the removal of any mineral from a mineral-working deposit.

A.2(1)(c) Waste materials are not brought onto the land from elsewhere except for deposit for use in works described in Class A(a) or in the provision of a hard surface and any materials so brought or incorporated into the building or works in question.

- 8.20. No waste material is to be brought onto the land in association with the construction of the building.

9. SITING, DESIGN AND EXTERNAL APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING

- 9.1. Paragraph A.2(2)(a) states that development consisting of the erection, extension or alteration of a building, is permitted by Class A, subject to a number of conditions. These include that (2) (i) the developer must, before beginning the development, apply to the Local Planning Authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the Authority will be required as to the “siting, design and external appearance of the building.”

Siting

- 9.2. The building is proposed to be sited on the footprint of the existing agricultural buildings that serve the holding, but are no longer suited to modern agricultural machinery and operations.
- 9.3. The site is within the long-established group of buildings that comprise the main farm centre for the holding.
- 9.4. It is immediately to the north of the quadrangle of traditional former farm buildings, and adjacent to modern buildings. This includes a building of similar character, immediately to the east, that is used in association with the diversification leisure activities that take place on the holding.
- 9.5. The building is proposed to be sited in the same location as a structure that was originally envisaged to replace the existing buildings and was authorised through an Agricultural Prior Notification application in 2019 (LPA Reference DM/19/4218).

- 9.6. It is within a contiguous land parcel that extends to some 19 hectares, and is close to other land within the holding, located a short way to the northeast (beyond Turners Hill Road), and to the northwest.
- 9.7. The existing agricultural buildings on the application site have long served the holding.
- 9.8. The building would have limited visibility from public vantage points.
- 9.9. There are no Public Rights of Way within the immediate vicinity of the application site.
- 9.10. The nearest public viewpoint of the site is from Turners Hill Road to the northeast. This is a public highway without segregated footways. It is therefore predominantly used by vehicles.
- 9.11. There is a well-established hedge/ tree line bordering the south-west side of the highway that heavily screens and filters views from the road towards the site.
- 9.12. Any residual views of the application building would be substantively screened by existing structures to the north and east, and in particular, the building constructed pursuant to planning permission granted in 2021 (LPA Reference DM/21/2534).
- 9.13. The building is also set well away from any residential properties that are unrelated to the holding. The closest are in excess of 300m to the northwest.
- 9.14. The proposed siting of the building represents the most appropriate functional location for a replacement general purpose agricultural building to serve the holding, whilst also minimising the visual impact on local landscape character and wider visual amenity.

Design and External Appearance

- 9.15. The building is of functional utilitarian design, reflecting its proposed use as a general purpose agricultural building.
- 9.16. It would be formed of steel framed construction and clad in profile sheeting. This would be externally colour finished in Anthracite Grey (RAL7016) to the walls and roof (with small areas of timber cladding in the gable apexes).
- 9.17. The overall scale of the building has been minimised by the use of a tripartite ridgeline roof that is aligned broadly north-south.
- 9.18. The building design and its external appearance seeks to reflect and harmonise with the structure to the east.
- 9.19. The openings in the building are limited to the north and south elevation, and represent those that are practically necessary for the efficient use and operation of the structure.
- 9.20. The design and appearance of the building is both fit for purpose, and in keeping with its immediate setting and surroundings.

- 9.21. It is considered that the building would have no undue impact on either visual amenity or wider landscape character.

10. SUMMARY

- 10.1. This Statement supports an Agricultural Prior Notification Application, submitted in accordance with the requirements of Class A, Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.
- 10.2. The proposed construction of a general purpose agricultural on a well-established agricultural holding, to replace existing buildings that are no longer suited to modern agricultural machinery is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the unit.
- 10.3. The building is proposed to be sited in a location that is within the long-established group of buildings that serve the holding and broadly centrally located within the wider land ownership. It is on the same footprint of buildings it is to replace, and immediately adjacent to a building of similar character constructed in 2021, to serve the diversified leisure activities that take place on the property to underpin the vitality and viability of the agricultural operations.
- 10.4. The building is closely grouped with other structures, and generally screened from public vantage points, as a result of intervening trees and hedgerows, and other structures. The design and external appearance of the building is functional and utilitarian, in keeping with its proposed use as a general purpose agricultural building.
- 10.5. It is respectfully submitted that no further Prior Approval should therefore be required from the Local Planning Authority for the undertaking of these works.
- 10.6. In accordance with the requirements of the GPDO, the Local Planning Authority are requested to issue a positive determination of the application proposal within 28 days of receipt of these submissions.