OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 24/02412/FUL Full Planning Application

Proposal: Erection of Two Replacement Barns (requiring demolition of existing)

Location: Agricultural Buildings Great Parlow Close Graveley Road

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Wisson

Grid Ref: 524187 265209

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application seeks planning permission for the erection of Two Replacement Barns (requiring demolition of existing) at Agricultural Buildings, Great Parlow Close, Graveley Road, Offord Darcy.

The buildings will replace existing barns on an existing agricultural farm holding, which is heavily screened with substantial and well established planting. They are proposed in the same location as the existing buildings.

The site is situated in flood zone 1 and there are no designated heritage assets in the vicinity.

Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (20 July 2024) (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development '

The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
* building a strong, competitive economy;
*Making effective use of land
* conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
* conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.
For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)

* Policy LP1 - Amount of development
* Policy LP2 - Strategy for development
* Policy LP10 - The Countryside
* Policy LP11 - Design context

* Policy LP12 - Design Implementation
* Policy LP14 - Amenity
* Policy LP15- Surface Water
* Policy LP16 - Sustainable travel
* Policy LP17- Parking provision and vehicle movement
* Policy LP19 - Rural economy
* Policy LP30 - Biodiversity and geodiversity
* Policy LP31 - Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
* Policy LP37 - Ground contamination and groundwater pollution

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD 2022

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

83/00276/FUL for CHANGE OF USE FROM AGRICULTURAL TO INDUSTRIAL WORKINGS
GREAT PARLOW CLOSE GRAVELEY,
REFUSED dated 07.06.1983

83/00277/FUL for REMOVAL OF AGRICULTURAL OCCUPANCY CONDITION
GREAT PARLOW CLOSE GRAVELEY,
REFUSED dated 02.06.1985

24/00872/HHFUL for Proposed two storey extensions to the side and rear
GREAT PARLOW CLOSE GRAVELEY,
GRANTED dated 20.12.2024

CONSULTATIONS

CCC Minerals and waste: No concerns

CCC Rights of way: No objections subject to informative

CCC Highways: This is the replacement of two agricultural buildings with the replacement of the same with only a minimal increase in square meterage of 46 sqm. Whilst no traffic movements have been submitted in relation to that proposed it is not unreasonable to assume that they would be similar to the existing building, given they are for the same use. Following a review of the documents provided to the Highway Authority as part of the above planning application, no significant adverse effect upon the Public Highway should result from this proposal, should it gain benefit of Planning Permission.

Environmental Health: No concerns.

Anglian Water: No comments

No response received from: Ecology, Landscape, Environment Agency, Arboricultural Officer, Wildlife Trust, Parish Council.

REPRESENTATIONS

The application was advertised by:

-Site notice
-Neighbour letters

-On the council's website

No representations were made.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Principle of development
- Character and Appearance of the Countryside
- Traffic and highway safety
- Residential Amenity
- Impact on protected species and biodiversity

Principle of development

The proposal is to replace the existing barns that are in a poor state with modern buildings that are more fit for purpose. The use is to remain the same agricultural use and the footprint will only slightly increase by 46sqm.

Policy LP10 from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 states that development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan. All development in the countryside must seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value, recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.

Policy LP19 from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 explains that a proposal for the expansion of an established business within its existing operational site will be supported. A proposal on land outside of its existing operational site in the open countryside will be supported where it is demonstrated that opportunities to reuse existing buildings have been fully explored; any opportunities to make more efficient use of land within the existing site boundary are not suitable for the proposed use; it avoids the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land and the scale, character and siting of the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on its immediate surroundings and the wider landscape. A rural business is one which has a legitimate reason to be located in the countryside, including but not limited to agriculture, horses, horticulture or forestry.

The proposed development is considered to be essential operational development associated with an existing rural agricultural enterprise and it will contribute to a prosperous rural economy. The principle of the replacement barns is therefore acceptable on this site and accords with policies LP10 and LP19 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (2019) and the NPPF, subject to addressing all other material considerations.

Character and Appearance of the Countryside

Local Policy LP11 sets out the mechanisms for achieving high standards of design for all development, particularly those that will significantly add to, or create new communities and will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings, including natural, historic and built environment.

Local Policy LP12 states new development will be expected to be well designed based upon a thorough understanding of the constraints and appraisal of the site's context, delivering attractive, usable and long-lasting buildings and spaces. A proposal will be supported where it can demonstrate that it contributes positively to the areas character and identity, successfully

integrates with adjoining buildings, the routes and spaces between buildings, topography and landscape.

The application site falls in the South East Claylands character area, situated in the south eastern corner of Huntingdonshire stretching up to the Great Ouse Valley in the north and west.

Much of the topography has been shaped by water with the River Great Ouse creating a wide shallow valley to the north and west of the area. Tributary streams flow from higher land to the south west to the Great Ouse forming a gently undulating landscape in the central part of the character area.

The South East Claylands include large areas of high quality landscape with a varied and typically gently undulating landform, established hedgerows and woodland and the historic settlement patterns which are reflected through the route of the Roman Ermine Street, medieval green lanes and abandoned settlements and field patterns arising from 18th and 19th century enclosures. The Offords are linear in form.

