



SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

Ash Tree Farm, Woodcock Lane, Grafty Green, Kent,
ME17 2AX

July 2021

SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

In support of an application for the

Prior Notification of Agricultural Development under The Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015 Schedule 2, Part 6 (as amended)

at

Ash Tree Farm, Woodcock Lane, Grafty Green, Kent, ME17 2AX

On behalf of

Mr S Wickens

ISSUE DATE / REVISION	COPY REVIEWED BY	DATE COPY HAS BEEN REVIEWED
Supporting Statement (26.07.21)	DP	26/07/21
Supporting Statement 27.07.21	ANY	

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. We are writing on behalf of our client, Mr S Wickens, herein referred to as ‘the applicant’, to support a Prior Notification application at the property known as Ash Tree Farm, Woodcock Lane, Grafty Green, Kent, ME17 2AX.
- 1.2. This prior notification application is for two modest agricultural buildings, to provide secure storage for farm machinery, equipment and hay, as well as for various other additional general agricultural miscellany. The extent of this proposal is shown on the plans accompanying this application as submitted via the Planning Portal.
- 1.3. The applicant’s total farmed land extends to approximately 148 acres (59.89 hectares) of permanent pasture, currently managed for the production of hay and the grazing of livestock. **Figure 1** shows the extent of the applicant’s farmed land. As described more particularly in **Table 1**.

Location	Acres	Hectares	Interest
Ash Tree Farm, Grafty Green	49	18.82	Owner Occupied
March Farm, Grafty Green	37	14.97	Farm Business Tenancy
Land at Chilston Park Hotel, Sandway	46	18.61	Farm Business Tenancy
Telpits Farm, Grafty Green	16	6.47	Farm Business Tenancy

Totals: 148 59.89

Table 1: Land owned and occupied by the applicant

- 1.4. The development is to be located on the applicant's owned land at Ash Tree Farm to provide a greater means of flexibility for the future. Understandably, capital investment on freehold land is logical compared to capital investment of rented land.

