



AGRICULTURAL APPRAISAL

The Watergate Estate

Locksash Farm

Locksash Lane

West Marden

Chichester

West Sussex

PO18 9DZ

On behalf of

The Watergate Estate, c/o Mr Stuart Reid

Prepared By

Batcheller Monkhouse

16 February 2024

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This agricultural appraisal is submitted in support of a Prior Notification application (SDNP/23/05350/APNB) for a new agricultural building for grain storage on land forming part of The Watergate Estate, Locksash Farm, West Marden, Chichester, PO18 9DZ.
- 1.2 The proposed barn is considered to meet with the criteria set out in Part 6, Section A.2, part (2)(i) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, as amended, which requires the Applicant to apply to the Local Planning Authority for determination as to whether prior approval will be required for certain elements of the proposal.
- 1.3 This agricultural appraisal has been prepared by Batcheller Monkhouse on behalf of The Watergate Estate c/o Stuart Reid of Locksash Farm, West Marden, Chichester, PO18 9DZ. The statement includes a brief description of the site and surroundings, a description of the proposed development, an assessment of the agricultural justification and an assessment of compliance with Class A Part 6 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended).

2 THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site is situated just to the south of a range of existing farm buildings at Locksash Farm, off Locksash Lane, which is approximately 10 miles to the northwest of Chichester. The proposed location for the barn is shown in Figure 3 below.
- 2.2 Locksash Farm comprises an area of approximately 610 hectares (1,500 acres) predominantly made up of arable land, permanent pasture and woodland, with a farmyard comprising of a mix of traditional and more modern farm buildings, as well as a handful of residential properties. There are approximately 16 miles of public rights of way on the holding. The farm is situated within the South Downs National Park.
- 2.3 The site has been identified as being the most appropriate location for a new grain store as it is part of an area of existing hardstanding which adjoins the farmyard. It is accessed through the farmyard, via two trackways between existing farm buildings. It also has a large hardcore area to the north of the barn which can accommodate turning of farm machinery and HGV grain merchant lorries.
- 2.4 The application site is completely screened by the existing yard and buildings to the north, south and west, with mature woodland to the east.

Figure 1: Location of Locksash Farm:

