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Consultants*

**AGRICULTURAL BUILDING FOR HAY AND MACHINERY
STORAGE.**

PLANNING STATEMENT

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Pond Farm,
Hall Road,
Great Bromley,
Colchester
CO7 7TP



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PARTICULARS

Document Title	Planning Statement
Proposal	Planning application for a general-purpose agricultural building for hay and machinery storage.
Applicant Details	Mr & Mrs T Frary
Site Details	Pond Farm, Hall Road, Great Bromley, Colchester CO7 7TP
Prepared by	Melanie Bingham-Wallis Farm Planning Consultant
Agent details	Foxes Rural Consultants Ltd Foxes House Foxes Lane Eight Ash Green Colchester Essex CO6 3PS



INTRODUCTION

This statement is submitted to support an application for a planning application for a new agricultural building at Pond Farm for the purpose of hay and farm machinery storage. The application is made on behalf of the owner of the agricultural holding Mr & Mrs T Frary

ENCLOSURES

The following documents are enclosed with this application.

Reference	Description
Floor and elevation plans	Refer to plans for scale
Location plan	Scale 1:35,000
Site plan	Scale 1:1,250
Planning Statement incl. Design and Access	
Farm Plan	For reference
Planning Forms	Submitted via Planning Portal

MY EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

This statement and application have been prepared by Melanie Bingham-Wallis. I am a farm planning consultant employed by Foxes Rural Consultants Limited which specialises in rural planning matters. The company regularly advises on agricultural related planning applications, justifications and proposals throughout Essex, Suffolk and Hertfordshire.

The company is registered with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers.

THE FARM HOLDING

The farm holding extends to 6.01 hectares as illustrated on the accompanying farm plan. It is cropped to grass and hay is cut annually. The applicant currently has 20 sheep grazing the land and there are plans to buy 40 sheep during the autumn livestock markets. The sheep will be outwintered with supplementary feed and hay. The hay will be fed to the livestock, any excess will be sold to hay merchants and local farmers as additional feed for livestock.





THE PROPOSAL

The application is for an enclosed steel portal framed agricultural building measuring 10.00 m x 40.00 m for hay and associated farm machinery storage.

The agricultural holding is cropped to grass and hay is harvested from the land. There are currently no suitable agricultural buildings on the holding at present for the purposes of storing hay. There are other buildings on site, but these are either tenanted and/or have a commercial use. As the livestock are outwintered, it is crucial that the hay given is of the highest quality during the winter months.

The applicant does not have the ability to store hay on site during the winter months in undercover, dry conditions. Demand for hay is at its highest during winter months when the grass not growing in the fields and livestock need supplementary feeding and lowest in the summer growing months when grass is naturally grazed. The sale of the hay crop direct from the field in the summer months results in the lowest price being received by the applicants.

This proposal will therefore enable the applicants to store hay undercover after its harvest as well as some of the farm machinery associated with the farming of the holding.

REASONS FOR THE BUILDING

The core reasons for erecting the building is:

1. To provide dry, safe and secure storage the hay crop.
2. Improve the profitability of the hay crop as the building will provide the applicants with the ability to store the hay crops for winter months when hay sales are at their highest demand and prices for hay increase.
3. To prevent loss of hay crop due to weathering and increased moisture content.
4. Provide the safe, dry and secure storage of farm machinery.
5. Provide temporary shelter for sick/injured livestock

Storage to Maximise Marketing

During the winter months, grass has a much slower growth rate, and the nutrient content tends to be lower than in the warmer growing spring and summer months. As a result, the livestock are supplementary fed during late autumn, winter and early spring. The hay cut and baled from across the holding will be fed to the sheep and any excess will be sold on.

It is crucial that the hay given is of the highest quality and nutritional value to ensure the livestock continue to receive the correct dietary requirements, especially so during the colder winter months when grass is not growing.

For good quality hay, the target moisture level is 15-18%. Within this range, hay should not either heat up nor grow mould or bacteria. Furthermore, the quality and the nutritional values tend to be more stable at these levels, and so can be stored for longer periods under the correct conditions.

