

WHA/4310/9 - J D And A Cottrell

Construction of new grain store, construction of hardstanding for manoeuvring, and revised access position on the Hanney – Denchworth Road Land at Priors Court Farm, West Hanney

1.0 The Proposal

- 1.1 The application is for the construction of a grain store with associated hardstanding, and revisions to the existing highway access
- 1.2 Extracts from the application plans and the Design and Access Statement are at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.3 The application comes to Committee as the Parish Council objects.

2.0 Planning History

- 2.1 WHA/8990/3 – Grain store and drying system. Permitted in November 2001. This application has not been implemented and has since expired. The building now proposed is of a similar size and siting to that previously permitted.

3.0 Planning Policies

- 3.1 Policy DC1 of the adopted Local Plan requires development to be of a high design quality in terms of layout, scale, mass, height, detailing, materials to be used, and its relationship with adjoining buildings, and to take into account local distinctiveness. Policy DC5 of the adopted Local Plan requires safe and convenient access and parking.
- 3.2 Policy DC9 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to ensure development will not unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties or the wider environment.
- 3.3 Policy E16 of the adopted Local Plan allows for the provision of new buildings and development necessary for the operation of agriculture or forestry providing it would not cause demonstrable harm to the visual amenity of the landscape, archaeological sites, listed buildings, or sites of nature conservation value.
- 3.4 Policy NE9 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to preserve and enhance the special landscape quality of the Lowland Vale.

4.0 Consultations

- 4.1 West Hanney Parish Council objects to the application. Their comments are at appendix 2 and can be summarised as follows:
- The site is unsuitable for a grain dryer/storage building
 - The building would be visible for a wider area
 - There are no suitable public road connections
 - There are no toilets within the building (this is not a material planning consideration)
 - Concerns raised with regard to the proposed landscaping scheme

- Circumstances have changed since the previous permission was granted i.e. there has been a considerable increase in traffic, and some bridges/roads are in a poor state of repair
- The size and position of the building has changed
- The operation of the dryer and vehicular movements would cause noise in the early hours of the morning
- A number of conditions are suggested by the Parish if permission is granted

- 4.2 East Hanney Parish Council (the neighbouring parish) does not object but concerns are raised with regard to large lorries accessing the site, and damage to bridges along the route (namely the bridge at Dandridge's Mill). The Parish Council suggests a weight or length limit on vehicles.
- 4.3 Charney Basset Parish Council states that on the face of it the application is not considered to have an impact on the parish. However, it is concerned at the associated traffic implications. When this or a similar application came up a few years ago, the Council sought an assurance that it would not generate additional heavy vehicle traffic through the village. It is believed that this assurance was given with the requirement that heavy vehicles would be expected to access main roads via West Hanney village and the A338. The location of this new barn and the new access seems to suggest that a logical route for vehicles to and from the new store to the A420, for example, would be through Charney Bassett and a satnav system would certainly direct lorries along this route. My Council therefore requests that should permission be granted, a condition to avoid any adverse traffic impact on the village should be applied to it. The routes heavy vehicles delivering to and from the barn are allowed to take should be restricted, directing them away from the inadequate roads through the village.
- 4.4 Environment Agency comment: "We have reviewed the Flood Risk assessment and found it to be satisfactory. We therefore have no objections to the proposed application subject to conditions."
- 4.5 Principal Drainage Engineer has no objection, and states that the Flood Risk Assessment is acceptable.
- 4.6 Environmental Health Officer has no objection subject to a condition requesting details of the noise output. He states "it may be the case that at the location of the nearest noise sensitive properties, there will be sufficient attenuation of noise by virtue of distance that no additional noise insulation is necessary. This will need to be demonstrated and in order to do this I would recommend the applicants engage an acoustic consultant to assess this, and to produce a report for the planning authority."
- 4.7 County Engineer comments: "The provision, effectively relocating an existing grain store and associated hardstanding area would not increase vehicular movements to and from the site. Regardless of a grain store the farm would require the transportation of grain which could be carried out in an indiscriminate manner at any point on the site. The provision of a grain store, therefore, formalises movements and spreads them over a greater time span, there being a reduced urgency to transport the grain at harvest. The effect of the proposal on the highway network in general is considered to

be negligible. My concern is drawn to the issues of access and the route taken by grain vehicles to and from the site. With regard to vehicular access; an illustrative plan has been submitted and there is no good reason why an appropriate access could not be provided as described. However precise details of dimensions, visibility lines and construction would need to be determined and agreed with the Highway Authority. Due consideration should be given to prevent materials and soil being dragged or deposited on to the highway. With regard to vehicle routing; I note the previous application was subject to a routing agreement; however I agree with the findings of the Design and Access Statement that there is little need for such an agreement as vehicles would follow a logical route to and from the site. Therefore, the Highway Authority has no objection to the application subject to the submission and approval of detailed plans of the proposed access, given due consideration to the issues raised above.”

