

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015

GREYLEES LTD

PRIOR NOTIFICATION APPLICATION FOR ERECTION OF AGRICULTURAL BIOMASS BOILER BUILDING UPON LAND AT BOILING WELLS FARM, GRANTHAM ROAD, GREYLEES, SLEAFORD

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(JHG/002/24)



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement is submitted in support of a prior notification application for erection of an agricultural biomass boiler heating system building authorised under Part 6, Class A(a) of the *Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015*, as amended by the *Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2018*. The site subject of this application is located within Boiling Wells Farm, Grantham Road, Greylees, Sleaford NG34 8QX (Easting: 504304, Northing: 345396)
- 1.2 Part 6, Class A, Conditions A.2(2) stipulates that: (i) *The developer must, before beginning the development, apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the siting, design and external appearance of the building, the siting and means of construction of the private way, the siting of the excavation or deposit or the siting and appearance of the tank, as the case may be;* and (ii) *‘the application must be accompanied by a written description of the proposed development and of the materials to be used and a plan indicating the site together with any fee required to be paid.’* Such information is duly outlined below. The following should also be read in conjunction with the accompanying site survey, proposed site layout, floor and elevation plan drawing F3167-01.

2.0 DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

- 2.1 The proposed site, which is under applicant ownership (Greylees Ltd), occupies an area of vacant farmyard that was previously used to store containers/trailers. It is located within the confines of the established Boiling Wells Farm complex. This occupies an area of approximately 2.45 hectares and includes six modern steel portal framed barns (located to the east of the site) and a small block of woodland (to the north and west). It should be noted that an agricultural building (biomass woodchip fuel store) with floor area of 546.25 m² is in the process of being constructed (in accordance with prior approval 22/1769/PNAGR) within the northern confines of the farm complex approximately 70 metres from the application site. This is not evident within the pre-dated aerial photograph included below.
- 2.2 Land in residential and equestrian use is located to the south of the farm complex/proposed site. The most proximate dwelling comprises the applicant’s farmhouse. A separate detached dwelling with outbuildings and paddock (not under applicant ownership or part of the farm holding) is located to the immediate southeast of this, 70+ metres from the application site. The site comprises part of the applicant’s wider 97 hectare (240 acre) farm holding. The application site boundaries are not yet physically defined by terrain features. It can however be noted that the aforementioned established woodland is located adjacent to the western boundary (this provides a significant degree of screening) and farm tracks run a course adjacent to the northern and eastern boundaries. These will provide access to the building. The trackways, which are constructed of crushed stone, in turn connect with the farm’s primary access (private carriageway).



Aerial photograph depicting proposed 'development area' (red) in relation to farm complex and surrounding landscape.

- 2.3 The primary access comprises a 1.5 kilometre long private carriageway surfaced with compacted aggregate. This extends a little over 1 kilometre to the south and west of the application site in order to connect with the A153 Grantham Road via a heavy duty industrial specification junction with right turn lane. The carriageway also progresses through the farm northwards from the application site in order to provide access to the applicants' broiler poultry farm complex and surrounding field systems.
- 2.4 With the exception of the aforementioned applicant's farmhouse and adjacent dwelling, all land neighbouring the proposed site is in agricultural use and part of the applicants' wider farm holding. It can be noted that a section of public footpath (SRau/3/1) is located approximately 70 metres to the North of the site. The development will have no impact upon this public right of way, and it will not be readily visible therefrom due to the presence of existing screening buildings and woodland. A second public footpath (SRau/8/1) also runs a course along the aforementioned private carriageway/farm access approximately 100 metres to the west of the site. Again, the proposed development will be predominantly screened from view of this receptor. The periphery of Quarrington (Sleaford), comprising the closest settlement, is located approximately 0.9 kilometres to the east of the proposed site. The villages of Greylees and South Rauceby are situated circa 1 kilometre to the south and west respectively.
- 2.5 The entirety of the application site is flat, being devoid of any notable topographical features. As evident within the extract included below, the Environment Agency flood hazard map depicts the proposed site within Flood Zone 1, which indicates a low risk of fluvial flooding (the outlying River Slea and land drains being the greatest potential source of flood risk). However, land in Flood Zone 2 'medium risk' is situated to the immediate west of the proposed building. There is no evidence to suggest that the site has been subject to localised flooding or drainage problems.



