

**PLANNING STATEMENT**

**for the**

**RESUBMISSION**

**of the**

**APPLICATION FOR PRIOR APPROVAL**

**of**

**NEW AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS**

**at**

**GREEN STREET LITTLE HADHAM WARE SG11 2ER**

**for**

**BILLINGFORD FARMS Ltd**

**south bank architects**  


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**December 2023**

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been produced by South Bank Architects on behalf of Billingford Farms Ltd, to support the resubmitted application ref: 3/23/2443/AGPN for prior approval of two new agricultural sheds on a field near Little Hadham.
- 1.2 The previous application was withdrawn because the information requested by the planning officer could not be supplied prior to the deadline date due to delays caused by the Christmas break.
- 1.3 The application now includes corrections to the heights of the buildings on the drawings and application form, elevational drawings of the sheds, details of the applicant's Agricultural Land Holdings, the purpose of the existing and proposed sheds and photographs of the interiors of the existing sheds as requested in the planning officer's e mail dated 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024.
- 1.4 BThe proposed site plan and elevations are shown on drawing nos. S3724/01A and 03.
- 1.5 Billingford Farms' Statement in support of the application is included in Appendix A.
- 1.6 Details of the Agricultural Holdings are included on drawing no. S3724/02 and Appendix B.
- 1.7 Photographs of the interiors of the existing sheds and agricultural holdings land are included in Appendix C.

## **2.0 The Proposed Sheds**

- 2.1 Billingford Farms consists of two Agricultural Holdings (County Parish Holding - CPH) and they are both covered by a single business identifier according to the rural payments agency. The SBI means that both function as a single business. The owned land currently extends to approximately 16 hectares or 40 acres and has been used for agricultural business for many years. Billingford Farms also rents other land for the production of crop and buys crops from other farmers. The business is growing and this has resulted in a pressing need for additional storage This location is the most appropriate in order to minimise vehicular movements. The buildings are used to sort and manage crop, store machines and plant, maintain the machines and plant and store ancillary items used in the field as detailed on drawing no. S3724/01A.
- 2.2 The proposed new buildings are of typical utilitarian construction comprising a steel portal frame with green profile steel sheet cladding to the sides and grey profiled cladding to the roof. The lower part of the building will comprise concrete panels. Roller shutter doors and personnel doors are proposed for access.
- 2.3 The two building will measure 12 metres in depth by 42 metres in length with a footprint of 504 square metres and 10 metres in depth and 48 metres in length with a footprint of 480 square metres. Both will have gable pitched roofs with a variable eaves height as shown on drawing no. S3724/03, due the existing slope of the land. The buildings have been kept to this modest height to allow for sufficient storage without exceeding the height of surrounding trees and therefore keeping the buildings screened within the site.
- 2.4 The siting of the new sheds has been dictated by the functionality of the buildings, ground levels and proximity to the existing sheds. There is also an 11,000 volt UKPN electrical mains running through the site which cannot be built over. The building will be located on a small grassed area and will not result in a significant loss of productive agricultural land as the plot size does not lend itself to modern intensive agricultural methods.
- 2.5 The existing yard area will have sufficient space for the vehicles accessing the site.
- 2.6 The site received previous permission under application 3/17/1156/AGPN in June 2017 and also 3/20/1234/AGPN in July 2020 for agricultural buildings which are now fully utilised and additional storage provision is required. The previous permissions have shown the necessity for these buildings and the business growth now requires more space and the certainty the

business will be allowed to expand further, in line with the owner's business plans.