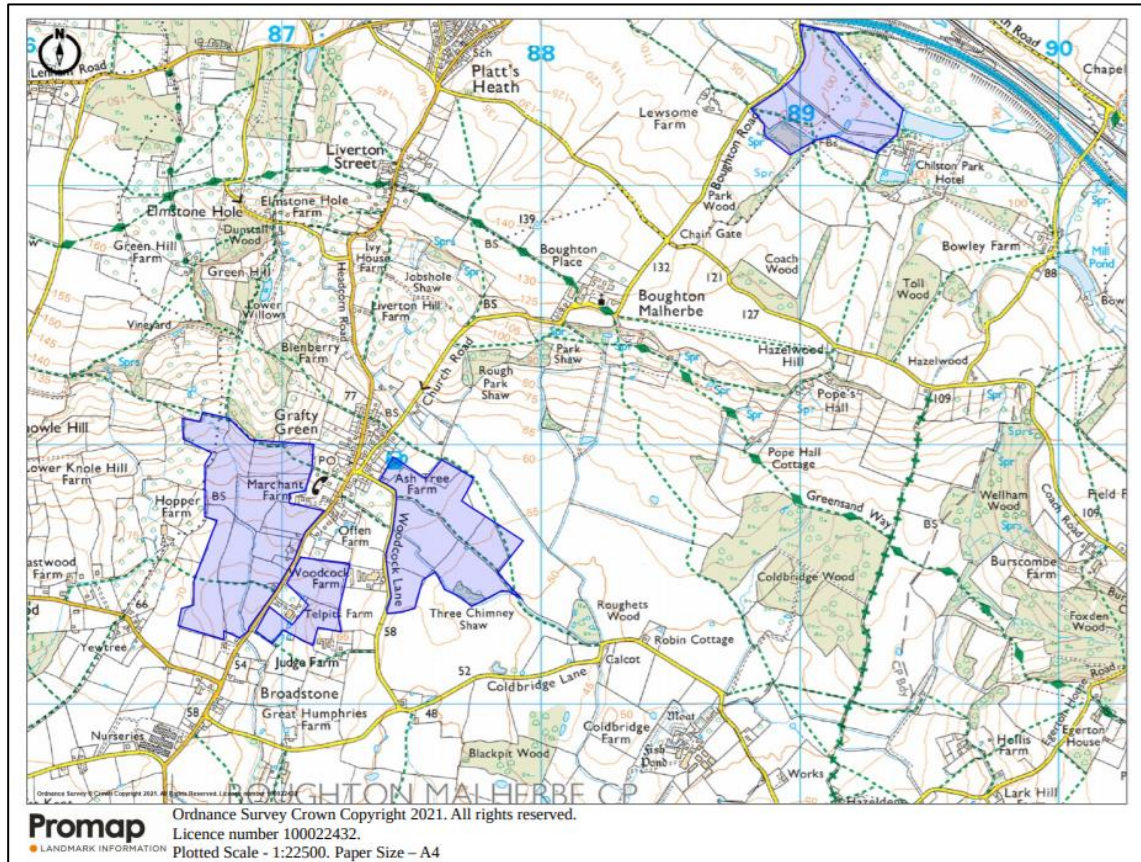


Figure 1: Plan showing land farmed by the applicant

- 1.5. The applicant currently is relying on temporarily storing equipment and machinery with family at a range of different locations. This is highly impractical and this arrangement cannot continue, given the obvious logistical problems this creates when trying to undertake farming operations.
- 1.6. The proposal is intended to be located on the applicant's owned land at Ash Tree Farm to provide a greater means of flexibility for the future. Understandably, capital investment on freehold land is logical compared to capital investment of rented land.
- 1.7. The buildings are required to store the applicant's farm machinery and equipment used on site, as well as across the wider farm holding to make hay. As well as manage the land in accordance with DEFRA's Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) standards.
- 1.8. There are obvious benefits of having a secure watertight facility to store hay to include but not limited to the flexibility of retaining harvested crop and selling when the market is strong, which in turn allows the business to command better prices.
- 1.9. The Farmers Weekly (from 4th July 2021), as shown within the screenshot below within **Figure 2**, shows average prices for smaller bales but due to lack of supply has been unable to provide a market figure for big bales. A secure, watertight hay store would enable the applicant to ensure he can store his made hay to be able to benefit from situations such as these.

NAME	PRICE	QUALITY	BALE SIZE
Seed Hay	180	Good	Pick-up
Meadow Hay	150	Good	Pick-up
Hay	-	Good	Big Sq

Marketprices: Hay And Straw/Hay - South east (Last updated: 04/07/2021) - Hay

Figure 2: Farmers Weekly south east hay prices

2. Background

- 2.1. The applicant's farmed land extends to approximately 148 acres and is located in and around the civil parish of Boughton Malherbe.
- 2.2. The applicant is a fourth generation farmer who has been the sole owner of Ash Tree Farm since 2019, having been previously owned and farmed by the applicant's father.
- 2.3. The applicant has worked within agriculture his whole life and is well known within the industry and the locality.

Livestock

- 2.4. The applicant keeps an average of 180 continental beef cows across the holding. The beef enterprise requires the following management;
 - Weight management
 - Weight forecasting
 - Improving heard health
 - Providing the highest standards of animal welfare
 - Management of healthy young stock
 - Selecting the best markets for selling produce
- 2.5. Alongside the beef enterprise the applicant also has a flock of 150 ewes with followers. The applicant normally sells through avenues such as Ashford Market and ABP, Guildford.
- 2.6. The applicant is a registered farm business with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) with a County Parish Holding (CPH) Number of 20/053/0037.

Pasture

- 2.7. The pasture land on the holding amounts to approximately 148 acres (59.89 hectares) which requires general year-round upkeep. Mowing, baling and topping takes place in the summer, alongside general maintenance works such as fencing, to make sure it is stock proof at all times.

- 2.8. The applicant's hay crop is used to feed his livestock, with any surplus being sold to existing equestrian clients.
- 2.9. The proposed development site is located within owner occupied land at Ash Tree Farm which extends to approximately 49 acres (18.82 hectares) of permanent pasture.
- 2.10. As shown within **Figure 3**, there is a timber framed agricultural building at Ash Tree Farm, however, it is understood that this building is in poor condition and is not suitable for purpose of modern agriculture.
- 2.11. There are currently no suitable farm buildings at Ash Tree Farm to provide secure storage for farm machinery and the applicant's hay. As the farm's equipment and machinery is all stored off site, these are imported from March Farm to Ash Tree Farm as and when required to allow for agricultural operations and general farm management (such as fence repairs, harrowing, topping, etc.) to be undertaken. After the relevant works are completed, the machinery is returned to March Farm for its secure storage.
- 2.12. Moving forward, it is proposed that there would be two suitable farm buildings to securely store farm machinery and hay at Ash Tree Farm.
- 2.13. A secure machinery store on site means that equipment can be safely stored in situ where it can be readily available to undertake the tasks at hand and where general repairs to farm equipment and maintenance can be done under cover. This adds obvious efficiencies in terms of moving vehicles and equipment on and off site, whilst it gives the applicant's business greater flexibility when storing produce and being able to respond to required agricultural operations more quickly.
- 2.14. The applicant is in possession of farm machinery and equipment which is used to manage the land (tractors, trailers, toppers, etc.) as shown submitted alongside this application (this is by no means an exhaustive list). For obvious security reasons, we ask the contents of this should remain **Private & Confidential** and is not uploaded onto the website.



