



PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

FOR APPLICATION FOR CLASS A PART 6 PRIOR APPROVAL

IN RELATION TO

**PROPOSED AGRICULTURAL RESERVOIR
(Revised Site)**

AT

LAND AT OAKLANDS FARM
PITCHFORD
SHREWSBURY
SY5 7DJ

ON BEHALF OF

JRO GRIFFITHS LTD

Stephen Locke Associates

Barcaldine, Barrack Lane
Lilleshall, Newport
Shropshire, TF10 9ER



Contents

	<i>Page</i>
1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Background and Information	3
2.1 The Site and Surrounding Area	3
3.0 The Proposed Development	5
4.0 Policy Review & Development Principle	7
4.1 Review of Class A	7
5.0 Matters that may require Prior Approval	9
6.0 Conclusions	11
Appendix 1 Location Plan	
Appendix 2 Site Layout and Cross Section Plans	
Appendix 3 Site Photographs	
Appendix 4 Flood risk report	

Prepared By

Stephen Locke BSc(Hons) MRICS MRTPI FAAV

Of

Stephen Locke Associates, Barcaldine,
Barrack Lane, Lilleshall, Newport,
Shropshire, TF10 9ER.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies a prior approval application to seek to confirm if the Prior Approval of Shropshire Council is required for the construction of an irrigation reservoir for agricultural use pursuant to the provisions contained within Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 as amended.

1.2 The applicants are JRO Griffiths Ltd, who own the agricultural land at Oaklands Farm where the proposed new farm reservoir would be located.

1.3 The statement has been prepared by Stephen Locke BSc (Hons) MRICS MRTPI FAAV who has over 30 years of rural planning experience and is a specialist Chartered Surveyor and Chartered Town Planner.

1.4 The new reservoir would help to provide long term water security to support the business' current operations which includes growing over 23,000 tonnes of potatoes for Walkers Crisps and 4000 tonnes of potatoes for Kettle Foods, plus a variety of cereals and other crops across a total of 4,000 acres of agricultural farmland.

1.5 The proposal has been assessed against the Class A eligibility criteria and relevant national and local planning policies. It is considered compliant with these various requirements; therefore, this application should be supported by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

2.0 BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION

2.1 The Site and Surrounding Area

2.1.1 The site is approximately 3.6 ha in size and is currently an open area of ground forming part of a large arable field. The site drains into the field drain network and ultimately into the Count Brook and the nearest public highway is known as Pitchford Road, sitting approximately 630m south west of the Oaklands Farm complex. The site for the proposed reservoir is approximately 700 m from the nearest public highway.

2.1.2 A previous approval (23/03259/AGR) was given for a site to the south of the farm but extensive ground investigations have concluded that this is not suitable for the works. The grid reference of the revised site is SJ526056 and a location plan showing the proposed development can be seen at **Appendix 1** of this report.

2.1.3 The proposal would enable the applicants to be adequately prepared for irrigation requirements in 2024, given the unpredictable climate conditions experienced in recent years. The aerial photograph at **Figure 1** on the following page demonstrates the location of the revised application site (Point B marker).