### **3.0 Permitted Development**

- 3.1 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) details rights for agricultural development under permitted development. Part 6, Class A is related to agricultural development for units of 5 hectares or more.
- 3.2 Development is permitted under Class A if it is to be carried out on an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more, and involves the erection, extension or alteration of a building or excavation or engineering works that is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture.
- 3.3 This application proposes the construction of new buildings to be used to sort and manage crop including trees and fodder, store machines and plant, maintain the machines and plant and store ancillary items used in the field, these functions are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture, and as previously stated they are to be sited on a unit larger than 5 hectares. Although there are existing storage buildings on site these buildings have insufficient capacity to accommodate all of the activities of Billingsford Farms' expanding business.
- 3.4 The buildings are likely to be at maximum capacity for the fodder crops at harvest time and crops may have to be stored for several months from harvest to sale to take advantage of the most advantageous market conditions. Other crops require covered, frost free space for sorting and storage prior to distribution. The maintenance of our plant and machinery also requires dedicated space to allow the work to be done within HSE guidelines. The proposed new buildings will ensure these requirements can all be accommodated in separate appropriate spaces.
- 3.5 There are a number of specific restrictions to development under Class A, all of which have been met. These are listed below:
- (a) the development would not be carried out on a separate parcel of land forming part of the unit which is less than 1 hectare;
  - (b) no applications under Part 3, Class Q or Class S have been carried out within a period of 10 years ending with the date on which development under Class A (a) begins;
  - (c) the proposal does not consist of, or include, the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling;
  - (d) it would not involve the provision of a building, structure or works not designed for agricultural purposes;
  - (e) the ground area of the building would not exceed 1000 square metres, calculated as described in paragraph D.1.(2)(a);
  - (f) the site is not located within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome;
  - (g) the height of the building will not exceed 12 metres;
  - (h) no part of the development would be within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk road or classified road;
  - (i) the proposal would not consist of, or include, the erection or construction of, or the carrying out of any works to, a building, structure or an excavation used or to be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge where the building, structure or excavation is, or would be, within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building.
  - (j) it would not involve excavations or engineering operations on or over article 2(4) land which are connected with fish farming; and
  - (k) the building will not be used for storing fuel for or waste from a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system and is not within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building.
- 3.6 Development under Part 6, Class A is also subject to a number of conditions, including a requirement to apply for prior approval for the siting and external appearance of any new building. In terms of determining whether prior approval should be required, the only relevant Government advice is that remaining in Annex E of PPG7. Annex E does in fact remain extant as it was adopted separately to PPG7 and therefore not replaced by PPS7 or subsequently the NPPF.
- 3.7 Paragraph E15 of Annex E states that "provided all the General Permitted Development Order requirements are met, the principle of whether the development should be permitted is not for

consideration, and only in cases where the local planning authority considers that a specific proposal is likely to have a significant impact on its surroundings would the Secretary of State consider it necessary for the authority to require the formal submission of details for approval.”

- 3.8 Paragraph E16 of Annex E goes on to remind local authorities that full regard should be had to the operational needs of the agricultural industry in determining whether prior approval should be required, and that long term conservation objectives will often be served best by ensuring that economic activity is able to function successfully.
- 3.9 The test is therefore one of ‘significant impact on surroundings’. In this case, whilst accepted that the buildings are large, they will be located adjacent to two existing agricultural buildings and will not appear prominent from any public viewpoints. On the contrary, they are well hidden by the mature trees surrounding the site. The building is located away from the public highway and there are no public rights of way within the vicinity of the site.
- 3.10 It is therefore considered that the building will have no significant impact on the landscape or local environment, and therefore prior approval should not be deemed to be required. Further, Annex E reminds us that when determining whether prior approval should be required, full regard should be had to the operational needs of the agricultural industry and ensuring that economic activity is able to function successfully. In this case the new building is essential to the agricultural needs of the holding due to the success of the business.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

- 4.1 We consider that sufficient information has now been submitted to allow the prior approval of the construction of the two agricultural sheds.

Gareth Bridge  
South Bank Architects  
January 2024

# **APPENDIX A**

## **Billingford Farms' Statement**

# BILLINGFORD FARMS LIMITED

Farm Holdings      Agricultural Contract Growing      Forestry      Horticulture      Landscaping

To whom it may concern

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF APPLICATION FOR AGRICULTURAL BUILDING AT BILLINGFORD FARMS, GREEN STREET, WARE SG11 2EN.

I am the land owner for Billingford Farms Limited who have submitted the application for the agricultural buildings to be erected on my land. My land consists of two small holdings (county parish holding - CPH) and they are both covered by a single business identifier according to the rural payments agency. The SBI means that both function as a single business, please see their letter attached confirming these statements. The two holdings have in excess of 16 hectares in use for horticultural purposes.

I have a tenant on CPH 08/086/0476 who we work closely with, the land at that holding is currently stocked with semi mature field grown specimen trees which are supplied from stock at our Hertfordshire holding CPH 18/004/0217. This is the subject of this application, we use this land for growing on of feathered trees and standards and there are currently over 9000 trees planted on the land, further planting will be done in the coming years to ensure the regular supply of crop, as the trees are harvested we are also replanting with new stock to ensure continuous supply. The land is used to support horticultural businesses and therefore it is classified as agricultural us.

