CHANGE OF USE OF REDUNDANT AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS TO B1 AND B8 USE

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

The proposal &The Site

1. This application relates to a proposal to convert and use four redundant agricultural barns for B1 and B8 uses. The buildings at Forest View Farm are generally set out in a long line rather than round a yard, and three of the ones referred to in this application (Units 3-6) are located at the western end of the line. At the moment these are open sided structures with either curved Dutch Barn or low mono pitch roofs. The other building (Units 1&2) is a lower structure standing in front of the long line, generally clad with fibre cement to the walls and roof. This building is already enclosed and has two existing large door openings



2. The total floor area involved with the application is 704m², providing six separate units ranging from 51m² to 170m².

3. The applicant makes no secret of a long term aspiration to secure permission for commercial use of the full range of buildings here involving a further c400m² to create three units at the eastern end of the group. The reason why these are excluded now is simply a matter of timing in respect of the protected species survey, as explained later in this Statement.



The application buildings are those to the left of (beyond) the electricity pole

4. Forest View Farm is a holding of c73 hectares, with the building complex sited down a 300m drive, and central to the fields. The fields are down to arable and the range of buildings are neither suitable nor required to service this activity.

5. The farm is immediately opposite the very extensive Caterpillar site to the south of Desford. Thus, while the farm is in open countryside, it is adjacent to one of the largest employment sites in the Borough, and where the local road network caters for all the traffic associated with that site.



The application buildings – Units 4-6



Units 1&2

Relevant History

6. After an extensive period of negotiation associated with a number of applications that were withdrawn before decision, planning permission was granted for Change of use of Barn to Industrial Premises under reference 06/01172. This relates to an "L" shaped area of 270m² right in the middle of the building complex, alongside and immediately to the east of the present application.

7. That approval also included provision of a new farm access, with the detailed design of this – relating to visibility requirements – subsequently amended under approval 08/00028. The design involved moving the access some 150m or so to the south and the opposite end of the lay-by. The new access has now been constructed and the old access closed, although this does not yet appear to be shown on the latest available aerial photograph.

The Development Plan

8. National and local planning policy support reuse of redundant agricultural buildings for commercial purposes as a means of stimulating the rural economy, subject to the proposal satisfying a number of detailed criteria. Saved Policy BE20 of the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan refers.

9. In this case, the principle of commercial use has already been agreed with the established Keswick Trays business; the site has a new access capable of accommodating any additional traffic (see the Access section of this Statement); and any concern about sustainable development in the countryside is completely satisfied by the immediate proximity of one of the largest employment sites in the Borough.

Design

10. The existing buildings are open sided agricultural barns under curved Dutch Barn or monopitch corrugated steel roofs. The proposal is to build up the sides with grey concrete blocks, associated with a personnel door and a roller shutter door to each unit, in exactly the same manner as has been implemented for the approved Keswick Trays building. The buildings will look the same as they do now in any long distance public views.

Protected Species

11. A detailed Protected Species report prepared by Ecolocation forms part of this application. That report indicated no evidence of relevant activity in the buildings now applied for, however there was some evidence of bat use of the brick structures at the eastern end of the line of buildings. There should therefore be an emergence survey for these buildings in the spring / summer period, and this is the reason why they have not been included in the present application.

Access

12. The initial applications for commercial use at Forest View Farm were accompanied by a detailed Transport Statement prepared by BWB Consulting Ltd of Nottingham.

13. A new Statement from the same consultant forms part of the present application. This deals both with the long term proposal for 1100m² of B1 / B8 space, and the present application for 700m².

14. The conclusion is clear and simple. On the basis of the information gained and the investigations carried out, there should be no highways problem or objection to either the more extensive scheme or the application as submitted now.

15. Car parking provision will be made in line with Table DG11 of the Highway Authority Design Guidance. This requires 1 space per 55m² for B1 development in a rural location like this, giving 13 spaces for this 704m² scheme. These spaces can easily be accommodated, as can any HGV manoeuvring space, within the complex as shown on the plan.

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