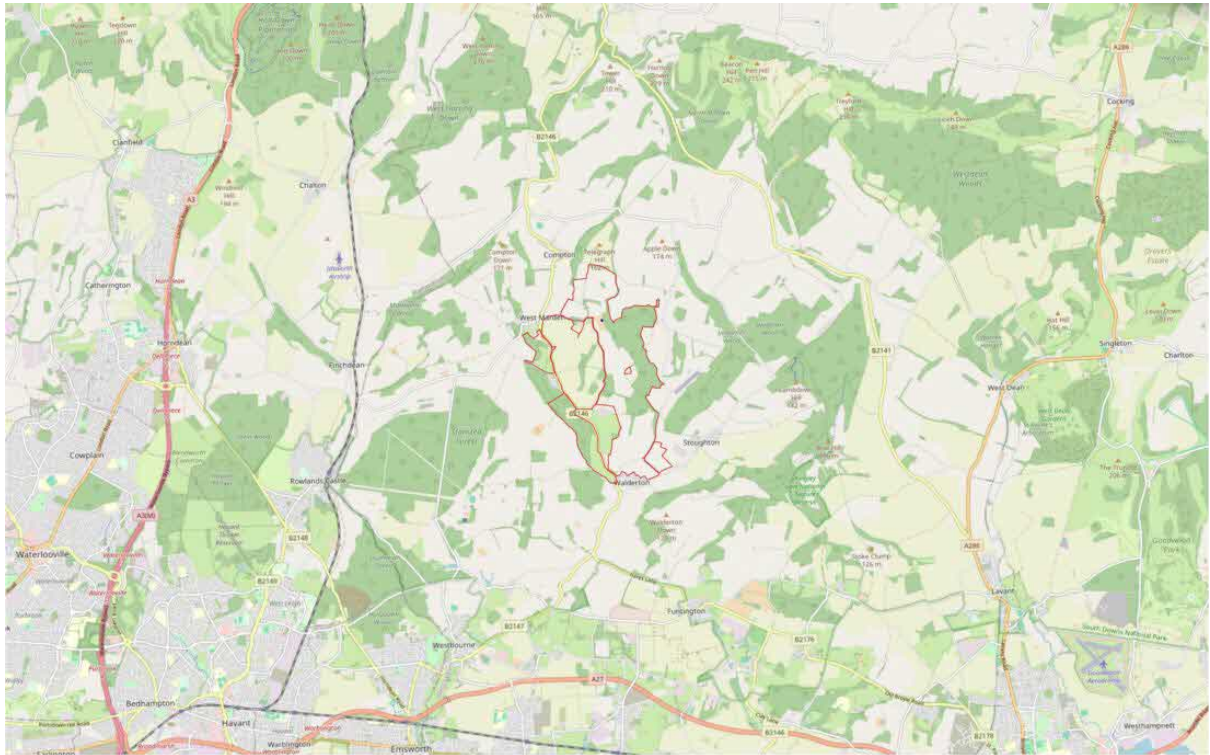


Figure 2: The holding –Locksash Farm



Figure 3: Proposed location for the barn:



3 THE PROPOSAL, DESIGN AND ACCESS ELEMENTS

3.1 PROPOSAL

3.1.1 The proposal is for the erection of an agricultural building for use for storing grain and agricultural machinery and equipment.

3.1.2 The barn will be used for the storage of grain produced on the holding and other adjoining farms under the contract farming agreements. During the short periods that the barn is empty of grain following its sale, the barn will also be used to securely store agricultural machinery and equipment.

3.2 DESIGN AND SCALE

3.2.1 The new barn will be a standard steel portal framed barn measuring 30.48 m x 18.28 m and have an eaves height of 7.01 m and a ridge height of approximately 9.49 m. The barn will be fully enclosed and clad with concrete panels and box profile agricultural tin cladding. There will be two roller shutter doors set within the northern elevation. The roof will comprise of concrete cement roof sheets. There will not be any roof lights. There will be an internal concrete floor. The barns rainwater goods will feed into a rainwater harvesting system, from which the harvested water will be reused on the farm. Scaled drawings have been submitted alongside the application.

3.2.2 In order to reduce the impact it has on the surrounding landscape, the scale of the barn has been selected as the minimum size feasible whilst providing adequate grain storage facilities to the agricultural business. The proposed situation of the barn ensures that there will be very minimal impact on the surrounding views, as it will be entirely screened by woodland and the existing farm buildings.

3.3 MATERIALS

3.3.1 The proposed barn will have a steel frame under a fibre cement roof, with concrete panels and box profile agricultural tin cladding. The northern elevations will have two roller shutter doors of sufficient size to permit the entry of tractors, grain trailers and other large farm machinery. The internal floor surface will be concrete.

3.3.2 The barn is of a simple and functional design as would be expected of a modern agricultural building. The design is also intended to be sympathetic to the existing buildings and landscape. The tin cladding and fibre cement roofing materials have been selected so that the visual appearance of the new building resonates with the existing adjacent farm buildings and the visual impact on the South Downs National Park is negligible.

A schedule of photographs showing the existing farm buildings can be found at Appendix A.

3.4 ACCESS

3.4.1 Access to the barn will be via an existing hardcore track leading from Locksash Lane, through the existing yard. This then splits into two accesses that lead to the site.

3.5 SERVICES

3.5.1 The electricity supply will be connected to the new barn from an existing barn to the west for two small internal lights.

3.6 LANDSCAPING

3.6.1 No new landscaping is proposed as the new barn will connect directly with the existing hardcore yard and will be almost completely screened from distant views by existing mature woodland and the farm buildings, as shown in the attached Schedule of Photos in Appendix A.