Chapter 3 : landscape character area assessments of the Landscape and Townscape SPD 2022 states that

'Development proposals should:

-Promote increased planting and soft landscaping around the edges of the towns to screen visually intrusive development; particularly through planting of tree and woodland belts.
-Avoid ribbon development to conserve the form of historic villages.
-Ensure preservation and interpretation of historic features remaining within the landscape.
-Carefully consider the siting and scale of new farm buildings to minimise their impact on the countryside.
-Protect tall hedgerows and hedgerow trees as these are a distinctive feature of the central area.'

Both proposed buildings are 7.6m tall with the existing tallest agricultural building being 5.4m tall. They are positioned in the same position as the barns to be replaced. There is a farmhouse on the site taller than this and all of the existing is well screened. The site is heavily surrounded by trees and shrubs offering very limited views of the farm buildings on the site. The trees are tall and any increase in height will not harmfully affect the views. This site is already in agricultural use and so an appropriate appearance in the countryside and the buildings appear agricultural in nature, with a simple form, metal sheeting and concrete panels. A condition will be imposed for the colour of the panelling to be a grey roof and green walls, to ensure the colour and appearance minimise their visual impact.

A landscaping condition will be imposed to ensure that any gaps in the boundary planting are filled with appropriate native species.

It is concluded that the proposal would not be unduly intrusive or significantly detrimental to the character and appearance of the countryside subject to materials being controlled and additional landscaping, which will be secured by condition. The proposal is therefore broadly in accordance with policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (2019).

Traffic and highway safety

Policy LP17 states a proposed will be supported where it incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates accessibility for service and emergency vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles.

The site currently is an agricultural holding with an access, turning and parking within the site.

The County Council Highways team have been consulted and raise no concerns given the use is agricultural in nature and the barns will not intensify the site as they are similar in scale and location. They therefore feel the access and level of traffic will not create any greater impact than what can currently be produced.

It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of traffic and highway safety as the proposals do not significantly increase traffic or create harm to highway safety in accordance with policy LP17 of Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (2019).

Residential Amenity

Regarding residential amenity, the relevant policy within the local plan to 2036 (LP 14 Amenity), applies.

Policy LP14 states a proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of a proposed development and maintained for users and occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings.

Officers have assessed the likely impact of the proposal on adjacent and adjoining neighbours and have no concerns regarding overshadowing, overlooking and overbearing due to the location within the existing farm holding and the use being the same as the existing without any intensification of what could be achieved on the site at the moment.

The Environmental Health Officer has also been consulted and raised no concerns.

The proposals are considered to be in accordance with Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (2019).

Impact on protected species and biodiversity

Policy LP30 states the purpose of the policy is to set out how Council will consider proposals in relation to biodiversity and geodiversity. A proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal should be prepared where a proposal is likely to have an impact, either directly or indirectly, on biodiversity or geodiversity which identifies all individual and cumulative potential impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. Any further research that is identified as necessary by this appraisal will need to have been carried out and submitted with the proposal.

Policy LP31 of the Local Plan seeks to ensures proposals demonstrate that the potential for adverse impacts on trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows have been investigated. A proposal will only be supported where it seeks to conserve and enhance any existing vegetation of value that would be affected by the proposed development.

An up-to-date Ecological Assessment supports the proposals (Elton Ecology, 18.10.24) which details that the area surveyed comprises vegetated garden and hardstanding. The report concludes that the site was species poor and of little ecological value. There was no evidence of most protected species or notable species on the site. The bat roost assessment noted gaps in the existing buildings but no evidence of roosting bats. Moderate suitability was shown for roosting. No emerging or re-entering bats were seen on the survey but there were sounds of bats in the vicinity. Ecological constraints and opportunities have been provided that will be conditioned to be actioned on the site through a CEcMP and the suggested biodiversity enhancements of two bat boxes will also be conditioned. Lighting is a concern with bats in the vicinity and so a condition has been imposed in this regard.

The landscaping has been considered in the previous section and the proposal will not have a detrimental impact subject to condition. A tree protection plan has also been conditioned to ensure the existing trees are not damaged during construction.

The proposal has no significant increase in loss of habitat with the size of the buildings only increasing by 46sqm. This increase will be on hardstanding and will not create any net loss of biodiversity. Thus a biodiversity net gain assessment was not required but enhancements will be provided to accord with local policy requirements.

Given the above, the proposals are considered acceptable in terms of ecology and in accordance with policies LP30 and LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (2019).

CONCLUSION

Taking the above matters into consideration the proposed development is considered to be compliant with relevant national and local planning policies:

* The principle of the redevelopment of this site for the proposed replacement barns is an acceptable agricultural use.
* The proposal will result in significant harm to biodiversity or ecology
* The proposed buildings would have no significant adverse impact on the overall character of the area due to their scale, massing, existing use of the site and location.
* The proposal would satisfactorily safeguard the amenities of nearby dwellings.
* There are no overriding highway safety issues.
* It will have no significant adverse impact on features of landscape value.
* There are no other material planning considerations which have a significant bearing on the determination of this application.

Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is therefore recommended that planning permission should be approved for the reasons set out above, subject to conditions.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Hannah Hodges**