4.8 Arboriculturalist has no objections.

4.9 6 letters of objection have been received from local residents. Their comments reiterate those of the Parish Council, plus the following additional points:

- The roads to the site are totally inadequate for large volumes of traffic. There is already excessive heavy traffic along these roads
- Concern are raised to highway safety issues
- The shortest cross-country route linking A roads is through the Hanneys
- The proposal is likely to be a 24-hour operation
- The proposed structure will not be part of an existing group of buildings
- Concerns relating to the loss of hedgerow

4.10 1 letter of support has been received from a local resident which states that the development is consistent with good farming techniques with regard to the appearance and husbandry of the countryside around West Hanney.

5.0 **Officer Comments**

5.1 The proposed grain store is considered to be of a design which is commonly associated with modern farm buildings. Whilst its location is relatively isolated, it would be located adjacent to an existing farm building which in part obscures views of the proposal from the north, and an application was approved for a grain store on this site in 2001. Furthermore the proposal would be located in close proximity to land owned by the applicants which is proposed to be harvested, with the grain stored in the proposed building. It is also noted that the building would be obscured from wider views within the landscape from the north east and north west by existing trees. The proposal would be visible across the wider landscape to the south, however as stated above it is considered to be of a design commonly associated with farm buildings within the open countryside. Notwithstanding this it is considered reasonable and necessary to require a landscaping scheme to be carried out due to the size and relative isolation of the building to mitigate any views from the south.

5.2 The proposed building would be located more than 600 metres from any neighbouring dwelling, and is therefore not considered to have a visually intrusive impact in this

regard. Concerns have been raised by the Parish Council and nearby residents within regard to noise generation from the grain dryer, and from vehicular movements. With regard to the first issue comments from the Senior Environmental Health Officer have been received which requests that a scheme for sound insulation and acoustic attenuation be submitted. However he then comments that due to the distance to neighbouring properties this may not be necessary. Given these comments, the substantial distance to any nearby residential property, and the fact that such a condition was not imposed on the 2001 permission, it is not considered that the proposal would result in a harmful impact on the amenities of residential properties, and any such condition would be unreasonable.

- 5.3 It should be noted that the adjacent farmland is part of the existing holding of the applicant, and the transportation of grain can be carried out in an indiscriminate manner at any point at present. As stated by the County Engineer it is considered that the proposal for a grain store would formalise these vehicular movements, and spread them over a greater time span. Furthermore the distance to neighbouring dwellings is considered to sufficiently mitigate any noise disturbance from vehicles entering the site. Whilst it is appreciated vehicles may pass properties along their route, as stated above this is not likely to be significantly different from the alternative situation whereby the land is still harvested, but the grain is transported to another site. Notwithstanding this it is considered reasonable to restrict the use of the grain store to land adjacent to the proposed building, and other land within the applicant's agricultural holding, in order to safeguard neighbour's amenities.
- 5.4 The proposal submitted involves alterations to the existing access arrangements to the site. The County Engineer is of the opinion that the proposed alterations could provide a safe access, but requires further details to be submitted and approved. The proposed access alterations are considered to improve the existing situation whereby grain could be harvested from the fields using the existing access. The County Engineer has also raised no objections to the traffic movements to and from the site stating that the proposal would formalise movements to the site, and would spread the movements over a greater time span. The County Engineer acknowledges the Routing Agreement imposed on the previous permission for a grain store on this site in 2001; however he is of the opinion that a Routing Agreement is not necessary for this application, stating that "there is little need for such an agreement as vehicles would follow a logical route to and from the site." In this regard no objections are raised to the application on highway grounds.
- 5.5 It is noted that the access point is within the flood zone. The applicants have submitted an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment, and the Principal Drainage Engineer and the Environment Agency have no objections to the proposal subject to conditions.

6.0 **Recommendation**

6.1 *It is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the following conditions.*

1. *TL1 Time limit*

2. *MC1 Submission of materials*
3. *LS4 Landscaping scheme to be submitted*
4. *The building hereby permitted shall only be used in connection with grain and other agricultural produce farmed within the existing agricultural holding or within the immediate vicinity of the barn and shall not be used for storage or any other associated use which would involve the importation of agricultural produce to the site.*
5. *No spoil or materials shall be deposited or stored on the part of the site that is liable to flooding.*
6. *There shall be no raising of the existing land levels on the site.*
7. *HY2 Details of access to be submitted and approved*