

Design and Access Statement for proposed agricultural development at Worton Grounds Farm, Deddington, Oxfordshire

1. INTRODUCTION

Worton Grounds Farm are seeking to secure planning permission to extend the walls and providing roof over an existing silage clamp.

This Statement forms part of a planning application accompanied by the following:

- ✓ Planning Application Form and Certificates;
- ✓ Location Plan
- ✓ Site Plan
- ✓ Detailed Site Plan
- ✓ Design and Access Statement; and
- ✓ Planning Fee

In 2019, the Farm secured Planning Permission from West Oxfordshire District Council for the construction of an agricultural grain store incorporating an equipment store and workshop, rainwater harvesting, erection of an open concrete storage pad and installation of an underground water tank. In October 2020, a further permission was secured to construct an additional agricultural barn for forage conditioning. These permissions have both been enacted and are continuously utilised as part of the Farm's operations.

2. DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

Worton Grounds Farm is a predominantly arable farm of 365ha. The future of farming, and particularly arable farming, is being challenged to diversify further and create further employment whilst receiving less subsidy via the current Basic Payment Scheme. Furthermore, the cycle of continuous arable crops brings weed and disease pressure, further challenging the arable farm economics. For these reasons Worton Grounds Farm has decided to diversify its rotation into more crops to be grown for forage to try and address these two forthcoming challenges. Modern farming often extends beyond the curtilage of a farmstead, with contract farming of agricultural land prominent to ensure the continued viability of farm operations. Worton Grounds Farm farms a large extended area beyond its own boundaries, but requires sufficient infrastructure at a centralised location to ensure these operations can be undertaken. Development at Worton Grounds Farm significantly offsets the need for similar infrastructure on other agricultural land within Oxfordshire.

To achieve this, considerably more storage for forage is required to enable this change to occur and the targets of an expanded crop rotation and more employment to be met. It is therefore proposed to construct a roof over the current compost/digestate store to make this a purpose-built building for hay storage and to allow forage storage at all times of the year.

In order to create sufficient winter forage storage, it is necessary to enclose the existing clamp through the addition of a roof over the current concrete storage area. The roof would measure 36m long, 32m wide and 11.28m high to the apex. The walls and floor of the existing clamp will be retained. A steel frame incorporating cladding will be constructed on top of the clamp to create an enclosed building. A single door will be installed on the western elevation. The materials and external appearance of the building is designed to align with the existing farm buildings.

The addition of the roof facilitates further rainwater harvesting which will be linked to the existing water storage (the farm is spring-fed and struggles to supply its own needs). This interception of

rainwater would also significantly reduce the run-off to the dirty water drainage system, reducing the need for off-site tankering to treatment facilities when the land is at soil capacity after rainfall.

This extension would also be equipped with rainwater harvesting technology.

3. POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND AMENITY IMPACTS

The following sections provide discussion around the potential for environmental or amenity impacts and provide a discussion and assessment of their potential.

a. TRAFFIC

The proposed development will not give rise to further vehicle movements, it is proposed to improve the operations already being undertaken by the farm and its operations.

Given the new forage-led direction of the Farm, deliveries of agricultural compost and digestate have ceased; rather the proposed development seeks to reduce the vehicle movements over the year.

Access to the farm is from the B4031 road and the access incorporates a wide bell-mouth providing appropriate views from the junction. The access has, and continues to be, routinely accessed by farm vehicles throughout the year without giving rise to any highway impact.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not give rise to any detrimental impact in terms of traffic.

b. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

The scheme has been designed to ensure that the scale of the development is in keeping with the operations of the farm and is massed in relation to existing structures to ensure minimal visual impact. The design has ultimately, however, been dictated by the requirements of the processes. Owing to the scale of the proposed roof and building, their incorporation within proximity to larger farm structures will ensure their visual impact is negligible when viewed from surrounding visual receptors.

The appearance of this building is proposed to be softened by the use of materials in keeping with the wider farm buildings. To reduce the massing of the buildings within the landscape, all buildings have been located within close proximity; this is also beneficial in terms of movements within the farm and security. Both proposed agricultural buildings are situated within the shadow of existing buildings.

The Barford St John St Michael footpath (121/13/20) and the Deddington Restricted Byway (187/13/10) are located 430m to the north and 456m to the east, respectively. Views to the north are considered to be broken up by the established tree and hedge lines along the B4031, and the intervening field boundaries between the road and the development site; it is further considered that due to lay of the land, any views of the proposed buildings would be shielded by existing farm buildings. Critical views from the byway to the east are primarily screened through existing planting. Any views of the proposed buildings from this path would therefore be sporadic.

Any views from the road network are considered fleeting and therefore any sight of the proposal is considered negligible.

c. WATER MANAGEMENT

The site is not located within a designated Flood Zone.

Both buildings will use rainwater harvesting technology and will only ever produce occasional clean water run-off to ditch, but intercepted by a 600m³ catch tank to allow a hydro-break.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not have any detrimental impact on the hydrological environment around the development site and in the case of the Compost/Digestate and Forage Store, it will actually enhance it by removing dirty water run-off.

SUMMARY

The proposed development is considered necessary for the agricultural use on the site. The scale, mass and nature of the proposed building has been chosen to manage the need for economic growth, increased local employment, improved carbon management and soil health improvement. The location of the new buildings was chosen to reduce their mass, complement vehicle and pedestrian movements through the site and to ensure security.