Our ref: TDK/055579

17 December 2024

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Dear Sir/Madam,

EXTENSION TO AN EXISTING AGRICULTURAL BARN AT REDWOOD FARM, CAXTON ROAD, GREAT GRANSDEN, SANDY. SG19 3BQ

I hereby submit a full application on behalf of G.E. Baker (UK) Ltd for the extension of an existing agricultural barn at Redwood Farm, Caxton Road, Great Gransden, SG19 3BQ.

The application comprises this letter and the following submission documents and plans:

- Completed application form;
- Location Plan (Ref: IN2469-01 Rev 2);
- Site Layout (Ref: Revised - 3469);
- Elevations (Ref: IN3469-02 Rev 1);
- Internal Plan (Ref: IN3469-02 Rev 1)
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment;
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and calculations;
- Biodiversity Checklist; and
- Policy Checklist

Site Background

Redwood Farm is an established pig breeding unit located about 1.5 miles north east of the village of Great Gransden and 0.4 miles south west of the village of Caxton. Full planning permission was granted in 2019 to replace the existing pig-rearing unit structures with an entirely new piggery comprising eleven state-of-the-art pig houses (19/00198/FUL). The Applicant implemented the approved permission in 2020, as shown by the Aerial photograph contained in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Aerial photograph of the site edged in red

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This application proposes the extension of the northernmost barn, which is the gilt growout building (the site area is edged in red in Figure 1 above).

To the south-west of the main pig-rearing buildings, the Council recently determined (in May 2024) that Prior Approval was not required for siting, design and external appearance for a general agricultural building for storing machinery and plant equipment (LPA REF: 24/00672/AGDET).

A parallel planning application is submitted for the erection of four semi-detached agricultural workers' dwellings.

Proposed Development

Full planning is requested to extend the existing gilt growout building situated in the northern section of the existing farm complex. The extension will measure 14.8 x 15.6m.

The small extension to the gilt growout building is required to provide a store for bagged food to be prepared before being fed to the gilts.

Policy Context

The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 was adopted in May 2019. The plan outlines the location and scale of development across the district and sets out the strategies for achieving the plan aims through to 2036. The relevant policies to determination of this application are outlined below:

- LP2: Strategy for Development
- LP10: The Countryside
- LP11: Design Context
- LP12: Design Implementation
- LP14: Amenity
- LP15: Surface Water
- LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
- LP19: Rural Economy
- LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

The Council accepted the principle of development for the replacement pig rearing unit (LPA Ref: 19/00198/FUL) as an essential operational development associated with an existing rural agricultural enterprise, which would continue to contribute to a prosperous rural economy. Therefore, the Council accepted that this was in accordance with policies LP10 and LP19 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (2019).

This previous approval was subsequently implemented by the applicant in 2020 and as a development into a successful pig-rearing facility. The small extension to the gilt growout building is required to provide a store for bagged food to be prepared before being fed to the gilts. It needs to be located in close proximity to the gilt growout barn.

It is therefore considered that small extension continues to be essential operational development associated with an existing rural agricultural enterprise, and it will contribute to a prosperous rural economy, in accordance with policies LP10 and LP19.

Character and appearance of the countryside

The extension would be located within the existing farmyard and would involve a 15m extension of an existing building. The extended gilt growout building would be maintained at the same height as the current building.

There were no objections to the previous application from the HDC Landscape officer (LPA Ref: 19/00198/FUL), subject to the imposition of conditions relating to soft landscaping works compliance and the submission of a landscape management plan. The proposal is therefore in accordance with policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (2019).

Impact on amenity

The extended building will be used for the packaging of feed and not for the rearing of pigs, so it will not result in any increased noise or odour.

Biodiversity

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was prepared by Brown&Co to support the separate applications for the proposed agricultural extension and agricultural dwellings.

The results of this sampling for Great Crested Newts indicate that this pond tested positive for breeding great crested newts. As great crested newts may be impacted by the proposed works, the PEA recommends that a Non-licensed Method Statement (NLMS) should be produced to discharge risks to this species. The NLMS will outline appropriate mitigation and protection measures to be employed during the project phases. An NLMS could be secured as a pre-commencement condition to any approved scheme.

A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment was also conducted. The BNG assessment outlines that a baseline dominated by poor condition modified grassland will be partially lost to the erection of a new building; the retained grassland will be enhanced to Good condition via the broadcasting of appropriate seed mixes and targeted management. The onsite habitat change is estimated to result in a habitat unit uplift of 11.25%. Thus, the project is considered to meet the legal obligation to achieve a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in England.

Drainage

The site is located within Flood Zone 1, but within the 1,000 year extent for surface water flood risk, as shown in the map extract below.



A Surface Water Drainage Strategy was submitted as part of discharge charge of condition application 19/80253/COND in relation to the original approval of the agricultural buildings on this site (19/00198/Ful). This includes Conditions 17(Surface Water) and 18 (SuDS). The Lead Local Flooding Authority did not raise any objections, and the conditions were discharged. The extension is less than 250sqm, so consistent with National Planning Guidance the development would be exempt from the sequential test.

Conclusion

The proposed development is considered to be compliant with relevant national and local planning policy as:

- The principle of the redevelopment of this site for the proposed agricultural pig rearing unit is acceptable.
- The proposal is acceptable in terms of flood risk and drainage.
- The proposal will result in a biodiversity net gain (11.25%).
- The proposed buildings would have no significant adverse impact on the overall character of the area due to their scale, bulk and massing.
- 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.

Yours sincerely



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