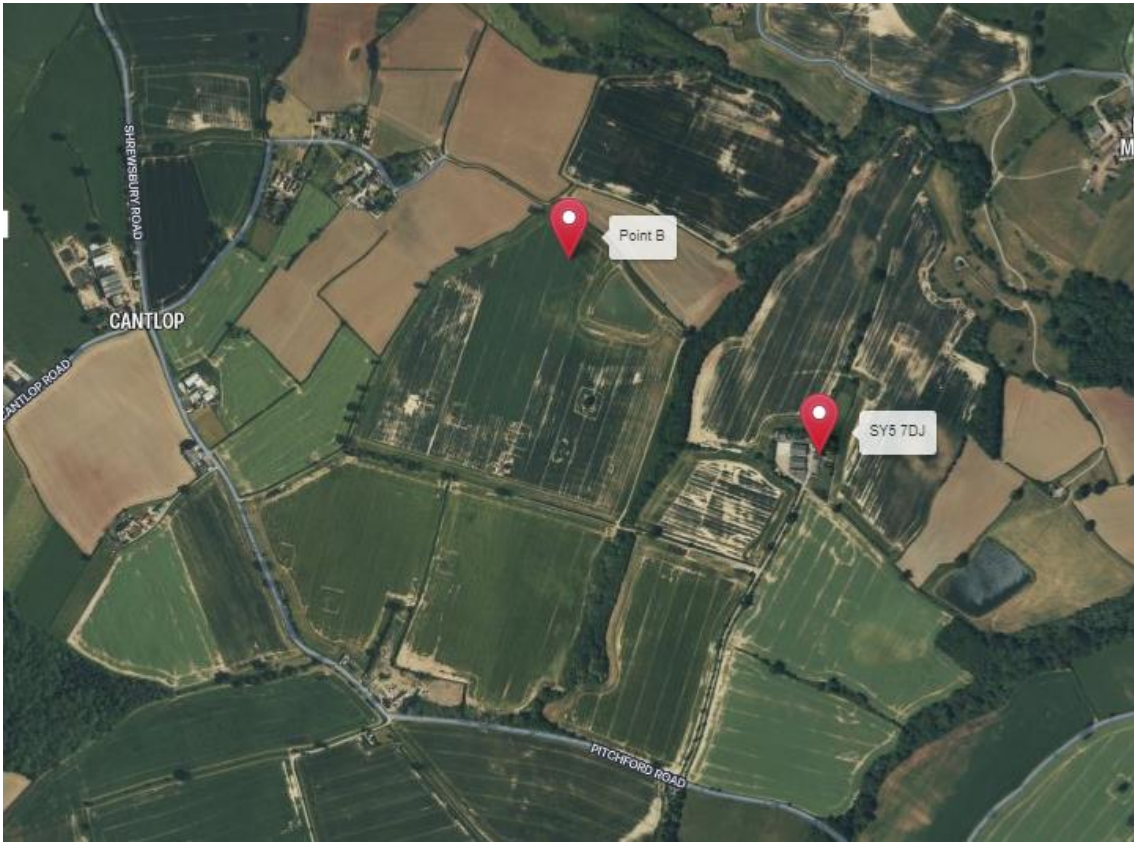


Figure 1 – Site Location

(Not to Scale)

2.1.4 **Figure 2** below outlines the application site and the proposed siting in greater detail.

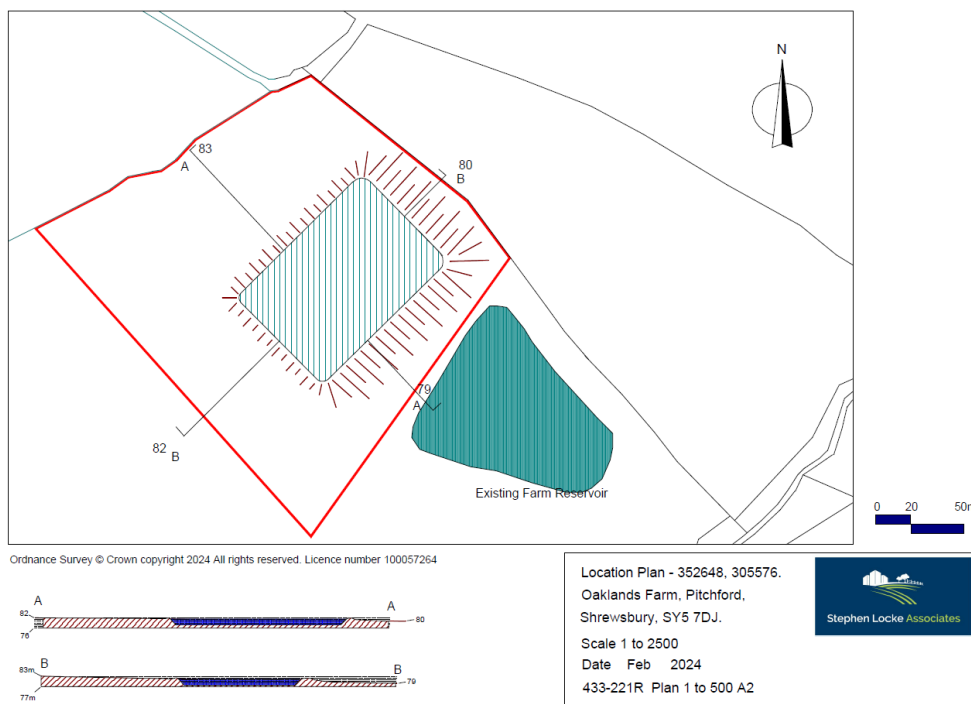


Figure 2 – Application Site (Not to scale)

2.1.5 The applicants are committed to farming sustainably and to a high environmental standard, which is reflected by their Higher Level Stewardship Agreement and Educational Access initiatives running across the holdings. This is assisting with the Government's aim set out in Section 1(b) of the Agriculture Act 2020, which states that the Government will focus on *“supporting public access to and enjoyment of the countryside, farmland or woodland and better understanding of the environment.”* Therefore, it is important that businesses who are contributing towards this vision are supported.

