

Parish:	Nordelph	
Proposal:	Change of use of existing agricultural building to a workshop and store (B2 General Industrial) use, and an extension to the building to provide additional storage.	
Location:	White Barn Farm Silt Road Nordelph Norfolk	
Applicant:	Anglia Growers	
Case No:	19/01060/F (Full Application)	
Case Officer:	Bradley Downes	Date for Determination: 9 August 2019 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 13 December 2019

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Officer recommendation contrary to the opinion of Parish Council and application referred by Sifting Panel

Neighbourhood Plan: No

Case Summary

The site is located on the south side of Silt Road to the west of Nordelph, which is designated as a smaller village or hamlet under Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 2011. Nordelph does not have a development boundary, but in any case the site does not strictly lie within Nordelph and it is therefore classed as countryside, where development is more limited to that as identified as suitable by other policies in the plan. There are two residential dwellings that adjoin the site to the west which are not related to the site.

Part of the application involves the erection of an extension to the commercial unit in the form of a new building for B8 Storage and Distribution and B2 General Industrial purposes. The new building will be constructed to match the existing units, with metal sheeting in grey on the elevations and roof. Also, the whole unit is proposed to be changed in use from agricultural storage to the repair and maintenance of farm machinery and food processing machinery, and for the storage and distribution of food processing machinery.

Key Issues

Principle of development
 Impact on character and appearance of area
 Impact on residential amenity
 Other material impacts

Recommendation

APPROVE

THE APPLICATION

The site is located on the south side of Silt Road to the west of Nordelph, which is designated as a smaller village or hamlet under Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy 2011. Nordelph does not have a development boundary, but in any case the site does not strictly lie within Nordelph and it is therefore classed as countryside, where development is more limited to that as identified as suitable by other policies in the plan. There are two residential dwellings that adjoin the site to the west which are not related to the site.

Part of the application involves the erection of an extension to the commercial unit in the form of a new building for B8 Storage and Distribution and B2 General Industrial purposes. The new building will be constructed to match the existing units, with metal sheeting in grey on the elevations and roof. The proposed extension will be approximately 19.5m x 46m, following which the total footprint of the commercial unit will measure approximately 60m x 46m.

Previous planning applications and also formerly this application were proposing for an agricultural use. But following discussions with the applicant and agent it has been determined that a B2/B8 use would be more suitable to reflect the activities taking place in the unit. As such, the whole unit is proposed to be changed in use from agricultural storage to the repair and maintenance of farm machinery and food processing machinery, and for the storage and distribution of food processing machinery.

The storage and Distribution element is for food processing machinery in association with the commercial business Fountain Food Machinery, who primarily are the purveyors of refurbished food processing machinery. The General Industrial use involving repairing and maintenance is in part in direct association with the Fountain Food Machinery business (to refurbish the food processing machinery to be later sold), and in part operated for the repair of third party farm or food processing machinery (primarily Anglia Growers, but also machinery from other clients).

SUPPORTING CASE

Anglia Growers and Fountain Foods are family owned businesses that are under the same controlling ownership, they are both agriculturally based businesses that grow, pack and process mainly root vegetables farming around 400 acres locally and packing circa 25,000 tonnes of vegetables per annum. In 2015 the BCKLWN supported the building of an agricultural store at Fountain Foods (Application 15/00806F) that was constructed by Anglia Growers to store the crop straight from the field as harvested where it is cured, conditioned and stored and then packed by Fountain Foods as required.

The store was built using the latest technology storage equipment that uses 60% less energy per tonne to condition the crop as opposed to traditional storage methods. The store allows for the crop to be stored for longer which results in UK onions being available when historically only high cost imported onions would have been the only option.

To deliver this project there was a need for a lot of growing, harvesting and storage equipment along with grading, washing, peeling and packing equipment. It soon became apparent that this equipment required a lot of ongoing servicing and maintenance to deliver the projects goals.

White Barn Farm was a building that was available within the group although in a poor state of repair the size, location and the timescale the building could be operational made it the best choice to set up a workshop (it was used to store redundant and out of season equipment in it). We invested in refurbishing the original building and erected another building adjacent, to store the machinery that was in the original building before we changed it into a workshop. Due to the success of the project and the skill set of our engineers we have now started repairing and servicing machinery from third party companies, which we will be looking to do and hopefully increase on in the building covered under this application. When we started the workshop we had 2 engineers, we now have 4 engineers and will require 2 more once the proposed building is operational.

The application has had no negative comments from any of the consultees, apart from the Parish Council who are concerned on location and visual impact, The location is not in the village it is located on the periphery of the village and has good road links, the Parish's comments regarding the location are not in line with the Boroughs Core Strategy. "The Council will seek to retain and support development of land or premises currently or last used for employment (including agricultural uses)".

The visual impact issue will be minimal from both side views as it will be the same size and scale as current elevations, the front view will be increased by 33% but if the Parish Council views were shared by the Committee Members the visual impact could be mitigated by a tree planting and landscaping condition.

The Borough has already supported the project and due to its innovation and reduction in Food Miles (over 600,000 food miles have been saved) since the project started and there has been a 750,000kg Co2 emission saving since this project began, these achievements have been recognised by the Fens Adventures (rural grant scheme) that supported the project due to the environmental benefits, these benefits fit hand in hand with the Borough's core strategy for sustainable development and responding to climate change. The project also generates £750,000 annually to the local economy that was historically spent importing onions from outside the UK.

