

APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDING AT DERRY ROSE FARM, BOBBY HILL WATTISFIELD FROM AGRICULTURE TO TRAILER MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

Introduction

The application for planning permission for change of use is being made by AJ Trailer Maintenance Ltd as the company is under notice to quit from their landlord due to sale for redevelopment of their current premises at Upthorpe Road Stanton. They are looking to take a 10 year lease on the Barn at Derry Rose Farm to continue their operations servicing and repairing semi trailers for local customers, principally DHL courier service. The lease would be on the existing building and the immediate surrounds with a right of way from Diss Road.

Existing agricultural use

Planning permission for the agricultural building and access road was granted in January 2004 and it has supported agricultural activities of Bryan Simpson since that time.

Mr Simpson now lives at South View, Walsham Road, Wattisfield where there is additional grazing and a range of agricultural buildings which are suitable for the storage of feed and other incidentals in support of his stock.

He will continue to graze the land at Derry Rose Farm but the existing barn is redundant to his farming activities and there is no call for agricultural use by others.

Proposal

The proposal is for the change of use and there is no need to alter the building to accommodate the company's activities and staff.

The workshop and storage facilities within the existing barn are suitable for servicing and repairing semi trailers. The farm office and toilet within the building are adequate for admin support and amenities for the staff comprising the manager, secretary and 3 mechanics.

In addition to the onsite activities some staff are mobile and carry out servicing and repairs to trailers over much of East Anglia where it is not possible or practical to use the base facilities.

Alternative locations

The applicant has sought alternative premises close to the existing facility at Stanton but there is nothing immediately available. Email correspondence with Merryfields seeking alternative premises is included in the appendices. Time is of the essence to relocate close to their principal customer with appropriate vehicular access from a main road. The redundant barn at Derry

Rose Farm fulfils the requirements. It is available immediately and requires no changes to meet the company's needs. There is an adequate three phase power supply, mains water and toilet facilities on an existing sewage treatment plant within the curtilage.

Impact on residential amenities.

The nearest residential development is to the north and west. It is over 150M from the barn and the access from Diss Road. Residents will not be overlooked or suffer loss of privacy or light.

Noise

The servicing and repairing process is not noisy and no heavy plant or machinery is employed.

The hours of operation are 7.30am till 5pm Monday to Friday and 7.30 am till 1.00pm Saturday. Sundays and bank holidays are not usually worked on site.

No neighbouring properties would be affected and there will be no adverse effect on residential amenity.

Contamination

A Phase 1 desk top study and site walkover report was undertaken in 2019 and there no were issues of concern. Lubricants and servicing agents used by the proposed end users are closely controlled under the Health and Safety at Work Legislation.

Highways impacts

The site has an established vehicular access off an adopted highway with adequate visibility in both directions where the road is subject to a 30mph speed limit. The proposed use would give rise to some traffic movements but the impact on traffic flow would be minimal.

The existing full time staff live locally to Wattisfield. Four live in Badwell Ash and one in Stanton. Wattisfield is a sustainable location in terms of travelling for work.

Customers rarely visit the premises and a tractor unit from the compound delivers a trailer on each working day to the DHL depot at Stanton and returns with the next trailer to be serviced or repaired.

The service yard will allow vehicle turning to meet the requirements of SCC Highways.

Parking

There is sufficient space within the compound for staff parking and trailers

Flood risk assessment

The proposed use is not sensitive to flood risk and the attached Surface Water Flood Maps show that there very low risk of flooding.

The barn is on high ground and there is little or no risk to life from flooding. Should the highway flood it may cause disruption to site access and egress until flooding subsides.

Landscaping and ecology

There are no protected landscape features or ponds to harbour amphibians and invertebrates. Two substantial earth bunds to the south east and the north east of the compound have not been grazed and have been left to grow naturally to provide habitat for insects and ground nesting birds.

Changes to the landscape character will be minimal and the security fencing that is proposed to part of the south west boundary of the compound will be screened by a new hedgerow of non toxic indigenous species to avoid risk to grazing livestock on the adjoining agricultural land.

Conclusions

The proposed use will consolidate the employment of the existing staff who live locally and will provide future employment opportunities for local residents.

Reusing existing resources for employment in an otherwise redundant building avoids new build in the countryside, contributes to sustainability and supports targets to limit climate change.