



Agricultural Justification Statement for Agricultural Grain Store

PREPARED FOR

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Foxes Farm
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**Justification
Statement**

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INTRODUCTION

This statement is submitted to support an application for prior notification for a new agricultural building at Foxes Farm for the purpose of grain storage, associated with the farming of arable crops at Foxes Farm. The application is made on behalf of an established farming business, R L Baker.

EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

I am a partner of Landbridge Property LLP, which specialises in rural land and property matters. I regularly advise on agricultural related planning applications, justifications and proposals throughout Suffolk, Essex and Norfolk.

I am a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and a Fellow of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers.

THE FARM BUSINESS

R L Baker owns and farms 316 hectares (780 acres) at and surrounding Foxes Farm, largely comprising of arable crops including wheat, barley, oil seed rape, sugar beet and grass, from which a hay crop is taken.

EXAMPLE FARM CROPPING TABLE

Crop	Hectares grown	Average yield (t/ha)	Total tonnage
Winter Wheat	178.89	8.6	1,538.5
Spring Barley	39.17	5.75	225.2
Winter Beans	26.56	4.3	114.2
Sugarbeet	37.45	77	2,883.7
Winter OSR	20.37	3.5	71.3
Grass	13.56		

THE PROPOSAL

The application is for an enclosed steel portal framed agricultural building measuring 30.00m x 30.00m for grain storage, which is located within the existing cluster of agricultural buildings on site, standing on the site of two former agricultural buildings. The total floor area of the proposed building is 900.00 square metres.

In recent years, Foxes Farm has been very productive and has also taken on additional land, producing a range of high quality and high yielding crops, as shown above, with almost 2,000 tonnes of grain and pulses being produced each harvest. At this current time, suitable grain storage (on the farm) doesn't reflect the productivity levels that have been achieved. The creation of the proposed grain store, will allow the farm to have adequate and sufficient space to store grain. It will provide an up-to-date facility, allowing the farm to store grain for longer periods of time, utilising the market fluctuations between harvests, to ensure the business is achieving the best prices possible. At present, quite a significant proportion of the crops harvested are having to be sold off at harvest, not enabling the business to choose when best to sell their produce.

REASONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT

The core reasons for erecting the building are:

- To provide dry storage for the crop.
- Reduce losses and improve farming efficiency by ensuring there is adequate storage.
- Provide purpose built modern agricultural facilities to add value to the farm's existing arable cropping
- Improved profitability, through controlling moisture levels and forming better access to storage.
- Compliance with Red Tractor Combinable Crops
- Ensure Crop Segregation

DRY STORAGE

Dry storage for grain is of utmost importance for a farm business. It allows the grain to be stored for longer and reduces the risk of the grain rotting or germinating whilst being stored. This could potentially destroy large quantities of grain resulting in it becoming unsaleable and meaning the year of hard work in growing the crop equated for a potential loss.

ADEQUATE STORAGE

Having enough storage is vital for the farm business. Without it, it could mean that harvested crop would be stored in buildings that are unsuitable for grain, resulting in further loss through the risk of rodents, rot and germination.

FARM EFFICIENCY AND SAFETY

Harvest time for a farm and its workers is a stressful period. Ensuring that timescales and proceedings run as efficiently as possible is of great importance for the farm. The proposed development sits in a central position in relation to the existing farm buildings, with both the existing yard and road access being very good. This ease of access creates a more efficient and safer working environment for the farm.

PROFITABILITY IN MARKETS

If the proposed development is implemented, it would increase the probability of the farm through the business being able to capitalize on market fluctuations. Instead of selling early on in the arable farming year to avoid the crop spoiling, (due to insufficient storage), the business could take a more tactical approach, waiting and predicting for markets to peak before selling, resulting in a higher profitability of the farm. At a time when government subsidies are reducing drastically (and stop altogether in 2027), this is a vital consideration for the future viability of the farm.

PROFITABILITY IN MOISTURE LEVELS

Crops are sold by the tonne, meaning, the heavier the individual grain, the higher the overall sale price. One thing that determines individual grain weight is the moisture content. The higher the moisture content the heavier the grain, the lower the moisture content, the lighter the grain. Being able to control moisture levels, keeping them at a heavier weight, is imperative to achieving the best profitability per tonne. Insufficient storage would mean the moisture content of the grain would drop faster, resulting in a lower weight and therefore meaning a lower overall profit.