To be able to supply a hay crop into any onward market and to meet the quality requirements of the hay merchants, good quality hay generally has a moisture content of no more than 15–18 per cent and the applicant must ensure that the dry matter is correct. This is usually undertaken using a moisture probe at harvest time and it is then paramount that when the crop is carted back to the farm that it is stored in a dry and secure building undercover to maintain the maximum dry matter content for livestock feed. Penalties and price reductions are incurred if the moisture levels are not in the optimum range.



The undercover storage of hay improves its quality and values for market. A premium is achieved for the crop if the applicant can store the straw and sell at an economically advantageous time, as opposed to during or after harvest when demand is at its lowest and availability is at its highest.

If hay is either baled at higher moisture levels or if it becomes wet from rain or damp during storage, the quality of the forage is reduced, and the non-fibre carbohydrates (sugars and starches) break down. When this occurs, the nutritional value also decreases. If livestock are fed hay with a lower nutritional value, the growth rate is also affected. Smaller and less weighty animals are produced which achieve lower prices.

The external storage of hay in stacks is not feasible because this significantly decreases the quality. The outside top and sides of the stack are vulnerable to the weather, particularly rain. If hay becomes wet, mould and bacteria begin to grow and break it down. This turns the hay black and cannot be fed to livestock. In this case, 25% of the stack (top and sides) would be lost. This is the equivalent of 1 in 5 bales.

The cumulative effects of loss of hay bales through weathering and mould growth can significantly impact the profits of the business.



Fig 1: Hay has been exposed to rain and moisture when stored outside. The hay has turned mouldy and black. This section of hay cannot be fed to livestock and must be disposed of. The cumulative effects of lost bales can significantly impact profits.

Comparison with Crop Commodity Prices – Worked Example

The difference from one year to the next based on commodity prices is vast. The below is only an illustrative example to demonstrate the difference.

Through baling hay, the business has a yield of 4.95 tonnes of hay per hectare (2 tonne of hay per acre). On average, in 2018 the summer hay prices were £120 per tonne at harvest time and in the summer of 2019, hay



prices were £65 per tonne due to a wetter growing season. The Farmers Weekly article contained in Appendix 2 shows the reduction prices. This is a reduction of £55 per tonne at harvest and this vastly affects the profitability of this agricultural holding.

Legal Context

All livestock keepers have legal obligations to ensure minimum standards of care for their animals under the Animal Welfare Act 2006. It is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to any domesticated animal and reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that the needs of animals under the farmer's care are met. In addition, all farmed animals are protected by the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007. These include minimum requirements relating to inspections, record keeping, appropriate treatment, freedom of movement and appropriate environments, buildings and equipment, feeding and watering and breeding.

The DEFRA Code of Recommendations for keeping sheep interprets the above legislation and sets out welfare guidance practices for livestock farmers.

Temporary shelter for injured or sick animals

Sheep are notorious for injuring themselves or becoming sick. In these instances, close monitoring is essential. The building will provide temporary shelter in the event where an animal requires housing during treatment and recovery. Housing livestock limits movement which in turn enables the animal to rest and heal quicker. Also, by housing animals, it removes the daily stress of regular catching for inspection. Finally, the building will provide shelter from the elements of wind, rain and cold temperatures which can also cause illness and hinder recovery.

Fire Risk

It is important that hay is stored inside a secure and enclosed building due to it being combustible. This is the reason for the building being enclosed.

Moisture content leads to the heating up of hay and is the main factor that causes hay to spontaneously combust.

Farm Machinery Storage

The undercover storage of farm machinery is essential for security, maintenance and longevity of this equipment. While machinery is stored outside, especially during the colder months, it is prone to weathering effects. This causes ceasing of machinery bearings and parts, rusting of chains, weathering of frame, body work and paintwork. The replacement or maintenance costs increases, and life expectancy reduces due to the weathering effects on the farm machinery. Undercover storage gives protection from the elements, reducing maintenance costs and prolonging life expectancy of machinery.

