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Our ref: 178928 CN/CC

28 February 2024

Dear Sir / Madam,

Prior Notification application for a new general-purpose agricultural building at Mackerels Plain, Little Norman Street, Ide Hill, TN14 6BN

Schedule 2 Part 6 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)

Planning Portal Reference Number PP- 12812609

Strutt & Parker has been instructed by the Montreal Estate to submit prior notification of their intention to construct a 680.4m² general agricultural/forestry building and associated hardstanding at Mackerels Plain, Ide Hill, TN14 6BN. This submission supersedes an earlier prior approval determination following a minor change to the scheme design.

Prior notification has been submitted under Planning Portal reference PP- 12812609, along with this covering letter, a location plan, block plan and existing, proposed and combined elevations. The submission is also supported by a statement of agricultural need. The relevant application fee of £120.00 (plus £64.00 Planning Portal fee), has been paid directly by our client through the Planning Portal.

Site Description

Mackerels Plain is located approximately 1.5km north-east of Ide Hill. The site for the proposed agricultural/forestry building (and associated hardstanding) is located towards the west side of a 3.6 hectare field of arable land situated centrally within the Estate, adjacent to an existing forestry building. The site is connected to the remainder of the Estate via a well-established network of agricultural tracks. The existing forestry building is situated towards the south-west corner of the field, immediately south of the proposed site. Access to the site is gained from an agricultural track off the north side of Little Norman Street. A public right of way runs along this section (SR230). There is an existing area of hardstanding to the south and east of the existing forestry building.

Background and Use

Presently, the Estate does not have suitable building stock to store grain and machinery efficiently. The Estate relies upon the rotation of machinery and grain in the agricultural buildings at Penn Farm, located approximately 1km north-west of Mackerels Plain. The agricultural buildings at Penn Farm were intended to be used primarily for the purpose of storing and servicing machinery, however the Estate has had to rely upon these buildings for the sporadic storage of grain.





The success of the arable and forestry enterprises (in terms of production levels), has resulted in the need for further storage capacity. The consequent rotation of storage amongst the current building stock has left the Estate short of secure storage for machinery, and is presently inefficient.

The volume of woodchip produced from the Estate's woodland enterprise annually significantly exceeds its capacity to store it. Further storage capacity will therefore allow woodchip to be supplied year round rather than seasonally. The new multipurpose building would be used for grain and timber product, alternating on a seasonal basis, but also for general machinery storage where capacity allows.

The agricultural need is set out in more comprehensive terms in the attached Agricultural and Forestry Statement.

Relevant Planning History

SE/15/03401/AGRNOT – Erection of a forestry store (prior approval not required).

23/00804/AGRNOT – Agricultural building (prior approval not required).

Proposal

In April 2023, Sevenoaks District Council determined that prior approval was not required for the erection of a general purpose agricultural building on the same site (23/00804/AGRNOT). The applicant is seeking permission for an amended scheme. The proposal only differs in so far as the finish of the building and doors, the addition of a further service door and a reduced hardstanding area. The size and siting of the building remain the same as permitted by 23/00804/AGRNOT.

It is proposed to erect a building with a footprint of 680.4m² for general purpose agricultural/forestry uses. The building has base dimensions of 18.9m x 36m, an eaves height of 6m and a ridge height of 8.1m. Externally, the lower 4m of the building will be formed from precast concrete panels with the remainder of the external walls being plastic coated profile cladding finished in olive green. The building will have 6 bays, each served by plastisol coated roller shutter doors on the eastern elevation. Each door will measure 6m in width by 5.5m in height and will be finished in olive green. The building will feature two personnel doors, with one located on the southern elevation and the other on the northern elevation. The doors will measure 1m in width by 2.1m in height. The roof would be formed from fibre cement roof sheets finished in a natural grey colour. The 6m eaves height will allow for access by a tractor and trailer or other suitable vehicle to allow tipping of grain onto the concrete floor.

In addition to the Agricultural Statement, the application is accompanied by the following drawings:

- NFP165S004 Location Plan
- NFP165B005 Block Plan (proposed)
- GJE165P001 Existing Elevations
- GJE165P002 Proposed Elevations
- GJE165P003 Combined Elevations

In addition, under Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J of the GPDO it is proposed to subsequently install 60 solar PV panels to the roof of the proposed building. The 60 panels would be located on the eastern elevation, at the northern end of the building as shown in drawing 24006-DGE-XX-XX-DR-E-6202 submitted with this application for information only. (Please note that the labelling on the East Elevation on drawing GJE165P002 is not intended to identify the precise location of the solar array).