4 AGRICULTURAL JUSTIFICATION

4.1 FARMING BUSINESS

- 4.1.1 Locksash Farm was purchased in 1992 and Mr Stuart Reid has managed the farm as per its existing structure since its purchase.
- 4.1.2 A contract farming agreement is in place between The Watergate Estate and Marden Contracting Limited. The Watergate Estate own 50% of Marden Contracting Limited, with the remaining 50% owned by an adjoining farmer. The Watergate Estate provide 100% of the labour, however Marden Contracting Limited own 100% of the machinery which is mostly stored at Locksash Farm.
- 4.1.3 The farming enterprise at Locksash Farm comprises approximately 300 hectares of arable land which is used to produce combinable crops. The farms rotation includes wheat, barley, oats, oil seed rape and beans. In addition, approximately 50 hectares of permanent pasture is grazed by sheep under an informal grazing licence. 250 hectares of woodland is actively managed under a woodland management plan.
- 4.1.4 Marden Contracting Limited entered into an additional contract farming agreement with a neighbouring farm in 2012. This agreement includes an additional 300 hectares of combinable crops. The grain produced on this farm is also processed and stored at Locksash Farm.
- 4.1.5 Additional to the production of combinable crops on both farms, and the grazing of Locksash Farm, general land management is undertaken, including hedge and boundary maintenance, as well as the clearance of the extensive public rights of way.
- 4.1.6 The land is registered with the Rural Payments Agency and has been used to claim the Basic Payment Subsidy and earlier subsidy schemes since the farms purchase.
- 4.1.7 The land is currently entered into the following agri-environmental schemes –
- Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier
 - Approximately 200 hectares of woodland is entered into WD2 (Woodland Improvement). A woodland management plan is in place and is regularly reviewed.
 - Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier
