

Planning Statement including Heritage Statement

Great Napchester Farm, Napchester Road, Whitfield, Dover, Kent, CT15 5HD

Change of use of land and buildings for wedding receptions, functions, events and ancillary overnight accommodation



Introduction

Great Napchester Farm is no longer primarily used for agriculture. The site is in the main is used as an office, pottery studio and storage of property maintenance materials and equipment. The dwelling on the site has not been used for residential occupation for a number of years and the smaller barn on the site currently has no use. This application proposes the change of use of the land and the smaller barn for wedding receptions, functions and events, the dwelling for ancillary overnight accommodation and the siting of five shepherds huts on the land also to be used as ancillary overnight accommodation.

Site Description

Great Napchester Farm is a former agricultural complex located on the western side of Napchester Road and is approximately one mile from the built up area of Whitfield. The location of the site is characterised by open agricultural land and woodlands.

The application site comprises of a small barn approximately 21 metres in depth and 17m in width, land to the south, a dwelling no longer in used which is a grade 2 Listed Building and land to the north of the dwelling.

Access to the site is via a made up road off Napchester Road.

The wider site comprises of a large barn used as an office, pottery studio and storage of materials and equipment for property maintenance purposes.

Proposal

As set out in the introduction it is proposed to change the use of the land and buildings to a wedding reception, function and events venue with ancillary overnight accommodation in the existing dwelling and siting of five shepherds huts.

Apart from security, traffic management, transport and serving of drinks the customer will be responsible for providing all food, catering, entertainment (including music), decorations and any other sundries.

Barn

The barn covers a floor space of approximately 357 square metres, and internally has already been fitted out with a bar and toilets. The barn will be used for all wedding receptions, functions and events. No receptions, functions or events will be held outside.

No external changes are proposed to be made to the barn, Internally a kitchen will be fitted which will be available for use if the customer would like to provide a caterer.

The capacity of the building is to a maximum of 150 persons although it is unlikely to reach this number,

The use of the former agricultural barn for these purposes provides a viable alternative use of an existing rural building.

Dwelling

The existing six bedroom dwelling (Grade 2 Listed) has not been used for permanent residential purposes for some time.

The dwelling on the site be available as accommodation for the bride and groom for any wedding reception being held on the site and where their wedding is being held in the district.

The dwelling will not be available for use as accommodation at any other time.

No internal or external alterations to the building are proposed.

Shepherds Huts

Five 1-2 person Shepherds Huts will be sited along the length of the northern boundary of the site.

Each hut measures 4.9m in length, 2.9m wide and 3.3m in height (including wheel chassis)

Externally the huts are finished in timber cladding with a corrugated steel roof.

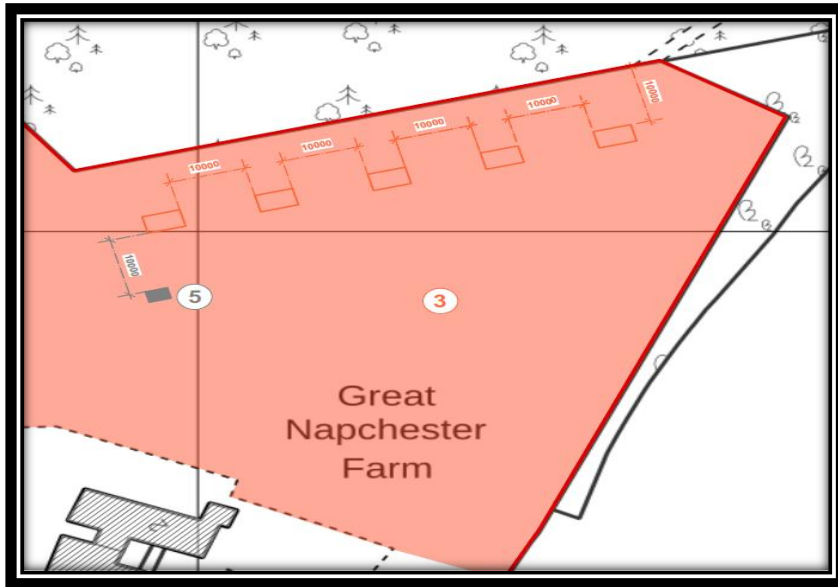
Being Shepherd Huts they will not be fixed to the ground and will be “off grid”. Water will be provided via a tank with water filtration system and pump, gas will provided via gas cannisters, electricity via solar. Grey water will be disposed of via a domestic sewage treatment plant in the near to the Shepherds Huts.