Figure 3: Timber framed barn at Ash Tree Farm

3. Proposal

- 3.1. The proposal is to provide a new hay barn and a new machinery building to serve as secure storage for the farm's machinery, equipment and hay.
- 3.2. The proposal also includes an area of hard standing / concrete apron between the two buildings.

Amount

- 3.3. The buildings will be situated to the north of the applicant's owned land, as identified within the block plan submitted alongside this application, an extract of which is provided within **Figure 4**.

- 3.4. It is proposed that the machinery barn will measure 25.08 metres in length by 12.89 metres in width (a total of 323.3 square metres). The building will measure 4.5 metres to the eaves and 6.33 metres to ridge.
- 3.5. The hay barn is proposed to measure 25.08 metres in length by 14.13 metres in width including overhang (a total of 354.4 square metres). The building will measure 4.5 metres to the eaves and 6.49 metres to ridge.

Volumes

- 3.6. The applicant intends to make and store a range of both small and large bales dependent on the quality of the crop and the demand from clients.

Small Bales

- 3.7. On a standard principle, if the applicant were to produce hay from 70% of the pasture land available on the holding there would be 40 hectares producing 180 tonnes of made hay (working on the basis of 4.5 tons per hectare of made hay). This equates to 1,530m³ of hay needing to be stored (based 8.5m³/tonne for standard bales). Therefore, working on the basis that the bales are stacked to a height of 4 metres there is the requirement for approximately 383m² of floor space required, being in excess of the 354.4m² proposed.

Large Bales

- 3.8. If the applicant were to produce only large 4' round bales and working on the standard assumption that the grassland produces 1.9 tonnes per acre dry matter, the following can be calculated the requirement would be as shown below within **Table 2**.

Projected Hay Yield: Large (4') Round Bales	
Area (acres)	40
Hay yield @ 85% DM (tonnes/ac)	1.9
Total DM (kg)	76,000
Bale weight (kg)	300
Total Bales:	<u>~253</u>