 - The majority of the remaining farmland is entered into a Mid-Tier scheme which comprises of mostly GS2 (Low Input Grassland), AB8 (Flower-rich margins and plots), AB9 (Winter bird food), AB11 (Cultivated areas for arable), AB12(Supplementary winter feeding for farmland birds), HS3 (Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on historic and archaeological features) and BE3 (Hedgerow Management).

- 4.1.8 Locksash Farm lies just outside of Portsmouth Water's catchment area, however a number of projects have been undertaken to assist the company with their aim to supply high quality water in the locality.
- 4.1.9 Furthermore, the farm is Red Tractor assured and therefore meets the high industry standard set for the combinable crops produced on the holding.
- 4.1.10 The businesses' long-term objective is to continue farming the land. The business is forward thinking and hopes to invest in innovative farm machinery that promotes sustainable management, while continuing to produce high yielding crops. While taking a modern, forward-thinking approach to the farming activities, the business is very traditional and does not intend to diversify or commercialize the asset.

4.2 AGRICULTURAL NEED

4.2.1 Building Heights and harvest efficiency

The most recent agricultural building erected on the holding was a grain store in 2012 (11/02861/PNONP). While this building is the most suitable building on the holding for grain storage, it does not adequately meet the farms grain storage requirements as the storage capacity of this building is only approximately 1,500 m³. This only accommodates a small proportion of Locksash Farm's grain production and does not accommodate any grain produced on the adjoining farm, under the contract farming agreement.

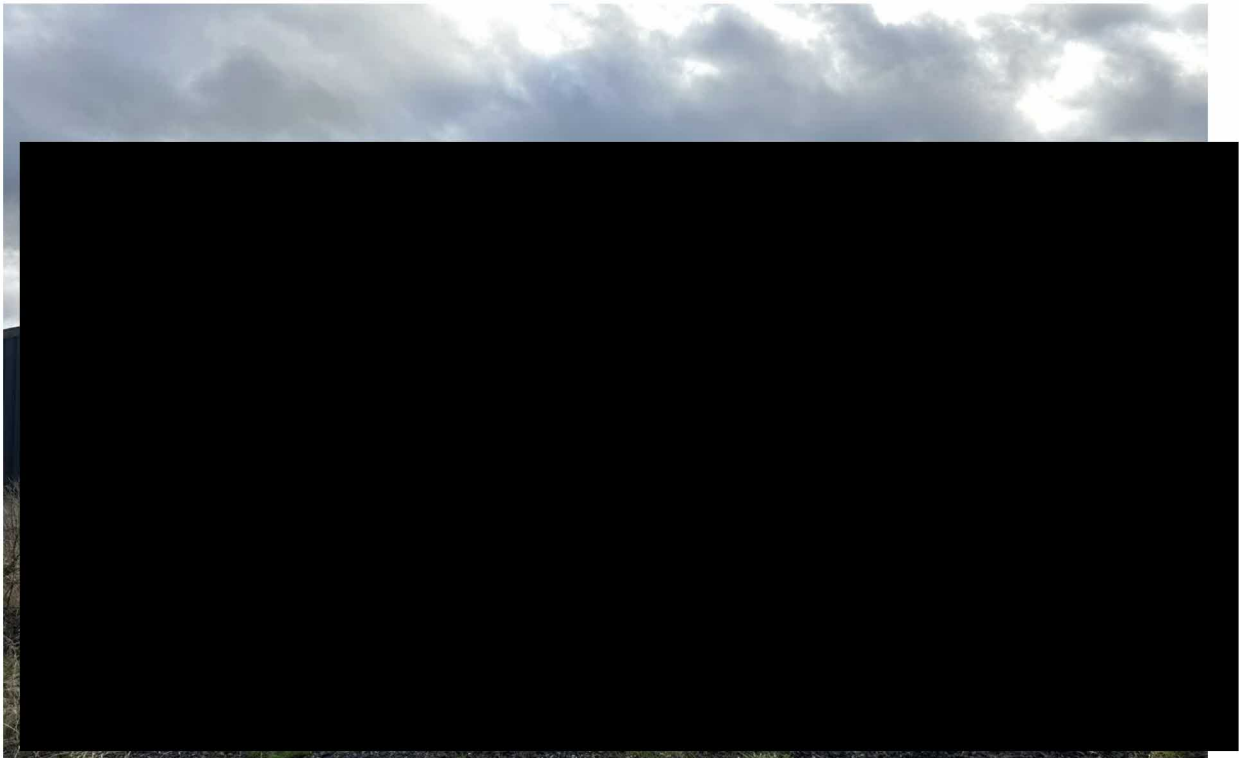
In addition, the low eaves and ridge height of this building as it is unsuitable for use with more modern machinery as there is not enough clearance between the machinery and the roof. For example, the existing grain trailers cannot tip their full loads into the barn, which severely impacts on the efficiency of the harvest operation. This issue is seen across all of the other existing buildings within the farmyard, however, it is significantly worse due to the even lower eaves and ridge heights of the older buildings, most of which can be seen at Appendix A.