The undercover storage of farm machinery which is currently stored outside will also improve the visual aesthetics of the surrounding area. Furthermore, the undercover storage of machinery increases the security of the machinery and reduces the risk of theft.

Floor Space Required



The building extends to a total floor area of 400m².

The calculations below have been obtained from the Agro Business Consultants Budgeting and Costings Book 77th edition.

Hay yields approximately 8-10 large round bales per acre. The average yield is therefore between 50-60 large round bales.

The baling of hay justifies the floor space required for the building as per the floor plan accompanying this application.

As demonstrated on the accompanying floor plan, the remaining floor space of the building will be used for the storage of farm machinery and equipment to include:

1. Tractor
2. Flatbed farm trailer
3. Trailer
4. Hay baler
5. Farm mower
6. Hay turner
7. Farm forklift / telehandler

DESIGN, SITING AND EXTERNAL APPEARANCE

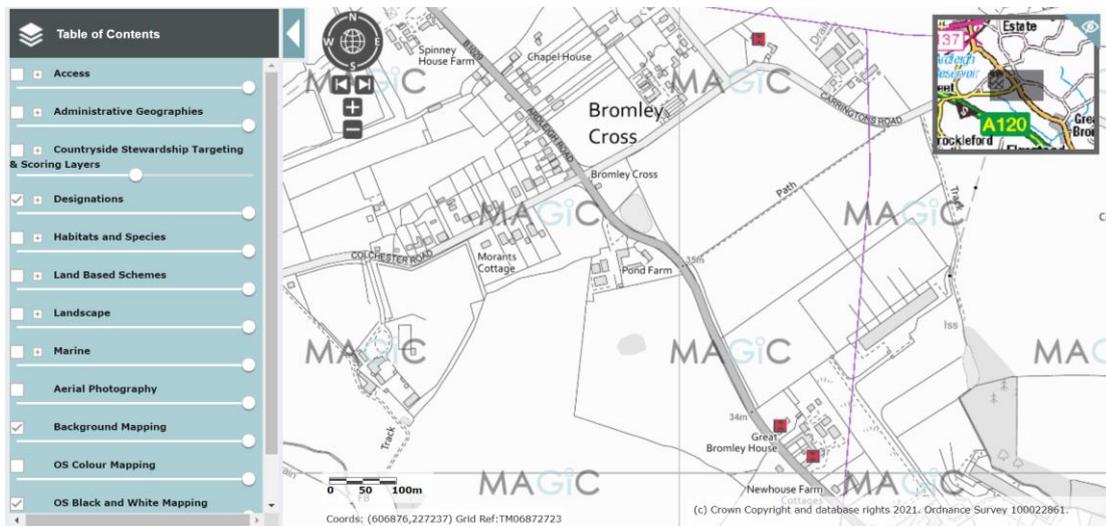
The building proposed is of a standard design for agricultural buildings. The colour and cladding has been selected to complement the existing buildings located on site.

Table 1 – Design of building

Building Size	The building measures 10 metres x 40 metres totalling 400m ² .
Walls	The side and gable elevations of the building will be clad in juniper green insulated composite cladding. The south elevation will be open.
Roof	The roof of the building will be insulated composite roof panels.
Eaves Height	The eaves height has been kept to a minimum practical height at 5 metres.
Roof Pitch	15 degrees
Ridge Height	The ridge height is 6.62 metres
Doors	There are no doors. The southern elevation is open.
Floor	The base inside the building will be a concrete power floated floor.

