

NEW AGRICULTURAL STORAGE BUILDING

**Woolshots Farm
Church Road
Ramsden Bellhouse
Billericay
CM11 1RH**

**WHIRLEDGE
& NOTT**

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This application seeks prior approval of siting and details of a proposed agricultural building. The application is made on behalf of the occupier farmer Mr David Keeling.
- 1.2 The farming business crops approximately 600 acres in the locality. Having split away from the larger family farming business. The business grows combinable arable crops and grass. Whilst there is some storage for crops, consumables and machinery at Woolshots Farm, the farm business is looking to provide an agricultural storage building in a more central location within their land.

2 The Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed to construct a new steel portal-framed building as a general-purpose storage building predominantly to be used for storage of crops, and for farm machinery and farm consumables when no crops are in store.
- 2.2 The building will be used in connection with farming the land surrounding the proposed site as outlined at Appendix 1. The development includes the construction of a hardstanding area to the front of the building to enable all weather access into and out of the building.

3 The Site

- 3.1 The proposed site is approximately 3km west of Wickford. The A129 is approximately 600 meters south of the site. Access is taken through an existing farm access off Church Road.

Location Plan - Woolshots New Barn



- 3.2 This site is more central within the land and would reduce the amount of traffic crossing over Church Road, to access Woolshots Farm close to the junction of the A129 and Church Road.

4 Relevant Planning History

- 4.1 There is no relevant planning history associated with this site.

5 Agricultural Justification

- 5.1 There is a need to provide additional storage for crops which can be stored centrally to the arable land in this location. As detailed above there is 600 acres of arable and grassland surrounding this site. The building will provide storage for the wheat cropped from the holding.
- 5.2 Currently some of the crop is at Woolshots Farm but the height of the grain store buildings on this site create difficulties when tipping large trailers as the eaves height of 18 ft on the narrower buildings makes it more difficult to load. The provision of a new building with taller eaves will provide modern storage for the farm central to the harvested fields.
- 5.3 The nature of a grain store is that grain can be stored longer term until the market price reaches its peak in the spring. This means there is little to no activity in or around the building whilst the grain is being stored. The only activity is loading into and out of the grain store.
- 5.4 At harvest grain can be sold direct off the field without storage but this puts the farmer at a disadvantage as the price is considerably lower than if it can be stored in good condition until later in the season. By way of example the average price of feed wheat sold in July/August 2020 was £155/tonne but by March 2021 the price had risen to £195/tonne. The additional margin of £40/tonne on 750 tonnes can add £30,000 to the farmer's profitability which is increasingly important as all farming subsidies are being withdrawn.
- 5.5 The provision of a new building will also enable farm machinery to be accommodated in the narrower grain storage buildings at Woolshots rather than be stored outside in the fields opposite Woolshots Farm. The machinery stored outside is very visible from the road which is a security concern. Removing them from this site into the yard at Woolshots will reduce this security risk and also improve the visual aspect of this part of the farm which is highly visible from the A129.

6 Permitted Development

- 6.1 The proposal is compliant with development permitted under Class A of Part 6, Schedule 2 of the General (Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended (GPDO). The criteria below confirm the development is permitted development.

- The development is for an agricultural purpose on an agricultural holding in excess of 5 hectares.
- The development of the building and hardstanding is 986.62 square metres which is below the permitted area of 1000 square metres.
- The height of the development is 9.3 metres which is below the maximum of 12 metres.
- The development is not located within 25 metres of a road.
- The site is not within 3km of an aerodrome.
- The development does not involve any building or structure used for the accommodation of livestock or slurry.
- No development under Class Q or S of Part 3 of the GPDO has taken place on the holding in the preceding ten years.
- No new buildings have been erected on this holding in the preceding two years.

7 Siting

- 7.1 The siting has been selected to utilise the existing landscape features to ensure the proposed building disappears into the rural landscape. Whilst the detached location looks to be intrusive the setting will minimise the overbearing nature of the utilitarian building as it is considerably set back from the main public highways and there are no public footpaths in the vicinity.
- 7.2 The siting away from the main road will increase the security of the building.
- 7.3 The siting in this location is central to the land and will reduce farm vehicle traffic on Church Road. The reduced length of tractor journeys will reduce carbon emissions and costs for the business.

8 Design

- 8.1 The building proposed is a standard design for an agricultural store. The eaves height has been kept to a height of 6.8 metres to provide enough room for tractors and trailers to tip crops.
- 8.2 The building is enclosed on all sides with a 5m roller shutter door. The walls will comprise of box profile steel cladding. This will enable easy access into and out of the building whilst keeping the building more secure. The roof will be apex and constructed from corrugated fibre cement sheets.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 To enable the efficient farming of this land the farm business is keen to construct a modern storage building.
- 9.2 The siting, design and location of the proposed development has been selected to minimise any impact of the new building in the rural area and is compatible with the needs of this farm holding.
- 9.3 The proposal is compliant with Class A, Part 6 of Schedule 2 of the GDPO.

APPENDIX 1 – Farmland at Woolshots Farm