2.1.6 The applicants have also entered into the pilot scheme of DEFRA's Sustainable Farming Incentive, which requires participants to aid the development of such programmes by providing constructive feedback, which in turn will assist all farms in England when the tried and tested scheme is fully rolled out.

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Summary

3.1.1 The application is notification for prior approval for the construction of an agricultural irrigation reservoir and conforms with Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended). Section 4 of this statement reviews each element of Class A requirements.

3.1.2 The reservoir will fill naturally through the collection of rainwater, which on average receives 739mm of rainfall annually for the SY5 postcode region; and pumping from existing sources. The harvested water will be used as a reserve for irrigation of the cropped ground, should it be required due to unpredictable weather conditions including droughts as starting to be experienced more extremely over the past years. Crops such as potatoes are especially susceptible.

3.1.3 Consequently, the collection and storage of rainwater in the winter months will reduce run-off into the adjacent watercourse which drains into the Cound Brook, leading to the River Severn which is prone to heavy flooding.

3.1.4 The reservoir will be approximately 100 metres in length by approx. 70 metres in width. The constructed depth of retained water is to be an average of around 3 - 4 metres. The volume of water held within the reservoir will not exceed 22,500 m³. It should be noted that whilst the site area shown on the site location plan is approximately 3.6 ha, the size of the reservoir is significantly smaller (circa 0.7 ha), this is to allow for manoeuvring space during construction and profiling of soil. Please refer to the accompanying proposed plans provided at **Appendix 2** for further detail.

3.1.5 The reservoir is to be constructed using a cut and fill exercise. Excavated soil is to be moved and used as fill material for the reservoir embankments. Any surplus soil will be placed in the embankment slopes to the lower sides. Topsoil is to be re-laid over the embankments of the reservoir and sown with an appropriate grassland/wildflower seed mix on land which cannot be cropped. No material is to be imported or exported from the site.

3.1.6 The revised site is well away from public land or highways and there are no public footpaths in the vicinity. Visually it is considered that the reservoir will be hidden from public views due to the existing natural screening and topography of the land.

3.1.7 In-keeping with the applicant's commitment to farm to a high environmental standards, as part of the project they propose to restore a pond which was originally adjacent to the earlier approved application site to improve the current habitat potential, which will also be enhanced on the wider farm through the addition of the reservoir (**Figure 3**). This pond is over 650m away from the revised site.

3.1.8 In terms of other environmental enhancements, the applicants propose to implement a native tree planting regime which will help to connect to existing woodland habitat and create further biodiversity benefits for the farm.

3.1.9 To ensure alignment with Walkers Crisps' efforts to encourage environmental enhancements and for their growers to produce sustainable products, J R O Griffiths Ltd are aiming for a holistic management approach, trialing zero planting methods and soil improvement. They also believe in the use of organic waste incorporation and are trialing various environmental working practices and robotics for the optimum growth and harvesting of the potatoes.

3.1.10 Further measures undertaken by the applicants include green initiatives with regard to their energy usage, as many of the buildings used for potato storage form part of a 550kW solar PV system. In addition, a 4MW Ground Source Heat Pump system has been installed to provide heat, whilst benefitting from the facility to chill 12 potato stores. The weather has been warmer over the past few years and the new reservoir will help to reduce the impact of weather fluctuations, improving overall business resilience. This will help to meet the government aims of employing practices that help to produce food sustainably and protect the environment.

3.1.11 It is therefore considered that the proposed farm reservoir project should be supported once fulfilment of the GPDO requirements has been demonstrated. Access to the site for construction will be sought from an existing farm track to Oaklands Farm off Pitchford Road, and the reservoir will be constructed by a qualified and experienced local soil and water contractor.

4.0 POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLE

4.1 Review of Class A

4.1.1 Class A of Part 6 within the GPDO 2015 (as amended) sets out the following criteria whereby development under this Permitted Development right is permitted/not permitted:

4.1.2 Under Class A development is allowed consisting of —

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; or

(b) Any excavation or engineering operation,

Which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit.