The proposal also includes the provision of an extended hardstanding. This is arranged on the east side of the building and will be contiguous with the existing hardstanding serving the forestry barn. The additional area covers 216sqm.

It is proposed to locate the building towards the south-west corner of the arable field, immediately to the north of the existing forestry building (15/03401/AGRNOT). This location provides immediate access to the existing agricultural track

network, and also benefits from existing screening from mature trees along the western and southern part of the field. The building has been positioned outside the likely root protection zones of trees at the fringe of the track.

Landscape

The site is located within the Kent Downs National Landscape (formerly the Kent Downs AONB). However, the proposed site is not particularly sensitive in landscape terms. The intended siting of the building is appropriate, with the building set against the backdrop of the mature trees and woodland to the west of the arable field. The report on SE/15/03401/AGRN0T acknowledged that the forestry store “*would be partially screened by existing tree belt to the north, east and south of the site*” and the same would be true of the current proposal. In addition, the officer’s report on 23/00804/AGRN0T states that this type of building “*would not appear ‘alien’ within its context of the wider landscape and of the AONB*”, further noting that “*provided the development is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture/forestry and meets the criteria of the legislation, their siting within the Green Belt or AONB is not a reason for withholding permission*”.

There are no medium or long distance views of the site because of natural screening, and only filtered views through the tree belt along a short section of the PROW which runs along the agricultural track to the west of the site.

GPDO Compliance

Part 6, Class A

Class A of Part 6 of the GPDO applies because the agricultural unit constitutes more than 5 hectares of land and the proposed development is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture.

The proposed building complies with Part 6, Class A of the 2015 GPDO (as amended) and meets the criteria set out in paragraph A.1, as follows:

- a) The development would not be carried out on a separate parcel of land forming part of the unit which is less 1 hectare in area.
- b) Neither Class Q nor Class S rights have been exercised on the relevant unit.
- c) It does not involve the development of a dwelling.
- d) The proposed buildings and works are designed for agricultural purposes.
- e) The ground area covered by the works and the buildings is less than 1,000 sqm (680.4 sqm + 213 sqm)
- f) The proposal is not within 3km of an aerodrome.
- g) The height of the building does not exceed 12m.
- h) No part of the development would be within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk road or classified road.
- i) The development is not being proposed for the accommodation of livestock or storage of slurry or sewage sludge.
- j) The development does not relate to fish farming.
- k) The building would not be used for storing waste from a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system, or for fuel not produced on land within the unit.

Additionally, the proposed building meets the conditions set out in paragraph A. 2 (1) as the building is not proposed to be used for livestock, slurry, biomass boiler or AD system.

Paragraph A.2 (2) requires details of new agricultural and forestry buildings that comply with the above conditions to be submitted to the Council for determination as to whether Prior Approval is required.

There is no prospect that this revised submission will result in a doubling up of the built area sought as the proposal is submitted on the same footprint as 23/00804/AGRN0T, so is incapable of being implemented other than as an alternative to that scheme.

Part 14, Class J

Class J of Part 14 of the GPDO allows for the installation or alteration of solar equipment on non-domestic properties. It is the applicant's intention to rely on this right once the building has been erected, to introduce a solar array on the roof.

The installation of the proposed PV panels complies with Part 14, Class J of the 2015 GPDO (as amended) and meets the criteria set out in paragraph J.1, as follows:

- a) The PV equipment will not protrude more than 0.2m beyond the plan of the roof slope.
- b) The PV equipment will not be installed on a flat roof.
- c) The PV equipment will not be installed within 1m of the external edge of the roof.
- d) The PV equipment will not be installed on a roof slope that fronts a highwayⁱ
- e) The site is not a designated scheduled monument
- f) The PV equipment will not be installed on or within the curtilage of a listed building.

Additionally, the proposed PV panels meet the conditions set out in paragraph J.4 (1) as follows:

- a) The PV equipment is to be sited to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building and the amenity of the area.
- b) The PV equipment will be removed from the building as soon as reasonably practicable when it is no longer required.

This submission has provided a reasoned justification for the proposed building and works and its siting at Mackerels Plain. Details of the design and external appearance of the proposed building have also been provided, and an agricultural justification presented.

We trust that this application is all in order and we look forward to a prompt registration. If you require any further information, please contact the writer.

Yours sincerely,



**Craig Noel BS MSc DipUP MRTPI
Director**

Encls: Application Form
Location Plan
Block Plan
Existing Elevations
Proposed Elevations
Combined Elevations
Solar PV Layout Drawing
Agricultural Statement

ⁱ As the footpath (SR230) to the west of the building is technically a highway, the array will be located on the east facing roof slope.