Trees of the size we are growing require a significant amount of internal sheltered space for when they are harvested as they are generally harvested in winter months when the plants are dormant but the root systems must be protected from frost etc. We transport trees between our sites and we also do contract growing on other parcels of land with trusted suppliers but require and use a central facility to sort and manage the crop, store machines and plant, maintain the machines and plant and store ancillary items we use in the field. The plant and machinery required for the operation has been a significant investment for us and requires secure storage when not in use along with workshop space for maintenance and repair. The plant and machinery we require is noted below, this list is far from exhaustive;

Excavator x 2	Tractor x 3
Forklift loader	Telehandler
Loading shovel	Tree lifter
Pruning platforms	Scaffolding stages
Hydraulic Tree spades	Spraying units
Cultivators and general ground care implements	Trailers and commercial vehicles
Mobile Welfare facilities for use in the field	Numerous hand tools

We received previous permission under application 3/17/1156/AGPN in June 2017 and also 3/20/1234/AGPN in July 2020 for agricultural buildings, subsequently with the expansion of the business, further growing work with Forestry and Land Scotland and our contract growing activity we have almost reached the limit of the space available and now require an expansion of our secure undercover space to allow the business to continue to grow. The building we would like are detailed in the drawings from our architect. We are informed that up to 1000m<sup>2</sup> can be built and while this application is for just under that amount it is split as

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# BILLINGFORD FARMS LIMITED

Farm Holdings    Agricultural Contract Growing    Forestry    Horticulture    Landscaping

2 buildings and we intend to phase the build as and when our company grows. Our turnover has improved year on year since we established our agricultural business and we look forward to future expansion subject to being allowed the facilities to do so. We are seeking permission for the 2 buildings at this time to safeguard the future of our business and be able to plan ahead.

This application also takes into account that our business will continue to expand in the coming years due to the increasing focus that is placed on sustainability and green spaces which in turn increases the demand for good quality home grown native tree stock.

The land was purchased as agricultural land and is still classified as agricultural land. The land is presently used for horticultural purposes and this falls under the agricultural use classes. In order to progress with the horticultural uses and the expansion of our business we require the proposed additional building.

Yours sincerely

Mr A Hoodless



Some of our larger field grown trees out for delivery

# **APPENDIX B**

## **Details of the Agricultural Holdings**



# HUGGINS & LEWIS FOSKETT

Incorporating Denis Tye & Co

SOLICITORS

TELEPHONE • 020 8989 3000  
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Billingford Holdings Limited  
17 Abbey Mills  
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**Your Ref:**  
**Our Ref:** JSC/SG/Billingford  
**Ext:** voicemail ext 242  
**Direct E-mail:**  
jcarmichael@huggins-law.co.uk

27 April 2017

Dear Sirs

## LAND AT BURY GREEN FARM, LITTLE HADHAM, HERTFORDSHIRE

We confirm that you purchased the above property on 17 March 2017 and the use of the property was agricultural land.

Yours faithfully

  
Huggins & Lewis Foskett



James Carmichael LLB Baldev Battu LLB\* Simon Huggins LLB\*\* Saika Alam LLB\*\*\* Michael Legister LLB LLM\*

Solicitors: Joanna Menikou LLB Vishal Amin LLB LLM Helen West LLB Cara Sandillon LLB

Executives: Neil S Carson\*\* Nick Maisuria A. Inst. L. Ex. Ann Hines Lorraine Cassell

Licensed Conveyancer: Joyce Owusu-Afari

\* Notary Public \*\* Association of Personal Injury Lawyers

\*\*\* Resolution (formerly Solicitors Family Law Association), Law Society Family Law Advanced Panel



# Rural Payments Agency

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Mr Antony Gerard Hoodless  
Appleby  
Cradle End  
Little Hadham  
Ware  
SG11 2EF

13th February 2017

CRN: **1104380854**

Task number: CRM: **804581-N1B7M0**

Your ref: SBI: **107087250**

Dear Mr Hoodless

## Customer Registration – County Parish Holding (CPH) number

We confirm your CPH number shown below refers to the locations of your land.

**CPH number: 18/004/0217**

**Business/Place of business: APPLEBY, CRADLE END, SG11 2EF**

**CPH number: 08/086/0476**

**Business/Place of business: Moorvale, Sandy Lane, Broadwath, Heads Nook, Brampton, CA8 9BQ**

Please keep a record of your CPH number as you may be asked for it by RPA, other Defra agencies or your Local Authority.

If you want to claim for payment you'll need a Single Business Identifier (SBI). You'll need to log into our Rural Payments service next week to get this.

### What you need to do

Please tell us if the business name shown in this letter is wrong. You must also tell us if your business details change, so that we can keep our customer register up to date.

If you keep livestock of any kind, you must register as a livestock keeper with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) - the new name for the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA). If you keep cattle, you must also register with the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS). Before you apply for any of the payment schemes run by RPA, Natural England or the Forestry Commission, you must register all your agricultural land with

# APPENDIX C

## Photographs of the existing shed interiors and Agricultural Land Holding