RED TRACTOR COMBINABLE CROPS

As part of the Red Tractor Combinable Crops Assessment, different areas of the farms have to be rated and assured to ensure that they are compliant and up to date with current health and food standards, as part of this, Red Tractor will assess whether the farm has an Assured Grain Storage. This involves various factors being tested, including, weatherproofing, cleanliness and hygiene, moisture and temperature and the overall structure of the building. With this proposed development it will ensure that the farm can continue to achieve their Red Tractor Licence.

CROP SEGREGATION

In one year, Foxes Farm can grow up to 4 crops that require suitable storage. Ensuring that the harvested grains are stored separately can be a challenge when storage availability on the farm is low. By having this extra storage, the farm can grow more varieties of different grains and separate them sufficiently to ensure there is no contamination, which in some cases could cause the crop to be rejected, especially if the grain is going for human consumption.

DESIGN, SITING AND EXTERNAL APPEARANCE

The proposed building is of a standard design for agricultural buildings.

The building measures 30.00 metres by 30.00 metres, with a total floor area of 900 square metres and complies with the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015 as amended.

The eaves height has been kept to a minimum practical height of 7 metres, which is in keeping with existing buildings. The ridge height is 10.5 metres.

The side and gable elevations of the building will be clad with dark green steel box profile sheeting to the eaves, with 3 metre high natural concrete panelling from ground level to 3 metres.

The roof of the building will be a steel box profile and the base inside the building will be a concrete power floated floor.

Access to the building will be through three 6 metre wide x 7 metre high roller shutter doors, with one metal personnel doors.

POSITIONING

The proposed grain store is south-westerly facing, on the site of two existing livestock buildings, that sits at a central point within the other farm buildings. There will be no impact on the landscape as a result.

SETTING AND ENVIRONMENT

The building has been designed for functionality purposes only, of which the design is in-keeping with the rest of the agricultural buildings on the farm.

The design ensures functionality and practicality for its intended purpose of being an agricultural grain store.

CONCLUSION

The proposed agricultural grain store is highly necessary for a farming business operating at this scale and is also necessary for the business to ensure the farm is future proofed and able to grow a variety of crops without being held back by insufficient storage.

As mentioned previously, the grain store will help profitability of the farm. With margins becoming smaller in the agricultural industry, caused by rising input prices, the ability to maximise revenue is as pressing as ever.

The fluctuation of commodity markets can be very serious for a farming business of this scale so ensuring that grain can be stored for longer periods of time, enabling the business to sell at the best rates, is vital to the prosperity of the farm.

Ben Wheaton BSc (Hons) MRICS FAAV

Partner at Landbridge Property LLP

Date: April 2023

Feed wheat slumps to £182/t as global pressure mounts

Philip Clarke 24 March 2023



© Tim Scrivener

Feed wheat values have fallen sharply, dropping below the £200/t mark for the first time in more than a year, reflecting the overall weakness in the trade globally, as well as the imbalance between supply and demand at home.

The *Farmers Weekly* spot feed wheat price, derived from a cross-section of merchants around the country, stood at just £181.60/t on Wednesday (22 March), compared with £209/t a week earlier and £300/t a year ago.

The last time it was sub-£200/t was in October 2021.

See also: [UK oilseeds markets fall below £350/t](#)

London May futures, which represent a theoretical delivered price rather than an ex-farm price, also dropped below £200/t, closing at £199.75 on Tuesday (21 March), slipping further to about £194/t on Thursday morning (23 March) – a drop of more than £30/t in just over three weeks

According to the AHDB, UK values have followed global wheat contracts down, based on improved weather across the US grain belt as well as the extension of the Ukrainian grain export corridor, easing concerns over Black Sea supplies.

“Cheap Russian supplies especially continue to provide tough export competition for EU wheat,” said senior arable analyst Megan Hesketh.

“Financial market concerns, following news on Swiss bank Credit Suisse, weighed on global grain markets, too.”

Stronger sterling

Analysts CRM Agri suggested that a stronger pound sterling may also have pressured UK prices, as higher-than-expected UK inflation data on Wednesday (22 March) lifted expectations for a further interest rate rise by the Bank of England on Thursday.

Simon Wilcox of Cefetra Grain also pointed to the relatively weak demand situation in the UK, suggesting that “domestic consumers remain on the sidelines”.

“Indeed, there is still an exportable surplus and it remains to be seen whether demand for UK exports persists and much of this can find an outlet,” he said.

