



PLANNING STATEMENT

Application for Prior Approval from Sevenoaks District Council

Prior Approval: Erection of Machinery Store



Gilridge Meadow Farm,
Spode Lane,
Cowden,
Edenbridge,
Kent,
TN8 7HG



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is to be read in conjunction with the planning application and the following drawings:
 - NFP166P002 PLANS AND ELEVATIONS
 - NFP166S003 LOCATION PLAN
- 1.2 Gilridge Meadow Farm is an agricultural holding located to the North of Spode Lane close to the village of Cowden, near Edenbridge in Kent. The holding extends to 45 acres (18.2 hectares) including 36 acres of meadow land. The main farming activity is the production of hay with the aim of bringing livestock on to graze in the coming years.
- 1.3 The land was purchased as one plot in June 2015 and was registered as a farm with the RPA in 2023. Additional land is in the process of being purchased to add to the farm holding.
- 1.4 In early April 2024, a prior notification for permitted development for a hay store was deemed “No prior approval required”. With the addition of a hay store to the unit, it is now necessary to allow a secure space for storing the machinery required on the unit. Until now, the hay cropping was undertaken by contractors, bringing in the required machinery on repeated visits during the season and throughout the year for the management of the meadow, woodlands and hedgerows. In order to improve the viability of the farmland, and grow a sustainable agricultural unit, it has become necessary to reduce the costs of contracting and directly acquire the machinery and small implements needed, which will need to be stored on the unit. This will significantly reduce the farm traffic on the roads as the machinery will be stored inside the curtilage of the farmland.
- 1.5 Due to the adverse weather across the 2023 growing season, the contractors in place to provide the services on the unit were unable to get onto the holding in good time, meaning the window for bringing the hay harvest in was missed. Whilst the fields were serviced, nothing could be dried and baled and therefore sold, leading to a complete loss. This could have been avoided if the applicant had their own machinery on site and could harvest at the right time for the unit and not rely on contractors being available.
- 1.6 On that basis, a fully enclosed machinery store with functional height for modern farm machinery is necessary for the farm unit. This application is for a machinery store to be constructed on the holding for the purpose of securely storing the machinery and equipment necessary to run the farm.
- 1.7 This statement is to support the application that no further prior approval should be required from the Sevenoaks District Council for the erection of a machinery store on the agricultural unit.

2.0 Design and Siting

- 2.1 The building will be a clear span steel frame portal, fully enclosed in timber castleboarding to closely match the approved hay store, complete with perimeter concrete panel. The timber will have a natural finish to help it blend with the surrounding environment.
- 2.2 The machinery store will have a fibre cement roof to match the adjacent store, in keeping with its agricultural use, whilst reducing the likelihood of condensation as compared to a metal roofing sheet. These are standard agricultural materials and appropriate for the use of the building.
- 2.3 Concrete panels on the perimeter will improve the security of the unit as cladding alone can be limited in its ability to deter thieves. The roller shutter door and personnel door will also have additional security capabilities to ensure safe storage of equipment.
- 2.4 A 1.8m canopy on the East elevation will offer additional protection against inclement weather when the store is open and keeps the design in line with approved hay store.
- 2.5 The building footprint measures 18.2m x 12.2m and the height of the new building will be 3.65m to eaves, which gives the practical clearance needed for modern farming machinery to access and be stored in the building. Keeping the eaves to 3.65m reflects the desire to reduce the prominence of the development in the local area, keeping the ridge well below the adjacent hay store.
- 2.6 The position of the building has been carefully considered and is the most suitable for practical and agricultural reasons.
- 2.7 The building has been positioned close to the approved hay store with easy access to the existing double gate way and hardstanding into the field from Spode Lane.
- 2.8 The building has been moved into the field sufficiently to enable the floor level to come down some metres from the road level, and from the hay store floor level as shown in Fig 1. This siting means the combination of the Hay Store and the surrounding trees and hedges effectively screen the Machinery Store from the road, and neighbouring properties. In the wider view, it will be set against the new Hay store so reducing the visibility.
- 2.9 The position is closest practical position to the existing house, preferred for security reasons, alongside the desire to avoid isolated development, and brings it to the closest proximity to the cluster of houses at the corner of Spode Lane, without imposing on the neighbours.

- 2.10 The building sits adjacent to the existing internal farm routes, close to the link gateway and machinery crossing into adjacent fields, so minimising the internal movements and ensuring farm traffic is kept off the roads.
- 2.11 The building lines up with the already existing access hardstanding that comes into the field, allowing for minimal additional engineering works for access.
- 2.12 An additional 220m² area of hardstanding, 9m from the building to allow for manoeuvring in and out of the machinery store also benefits from being positioned in front of the Hay store, linking the two but keeping the development from taking up too much additional agricultural land.
- 2.13 Some of the adjacent woodland is designated Ancient Woodland and the building has been positioned at a reasonable distance from this to ensure there is no impact from the development.
- 2.14 The site is within the High Weald AONB and, whilst the permitted development rights aren't removed by that fact, it should be noted that this has been considered in the design of the building.
- 2.15 Two of the defining features of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as stated in the management plan, are;
Woodland - abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings.
Field and Heath - small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys.
- 2.16 This development supports those features by investing in the growth of an agricultural unit which sustains those features in the AONB and is in keeping with the design of agricultural buildings across the district and AONB.

