

APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDING AT DERRY ROSE FARM, BOBBY HILL WATTISFIELD FROM AGRICULTURE TO STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION

Introduction

An earlier application for change of use of the existing barn from agriculture semi trailer maintenance was approved which would have established B2 use. Unfortunately the prospective tenant did not agree to a lease on the property and the development was not pursued.

However, there is significant interest in storage and distribution use B8 and approval is now sought for change of use from Agriculture to B8.

Site and Surroundings

The site lies outside the settlement boundary of Wattisfield in a countryside location with an existing vehicular access from the A143.

Agricultural grazing land surrounds the existing barn and at a distance to the west south east there are existing residential properties.

Principle of development.

Local plan policy relates to the reuse of agricultural buildings for industrial or commercial use and there is general acceptance provided the building is structurally sound, fit for purpose and will not adversely affect residential or rural amenity.

Proposal

The current proposal does not require changes to the building to accommodate the intended use for the storage and distribution of windows, doors and home improvement components to serve customers across Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire.

The existing toilet and office space in the barn is adequate for site based admin staff to support the fitters and glaziers working on building sites in the region.

On site activities

Components are delivered to site by the manufacturers in bulk about once a week. The components are offloaded within the building where they are separated, logged and stored ready for collection by the fitters and glaziers for each project.

Collections are made during the working hours of 7.30am to 6pm each weekday and occasionally on Saturdays between the hours of 7.30 am and 1 pm. Staff do not usually work on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

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 additional traffic movements but the impact on traffic flow would be minimal.

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 for the fitters and glaziers who collect components.

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.

Contamination

The intended use of the building is commercial and this will not involve disturbance of the surrounding land and is not classified as a sensitive end use.

Conclusions

The reuse of the existing vacant building will support the local economy and provide employment opportunities for residents.