4.1.3 This application seeks approval for the construction of a farm reservoir which is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the unit at Oaklands Farm.

4.1.4 Under Class A there are key criteria which need to be considered. Development is not permitted by Class A1 if :-

(a) the development would be carried out on a separate parcel of land forming part of the unit which is less than 1 hectare in area;

- The development would be carried out on parcel SJ5205 5541, which extends to approximately 23.5 ha in area as shown in **Figure 4** below.



Figure 4

(Not to Scale)

Planning Statement
Prior approval application for creation of agricultural reservoir

(b) it would consist of the erection or extension of any agricultural building on an established agricultural unit (as defined in paragraph X of Part 3 of this Schedule) where development under Class Q or S of Part 3 (changes of use) of this Schedule has been carried out within a period of 10 years ending with the date on which development under Class A(a) begins;

- The proposed development does not include any agricultural buildings

(c) it would consist of, or include, the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling;

- No dwelling is proposed

(d) it would involve the provision of a building, structure or works not designed for agricultural purposes;

- The development does not involve any works not designed for agricultural purposes

(e) the ground area which would be covered by—

(i) any works or structure (other than a fence) for accommodating livestock or any plant or machinery arising from engineering operations; or

(ii) any building erected or extended or altered by virtue of Class A, would exceed 1,000 square metres, calculated as described in paragraph D.1(2)(a) of this Part;

For definition purposes, paragraph D.1(2)(a) describes the calculated as follows: “an area “calculated as described in paragraph D.1(2)(a)” comprises the ground area which would be covered by the proposed development, together with the ground area of any building (other than a dwelling), or any structure, works, plant, machinery, ponds or tanks within the same unit which are being provided or have been provided within the preceding 2 years and any part of which would be within 90 metres of the proposed development;”

- The proposed development site would not include any areas that are covered by any works or structure for accommodating livestock of any plant or machinery arising from engineering operations or any buildings.

(f) the height of any part of any building, structure or works within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 3 metres;

(g) the height of any part of any building, structure or works not within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 12 metres;

- There is no building involved and the site is not within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome.

(h) any part of the development would be within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk road or classified road;

Planning Statement
Prior approval application for creation of agricultural reservoir

- The development is not within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk or classified road.

(i) it would 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;

- The proposed development does not include any building, structure or excavation used or to be used for livestock or the storage of slurry or sewage sludge.

(j) it would involve excavations or engineering operations on or over article 2(4) land which are connected with fish farming; or

(k) any building for storing fuel for or waste from a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system—

(i) would be used for storing waste not produced by that boiler or system or for storing fuel not produced on land within the unit; or

(ii) is or would be within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building.

- The proposed development would not involve excavations or engineering operations on or over article 2(4) land which are connected with fish farming and would not involve any building for storing fuel for or waste from a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system.

Following appraisal of the above requirements, it has been clearly demonstrated that the proposed development complies with the regulations and criteria set out within Class A of Part 6 GPDO 2015 (as amended). Therefore, it can be concluded (given that a previous approval had been given on a site south of the farm) that the revised siting of the reservoir is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture given the needs of the agricultural enterprise.

5.0 MATTERS THAT MAY REQUIRE PRIOR APPROVAL

5.1.1 Part 2 of Class A states that the following development is permitted subject to a number of conditions:

- (a) The erection, extension or alteration of a building;*
- (b) The formation or alteration of a private way;*
- (c) The carrying out of excavations or the deposit of waste material (where the relevant area, as defined in paragraph D.1(4) of this Part, exceeds 0.5 hectares); or*
- (d) The placing or assembly of a tank in any waters*

5.1.2 In this regard the Order states:

“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.”

5.2 Siting of the proposed development

5.2.1 The proposed development will be located within an existing arable field, a location with minimal ecological interest. It is considered the revised site is the most appropriate for the farm as the original site (23/03259/AGR) following further ground investigations is not deemed to be suitable due to the underlying ground conditions. Extensive ground investigations on the revised site have shown that suitable ground conditions exist.

5.2.2. An independent flood risk assessment report has been submitted with the application which shows that the risk to the site from flooding is low. A copy of the report is provided at **Appendix 4.**

5.2.3 The site does not lie within any nature conservation or heritage designation. The location of the proposed farm reservoir is such that the reservoir would be able to store water during the winter months (thereby reducing run off to the River Severn which is prone to flooding).