As per the plan at Figure 4, the ridge height of the building erected in 2012 is 5.786m, and the eaves height is 4.7m. Figure 5 demonstrates the standing and tipping heights of one of the Bailey TB16's currently used on the farm to transport grain from the field and tip into the farmyard. This trailer should be utilised to tip directly into a grain store.

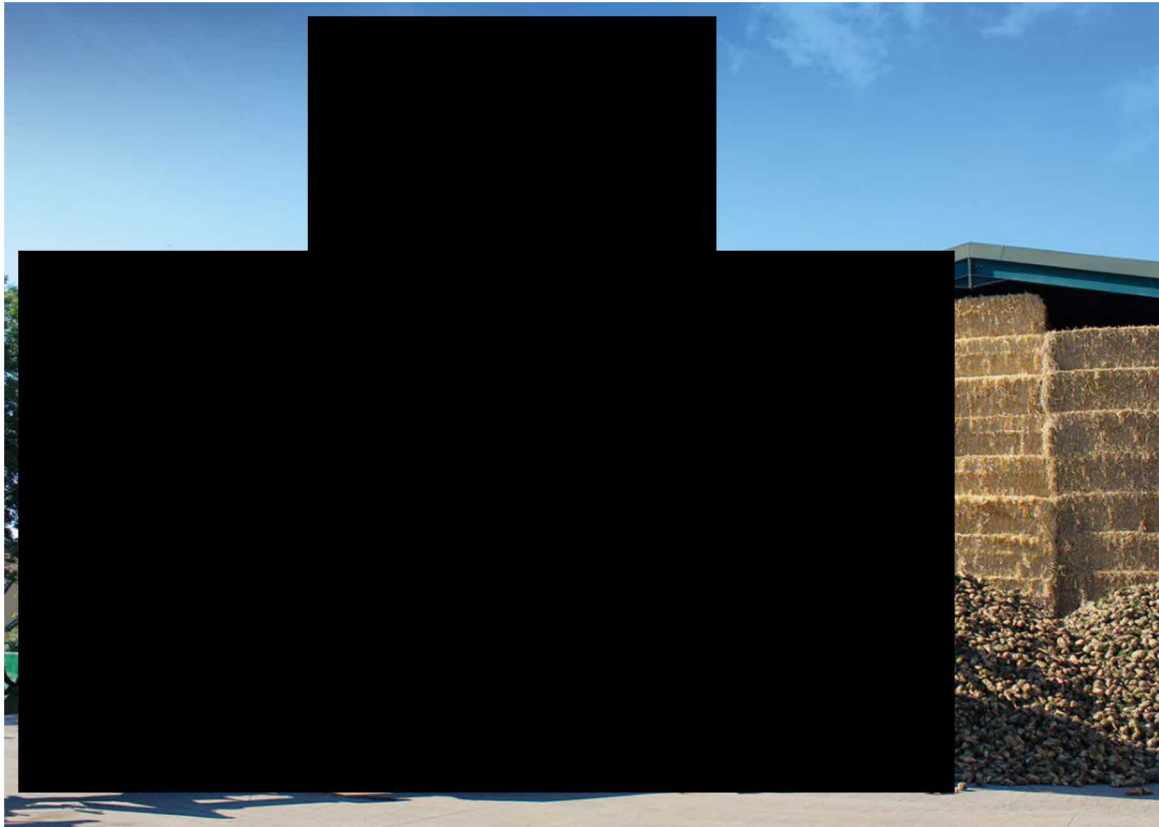
Figure 4: Grain store erected in 2012



Figure 5: Bailey TB16



(Photograph of Bailey Trailer at Locksash Farm)



(Photograph of fully tipped Bailey trailer taken from Bailey website)

The schedule of photographs at Appendix A demonstrates that none of the existing farm buildings can accommodate the full tipping height of the grain trailers and some do not allow enough clearance to tip any grain within the building. Subsequently, the grain currently has to be tipped on the outside of barns, then moved with smaller machinery into the barns, making the grain handling process highly inefficient. The increased use of fuel, labour, time and older machinery has significantly increased costs.

The existing requirement to tip the grain onto an area of hardstanding near to the current buildings, then to move the grain into the barn using smaller machinery immediately effects the quality of the grain. The grain often becomes contaminated with other material, such as gravel, which immediately reduces its value and saleability.

The new barn would ensure that the modern machinery could be utilised to its full efficiency. By eliminating the need to utilise older machinery to move the grain into the stores, it not only reduces costs to the business, but also reduces carbon emissions significantly, all of which contributes towards a more sustainable farming entity. The grain would also be protected from the risk of contamination, ensuring a high-quality product can be marketed.

4.2.2 Crop production and storage requirements

Locksash Farm itself produces an average of 2,500 tonnes of grain during harvest per annum (depending on the rotation), with an additional 3,000 tonnes of grain handled and stored for the neighbouring farm, as per the contract farming agreement. The table below analyses the crops produced in one harvest at Locksash Farm, based on yields described in the Agricultural Budgeting & Costings Book, May 2023 and those supplied by Locksash Farm harvest records.

Figure 6: Analysis of crops produced at Locksash Farm

Crop	Hectares	Average yield per hectare	Total grain produced
Winter Wheat	80	10 tonnes	800 tonnes
Second Wheat	40	9 tonnes	360 tonnes
Spring Barley	30	7.5 tonnes	225 tonnes
Winter Barley	60	9 tonnes	540 tonnes
Winter Oil Seed Rape	20	3.7 tonnes	74 tonnes
Field beans	20	4.2 tonnes	84 tonnes
Winter oats	50	6.6 tonnes	330 tonnes

The approximate capacity of the proposed building is 3,000 m³. The proposed buildings storage capacity per crop type can be found at Figure 6 below. The new barn will have two bays to accommodate the storage of two crop types. The new agricultural building would provide significant storage capacity to Locksash Farm, as well as the grain produced by the adjoining farm, which is handled and stored at Locksash under the contract farming agreement. Based on the assumption that the adjoining farm operates the same rotation as Locksash Farm, one bay of the new agricultural building would provide storage capacity for 68% of the Winter Wheat produced over the two holdings. Similarly, the other bay of the new building would provide storage for 95% of the Winter Barley produced over the two holdings.

The new grain store would provide the required infrastructure to utilise the farm buildings as a whole in more effective way and maximise the storage of crops within the appropriately sized building, relative to the volume of crops produced.

Figure 6: The proposed buildings storage capacity based on crop type.

