

**acorus**<sup>®</sup>

**PROPOSED HATCHERY EXTENSION,  
STAFF WELFARE FACILITIES  
AND CAR PARKING**

**PREPARED FOR:**

**PD HOOK (HATCHERIES) LTD  
The Hatchery  
Croyle  
Kentisbeare  
Cullompton  
EX15 2AL**

**21<sup>st</sup> October 2022**

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. TERMS OF REFERENCE	1
2. BACKGROUND	1
3. THE PROPOSAL	2
4. PLANNING POLICY	3
5. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	5
6. BIOSECURITY	5
7. LANDSCAPE	6
8. HIGHWAYS	7
9. ECOLOGY	8
10. RESIDENTIAL AMENITY	8
11. CARBON REDUCTION MEASURES	9
12. CONCLUSION	9

## **1. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of Mr Adrian Rushby of PD Hook (Hatcheries) Ltd ('the Applicant'). It outlines the facts considered relevant to the application for the extension of the existing building to provide additional hatchery, storage and circulation space, staff welfare facilities and staff parking facilities at The Hatchery, Croyle.
- 1.2 Information within this report should enable the Local Authority to assess the application in light of the current Government Guidelines and relevant local planning policy.
- 1.3 This report has been prepared by James Whilding, Managing Director of Acorus Rural Property Services Limited and a Professional Member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. In addition, I am a Fellow of the British Institute of Agricultural Consultants (BIAC) and professional member of the Country Land & Business Association (CLA) and the National Farmers Union (NFU). I have provided rural planning advice to LPAs and private clients for more than 25 years.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 P D Hook Ltd are one of the leading poultry breeders and rearers in the country and operate from a number of sites across England, of which 43 farms are broiler breeder units and 8 are hatcheries. The company is split into four principal elements which are namely; hatcheries, breeding, rearing and broilers. Due to the diversity of the company, they are able to control every aspect of the poultry meat production chain.
- 2.2 The holding extends to approximately 2.9 acres (approximately 1.2 hectares), with the majority of the land area covered by buildings and other infrastructure. Operated as a hatchery for many years, it produces day old chicks which are then distributed to the various rearing sites across the South West.
- 2.3 Eggs are typically sourced from P.D. Hook owned farms in the region. Once eggs are delivered to the site using company lorries, they are transferred from the egg handling room where any eggs damaged in transit are removed. The eggs are then placed in the incubators and setting area within the hatchery where they will remain for 18.5 days. Eggs are then transferred to the candling machine which enables infertile eggs to be identified and extracted. Eggs are then placed in the hatcher for 3.5 days.

2.4 Once hatched, chicks are graded to a high standard, and counted into boxes ready for dispatch. They are then transported in company lorries as day old birds to broiler rearing farms across the region.

2.5 The facility currently employs 26 full-time which includes 5 drivers, 2 managers and 2 maintenance members of staff. The hatchery operates on a two shift basis:

- Shift 1 - 5.00am - 2.30pm
- Shift 2 - 7.30am – 4.00pm

2.6 In 2012 under application 12/00509/MFUL, planning permission was granted for an extension of the existing hatchery building to provide additional storage and production facilities. This permission was implemented and the additional facilities installed. Aside from this application, the following has been approved on the site, as detailed on the LPA planning portal.

