

Our ref: LJP/Clopton – 037057

Your ref:

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Dear Ms Waugh

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO B8 STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION USE – APPLE ACRE FARM, STRADISHALL ROAD, HUNDON, SUDBURY, CO10 8EU

On behalf of our client, we hereby submit a planning application for change of use of agricultural building to B8 storage and distribution use at Apple Acre Farm, Stradishall Road, Hundon, Sudbury, CO10 8EU. We hereby enclose this letter and the following plans and documents to be considered in the determination of the application:

- Application Form
- Location Plan, drawing number 21.134.L0101_B
- Site Plan As Existing, drawing number 21.134.S0001_B
- Site Plan As Proposed, drawing number 21.134.K0001_B
- Site Plan As Proposed Large, drawing number 21.134.K0002_B
- Ground Floor Plan As Existing, drawing number 21.134.S0002_A
- Roof Plan As Existing, drawing number 21.134.S0003_A
- Elevations as Existing, drawing number 21.134.S0004_A
- Floor Plans as Proposed, drawing number 21.134.K0003_A
- Roof Plans As Proposed, drawing number 21.134.K0004_A
- Elevations As Proposed, drawing number 21.134.K0005_A
- Heritage Statement
- Biodiversity Checklist Form

Context of the proposal

At present West Suffolk Council are currently considering a planning application at The Cold Store, The Street, Stradishall, CB8 8YR for retrospective change of use of agricultural storage building to B8 storage and distribution (LPA Ref: DC/21/0614/FUL). It is important to note that both the land and agricultural building at Apple Acre Farm and The Cold Store site are both in my client's ownership. The Cold Store building was used by the farm for the 'cold storage' of apples produced on the holding which ceased 2/3 years ago and has been subsequently used for general agricultural storage. The building was no longer required for general agricultural storage and the building is now currently let to Simplee UK to store and distribute flat packed furniture (B8 Storage and Distribution use). During the course of this planning application, working with West Suffolk Council and considering the consultee comments, neighbour representations and Parish Council's concerns we have amended the route of the access to the rear of the building with a new door for the lorries.

In light of further neighbour representations and Stradishall Parish Council's concerns we are proposing this planning application for change of use of the agricultural barn to B8 storage and distribution as a solution which would enable Simplee UK to move into the barn at Appleacre Farm and provides the opportunity for a successful business to continue which would mean they would move out of the current site at The Cold Store.

Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

Paragraph 81 of the NPPF 2021 set out that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Paragraph 84 of the NPPF 2021 supports the conversion of existing buildings. The development makes effective use of the building and enables Simplee UK to thrive in a competitive marketplace with them being the first occupant. Therefore, the principle of the development accords with policies CS1, CS4, CS9 and CS13 of the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy (SECS) adopted December 2010, the Rural Vision 2031 adopted September 2014, policies DM5 and DM33 of the Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Local Plan Joint Development Management Policies Document adopted February 2015 and paragraphs 81 and 84 of the NPPF 2021.

Impact on the Character of the Area and Heritage Assets

The site comprises of an agricultural barn with grey external roof cladding, grey sheet cladding and block work walls, roller shutter door and entrance door with hardstanding and plant equipment. There is an existing bund with planting on the eastern boundary and along Stradishall Road there is existing hedgerow. The proposal will involve no major changes to the structure of the existing building (agricultural barn) and will enable the tenant to move in with the plant removed to facilitate the car parking and the hardstanding used to enable the vehicles associated with Simplee UK to turn and exit in forward gear and allow access to the roller shutter door. Further hedgerow and trees will be planted along the access road to the site and on the western boundary around the car parking.

Therefore, the proposed development is not considered to give rise to an impact on the character and appearance of the area in accordance with policies CS2 and CS3 of the SECS adopted December 2010, policies DM5 and DM33 of the JDMPD adopted February 2015.

A separate Heritage Statement sets out the heritage asset considerations and overall concludes the proposed development will preserve a modern farm building which is part of the agricultural history of the site. The building is considered to have a neutral contribution to the setting of the listed farmhouse and is not prominent in the historic landscape surrounding the farmstead. The harm which will result will be low and can be justified as part of retaining the building. The proposals are assessed as resulting in less than substantial harm to the listed farmhouse and the level of harm is held to be low. This harm can be balanced against the public benefits arising from the proposals.