5.2.4 The location of the revised application site cannot be viewed from the public highway due to the distance and natural topography of the land which is undulating in form and will assist with the assimilation of the reservoir embankments into the landscape. Therefore, this will not give rise to any potential harm to the context of the surrounding agricultural environment.

5.2.5 The reservoir is to be located away from nearby properties and there is no public access to the site.

5.2.6 The siting of the reservoir is therefore considered to be entirely appropriate and suitable and therefore it is not considered that the prior approval of Shropshire Council is necessary in respect of the location of the reservoir.

5.3 Ecology

5.3.1 The previous application required an ecology assessment as the site was close to a pond with potential for Great Crested Newts. The revised site is far away from the pond (some 650m away).

5.3.2 Pre-application consultation with Demi Cook, Shropshire Council planning ecologist has confirmed that the revised site does not seem suitable for great crested newts and connectivity to the surrounding habitat is poor. It was anticipated that great crested newts will not be constraint for the revised reservoir location and it was advised that an ecology report would not be required.

5.3.3 The applicant is happy to provide the wildlife enhancements suggested under the previous application in order to boost local wildlife value.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.1.1 Every day agriculture, along with industry and power generation, uses 1,000 million litres (of the 14,000 million litres of water supplied daily by water companies) of water daily. Furthermore, water demand is increasing with a growing population, changing societal demands and impacts of climate change. If the agricultural industry can take responsibility to sustainably capture and store water at times of peak flow, it will help limit soil erosion and flooding and provide environmental benefits.

6.1.2 The proposed development is for a small-scale scheme providing a new agricultural crop irrigation reservoir at land at Oaklands Farm, Pitchford, Shrewsbury, SY5 7DJ. The assessment of the prior notification planning application has been made in accordance with the criteria as set out in Schedule 2, Part 6 of the Town and Country Planning (GPDO) Order 2015 (as amended), Class A.

6.1.3 The siting, design and external appearance proposals are in accordance with other functional irrigation reservoirs elsewhere in the surrounding countryside. A revised site has been put forward as the original site was unable to be constructed due to unsuitable ground conditions.

6.1.4 In consideration of the above, this application is considered appropriate and accordingly is seen as acceptable under permitted development rights to provide a new irrigation reservoir which will provide long term water security for the applicants given the unpredictable climate conditions experienced in recent years.

6.1.5 The application and this statement have clearly demonstrated that the proposed development meets all the criteria detailed in Schedule 2, Part 6 of Class A, therefore it is considered that Prior Approval for the revised siting of the reservoir is not required, and the project can proceed as permitted development.

6.1.6 The Shropshire Council ecologist has confirmed that the revised reservoir site does not appear suitable for great crested newts and the connectivity to the surrounding habitat is poor. It is not anticipated that great crested newts will be a constraint for the revised proposed location.

6.1.7 In accordance with Part A.2(2) the planning authority has 28 days from the receipt of an application to notify the applicant as to whether Prior Approval is required.