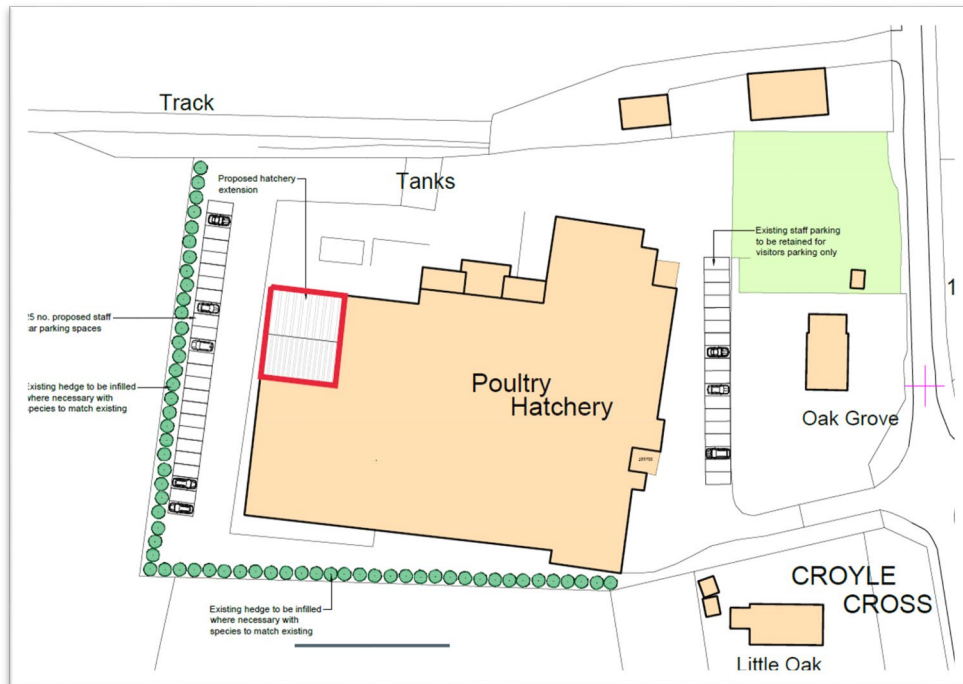
- Erection of an agricultural building  
Ref. No: 11/00670/FULL | Status: Decided
- Erection of a dwelling associated with hatchery  
Ref. No: 13/00908/FULL | Status: Decided

### **3. THE PROPOSAL**

3.1 The proposal for the purpose of this application seeks the following:

- Extension of hatcher building to create additional circulation space. This will enhance the working area, but will not increase hatchery output and production.
- Replace temporary facilities introduced during the COVID pandemic and provide new store room (including laundry) and replacement staff welfare/changing rooms for those working on site.
- Staff car parking facilities at the rear of the site. Existing facilities at the front to be retained principally for visitors and lorry parking (where required).

- 3.2 The building extensions will be of typical construction and similar to the existing hatchery structure in that it will be steel framed and clad in similar colour profile sheeting.
- 3.3 The building extension measures 18.16m x 13.65m, 4.59m to eaves and 6.05m to the ridge, and will provide an additional floorspace of 247m<sup>2</sup>. The location of the extension is as highlighted in red below and on the submitted planning drawings.



Source - Acorus

- 3.4 COVID aside, the new facilities will significantly enhance biosecurity on the site. This is particularly poignant at a time when the region is impacted by cases of H5N1 avian influenza ('bird flu'). The importance of biosecurity is highlighted in a subsequent chapter.

#### 4. PLANNING POLICY

##### National Planning Policy

- 4.1 National planning policy considered relevant to this application is the National Planning Policy Framework which has recently replaced the guidance contained in planning policy statements. It details that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It goes on to state that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.2 Under section 6 headed 'Building a Strong, Competitive Economy' the NPPF conveys a number of policies, aims, objectives and guidance to local planning authorities which are deemed to be relevant to this proposal.

4.3 Paragraph 84 (Supporting a prosperous rural economy) states that planning policies should enable:

- the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and
- the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities.

4.4 In this case, the proposal will lead to the further development and enhancement of facilities of an established agricultural/rural business.

#### **Local Policy**

4.5 The Mid Devon Local Plan recognises the importance that agriculture plays to the District's economy. Agricultural development is essential to support modern farming and ensure a sustainable rural economy. Policy DM20 (Agricultural Development), as detailed below, supports agricultural development outside of the defined settlements.

4.6 Agricultural development will be permitted where:

- a) The development is reasonably necessary to support farming activity on that farm or in the immediate agricultural community;
- b) The development is sensitively located to limit any adverse effects on the living conditions of local residents and is well-designed, respecting the character and appearance of the area;
- c) The development will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment;
- d) The development will not have an unacceptable traffic impact on the local road network.

4.7 In considering biosecurity in particular, it is clearly shown that the proposals are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the unit. The extension will not impact on neighbouring properties or the wider environment, and given hatchery output will be unchanged, no additional traffic movements will be generated so the impact on the local road network will be unaffected.

## 5. **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

5.1 No formal consultation has been undertaken with the local community or LPA.

## 6. **BIOSECURITY**

6.1 Poultry diseases can be transferred by incoming vehicles and personnel. Disease control therefore hinges on the biosecurity of the unit. Biosecurity can be defined as a set of management practices which, when followed, collectively reduce the potential for the introduction and spread of disease causing organisms onto and between sites. Everyone involved with poultry must buy in to the concept of biosecurity. A weak link in the chain is potentially disastrous.