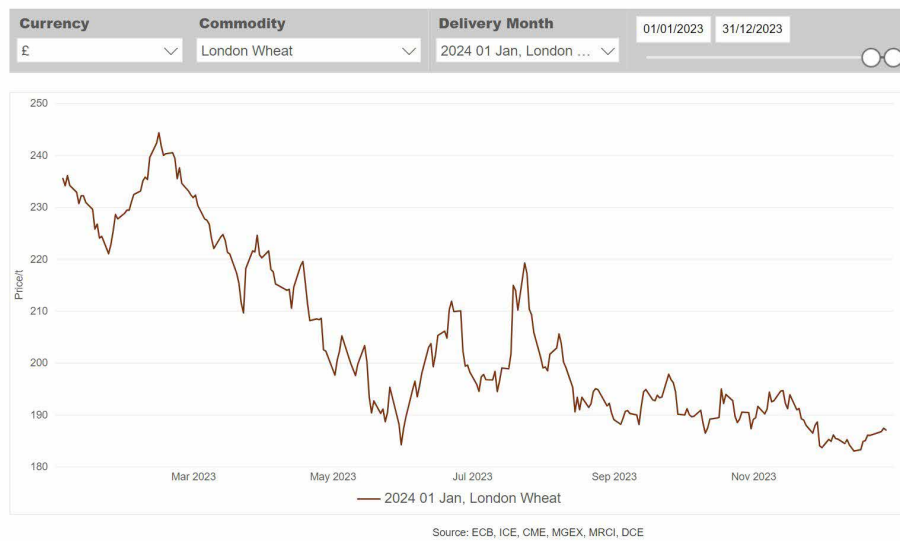
Crop type	M ³ per tonne	Storage capacity of whole building	Storage capacity per bay
Wheat	1.35	2,220 tonnes	1,110 tonnes
Barley	1.45	2,070 tonnes	1,035 tonnes
Oil Seed Rape	1.45	2,070 tonnes	1,035 tonnes
Oats	1.95	1,540 tonnes	1,270 tonnes
Beans	1.17	2,560 tonnes	1,280 tonnes

Storage capacities obtained from The Agricultural Budgeting & Costing Book – May 2023.

Secure undercover storage also helps to preserve the grain as a high-quality product. Inadequate storage conditions can lead to a reduction in the quality of the product, or an increase to the moisture content. The market for corn is particularly sensitive to the quality and moisture content and therefore this can also significantly affect the ability to obtain a higher price per tonne.

Greater capacity and better-quality storage will allow flexibility as to when the farms produce can be marketed, to provide opportunity to maximise access to better prices and allow the farm to be financially sustainable. Targeting the best price periods for marketing is paramount due to the fluctuations in grain price experienced throughout each year. Figure 7 below displays the price fluctuations of Wheat per tonne throughout 2023. Timing to sell crops at an economically advantageous moment is crucial to the viability of the farming enterprise.

Figure 7: London Wheat prices per tonne during 2023. (AHDB Cereals and Oilseeds markets).



4.2.3 Crop segregation

The proposed building would be partitioned into two bays, allowing for crop segregation. With the farm business growing multiple crops, it is important that these can be kept separate to eliminate different species or varieties from mixing, thus consequently causing the rejection of the grain by merchants which could be catastrophic to the business's profitability.

4.2.4 Machinery storage

Furthermore, a lockable, weather tight indoor space is important for the storage of valuable farm machinery both in terms of security and protecting it from the elements. With modern farm machinery growing in size and cost, the number of appropriate buildings available on the farm to store machinery is depleting. Once the grain stored within the new building is sold and it is subsequently empty, the building would be utilised to store new, larger machinery to avoid accelerated deterioration in its condition, particularly with regard to rust. This would reduce the effective working life of the machinery and maintenance costs.

A large proportion of machinery is currently being stored outside, on existing yard areas. An example of this is demonstrated at Figure 5 as the photograph shows the Bailey TB16 and a hydraulic roller stored outside. A wider range of machinery was also stored outside on various areas throughout the farmyard.

The existing useable storage buildings within the farmyard extend to approximately 2,600 sqm. However, these buildings are also currently required for grain storage (where possible), of which grain storage takes priority over machinery storage. As per the photographs at Appendix A, the storage of the larger machinery such as tractors and sprayers has been prioritised within the only barn that is currently empty of grain and has an adequate eaves height to accommodate the larger machinery. The new farm building would free up more of the storage areas throughout the year within the existing buildings that are currently used for grain storage, as well as offering an additional area to store large machinery when it is empty of grain of itself.

