BIDWELLS

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Date: 5th March 2025

Planning and Development Control
Huntingdonshire District Council
St Mary's St
Huntingdon
PE29 3TN

Dear Sirs

PROPOSED NEW AGRICULTURAL BUILDING
NEW BARNS FARM, ABBOTSLEY

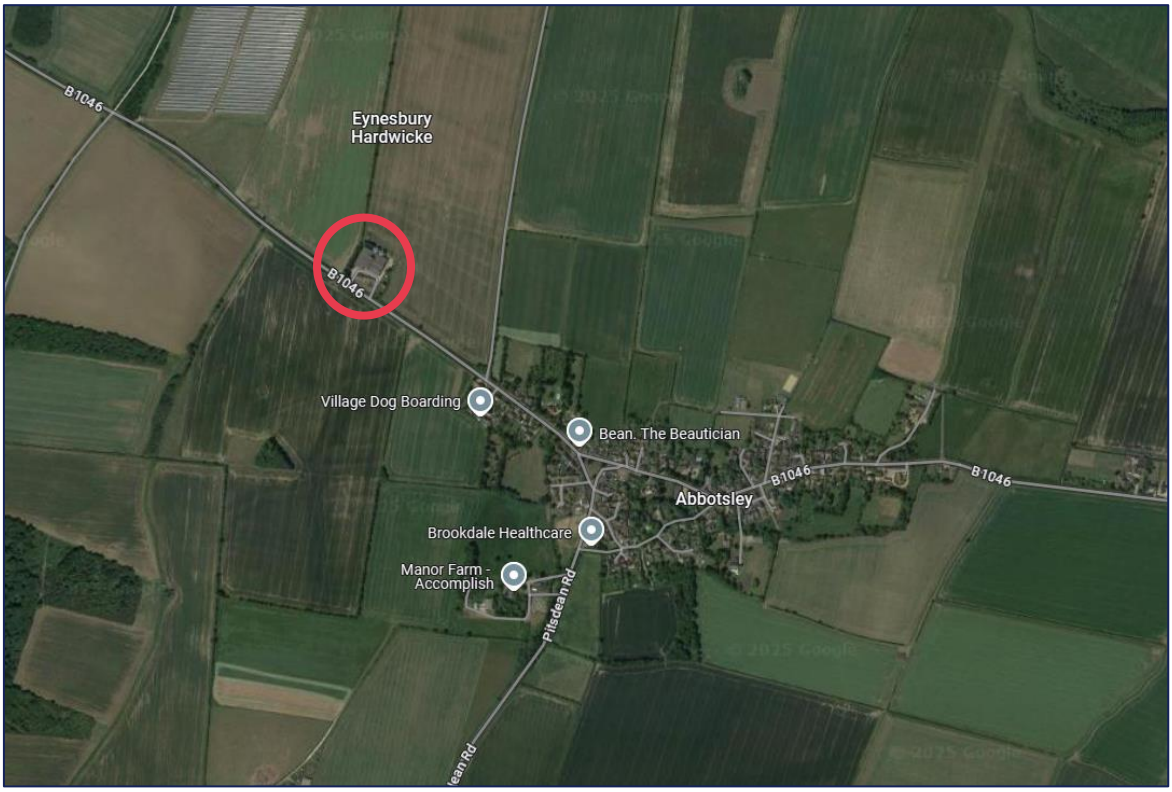
Please find enclosed a Prior Notification under Part 6 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended 2024 for a proposed agricultural storage building at New Barns Farm, St. Neots Road, Abbotsley, St. Neots PE19 6UU

The application is submitted online via the Planning Portal (Ref: PP-13832835).

The Site

New Barns Farm is situated to the north west of Abbotsley, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Location of New Barns Farm



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The farmyard comprises a range of agricultural buildings and silos, the majority of which are now outdated and not suitable for modern agriculture. The land has been farmed by the applicant and his family for many years with farming operations primarily comprising arable rotation. The arable rotation typically comprises wheat, barley and a break crop, with a total area of circa 670 acres at New Barns Farm in arable production. The applicant also farms additional land within the locality, so the total area farmed is much greater.

Proposal and Agricultural Justification

The existing agricultural buildings at New Barns Farm are fully utilised for the storage of straw, machinery and fertiliser. The buildings are largely outdated and no longer provide suitable grain storage capacity and effective conditioning to serve the farm. They do not have serviceable drying facilities, nor would the buildings be capable of adaptation for new dryers due to their age and the nature of their construction.

Furthermore, the existing buildings have low ridge and eaves heights as well as multiple structural pillars internally, making it extremely difficult (and often unachievable) to access the buildings with modern machinery. It is not possible to tip grain in most of the space due to the restrictive structural elements, and manoeuvring trailers within the buildings is not possible. This renders the existing buildings unsuitable for the grain storage needs for the farm. This is demonstrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 – Existing building – unsuitable for grain storage.



As such, there is currently insufficient grain storage facilities at New Barns Farm.

The farm currently has an additional storage requirement of circa 2,500 tonnes, which would be met by the proposed new building. Without the new building, the applicant is unable to store and dry grain, which is hugely detrimental to the farming business.

