

**Change of Use: Agricultural Building to a Storage/Distribution (B8) Use
Planning Statement**

LANDBRIDGE PROPERTY LLP

R L Baker
Foxes Farm, Creeting St Mary
Ipswich, Suffolk
IP6 8PF
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement is submitted to support an application at Foxes Farm for the change of use of an existing agricultural building to a business/distribution (B8) use, associated with the diversification of the farming business at Foxes Farm. The application is made on behalf of an established farming business, R L Baker.

2.0 EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

I am a partner of Landbridge Property LLP, which specialises in rural land and property matters. I regularly advise on agricultural related planning applications, justifications and proposals throughout Suffolk, Essex and Norfolk.

I am a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and a Fellow of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers.

3.0 THE FARM BUSINESS

R L Baker owns and farms approximately 316 hectares (780 acres) at and surrounding Foxes Farm, largely comprising of arable crops including wheat, barley, oil seed rape, sugar beet and grass, from which a hay crop is taken. Alongside this, R L Baker is looking to diversify their income by seeking planning permission for the change of use of an existing building in order to generate additional income, to supplement the farming business.

4.0 PURPOSE

Landbridge Property LLP have been appointed by R L Baker, the owner of the agricultural building to prepare this full application to change the use to storage and distribution (B8). This report should be read in conjunction with the relevant plans, consisting of a site location plan, and the existing/proposed site plan.

5.0 LOCATION AND POSITIONING

Foxes Farm lies to the east of the village of Creting St Mary, on the western side of the A140 and north of the A14, providing a direct connection to Felixstowe, and the A12 towards London. It sits 9 miles from Ipswich and 20 miles from Bury St Edmunds.

6.0 THE EXISTING BUILDING

The building is located to the rear (South western) side of the farm. In the past, the building has been let for the housing of pigs, however, due to the exceptional increase in market instability and reduction in the value of the pig industry, it is no longer economically productive to use the building, which is the subject of this planning application, for the rearing of pigs. As a result, the building is no longer required for agricultural purposes and is currently vacant. Together with the phasing out of Basic Payment Scheme and agricultural subsidy payments, the farm is currently faced with a considerable loss of income and the generation of non-agricultural income is critical to ensuring its overall viability.

The existing building is a large detached building of steel portal frame construction, clad with Yorkshire boarding above a concrete panel wall for the elevations and a pitched fibre cement panel roof. The unit consists of 9 large open bays internally, with a large

double rolling steel door on the front (Eastern) elevation. The building already has the benefit of lighting and power (See *Appendix 1*).

7.0 DIMENSIONS

The building provides the following approximate external areas and dimensions:

55m x 25m

Total: 1,375m²

8.0 THE PROPOSED WORKS

The proposal is to change the agricultural use of the building to storage and distribution (B8). There are no proposed alterations to the building.

9.0 HIGHWAYS ACCESS

The building uses the existing site access. The housing of pigs already gives rise to HGV movements (bringing pigs to and from the building) and, as a result, there will be no increase in vehicle movements if permission is granted.

10.0 SETTING AND ENVIRONMENT

The building sits between two other agricultural buildings. This will result in no change to the overall appearance of the site. This, along with no change to the amount of traffic entering and leaving the site, will mean there is minimal impact to the external environment. The building is located to the rear of the site, with good access to the existing road, so there will be no requirement for surface works to the concrete farm roadway.

11.0 IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED WORKS

Foxes Farm does not lie within any environmental designations so there will be no impact on the wider environment from the proposal.

12.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

12.1 IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

There is one residential property located at Foxes Farm, which is within the ownership of the applicant. There are a further two residential properties to the east of the farm, both of which are in the applicants' ownership. There are no proposed alterations to the building and the proposed change of use will have a positive impact upon the residential amenity of nearby dwellings compared to the rearing of pigs.

12.2 CONTAMINATION

The intended final purpose is not deemed sensitive, and there are no suggestions of contamination at the site. Consequently, a contamination report has not been

conducted, particularly given that there will no physical works that would be undertaken under this proposal.

12.3 RISK OF FLOODING

The whole site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is not therefore considered to be at risk of flooding (See *Appendix 2*)

13.0 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

National planning policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and states as follows: -

“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives)

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- b) a social objective – to support, strong vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Paragraph 10 states that “So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).

Paragraphs 83 and 84 provide policy on supporting a prosperous rural economy as follows: -

Planning policies and decisions should enable: -

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses;
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and
- d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites, to meet local business and community needs in rural areas, may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport.

In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where opportunities exist.

14.0 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Local planning policy is found in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan – Part 1, Adopted November 2023. The relevant policy includes: -

Policy LP09 - Supporting A Prosperous Economy

1. Proposals for employment use must:

- a. Be sensitive to the surroundings, including any residential and other amenity, landscape and heritage assets;
- b. Demonstrate a high standard of design;
- c. Where necessary, provide contributions to the enhancement of the digital infrastructure network; and
- d. Demonstrate a safe and suitable access for all users, sufficient onsite parking and that it will not have a severe impact on the road network.

2. Change of use to small scale employment within a residential curtilage is supported where:

- a. There are no direct sales from the site;
- b. The direct and indirect effects of the scale of the business activity, including the employment of non-residents at the business, must remain incidental to the

overall use of the site for residential purposes;

c. The hours of operation are compatible with residential use; and

d. The business does not create noise, dust, fumes or other emissions, outdoor storage or frequent delivery/collection that are likely to give rise to significant adverse impacts on health, quality of life or local amenity.

15.0 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Due to the site being an existing sealed surface and the proposed development requiring no material amendments, Biodiversity Net Gain legislation is not applicable to this application.

16.0 CONCLUSION

This application is for the change of use of an agricultural building at Foxes Farm to storage and distribution (B8), with no proposed alterations to the building, or surrounding site, required. There will be no increase in traffic to the site.

The building has been used to house pigs previously however due to a pressing agricultural market, the need to diversify is critical for the future of the farming business.

The proposed change of use is highly necessary for a farming business operating at this level. It is also necessary, for the business to ensure the farm is future proofed and can access a diversified source of income.

The proposal is considered unlikely to have any detrimental impact due to the location of the building within the existing site and other surrounding agricultural buildings.

Ben Wheaton BSc (Hons) MRICS FAAV

Partner at Landbridge Property LLP

Date: March 2024

Appendix 1: Photographs





Appendix 2: Flood Map

Flood map for planning

Your reference

Foxes Farm

Location (easting/northing)

611205/256703

Scale

1:2500

Created

26 Mar 2024 14:42



-  Selected area
-  Flood zone 3
-  Flood zone 2
-  Flood zone 1
-  Flood defence
-  Main river
-  Water storage area

0 20 40 60m