5 PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA

The application complies with the criteria outlined in Class A Part 6 of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) (herein referred to as ‘the Order’) in the following ways:

The agricultural unit is in excess of 5 hectares and the proposed development involves works for the erection of a building which is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the said unit. At approximately 610 hectares (1,500 acres) of land, the agricultural unit is well above the threshold of 5 hectares and there are no other suitable buildings available on the land, or the wider holding, for the necessary grain storage or to accommodate larger farm machinery to operate in. The requirement to store grain is considered to be a reasonable agricultural need and the scale and design of the barn is proportionate to that need.

The size of the proposed barn does not exceed 1,000 sqm, at just 557 sqm.

The proposed barn is less than 12m in height, being just 7.011m to the eaves and 9.492m to the ridge.

The proposed site of the barn is not within 25m of a classified road, being 157m from Locksash Lane. Access to the barn is to be provided via the existing farmyard, off Locksash Lane.

The proposed barn is within 400m of a protected dwelling, however will not be used to accommodate livestock or to store slurry or sewage sludge.

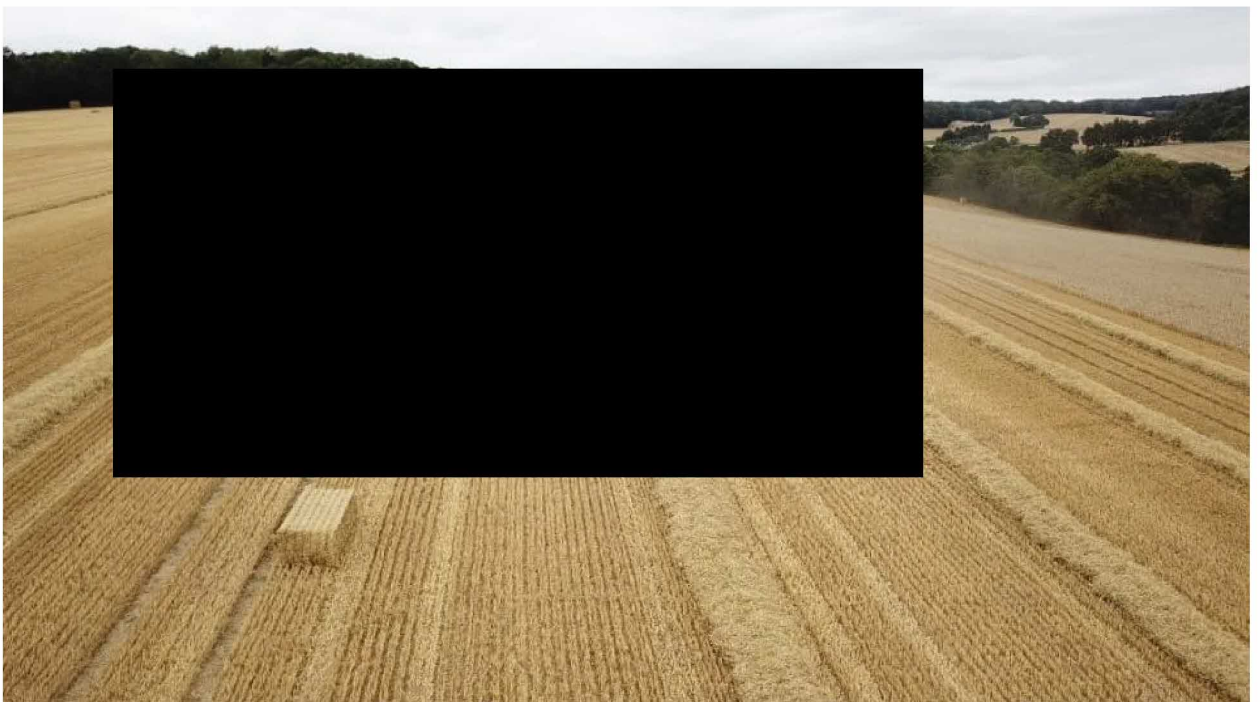
6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The applicant is an established farming businesses within the South Downs National Park who produces high quality and high yielding crops, whilst participating in multiple environmental schemes to carry out work to support biodiversity, enhance the landscape and improve air, soil and water quality on the holding.
- 6.2 The proposed agricultural building is essential for an arable farming business of this scale. The profitability of the farm is greatly affected by commodity price fluctuations and due to crop harvests only occurring annually, the applicants have an essential need to store crops and have flexibility as to when to store their crops and for what periods. The new grain store would subsequently boost the profitability, efficiency and sustainability of the farming business.
- 6.3 There are no existing buildings on the holding that can accommodate the dimensions of modern machinery (specifically the grain trailers). The modern machinery that has been purchased to increase the efficiency of the business, is unable to be utilised to its full efficiently due to the existing buildings being too low to allow for grain to be tipped in.
- 6.4 The proposed building is of appropriate form, scale, layout and design for the intended use, and is situated so as to have almost no impact on neighbouring properties and the wider landscape.
- 6.5 It is therefore considered that there is a justified requirement for the proposed new agricultural building and that it is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture in compliance with Schedule 2 Part 6 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended).