There is significant economic justification for storing grain in appropriate grain storage facilities. The Agricultural and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) provide the following evidence:

"*Compared with selling grain at, or near, harvest, later-sold grain usually receives a higher price (providing market specifications are met). Typically, feed wheat sold for a November movement attracts a* ***£4/tonne premium over the harvest price, with May movement providing a further £7/tonne****. Such economic incentives mean grain is often stored for long periods, prior to processing. During this time, grain quality and safety may deteriorate, without appropriate intervention*."

The proposed new building would meet the storage requirements of the farm, whilst also providing purpose-built grain drying facilities. It will provide the opportunity to store multiple crops within one building, with ample space for safe and efficient tipping of grain trailers.

Taking all of the above into consideration, there is an essential need for the provision of a new grain store at New Barns Farm.

The Location

We enclose the Site Plan and Location Plan which show the proposed location of the building edged red.

The proposed location is directly to the north of the farmyard, in line with the existing farm buildings.

The location has been identified as being in close proximity to the existing operations and is entirely contained within the existing farmstead. The proposed location will provide considerable benefits both in terms of sustainability and minimising costs to the farming operation. It will substantially improve the operational effectiveness of the unit.

It is considered that the proposed location will be of no detriment to the landscape, character or appearance of the site, being contained within the existing line of building and screened from outside views.

The barn will allow for the storage of grain to be located on one site, thus reducing movements on the local highways network. The proposed site is accessible via existing farm tracks and the farms landholding. The proposal will reduce transport costs and there will be no unnecessary transportation movements and no impact on the highways network.

The Design

The design of the proposed grain storage building is typical of modern agricultural buildings and reflective of the adjacent buildings. The building will be steel portal framed and will be designed to BS5502 Class 2 standard.

The elevations will comprise 3metre high concrete panels with metal sheet cladding above, which will be fully weatherproof and structurally strong enough to take the loading of grain. The roof is to be clad in natural grey fibre cement sheeting, which will ensure that the building will be dry and weatherproof, and therefore suitable for the storage of grain.

The eves will extend to a height of 7.5m and ridge height of 10.8m. Roller shutter and personnel doors are provided for access. The dimensions of the building will be 24m by 54m with a small fan house attached.

The proposed design is considered to be appropriate for the use of the building and is in keeping with the adjacent agricultural buildings.

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended 2018 – Part 6 Class A

Part 6 Class A allows for:

"*The carrying out on agricultural land comprised in an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more in an area of*

(a) works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building; or

(b) any excavation or engineering operations,

Which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit".

It has been demonstrated above that the proposal is reasonably necessary (and arguably essential) for the purposes of agriculture on the agricultural unit. The proposal fully complies with the criteria set out within Part 6 Class A, as set out in Table 1 below.

DEVELOPMENT IS NOT PERMITTED BY CLASS A IF -	CRITERIA COMPLIANCE
(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 within the unit subject of the proposal exceeds 1 hectare.
(b) it would consist of the erection or extension of any building on an established agricultural unit (as defined in paragraph X Part 3) 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 such permitted development rights have been implemented within the unit.
(c) it would consist of, or include, the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling;	The proposal does not consist of, or include, the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling.
(d) it would involve the provision of a building, structure or works not designed for agricultural purposes;	The building has been designed entirely for agricultural purposes, as demonstrated above.
(e) the ground area 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,	The proposed floor area of the building is 1,351 square metres.

would exceed 1,500 square metres	
(f) the height of any part of the building, structure or works within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 3 metres;	The proposal is not within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome.
(g) the height of any part of the building, structure or works not within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome would exceed 12 metres;	The proposed ridge height of the building is 10.8 metres.
(h) any part of the development would be within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk or classified road;	The proposal does not fall within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk or classified road
(i) it would consist of, or include the erection or construction of, or the carrying out of any works to, a building, structure or 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, or would be, within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building;	The proposal is for an agricultural grain storage building. It will not be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge. The very nature and design of the building ensures this is not possible.
(j) it would involve excavations or engineering operations on or over article 2 (4) land which are connected with fish farming; or	The proposal does not involve excavations or engineering operations on or over article 2 (4) land which are connected with fish farming.
(k) any building for storing fuel or waste from a biomass boiler or an aerobic digestion system – (i) would be used for storing waste not produced by that boiler system or for storing fuel not produced on land within the unit, or (ii) is or would be within 400m of the curtilage of a protected building.	The proposal does not involve the storing fuel or waste from a biomass boiler or an aerobic digestion system.

Summary

There is an essential requirement for the provision of a new agricultural building at New Barns Farm for the storage of grain, which is produced on the agricultural unit by the applicant.

The provision of a new storage building will significantly enhance farming operations, benefit the farm financially and provide a safe, secure location for the storage of grain.

The proposal fully complies with all of the criteria set out under Part 6 Class A, as demonstrated within this statement and it is considered prior approval should therefore be granted for the proposal.

Application Documents

The application is submitted online via the Planning Portal and comprises the following documents:

- Application Form
- Covering Letter and Statement
- Site Plan
- Location Plan
- Proposed Elevations
- Proposed Floor Plan

If you wish to arrange a site visit or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



Louise Newton MRICS
Partner, Rural