

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

- APPLICANT:** Woods Farm Christmas Trees.
- ADDRESS:** High Chimneys Farm, Old Warwick Road, Rowington, Warwick, CV35 7AA.
- APPLICATION / USE:** Construction of an Agricultural Building for the processing of Christmas trees for sale off site, including indoor packing and loading, together with the storage of agricultural plant, machinery, vehicles and tools.
- NATURE OF APPLICATION:** Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed building for Agricultural and Forestry use.
- Town and Country Planning (GPD) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 6.

SITE:

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is an application under the GPDO for a reasonably necessary agricultural / forestry building as part of an existing agricultural unit at High Chimneys Farm, Old Warwick Road, Rowington, Warwick, CV35 7AA

2. LOCATION

- 2.1 See address above and location plan.

3. EXISTING BUILDINGS

- 3.1 See drawing.

4. HISTORY

- 4.1 The applicants' land extends to approximately 200 acres and has been acquired over the last 35 years. All of it has been planted with Christmas trees and produce about 15,000 to 20,000 trees for sale each year. Due to the longevity of growth on the site, a number of the trees have been deliberately allowed to grow or near maturity, as there is a substantial market for large trees for indoor shopping centre or outdoor display purposes. These trees are usually in the 30ft to 40ft range. Felled / cut / transplanted trees are replanted.

5. PURPOSE OF THE BUILDING

- 5.1 The current buildings on site do not lend themselves to the current needs of the business. The existing main building on site is now proving too narrow and too low to eaves for the processing and packaging of larger trees. The doors are on the long side and the eaves height and width is proving insufficient for the larger trees.
- 5.2 Much of the applicants business is now dealt with through “Real Christmas Trees”, which is an internet based service. Over the period of October to December (primarily, but not entirely), trees are cut or dug and packaged on site (wrapped, root protected) and then shipped off site on lorries or transits.
- 5.3 This operation is time critical to meet the orders, but it is also imperative that this work is carried out undercover to avoid staff and trees being exposed to bad weather. Frost is particularly an issue for lifted trees and shedding of needles, where this product is being shipped.
- 5.4 Furthermore, in the shorter days, working outside in the dark is proving significantly problematic. Although outside lighting is available, it is more intrusive and is never as good as the illumination within a building.
- 5.5 Recently a person slipped on ice on the deck of a lorry and badly injured their back and this building addresses the packaging, storage and loading of materials inside.
- 5.6 Another benefit of this proposed building is that storage of trees and materials and of plant and machinery can be more adequately maintained on site, where there is an agricultural tied dwelling. This will reduce the number of journeys to site.
- 5.7 The Real Christmas Trees business does also sell Christmas trees for landscaping and for market stall and for display purposes all through the year and whilst the principal period for processing trees is October through to December, the business operates throughout the year.
- 5.8 We enclose some photographs of the larger trees and machinery. In addition there are 8no. transits, 6no trailers varying from 16ft to 23ft. in length. The JCB digger is one of a number used for lifting large trees and some timber is processed for log cabins.

6.0 CHRISTMAS TREE OPERATION THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

- 6.1 Trees are planted and then maintained each year by spraying for aphids and weevils, pruning for shape, cutting for grass and weed control and then cutting / potting for sale, followed by a rotation of further planting. It is a substantial investment and requires a building to maintain that investment in a secure and sustainable way. Sheep are utilised for grazing amongst the trees.

7.0 SITE AREA

- 7.1 200 acres or 81 hectares.

8.0 DISTANCE FROM METAL ROAD

- 8.1 Over 34 metres and it is not within 3 kilometres of an aerodrome.

9.0 TYPE OF BUILDING AND DESIGN

- 9.1 Steel portal frame with metal cladding, concrete walls and floors.
- 9.2 For the design - see drawings.



10.0 ACCESS

10.1 There are already two accesses on site, both off the Old Warwick Road and shown on the attached plan.

11.0 LOCATION

11.1 The building has been located as close to the other buildings, both from an access, security and impact perspective.

12.0 PLANNING AND THE GPDO

12.1 The permission for development is on a holding of 5 hectares or more. It must be reasonably necessary and we believe that this has been indicated above.

12.2 The growing of Christmas trees and their harvesting is an intensive operation. Operations are undertaken in all weeks of the year and occur daily in the period from October to December when most trees are lifted. Replacement trees are planted between November and March and the average planting of 30,000 to 60,000 trees per year takes many weeks.

12.3 The cutting of trees requires tractors, trailers and hand tools such as chainsaws. The trees need storage in a frost free environment after cutting and the building provides that cover.

12.4 In planting, new trees are delivered in bags or on pallets and forklifts are needed. These are not roadworthy and need leaving on site. The storage of fuel and fertilizer can also be covered by this new building, which would massively aid security.

12.5 In the growing season, the trees are sprayed against insects and are shaped by hand. In frost periods, machinery is used to blow air or spray water to prevent frost damage. Occasionally sheep are introduced for grass / weed control with electric fencing.

12.6 The cumulative affect of all the operations is that not only is expensive kit needed, it also needs to be housed undercover from weather damage and theft. The packaging operation is crucial to be made undercover. The building deals with that.

13.0 LANDSCAPING

13.1 The site is already surrounded by trees and we do not believe any additional landscaping is necessary.

14.0 LAYOUT OF ACCESS TRACK AND BUILDINGS

14.1 See plan.

Signed:

Nicholas P Barlow of Barlow Associates Ltd

Date:

27 June 2022