The public benefits involve enabling a continuing use of the building, and enabling Simplee UK a successful storage and distribution of flat packed furniture business which has one full time employee and one part time employee with seasonal work for up to 4 employees in the high season Summer (June-August) and Winter (November- January). In the low seasons there is ad hoc work for between 1-4 employees. The proposed use of the building will enable continuing employment to the local economy which is vital under the current climate of Brexit and COVID-19. In terms of the social benefits it will enable Simplee UK to move from the current site at The Cold Store and address the Parish Council and residents concerns. In terms of the environmental aspect the additional hedgerow and tree planting along the access road into the site and hedgerow on the western boundary around the car parking will provide a biodiversity net gain and enhance the landscape character.

Local Amenity and Noise including Highway Safety and Car Parking Considerations

There are existing tractor and lorry movements associated with the existing use of the agricultural barn along the road which has hardstanding. Simplee UK are a flat packed furniture business and the office operates from 7am-5pm Monday-Friday and the warehouse operating hours are 8am-4pm Monday to Friday. There is one full time employee and one part time employee with seasonal work for up to 4 employees in the high season Summer (June-August) and Winter (November- January). In the low seasons there is ad hoc work for between 1-4 employees.

In terms of delivery a 40ft artic lorry typically unloads for 0.5-3 hours and is a bulk delivery to the warehouse (standard reversing beep) per week with 2-3 deliveries per week in the high season (summer months of June-August and winter months of November-January). A fork truck standard reversing beep is used. In terms of dispatches this would involve a few pallets on a 40ft artic lorry or 1-2 long wheelbase / transit van per day. In the low season Simplee load out x1 artic lorry every 2-8 weeks and receive inbound x2 containers every 2-8 weeks. Therefore, when compared to the agricultural use the proposed development will not result in an increase in vehicle movements and will address the Parish Council's concerns regarding The Cold Store submission in relation to heavy vehicle movements going through the village.

There is ample car parking and cycle provision with give metal cycle stands are provided which can accommodate 2 bicycles on each stand, totalling 10 spaces as shown on the proposed site plan and the proposed site plan shows HGV vehicles can turn on plot and are able to manoeuvre within the site and exit in forward gear which has been the case with the current use. Therefore, overall, there is not considered to be a significant noise issue associated with the development given the agricultural use and combined with the separation to surrounding dwellings with Apple Acre Farmhouse in the clients ownership or significant impact on highway safety along with appropriate car parking and cycle provision is shown in accordance with policy CS7 of the SECS adopted December 2010, policies DM5, DM14, DM33, DM46 of the JDMPD adopted February 2015 and paragraph 107 of the NPPF 2021.

Drainage and Flooding

The existing building discharges surface water into existing soakaways and there is no foul sewage on site as none is needed given the portaloo will be used by the employees and has been used at the current Cold Store site. Given these current arrangements it would not be reasonable to require further details via condition in accordance with paragraph 56 of the NPPF 2021. The site is within Flood Zone 1 which is a low risk area of flooding and therefore the proposal accords with policy DM6 of the JDMPD adopted February 2015.

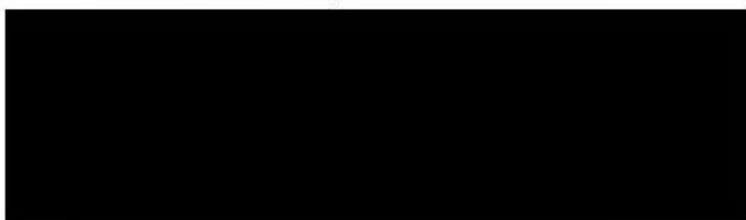
Ecology

A biodiversity checklist accompanies the application and due to the change of use of the building and existing hardstanding and car parking area being used there is not considered to be significant harm to ecology in accordance with policy DM12 of the JDMPD adopted February 2015.

Conclusion

The re-use of the agricultural building enables continuation of a successful storage and distribution company, Simplee UK, a flat packed furniture business and will enable them to move from The Cold Store site to this site. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity. Paragraph 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 supports a prosperous rural economy and enables the use of existing buildings such as that proposed. The development makes effective use of the building and enables the business to thrive in a competitive marketplace.

Yours sincerely



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Associate - Planning

For and on behalf of Brown & Co

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