Table 2: Projected hay yields for large (4') round bales

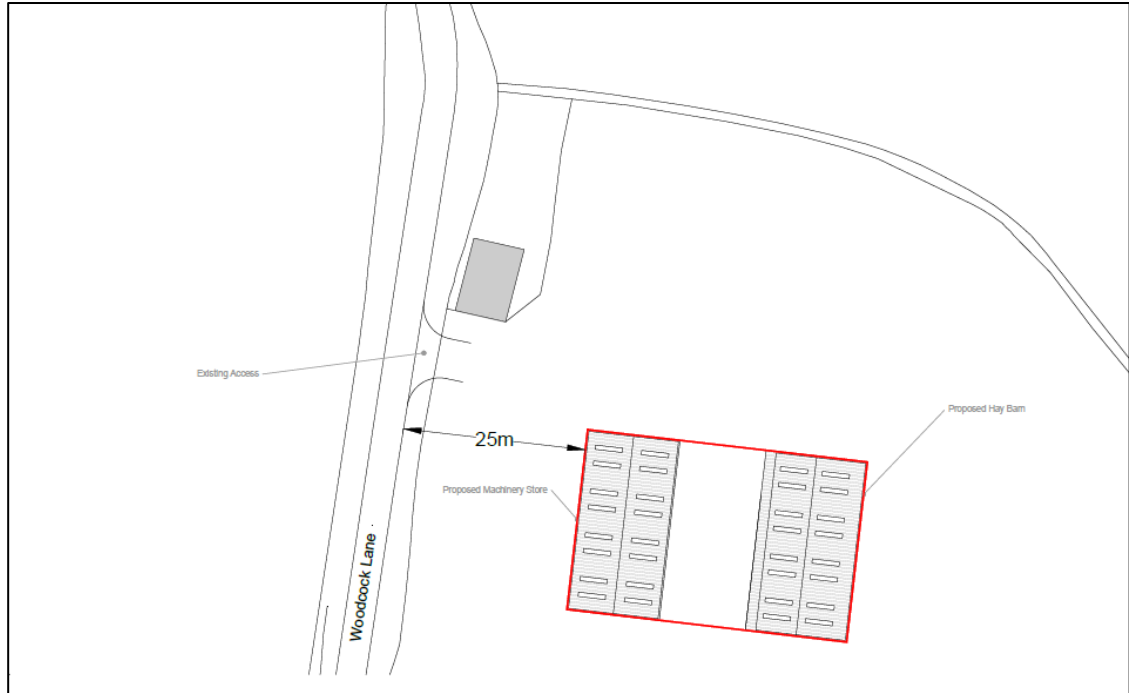


Figure 4: Proposed block plan

Layout

- 3.9. The buildings will be situated to the north of the field parcel and in close proximity to the existing site access from Woodcock Lane. This location provides good access to Woodcock Lane and is in close proximity to an existing farm building already present on the holding. Due to the presence of an existing building, albeit in a poor condition, it is thought that the proposed location is consistent with current and historic agricultural uses which are commensurate with the rural surroundings.

Landscaping

- 3.10. The site is surrounded by mature hedge and tree screens. Although it is not considered necessary, additional landscaping is being provided outside of the proposed development site and which does not require planning permission, on the north and southern field boundary. This comprises the provision of some native hedgerow species that will be planted in the Autumn Winter 2021/22.

Appearance

- 3.11. The proposed machinery barn is a steel portal framed construction, with a fibre cement pitched roof and 1.8m concrete side panels, with Yorkshire boarding above to the eaves. Clear roof light cladding panels are incorporated into the roof to provide a source of natural light. The building is proposed to contain two roller shutter doors both measuring 4 metres in width by 2.5 metres in height, to allow equipment to be unloaded on flat bed trailers etc.
- 3.12. The proposal has been specifically designed for its agricultural purpose as a secure machinery store.
- 3.13. The proposed hay store is the same as the machinery barn but with only three sides enclosed to allow air circulation around the bales and easy front loading with machinery.
- 3.14. The finish was chosen to not only be practical in terms functionality and security, but to remain aesthetically pleasing to the wider landscape. An extract of the proposed plans and elevations can be seen in **Figure 5** and **Figure 6**.



Figure 5: Proposed machinery store east & west elevations



Figure 6: Proposed hay store east & west elevations

4. Permitted Development

- 4.1. Class A of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the GPDO, as amended, has been given due consideration during the preparation of this proposal. This Class relates to agricultural development on units of 5 hectares or more, and especially in this instance, refers to Class A (a), being “works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building”.
- 4.2. It is submitted that this proposal complies with Class A.1 of Part 6, Schedule 2 as shown below within **Table 3**.

GPDO Paragraph Number	Comments
A.1 (a)	The development is proposed on a piece of land forming part of the agricultural unit which is greater than 1 hectare.
A.1 (b)	No development has taken place under Class Q or S of Part 3 (Change of Use) of Schedule 2 on this agricultural unit.
A.1 (c)	This proposal does not involve the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling.
A.1 (d)	The building is designed for the storage of agricultural machinery and hay.
A.1 (e)	The ground area covered as a result of the proposal does not exceed 1,000 square metres.
A.1 (f)	The site is not located within 3km of a registered aerodrome.
A.1 (g)	The building does not exceed 12 metres in height.
A.1 (h)	The site does not lie within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk or classified road.
A.1 (i)	The building will not be used for the storage of livestock, slurry, sewage sludge or for storing fuel for a waste from a boiler or system or for storing fuel that is not produced on the land.
A.1 (j)	The site is not located on Article 2(4) land and is not connected with fish farming.
A.1 (k)	The development is not to be used for the storage of fuel for or waste from a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digester
A.2 (1) (a)	The development is not within 400m of a protected dwelling.
A.2 (1) (b) & (c)	The development does not involve any mineral extraction or the removal of any mineral from a mineral-working deposit.

Table 3: Analysis of requirements for Part 6, Class A

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. It is considered that this proposal is permissible under Class A of Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order (2015), as amended.
- 5.2. The buildings have been well designed for their agricultural use, to serve as a secure agricultural machinery store and hay store which improve the efficiencies of the farming business and to support further expansion over the coming years.
- 5.3. It is therefore respectfully requested that this application is supported.