6.2 In order to understand the risks of disease transfer, it has to be noted that poultry diseases persist for long periods outside the infected birds in faeces and other discharges. The diseases are also extremely small such that a small quantity of infected material can infect a large number of birds. It is often quoted that 1 gram of infected faeces from birds with Avian Influenza has sufficient viral particles to infect a million susceptible birds.

6.3 Key elements of a biosecurity programme are:

1. General principle – immediate environment is clean, everything outside is dirty. Movement from dirty to clean must have a control measure.
2. Only allow necessary visitors – use visitors book to ensure compliance
3. Restrict movement of workers/equipment between houses, sites, age groups
4. Provide sanitising footbaths, protective clothing, showers etc
5. Maintain cleaning and disinfection programmes
6. Reducing microbial load on vehicles and mobile equipment by washing/disinfecting
7. Restricting contact of workers with other poultry, especially if have disease
8. Appropriate handling of waste and dead birds to minimise transfer of disease between sites
9. Controlling disease vectors, rodents, wild birds, insects



- 6.4 The hatchery and all staff must comply with the above in order to maintain biosecurity. The re-routing of staff to the rear of the site has been driven by the COVID pandemic, however the benefits are now fully realised and reinforces the above principle; the separation of clean and dirty and likewise of key staff and other visitors. All staff access the site from the rear, entering via welfare/changing room facilities into a controlled environment. At the end of the working day, the routine is reversed. The location of staff parking at the rear makes absolute sense.
- 6.5 For other visitors, including the lorry drivers, their movements are restricted to the front of the site. Once passed through the wheel wash at the entrance (as existing), visitors will park opposite the reception. For lorry drivers, their welfare area and canteen is likewise at the front to the south of the site.
- 6.6 The above measures will significantly enhance biosecurity measures on the site.

## **7. LANDSCAPE**

- 7.1 The resultant structure would simply be an extension to the existing buildings and not dissimilar from many other modern agricultural buildings. It would replace the modular structures as depicted in the following photograph.
- 7.2 The extension would be finished in the same colour and material as the existing building and as a result would merge into the surrounding landscape.



Site of current modular structures to be replaced

7.3 The presence of existing hedgerows and trees minimises the visual impact from the surrounding road network. Additional landscaping, as noted on the site plan, in the form of gapping up of existing hedgerows along the western and southern boundaries with native species to match existing are proposed.

7.4 Otherwise the landscape character of the area remains broadly speaking unaffected.

## 8. HIGHWAYS

8.1 As output from the hatchery will be unchanged, lorry and staff movements will remain the same. As a result, impact on the local highway network will be neutral.

8.2 The existing access will continue to be used. This access is deemed to be suitable for the amount and type of vehicles accessing the site. The layout allows vehicles to pull fully off the public highway before passing through the required bio security measures in place. Along the route to the hatchery, wheel wash facilities are in place for all vehicles entering the premises.



Site Entrance with barrier and wheel wash



Existing car parking and entrance to hatchery

8.3 There are approximately 18 parking spaces (including disabled spaces) at the entrance to the facility. These will be retained for visitors and overnight lorry parking. A total of 25 parking spaces (including disabled spaces) will be provided at the rear of the site, adjacent to the staff entrance and welfare/changing facilities.

8.4 There are no footpaths which will be affected by the development of this site.

## 9. ECOLOGY

- 9.1 In interrogating the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Interactive Map it shows that there are no ecological sites in the near locality, in this case within a radius of 1km.
- 9.2 The proposed development areas are either laid to concrete, hardcore or marginal grassland (refer to photograph overleaf) which are deemed to provide limited ecological value and therefore will not be unduly harmed by this proposal.
- 9.3 No trees or hedgerows will be affected by the proposal. The car parking will be set a minimum of 2m from the hedge boundary for root zone protection.



View from rear of site – planned area for staff parking

- 9.4 In consideration of the above, it is deemed that the proposed development will not have any significant adverse effect on ecology.