Internally each hut will have a bathroom/shower, kitchenette, and bedroom.

The Shepherds Huts will only be used in connection with any functions and events held on the site, not as separate holiday lets.



The huts are sited in a discreet contained location, cannot be seen from outside of the site and will have no impact on the landscape character of the countryside.



Functions and event frequency

It is proposed that the venue will be available for hire 1 in 4 weekdays and 4 weekends during a month.

During the period March through to September there will be a maximum of 2 events per week, one weekday and one weekend. This will be less frequent outside of those months.

Functions and events will commence no earlier than 12 (midday) and will cease at 23:15.

Records will be kept of all functions and events

Access, Parking and Traffic Management

The site is accessed via an existing vehicular access of Napchester Road which has a 30 mph speed restriction and has visible passing spots for traffic.

A parking area will be created to the south of the barn using heavy duty parking mats to prevent wear and tear on the land and allow vehicles to enter and exit the parking areas safely.

The parking area will have parking for up to 62 cars and comprise of 8 disabled spaces, 11 Staff and Contractor/Supplier Spaces and the remaining for other guests. Two spaces close to the barn will have EV charging points.

The site can be accessed from Whitfield which is approximately one mile away via Napchester Road. All customers will be told to access the site from this route and inform all guests to take this route rather than from the other direction to minimise traffic in the wider countryside.

A member of staff will be stationed in the parking area and entrance to the site to direct and manage traffic during a 90 minute period arrival and exit period. At busier events vehicles will be released from the site in phases to further minimise the impacts on the highway.

Two mini buses will be available for hire which will be driven by staff. All customers will be encouraged to make use of the service in order to minimise any impacts on the highway. Collection points will be agreed with the customer on a need by need basis.

Taking the above into account and at a maximum of 2 events per week there is unlikely to be a significant impact on the highway and traffic movements.

Noise Management

All music and bands will cease at 11pm in the barn and marquee.

The doors and windows to the barn will be closed at all times.

Sound systems will be fitted with a noise limiter device.

Speakers will be around the dance floor and directed away from main doors.

Bands and DJ's providing their own amplification equipment shall wire their equipment into supplied sound limitation devices.

No functions or events will take place outside of the barn.

Regular checks will be made outside of the site to check for noise levels.

The only dwelling in the locality is Little Napchester Farm which is approximately 200m to the south west of the barn which through the above measure will not be impacted by any noise disturbance.

Economic Impact

Great Napchester Farm will not be supplying food, entertainment, flowers, decorations, music however all customers will be provided with a list of local caterers, djs, entertainment, florists, other decorators, food suppliers, taxi companies and hotels which will directly positively impact the local economy. The use if granted will also result in part time employment for security and traffic management purposes. Local cleaners will also be used to clean the venue.

Guests staying at the site in connection with the function or event are likely to make use of local tourist attractions, restaurants and facilities which provide further positive impacts on the economy.

Impact on Heritage Asset

Great Napchester Farmhouse is a grade II Listed Building.

No works are proposed to the interior or exterior of the building. The use of the barn and land for functions, events and ancillary accommodation will have no harmful impact upon the character and setting of the Listed Building. As ancillary overnight accommodation the Farmhouse will be put to a good use rather than remaining empty

The funds gained from the proposed use of the land will allow the landowner to enhance and preserve the heritage asset which provides a public benefit.

Conclusions

The use of the land for functions, events and ancillary accommodation allows for the growth of a rural based business, provides a viable use to a former agricultural building, results in employment, benefits local businesses, promotes tourism, results in funds to preserve and enhance the heritage asset without causing a harmful impact on the landscape character of the countryside, residential amenity and where highway impacts are mitigated to an acceptable level.

The proposed use of the land for functions, events and ancillary overnight accommodation achieves the social, economic and environmental objectives and accords with paragraphs 84, 112, 130, 174, 201 and 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal also complies with all relevant policies set out in the Council's Adopted Local Plan and emerging Local Plan.