PLANNING HISTORY

17/01281/F: Application Permitted: 09/08/17 - Extension to agricultural building - Agricultural Building, Silt Road, Nordelph, PE38 0BW

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Nordelph Parish Council: OBJECT

The site already consists of two large agricultural sheds which are situated very close to two residential properties and other properties although not in the immediate vicinity would be subject to an inevitable increase in noise pollution and commercial activity from the proposed development. Activity on site is currently limited but a second warehouse is currently under construction and with this proposal of a third the impact will undoubtedly increase traffic movements along the 40 mph Silt Road which is already of concern to the Parish Council with speeding issues. The development is not in keeping with the surrounding countryside, is out of scale and totally out of character with the village Conservation Area nearby. There is no current evidence that the building is being used for agricultural purposes applied for.

Local Highways Authority: NO OBJECTION

I observe that the applicant has indicated an area of hard standing. This would be acceptable and I recommend a condition to ensure the permanent availability of parking and turning areas.

CSNN: NO OBJECTION

Due to the proposed use of the building being for machinery repairs etc, I would recommend that the permission, if granted, is conditioned to require a noise scheme to protect nearby dwellings from an adverse impact in terms of noise. The scheme could include details of proposed sound insulating materials, door closures and times of use.

REPRESENTATIONS

No third party letters received

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS06 - Development in Rural Areas

CS08 - Sustainable Development

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016

DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of development
Impact on character and appearance of area
Impact on residential amenity
Other material impacts

Principle of development:

As the site does not lie in any development boundary it is classed as countryside. In the countryside, Core Strategy Policy CS06 generally seeks to restrict development in line with NPPF policy to preserve the intrinsic beauty of the countryside. Paragraph 83 of the NPPF indicates that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas. Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy 2011 states that the local economy will be developed sustainably to facilitate job growth and it takes a flexible approach to the siting of employment generating development. Policy CS06 also seeks to retain existing employment land, and this development would contribute towards the retention of the site by ensuring the growth of the business is unhindered.

Impact on character and appearance of area:

The proposed extension to the unit would match the materials and scale of the existing buildings on the site. The buildings already have a commercial / industrial character with their use of grey metal sheeting and roller shutter doors. As the extension will be to the side of the existing buildings, wider views along Silt Road will be largely unaffected, as the new-build will be mostly eclipsed by the existing silhouette. As such, it is considered there will be no significant impact on the character or appearance of Silt Road. The site is located far enough from Nordelph Conservation Area such that there will be no material impact on its character or heritage significance.

Overall, the extension of this rural business would not have any significant impacts on the character and appearance of the area sufficient to outweigh the in principle support of the development.

Impact on residential amenity:

The site lies close to two residential dwellings which are not related to the business. However, due to the orientation of the proposed extension in relation to those dwellings, there will be no significant overbearing or overshadowing. Some noise is likely to be generated as a result of the extension, however this would not be significantly over and above the noise level generated from the existing building. A noise scheme will be requested via condition in accordance with the consultation response from CSNN, this would safeguard the amenities of the nearby residents.

Subject to the noise mitigation scheme, the proposed development would not have any significant adverse impacts on nearby residential occupiers. In addition, the environmental protection informative will be attached to the decision, which informs the applicant that the LPA has a duty to investigate complaints of nuisance and irrespective of planning consent, the LPA may serve a legal notice requiring any said nuisance to be abated.

Other material impacts:

The Local Highway Authority had no objection to the planning application. The Parish Council were concerned with the suitability of Silt Road, however it has a 40mph speed limit and is not generally very busy. In addition, the access point has very good visibility in both directions. For these reasons, it is considered any increased traffic resulting from the development would not have any significant highway safety impacts. The Local highway Authority requested a condition to ensure the proposed hardstanding is implemented and retained as such, to prevent extraneous material (dirt etc), from making its way onto the highway.

To ensure that the unit will be operated as approved, the decision should be conditioned to prohibit uses within classes B2 and B8 which may give rise to detrimental impacts on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

CONCLUSION:

As identified above, the principle of development is considered acceptable when assessed against the NPPF and Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy 2011. In addition there are no significant adverse impacts which would be sufficient to warrant refusal. As such, it is the recommendation of the Local Planning Authority that the application should be approved.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to the imposition of the following condition(s):

- 1 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 1 Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.
- 2 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans. Dwg nos. 19-1867-1 (Location Plan), 19-1867-3-B (Proposed Site Plan), 19-1867-6 (Proposed Roof Plan and Section), 19-1867-4.1 (Proposed Floor Plan 1), 19-1867-4.2 (Proposed Floor Plan 2), and 19-1867-5-A (Proposed Elevations).
- 2 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 3 Condition: Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted the proposed on-site servicing / loading / unloading / turning area shall be laid out, levelled, surfaced and drained in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter available for that specific use.
- 3 Reason: To ensure the permanent availability of the parking/manoeuvring areas, and prevent extraneous material being carried onto the highway in the interests of satisfactory development and highway safety.
- 4 Condition: No development above foundation level shall take place on site until a scheme to protect the two nearby residential dwellings to the west from noise has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved before the development is brought into use.
- 4 Reason: To ensure that the amenities of future occupants are safeguarded in accordance with the NPPF.
- 5 Condition: The use of the land outlined in red on the approved plan, including the use of the existing buildings and the proposed extension, shall be limited to the storage, distribution, repair and maintenance of farm machinery, and food processing machinery. At no time shall the unit be used for any other industrial process or for the storage or distribution of any other items or goods without having been granted through a planning application.
- 5 Reason: In order that the Local Planning Authority may retain control of uses which might be detrimental to the amenities of the locality.