Stephen Locke BSc (Hons) MRICS MRTPI FAAV

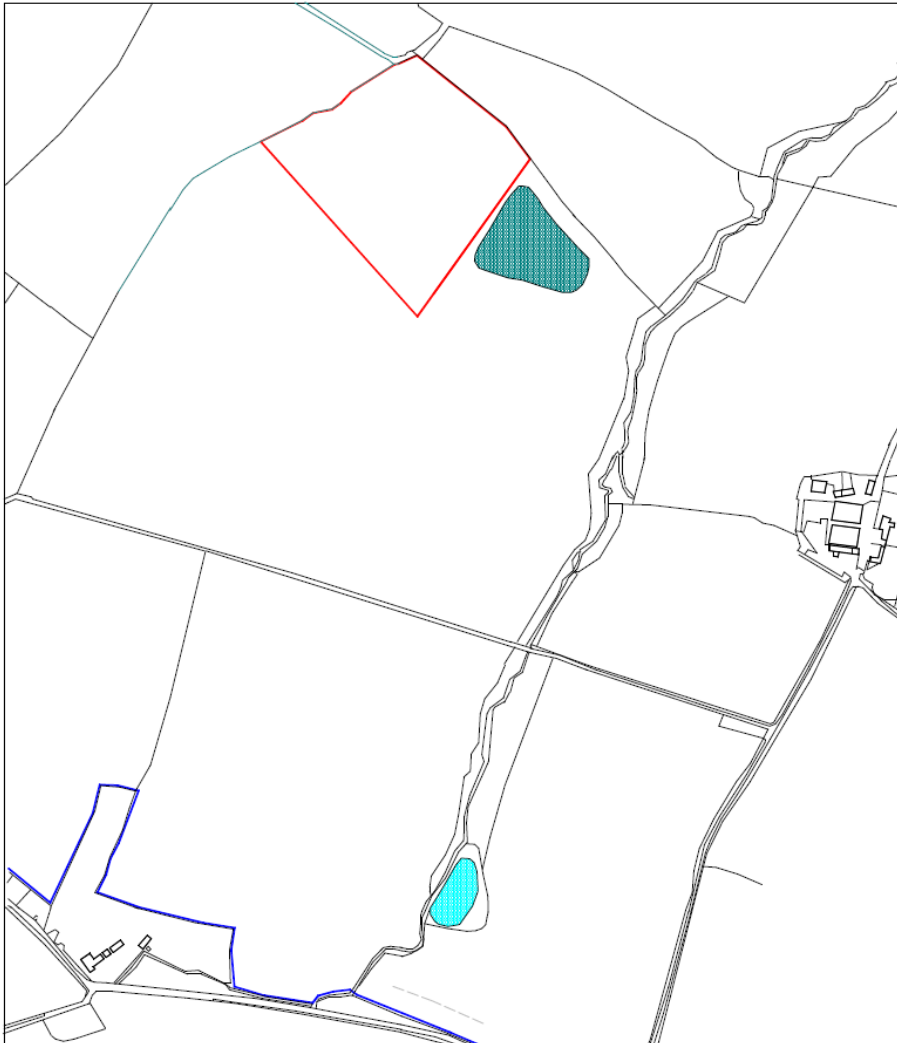
For Stephen Locke Associates

January 2024

Appendix 1

Location Plan (NTS)

Planning Statement
Prior approval application for creation of agricultural reservoir



Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2024 All rights reserved. Licence number 100057264

Location Plan - 352648, 305576.
Oaklands Farm, Pitchford,
Shrewsbury, SY5 7DJ.
Scale 1 to 2500
Date Feb 2024
433-221R Plan 1 to 2500 A1



Not to scale

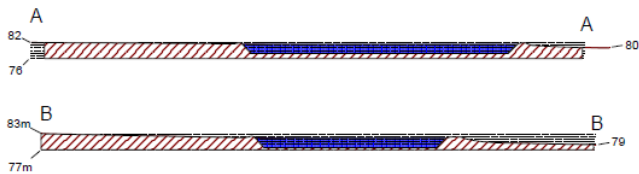
Appendix 2

Proposed Design Plans

Planning Statement
 Prior approval application for creation of agricultural reservoir



Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2024 All rights reserved. Licence number 100057264



Location Plan - 352648, 305576.
 Oaklands Farm, Pitchford,
 Shrewsbury, SY5 7DJ.
 Scale 1 to 2500
 Date Feb 2024
 433-221R Plan 1 to 500 A2



Not to scale



Planning Statement
Prior approval application for creation of agricultural reservoir

Appendix 3

Site Photographs

Planning Statement
Prior approval application for creation of agricultural reservoir



1. View from north east corner of field looking back towards new reservoir site



2. View of site showing existing arable use

Planning Statement
Prior approval application for creation of agricultural reservoir



3. View of site – very low environmental value

Appendix 4

Flood Risk Assessment Report



Flood map for planning

Your reference	Location (easting/northing)	Created
<Unspecified>	352606/305614	29 Jan 2024 10:19

Your selected location is in flood zone 1, an area with a low probability of flooding.