APPENDIX A

Schedule of photographs

Locksash Farm during harvest



Proposed site and surrounding area-



(Site of proposed building to the bottom left, with both accesses, turning area and adjoining farm buildings)



(Site of proposed building to the right, with turning area and adjoining mature woodland)



(One access to proposed site)



(Second access to proposed site)

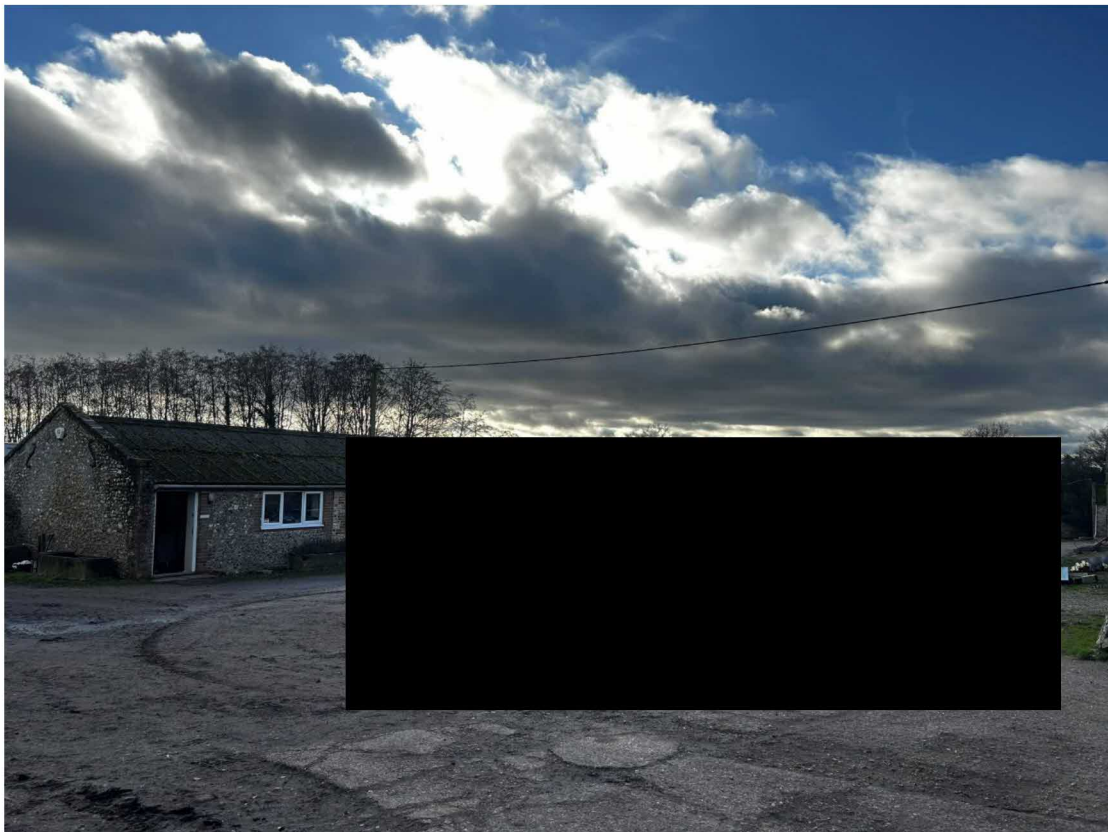


(Farm access off Locksash Lane)



(Farm access off Locksash Lane)

Existing farm buildings and yard







Internal photographs of existing farm buildings showing low eaves