Extract from EA Flood Map depicting application site in Flood Zone 1 (low Risk). Land in Flood Zone 2 (medium risk) located to immediate west.

- 2.6 The application site is not situated within an area of designated wildlife importance (such as SSSI's, LWS, RAMSAR site etc) or Article 2(3) land such as a Conservation Area or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It can however be observed that the site/farm complex is identified as being within a 'strategic green corridor', as depicted on the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Interactive Mapping System.
- 2.7 The application site is located within a Limestone 'Minerals Safeguarding Area', as allocated within the *Lincolnshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan 2016*. However, Policy M11, which specifically concerns the safeguarding of minerals resources, states that a 'Minerals Assessment' is not required in support of prior notification applications concerning agricultural development.
- 2.8 A search of Historic England's database indicates that the proposed site is not located within the setting or curtilage of a Listed Building, Scheduled Ancient Monument, Historic Park/Garden or any other designated heritage asset. The Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record (HER) has identified that the application site and wider farm complex is located within an area host to a post medieval quarry and limekiln. HER entry MLI89490 describes this as: '*Post medieval quarry and associated lime kiln, Bully Wells Farm, South Rauceby, as depicted on the Ordnance Survey County Series map of 1905. At Boiling Wells limestone was found, softer than Ancaster stone and normally unsuitable for building material, but widely used, after the agricultural revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, as a fertiliser. The limestone quarried at Boiling Wells also had another use: it could be converted into quick lime. Charles Kirk, who ran a very large building firm in Sleaford, had a lime kiln there as early as 1842 and his firm retained it until 1887, when it was sold to the Lord of the Manor, Lord Bristol, for £68. There is no surviving visible evidence for the kiln depicted on the OS County Series map of 1905.*' Nevertheless, such is considered to be of relatively low significance and the proposed development, comprising a very modest steel portal framed building characterised by limited foundation requirements (only small foundation pads required for supporting columns), will not realistically have any tangible impact upon archaeological feature/resources.

2.9 The proposed scheme seeks to facilitate erection of an agricultural building to accommodate a 500 kW (0.5 MW) biomass boiler system building within the Boiling Wells Farm complex. This will provide renewable heating required for a small grain dryer located within an existing adjacent barn. The site location is also conveniently close to the farm's recently erected wood chip biomass fuel storage barn. The purpose of the system is to allow:

1. The drying of woodchip biomass fuel primarily used within the applicant's established broiler poultry farm complex 1.8 MW biomass boilers (the same wood chip supply will also fuel the proposed boiler system). This will enable more efficient combustion and place less stress upon integrated exhaust emissions filtration systems (lowering long term operating and maintenance costs); and
2. Enable the drying of cereal crops. The southern extent of the applicant's farm holding includes over 100 acres of land that is currently only used for hay production. It has been determined that there is merit in cultivating this land in order to produce wheat, barley and oilseed rape (dependent upon crop rotation). The arable operation will benefit from the ready availability of manure fertiliser derived from the applicant's aforementioned poultry farm. The viability of this enterprise will however rely upon higher quality cereals being produced and dried to optimum moisture content so that they can be stored and sold at a time when the market yields favourable prices. In no small part due to increasingly unpredictable weather patterns, it is desirable to have the ability to dry crops on-site following harvest. The proposed ancillary biomass boiler system will facilitate this.

2.10 The applicant has sourced a suitable reconditioned biomass boiler at low cost. It is however necessary for the boiler system to be accommodated within a new dedicated structure. The proposed agricultural building will measure 10.95 metres by 12.0 metres (gross external area of 131.4 m²) with an eaves height of 4.1 metres and ridge height of 5.0 metres. The roof and elevations will be clad in profiled steel sheeting coloured 'Olive Green' (BS:12B27). The eastern elevation will include a personnel door and two steel roller shutter doors to allow servicing of the boiler and access to the wood chip store room with walking floor. Solar (photovoltaic) panels will be fitted to the roof in order to augment electrical power usage. The proposed development will utilise a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) allowing roof water to discharge via gutters and drain pipes (black UPVC) into a subterranean soakaway. The development will not require any external lighting.