## 10. RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

- 10.1 The nature of the application will not impact on odours, dust, flies, vermin and noise, matters considered in the previous application when hatchery output increased.
- 10.2 Overall, residential amenity for those residing in the locality will be unaffected.

## **11. CARBON REDUCTION MEASURES**

11.1 The following building design measures will be incorporated in the build.

- Roof of building to be insulated to allow a U Value of 0.29 (W/m<sup>2</sup>K) to be achieved.
- Gable and side walls to be insulated to provide a U Value of 0.4 (W/m<sup>2</sup>K).
- Windows to be constructed of 35mm thick 5 wall Polycarbonate sheet to offer with these giving a U Value of 1.12 (W/m<sup>2</sup>K). The provision of windows also reduces the level of artificial lighting required.
- Overall a building of the design proposed is capable of achieving a composite U Value of 0.33 (W/m<sup>2</sup>K). The Carbon Trust state that the current recommended performance level of insulation for poultry related buildings is 0.4 (W/m<sup>2</sup>K) and therefore the proposed buildings exceed this standard.

11.2 The extension will be similar to the existing structure and provide a vapour barrier between the liner and the insulation which minimises thermal bridging. All the external cladding joints on the proposed extension will be sealed with mastic sealant which significantly reduces the potential for air (heat) leakage.

11.3 Energy efficient dimmable lighting will be installed, and as outlined, the provision of windows within the building will reduce the artificial light input required. In the past tungsten lighting has been widely used, however compact fluorescent lamps are longer lasting and are up to 4-5 times more efficient.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

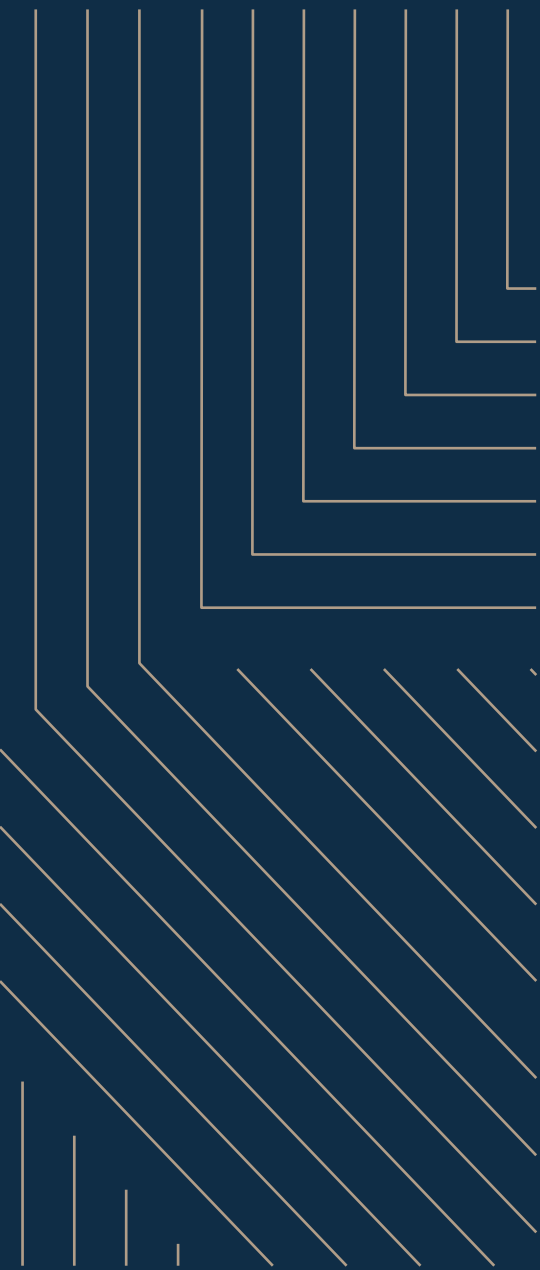
12.1 This proposal in part is an extension to existing buildings which have been established for a significant period of time. The provision of enhanced staff parking and other welfare related facilities will also enhance the biosecurity of the site.

12.2 The extension will have a similar appearance to the existing buildings and typical of this type of agricultural construction; they are therefore not alien in the countryside.

12.3 This proposal is deemed necessary for the purposes of agriculture and will result in the enhancement of facilities for the benefit of the hatchery and those who work in the business. Overall, this expansion of the hatchery should be fully supported.

**DISCLAIMER**

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