However, Mr Wilcox noted that new crop futures have been relatively well-supported given the weakness in old crop.

“This is due to the uncertainties still surrounding this coming harvest and the possible weather stories yet to play out across the world’s wheat-growing regions,” he said.

November wheat futures closed at £209/t on Wednesday (22 March) – just £10/t down on where they were two weeks ago.



CEREALS

Change in planning regs allows grain producer to speed up harvest

🕒 13th October 2022

Huddlestone Produce was able to reduce harvest time by around 30 hours after upgrading their grain drying and storage plant



Skandia Elevator conveyor fills grain store.

A continuous flow drier with square bin storage had been in place for over 40 years at Robert Huddlestone's Groves Farm at Howden, East Yorkshire, where HuddlestoneProduce is based.

Unsurprisingly, this grain drying and storage system was no longer reliable and lacked the capacity to cope with modern harvest demands. The time had come to upgrade and reap the benefits to the changes in permitted development rights.

"We harvest around 200h of wheat as a break crop to the swedes we grow for the wholesale markets," explained Robert Huddlestone. "It was key that a new grain-drying and storage plant delivered the efficiency and productivity we needed so that harvest could be completed as quickly as possible. We can't hold up work around our main crop of swedes which take up most of our time and manpower."

Options for new plant

Following discussions with McArthur Agriculture, Mr Huddlestone worked closely with Scott McArthur, director at McArthur Agriculture, with input from BDC Systems Ltd, on the options for a new plant to be designed to take full advantage of the change in legislation.

"Changes, made in 2018, mean that it is possible to construct an agricultural shed of up to 1,000sqm, a significant increase from 465sqm, without the requirement to submit a full planning application," explained East Yorkshire-based Killian Gallagher of Gallagher Planning which works with farmers needing planning advice.

"The permitted development rights are still subject to a prior approval process, but the main benefit to farmers is this prior approval process has considerably less red

tape than a standard planning application. Additionally, the entire process is cheaper, less complex and quicker," added Mr Gallagher.

Mr Huddlestone obtained prior planning approval to construct a galvanised steel portal framed shed (42m long x 23.5m wide x 11.75m to the apex) with precast concrete grain walls.

Optimising the space



Skandia Elevator handling equipment installed with Svegma continuous now grain drier.

McArthur Agriculture and BDC Systems designed the grain processing plant to optimise the permitted space, and deliver the required capacity to dry around 2,500t of wheat at 20tph when drying feed wheat from 20% moisture content (mc) down to 15%. The plant also had to operate with the existing 100Amp power supply.

The shed is divided into seven 6m bays. Bays 1-6 are for grain storage and bay 7 houses the intake, Skandia Elevator AB grain handling equipment and a Svegma SVC 4/4 continuous flow drier, both supplied by BDC Systems.

“We chose a Svegma drier not only because of its proven track record, but as we have to finish harvest as quickly as possible it is likely that we will need to combine grain with a high mc,” explained Mr Huddleston

The Svegma has a lateral fixing system which means there are no fixings or ledges inside the grain column to hinder the grain flow, which is really important if the grain is coming in wet.

The grain enters the plant via a Skandia KTIG 20/40 40tph trench conveyor fitted into a hopper recessed in a concrete trench in the wet grain bunker.

The conveyor transports the grain to a pair of Skandia SEI 35/14 40tph belt and bucket elevators. The drier feed elevator is fitted with a Skandia dust and chaff remover to pre-clean the grain before it reaches the Svegma drier.

The dry grain is fed into the grain store by a Skandia KTIB 20/40 40tph curved chain and flight conveyor.

“Skandia conveyors were chosen not only because of their build quality, but Skandia’s range of section lengths and curve options allows for the design of a compact grain handling solution without compromising on reliability,” explained Andrew Head, BDC Systems’ sales director.

“This was crucial for Mr Huddleston’s plant as to keep to the 1,000 sqm footprint the drier, grain handling system and control room had to be housed in one bay,” added Scott McArthur.

Future-proofed

The plant was completed within the timescales set despite Covid lockdowns, and has easily kept up with the combine.

“Before the installation of the new plant the previous five harvests had, on average, taken around 100 hours. Last year we had our biggest yield yet and harvest took just 70 hours!” said Mr Huddleston.

“This time saving has been solely down to the new future-proofed plant which allows us to dedicate resources to our other revenue generating business enterprises. I am confident that the plant will continue to meet our requirements for many harvests to come,” concluded Mr Huddleston.