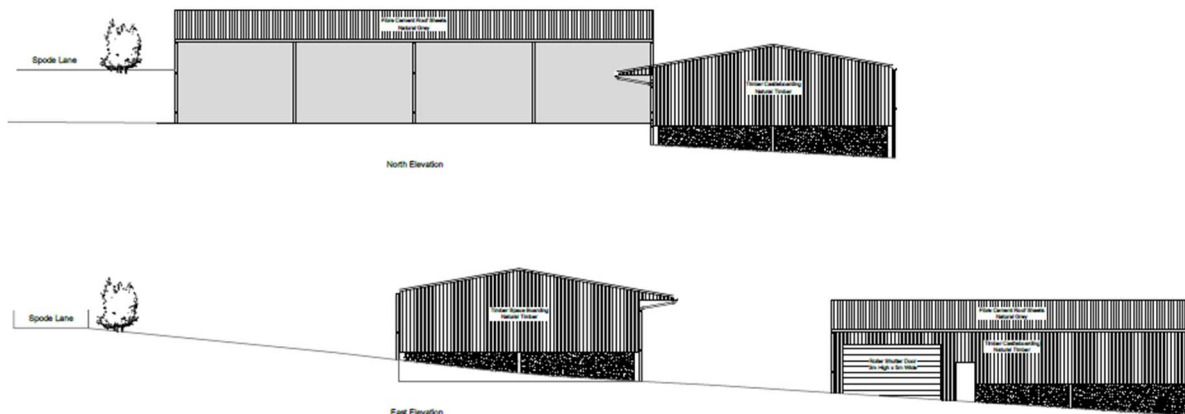


Figure 1: Elevations set against the existing levels and Spode Lane.

3.0 Access

- 3.1 The access to the proposed location is via the established double gateway from Spode Lane.
- 3.2 This means any farm traffic that may need to access the highway can meet the main road at the Cowden Pound junction and not have to move past the houses on Spode Lane, minimising the impact of the development on the local amenity.
- 3.3 The holding is in a block and fully accessible from the proposed location meaning the farm machinery is kept within the confines of the agricultural unit avoiding farm machinery on the local roads.

4.0 Legislation

- 4.1 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GPDO) came into force on 15th April 2015.
- 4.2 Part 6 of Schedule 2 relates to agricultural and forestry development. Class A relates to agricultural development on 5 hectares or more. This notes that permitted development includes the carrying out on agricultural land comprised in an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more in area (Part 6, Class A (a)) works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building, which is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit. The storage of machinery necessary for the operation of the agricultural unit is reasonably necessary as explained above.
- 4.3 Class A.1 sets out a series of limitations to the permitted development, whilst Class A.2 sets out a series of conditions which must be adhered to, for the works to be

considered permitted development. The Machinery store does not fall into any of the exclusions.

- 4.4 *A.1 Development is not permitted by Class A 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 parcel of land exceeds 1 hectare.

- 4.5 *(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;*

No development under Class Q or S of schedule 2 has been carried out on the unit in the last 10 years.

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

The development does not include and works to a dwelling.

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

The building is designed solely for the storage of agricultural machinery.

- 4.8 *(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;*

The machinery store totals 223m², with an additional 216m² of hardstanding in front, plus the hay store at 297m² totals 736m² of ground area. Therefore, the total does not exceed 1000m².

- 4.9 *(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;*

The building is not within 3km of an aerodrome and at 3.65m to eaves, does not exceed 12 metres in height.

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

No part of the development would be within 25m of a trunk or classified road. The nearest classified road is B2026 – Hartfield Road, 370m away.

- 4.11 *(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 building is not used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge.

- 4.12 *(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 building would not involve fish farming, or storing waste.

- 4.13 *A.2—(1) Development is permitted by Class A subject to the following conditions—
(a) where development is carried out within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building, any building, structure, excavation or works resulting from the development are not used for the accommodation of livestock except in the circumstances described in paragraph D.1(3) of this Part or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge, for housing a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system, for storage of fuel or waste from that boiler or system, or for housing a hydro-turbine;*

The building is not designed for or able to be used for the accommodation of livestock, slurry or sewage sludge or for housing an anaerobic digestion system or storing waste or for housing a hydro-turbine.

- 4.14 *(b) where the development involves—
(i) the extraction of any mineral from the land (including removal from any disused railway embankment); or
(ii) the removal of any mineral from a mineral-working deposit, the mineral is not moved off the unit;*

The development does not involve the extraction of minerals.

- 4.15 *(c) waste materials are not brought on to the land from elsewhere for deposit except for use in works described in Class A(a) or in the provision of a hard surface and any*

materials so brought are incorporated forthwith into the building or works in question

The development does not involve the bringing in of waste materials from elsewhere

- 4.16 Part 6, Class A.2(2)(i) states in relation to the ‘erection, extension or alteration of a building’ that before beginning the development, an application must be submitted 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. This statement accompanies that application.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The development is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture as it is required to support agriculture so meets the conditions set out in the GPDO.
- 5.2 The siting is functional and practical, on land that is accessible in closest viable and practical proximity to the existing building cluster so minimises undue impact on visual amenity or landscape character.
- 5.3 The design is considered appropriate to its setting, related to the function and agricultural purpose.
- 5.4 It is therefore respectfully submitted that no further prior approval should be required from the Local Planning Authority for the undertaking of these works.
- 5.5 In accordance with the requirements of the GPDO, the Local Planning Authority are requested to issue a positive determination of the application proposal within 28 days of receipt of the submissions.