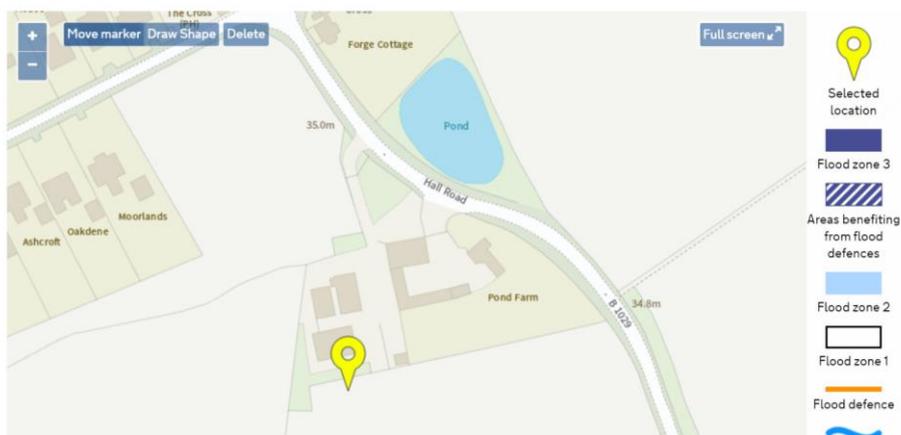
DESIGNATIONS

The site has no statutory or historic statutory designations. Neither are there any non-statutory designations. The site is not near any designated sites or priority habitats or species.



Flood Risk

The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is within an area of Very Low risk of surface water flooding, according to the data held on the 'gov.uk' flood risk information pages.



Source: Flood map for planning service

PLANNING POLICY

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states:

“83. Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- 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;”*



This proposal supports the sustainable growth of a local agricultural business in a rural area, by allowing for an increase in operational space to ensure storage and safe keeping of hay produce. It also supports the profitability and viability of the business.

The scale of the building is commensurate with that of the agricultural holding. The calculation and measurements from the Agro-Business Consultants Costings Book demonstrates the area required to store the number of bales produced inside the building.

The secure dry storage will allow the sale of the hay to be sold at the most economically advantageous times, when demand is high, and availability is lower. This is usually during the colder winter months, when livestock is wintered inside, as opposed directly during or after harvest when livestock are grazing in fields and there is plenty of availability. As result, maximum prices can be obtained during these months, which supports farm profitability. A profitable business is more able to invest back into or expand the business through the purchase of high value equipment or employment. In both situations, the rural economy and employment would be maintained and is supported by NPPF, para 83a.

The selling of hay into market or to hay merchants represents a diversification of the business. The NPPF supports the development of well-designed buildings. The design reflects that of a standard modern agricultural building found across the district. The materials used are that of a steel portal frame, with steel box profile cladding and a fibre cement roof.

Local Planning Policy

The North Essex Authorities Shared Strategic Section 1 Plan was adopted in February 2021, but the council has yet to adopt section 2 with policies relevant to agriculture.

Both the N.E.A.S.S adopted section 1 and Tendring Emerging Local Plan Policies (2013-2033) support rural business and the rural economy. It is noted that:

“Due to the extensive rural area outside urban settlements, agriculture and its related industries play an important part in the overall economy.”

North Essex Authorities Shared Strategic Section 1

Policy SP 1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

When considering development proposals, the Local Planning Authorities will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. They will always work pro-actively with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Development that complies with the Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposal meets the criteria as set out on policy SP1 and NPPF para 8.

Economic - the proposed building will support the development and growth of a rural business. The building will provide dry and secure storage for the hay and associated machinery. By keeping hay dry, it is protected from the elements and prevents the damage and loss of crop through the growth of mould. A premium price is obtained through the marketing of a high-quality crop. This positively impacts the profits made. A profitable business is better able to invest back into the business or support other rural businesses and the rural economy.



Social – The building itself will support a rural business within a rural economy and community. The continued success of the business will support employment opportunities found in rural businesses which will be endorsed.

Environmental – Hay fields provide important habitat for a variety of species of small mammals, birds and invertebrates. Hay pastures tend to be species richer than grasslands consistently mown or grazed with a wide variety of native grasses and flowers. The greater the number of plants and flowers the greater the number of invertebrates and bees that can be supported. The long grasses in hay fields provide food, shelter and habitats for small mammals and birds. For example, it can provide protected nesting sites for ground nesting birds and food for small seed eating birds. Wildflowers support pollen eating invertebrates and in turn animals which rely on insects for food.