You will need to do a flood risk assessment if your site is **any of the following**:

- bigger than 1 hectare (ha)
- In an area with critical drainage problems as notified by the Environment Agency
- identified as being at increased flood risk in future by the local authority's strategic flood risk assessment
- at risk from other sources of flooding (such as surface water or reservoirs) and its development would increase the vulnerability of its use (such as constructing an office on an undeveloped site or converting a shop to a dwelling)

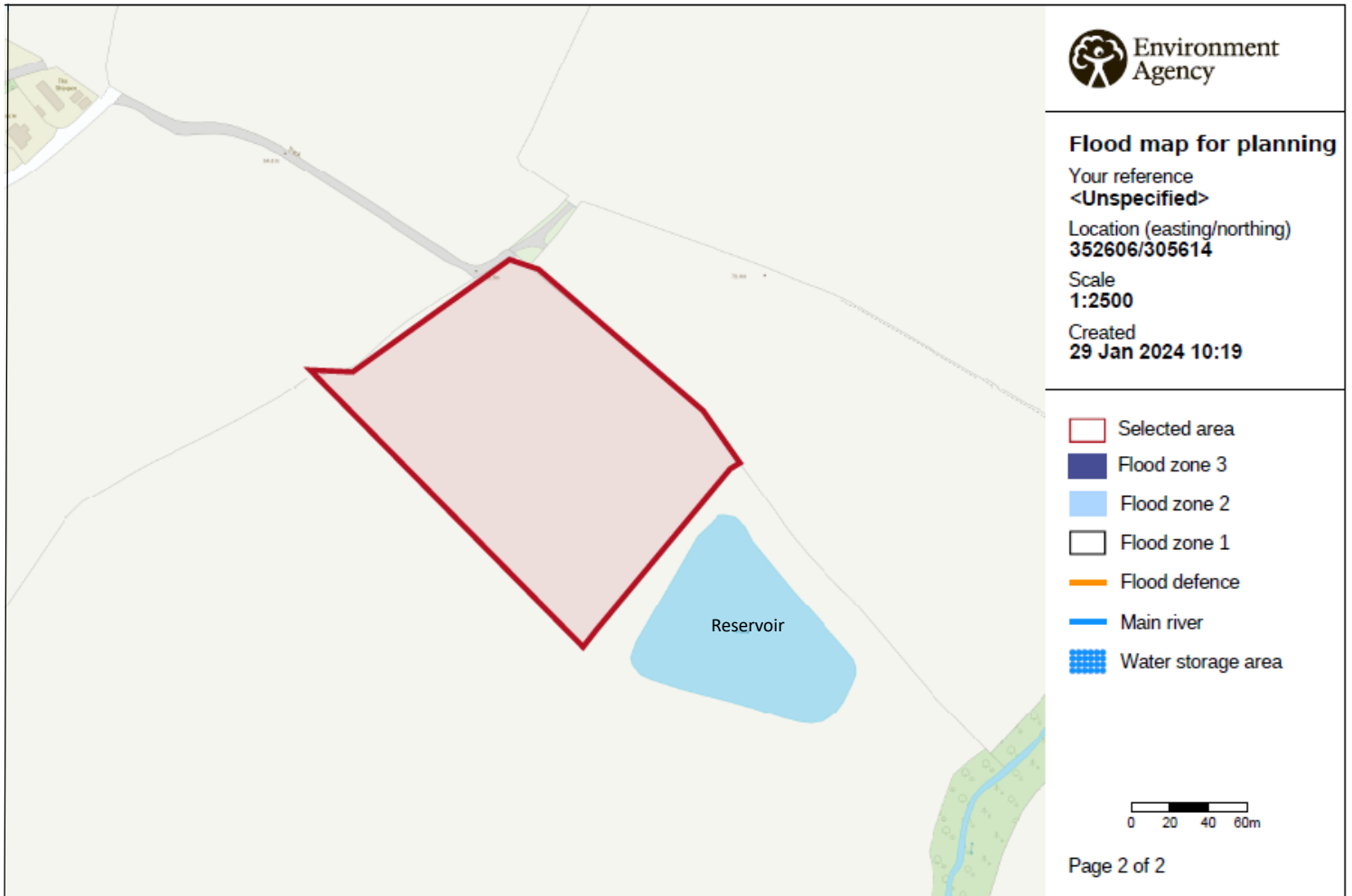
Notes

The flood map for planning shows river and sea flooding data only. It doesn't include other sources of flooding. It is for use in development planning and flood risk assessments.

This information relates to the selected location and is not specific to any property within it. The map is updated regularly and is correct at the time of printing.

Flood risk data is covered by the Open Government Licence **which** sets out the terms and conditions for using government data. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>

Use of the address and mapping data is subject to Ordnance Survey public viewing terms under Crown copyright and database rights 2022 OS 100024198. <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/os-terms>



© Environment Agency copyright and / or database rights 2022. All rights reserved. © Crown Copyright and database right 2022. Ordnance Survey licence number 100024198.