

SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

PROPOSED EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS & SUBDIVISION OF EMPLOYMENT PREMISES FOR FLEXIBLE BUSINESS USE - RODDEN FARM, RODDEN LANE, RODDEN, WEYMOUTH, DT3 4JE

Introduction

1 The change of use and alterations of agricultural building for storage and operation of business for hire of specialist marine access equipment including installation of mezzanine floor and external cladding, formation of hard-standing and siting of steel container was granted planning permission on 9 March 2017 (WD/D/16/002546)

2 Business rates make the operation of the business from the whole floorspace unviable. The company have therefore rationalised and reorganised their business and operational requirements, utilising regional basses in Scotland and Ireland and can now operate from a smaller floorspace at Rodden.

3 The planning application therefore proposes external alterations to form new service openings and the subdivision of the original floor space to create a total of five smaller units to accommodate flexible use for the Work on Water business and uses within Use Classes (B1/E(g)) industrial and (B8) storage or distribution, with associated servicing and parking.

Planning Policy & Constraints

4 The West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (LP) establishes the policy context for this development. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and The West Dorset Design Guidelines - Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) are also material planning considerations

5 The LP Proposals Map shows the site is outside any defined development boundary (DDB), within an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) and within the South Dorset Ridge and Vale landscape character area

6 Environment Agency Flood Maps confirm that the site is not within any flood-plane, or at high risk of flooding.

Case for Development

Principle

7 The principle of adapting the building for employment purposes has already been established through the grant of planning permission and is also consistent with LP policy SUS2.

8 The building is of permanent and substantial construction and no extensions or rebuilding is proposed. The building is part of a farm complex and its appearance and character will remain unaltered other than the insertion of additional service doors. In such circumstances LP policy SUS3 also accepts the adaptation and re-use of buildings for employment use.

9 LP policy ECON1 similarly supports employment development through the through the re-use or replacement of an existing building; or in a rural location where this is essential for that type of business. National policy also allows a change of use of B8 storage or distribution uses to B1 light industrial use as permitted development, where the floorspace does not exceed 500sqm (Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)).

Additionally, internal alterations do not constitute development. The principle of the use is therefore considered acceptable.

10 The concept of the hardstanding has previously been approved (WD/D/16/002546) and will be used for access to some of the industrial units and would be ancillary to the main use and not uncommon as a typical farmyard feature.

11 The Government also seek to support a prosperous rural economy to which this development will contribute. Paragraph 83 states:

83. Planning policies and decisions should enable: (amongst others)

a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;

b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;

Landscape Character and AONB

12 Part 3 Class R of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) reinforces Government policy and allows many conversions to take place, without formal planning permission.

13 The building has been refurbished as part of a previous planning permission, although new service doors will be inserted in colours to match the existing cladding.

14 The hardstanding will not appear out of place in the setting of the farm complex and will include drainage. A new fence is proposed along the boundary to separate the employment uses from the agricultural business, and for health and safety reasons.

15 The West Dorset Design Guidelines - Landscape Character Assessment notes that within the clay vale some traditional barns and farm buildings are in a poor state of repair and hedgerows are intensively managed with a lack of hedgerow trees and these are considered to be detrimental features.

16 The site is not immediately visible from points of public access along Rodden Lane but can be seen through intermittent tree cover along the road leading to Abbotsbury to the north-west and a public footpath, also behind the tree line and stream to the west. It is considered that the overall character of the building will remain unchanged. Planting can also be introduced to enhance the setting as a benefit to the landscape character and visual amenity of the AONB consistent with LP policies ENV1 and ENV10

Amenity

17 The Work on Water Business already has planning permission to operate from the site and mainly involves storage, with some cleaning down and repair of equipment. The equipment and vehicles do not leave the site on any regular or frequent basis. Staff generally attend between 0830 and 1700 Mondays–Fridays, except where it is necessary to respond to an emergency, or an early start is needed to reach a destination. The business activity from Rodden is to be downsized and with it any associated activity.

18 The remaining units will be occupied by low key B1/E(g) or B8 businesses. By definition B1/E(g) uses are those which do not give rise to noise or disturbance and could be accommodated in a residential area. B8 uses are for storage with some vehicle activity likely, but this is likely to be limited given the size of the proposed units.

19 The building and hardstanding are some 340 m and 120m from the nearest houses to the south and north respectively, and the existing array of farm/equestrian buildings provide a physical barrier between the development and the nearest residents on Rodden Lane.

20 Given social hours and low key nature of the operation it is not considered that there will be any material harm to neighbouring residential amenity, particularly when compared to the activities associated with a typical agricultural use. The development is therefore considered to satisfy LP policy ENV16

Access, Parking & Highway Safety

21 The Work on Water business delivers and collects all hired equipment and there is no general hire of equipment to visiting members of the public. The units will otherwise be used for low key purposes within Uses Classes B1/E(g) and B8, with minimal traffic movement.

22 Access is proposed via the existing farm access, with parking and manoeuvring within the hardstanding area or farm yard. All vehicles will be able to manoeuvre within the site allowing them to enter and leave Rodden Farm in a forward gear.

24 Work on Water operate one HGV and two vans but the nature of the work means that these vehicles do not routinely travel to and from the site. The three staff arrive in two cars and there may be occasional client visits. The companies HIAB lorry (HGV) mobilises approximately 4 times a month and the company vans twice a week, but these movements are likely to reduce arising from the planning application and the downscaling of the business at Rodden.

25 Movements associated with the other units are likely to be low level particularly when compared to the types and frequency of vehicles that might use the local highway network associated with the agricultural use of the site. The development is not therefore considered to harm highway safety in the context of LP policy COM7.

4.19 Overall the site provides sufficient space for all visiting vehicles to park off the highway in line with LP policy COM9.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 The development is considered to be in accordance with policies in the LP and there are considered to be no adverse impacts from the development which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits and the development should be approved.