3.0 PLANNING LAW

3.1 The proposed development is considered to achieve compliance with Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A(a) of the *Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015*, as updated by the *Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2018*. Class A(a) states that development will be permitted where:

'A. *The carrying out on agricultural land comprised in an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more in area of—*

*(a) works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building;
...which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit.'*

3.2 In context of the above it is emphasised that the application site comprises agricultural land situated amidst a nucleated 97 hectare agricultural unit, thereby significantly exceeding the 5.0 hectare threshold stipulated within Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A. The proposed agricultural building will accommodate an ancillary biomass boiler (used in farm heating systems for drying wood chip fuel and cereal crops), the entirety of which is necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the associated farm holding as described within the above 'Development Context' section of this statement.

3.3 In relation to the relevant qualifying criteria of Class A.1, it is stated that:

- a) The proposed development will be carried out on a parcel of agricultural land (part of wider farm complex) measuring approximately 2.45 hectares, which is situated within/adjoining the wider adjoining 97 hectare agricultural unit.
- b) The application site's associated agricultural unit has not been subject to any development permitted under Schedule 2, Part 3 Class Q or S.
- c) The proposed scheme does not involve the erection or extension of a dwelling.
- d) As previously stated, the entirety of the new building is to be used for the purposes of agriculture.
- e) The ground area to be covered by the agricultural building will be 131.4 m² (gross external area). It should be observed that an agricultural storage building is under construction upon land less than 90 metres to the northeast of the application site in early 2023 (i.e. less than 2 years ago). This building, which is being erected in accordance with prior approval 22/1769/PNAGR, had a gross external floor area/ground area of 564.25 m². No other buildings or associated structures have been erected within 90 metres of the application site during the previous 2 years. The combined development area (existing approved building plus proposed development) is thus 695.65 m². The 'ground area', as calculated in accordance with the requirements of Part 6, paragraph D.1(2)(a), will not therefore exceed 1000 square metres [as substituted by *Section 12 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2018*].
- f) The application site is not situated within 3.0 kilometres of an aerodrome. It can be noted that the most proximate aerodrome comprises RAF Cranwell, the defined periphery of which is located over 3.38 kilometres to the northwest of the application site.
- g) No part of the proposed agricultural building will exceed a height of 12.0 metres. The roof apex will be of greatest stature with a height of 5.0 metres.
- h) No part of the development will be situated within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk road or classified road.

- i) The proposed scheme will not involve the erection, construction or any works to a building, structure or excavation used, or to be used, for the accommodation of livestock, slurry or sewage sludge.
- j) The development will not involve excavations or engineering operations connected with fish farming on or over article 2(4) land.
- k) The proposed building will not be used for storing fuel or waste for an anaerobic digestion system.

3.4 On the basis of the above, it is reasonable to state that none of the Class A.1 preclusions apply to the proposed agricultural storage building. The proposal is therefore demonstrably permitted development.

3.5 This statement with submitted plan F3167-01 (Site Location, Proposed Layout, Floor Plan and Elevation Drawing) provides information sufficient to address the relevant conditions of Part 6, A.2 of the *Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015* (as amended).

4.0 SUMMARY

4.1 In accordance with Part 6, A.2, (2)(i) of the *Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015*, as amended by the *Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2018*, this application seeks determination of the requirement for prior approval from the Local Planning Authority in relation to a scheme for the erection of an agricultural storage building upon agricultural land situated within Greylees Ltd's surrounding 97 hectare farm holding.

4.2 The application site is situated upon a parcel of land exceeding 1.0 hectares located within an associated agricultural unit significantly larger than 5 hectares and the proposed scheme is required to provide ancillary agricultural development (renewable biomass boiler heating system for wood chip fuel and cereal crop drying floor in adjacent barn). The development will integrate successfully with the character of the site's surroundings and the scheme will not give rise to any adverse environmental impacts. The proposed building and necessary construction works achieve full compliance with the provisions of Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A, A.1 and A.2 of the 'General Permitted Development Order' (as amended). The proposal is therefore considered to comprise permitted development.