

PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL BUILDING AT LAND AT NORTH BROOK END, STEEPLE MORDEN, ROYSTON, SG8 0PH

PLANNING STATEMENT

Background

The Land at North Brook End, Steeple Morden extends to 26 hectares (64 acres) and was purchased by the applicant Joanna Franklin, in 2011.

Ms Franklin formed Kaipoi in 2013 with partner, Rob Hodgkins with 200 ewes on 60 acres of rented grass. The business now had a flock of 2,250 ewes over 400 hectares (1,000 acres) of semi improved grassland and farm 650 hectares (1,600 acres) of arable crops around North Hertfordshire. Virtually all of the land is rented on various agreements.

Kaipoi are developing a rural business to produce sheep's milk, which is shown to be a growing market.

The land at North Brooke End is the only owned land available to the farming business and prior approval was granted on 25 April 2022 for an agricultural building used for the milking process and storage for the sheep grazed on the surrounding grassland (ref: 22/01519/PRIOR). This building is now up and running and was used to milk sheep in 2022 and 2023

Planning permission has recently been granted for a mobile home on the site to provide for essential 24 hour supervision of the unit, which was to be sited adjacent the existing agricultural building.

Proposal

The business needs a secure building for general storage of feed, machinery and equipment for the sheep enterprise. The existing building is fully used as a dairy and milking parlour with handling.

It is therefore proposed to erect a purpose built 25.045 metre x 18 metre agricultural storage building with eaves and ridge heights of 4.575 metres and 7.16 metres respectively. The building will be of steel portal framed construction with concrete panelling and fibre cement cladding over and a fibre cement roof. There will be roller shutter doors to the north and east of the building with hardstanding to the north. This will allow a tractor to be stored with livestock trailer, feed for the sheep (bulk and bagged), hay as well as a range of equipment used during grazing and handling such as fencing, gates, crush and scales. There will also be storage of medicines and supplements.

It is proposed to site the building the west of the existing building so they will be in line and this will mitigate visual impact. However this will displace the permitted mobile home. It is therefore also

proposed to move the mobile home to the west of the proposed new storage building with a landscaped bund to the west of the resited mobile home to protect views into the site

Planning Policy

National planning policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at Paragraph 84 – Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy as follows:-

“Planning policies and decisions should enable:

- a) The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings’*
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses.....”*

The building could be built as permitted development as the business has not used the 1000m² allowance under part 6. However as the proposal also needs to move the permitted mobile home plot this has been wrapped into a planning application covering both aspects.

Planning Comments

The proposal is for an agricultural building on agricultural land to be used for the storage of machinery and equipment. The other element is a mobile home essential to the supervision of the stock.

Unfortunately, theft on farms is a common problem and secure storage is required.

The building is of a typical agricultural design with materials to match the existing building on site.

The relocated mobile home will be seen against the backdrop of an agricultural building as per the approved siting. The principal of the mobile home is already established.

A landscaped bund will further mitigate the visual impact of the development.

Access will be an existing farm access. The equipment is required already on site. If anything, use of the access will reduce as machinery can be kept securely on site with no need to transport it in periodically.

This is an application for agricultural building for an established agricultural business. The proposal is fully supported in planning policy.