Policy QL7 and Draft policy PP13 THE RURAL ECONOMY

“To support growth in the rural economy, the Council may grant planning permission for the following types of development in the countryside outside of defined Settlement Development Boundaries, subject to detailed consideration, including against other policy requirements in this Local Plan:

d. buildings that are essential to support agricultural, aquaculture, horticulture and forestry, and farm diversification schemes”.

It is recognised by the council that agriculture, which generally requires a countryside location, continues to play an important role in the local economy. Therefore, the Council will continue to support proposals for agricultural-related development (where permission is required) provided adverse impacts on the environment are kept to a minimum.

This proposal will support the farm enterprise to continue to expand, develop and further support the rural economy. This building will securely store high value machinery as well as the hay crop, enabling the applicant to store the crop and sell when market prices are good. It is essential that the crop is kept dry during storage to prevent any losses through the deterioration brought about by the growth of mould. The production of hay as a feed crop will support other livestock enterprises in the area.

CONCLUSION

This proposal is for an agricultural building required to support the baling of hay crops and farm machinery and will improve farm profitability from existing farmland.

Currently there are no storage facilities at the site in which to keep hay cropped from this holding, which is an essential need for any agricultural operation. It will allow for the safe and secure storage of high value machinery and the storage of hay and straw undercover in the dry to prevent losses and deterioration due to increased moisture levels and resultant growth of mould and bacteria. It will also ensure that the quality and nutrition values of the hay crop are maintained therefore producing a higher quality animal.

This proposal is for an agricultural building required to support the baling of hay crops and farm machinery and will improve farm profitability from existing farmland. There are no farm buildings on the holding at present and the proposal complies with both National and Local Planning Policy.

Melanie Bingham-Wallis

**RURAL PLANNING AND FARM CONSULTANT
FOR AND ON BEHALF OF FOXES RURAL CONSULTANTS LIMITED**



Date – 07.07.21



APPENDIX 1 – FARMERS WEEKLY ARTICLE ON HAY PRICES



Good crops cause hay and straw prices to tumble

Jonathan Riley 19 July 2019



Hay has tumbled to below the price of straw in some parts of the country after losing half its value compared to last season's record prices.

At Goostrey Produce Market in Cheshire, Ashley Waller auctioneers reported hay prices had tumbled to £60 – £70/t compared to last year's summer highs of up to £120/t recorded in the West Country .

The market is one of the largest in England and saw 66.7t in 10 loads, sold on 15 July.

See also: [Standing straw prices significantly down on 2018 values](#)

Among the sale prices this season's haylage averaged £52.00/t with hay achieving £60/t for round bales while square bales went slightly higher at £62/t.



A spokesman said it must be considered a buyers' market and advised anyone with barn space to invest in good hay which was attracting a lower price per tonne than straw.

At the sale round-baled barley straw sold for £82/t with square bales at £90/t and square baled wheat at £76/t.

Yorkshire price falls

Merchant Andrew Holman of A&A Services in Selby, Yorkshire, reported that hay prices were down at £50 to £70/tonne according to quality.

"In the region farmers who had empty barns after last year's fodder shortages, have gone out early and made high quality hay," Mr Holman suggested.

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"Those who waited longer were hit by rain showers and, despite higher yields, produced forage that varied from reasonable to 'unsellable'," he said.

An additional factor in the area was destocking as farms took drastic measures to cope with poor grass growth in 2018.

Mr Holman said he had been approached by a farmer who last year had been forced to buy in hay.

"By comparison, this year, the same farmer has sold off stock and seen higher grass yields and now has almost 500 bales to try to sell," Mr Holman said.

Strong trade for quality straw

But further south, Roger Parry and Partners in Shropshire, said it was the vendor who was happy after a strong trade for high quality standing straw at More Farm, Bishops Castle, on 9 July.



Senior partner Roger Parry, noted a particularly high standard of crops for this rain-affected season.

Winter wheat averaged £68/acre with spring barley averaging £50/acre while winter barley averaged £83/acre.

However, this is still well back on last year's values when the company reported winter barley selling for £150/acre at the same farm.

Mr Parry said: "There have been varied results this year but this auction shows there is still a strong trade for top quality straw and the vendors are delighted with the outcome."

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