Simon Harvey Designs Ltd

E: office@simonharveydesigns.com / T: 07833 178649

Design & Access Statement

Application to remove or vary previous condition 3 of approval I/24/99 in order to confirm the ongoing use of the building with B8 Storage use for other stored items including boxed items, furnishings, homewares, appliances etc. so as not to prescribe restriction to the storage of radio and electrical equipment only.



Barn at

Muntham Home Farm

Muntham Drive

West Sussex.

Revision B - December 2023

Simon Harvey Designs Ltd, 2 Greenfield way, Storrington, West Sussex. RH20 4PY.
Email: mailto:office@simonharveydesigns.com / Telephone: 07833 178649
Website: https://www.simonharveydesigns.com/
Company No. 12814601 - Registered Address Byne Cottage, Manleys Hill, Storrington RH20 4BN

This document is to be read in conjunction with all other submitted plans and documentation.

Introduction:

The site of the Barn at Muntham Home Farm relates to one section of a larger building range. The barn and enclosed forecourt as shown in red on the site Location Plan are owned by the applicant, whereas the buildings and land adjacent are in the ownership of others and fall outside of this application. The site comprises of a large, single-span steel framed warehouse building with Class B8 Storage use. The building once formed part of a larger Agricultural holding and permission and was granted temporary storage usage which was later made permanent with permission granted by appeal in 1999. It is understood that the building has since been used within this use class for at least 20+ years. The building has recently become vacant and marketed for sale by the previous owners after their retirement. Condition 3 applied to the original approval ref I/24/99 and imposed that the development could be used for the storage of electrical and radio equipment only and no other purpose (including any other purpose in any class of the schedule).

The new owner has recently purchased the property with requirement to continue the use of the building within B8 storage use but requires the building to be used for a wider store purpose including but not limited to, their own personal storage items. This application seeks to remove the wording of previous condition 3 to allow more flexibility over the types of items stored within the building. Local markets suggest that demand for storage space at reasonable rates for both commercial and private use is increasing due to modern living needs and pressures from smaller housing stock. Given the scarcity of such a space, the applicant is very pleased to have found a medium sized unit offering flexibility for their needs. For a long period of time, they have been leasing similar sized premises within West Sussex which has cost them a significant amount of expenditure. The chance to purchase the barn at Muntham presented an opportunity for them to have control over their own premises. It is noted that other buildings in the adjacent premises have also previously been permitted storage use for furniture, classic vehicles and other, all within the same use class.

Location:

The site is located within Horsham District within the village of Barn Green. It is served by a shared, surfaced access driveway known as Muntham House drive. It is part of a larger collection of former farm buildings, now used for a variety of differing uses. There are also noted to be some private residential dwellings within proximity of the application site, as well as the adjacent education facility at Muntham House School.

The site lies in flood zone 1 meaning it has a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea.

Heritage:

The property is not listed and does not lie within any Conservation Area. It lies to the west and outside the curtilage walls of Muntham House which is now used as a school & to the north-west of Muntham House Coach House (Grade II* listed) which is also part of the school grounds. Muntham House has a long history and formed the centre of the Muntham Estate of some 538acres. The current house was built around 1880 and replaced an earlier manor. The Coach house and other areas of the parkland gardens predate the current building. The land beyond the great garden walls to the west was primarily the farms with barns and cottages. Since the division of the estate in 1958, the parcels of land now fall within various different titles and the former agricultural buildings are now used for a variety of differing uses. The site forming part of this application relates to a section of one of the former agricultural buildings. It is understood that the building was erected around 1976 for agricultural use for dairy and linseed production. Now divided and changed into variety of uses outside of their original agricultural purpose. The barn to the north has no heritage status or interest.

Previous Planning / Enforcement Applications:

- Pre-application enquiry with Guy Everest – ref: PE/23/0177 – summary of advice:
  'The original reason for the condition appears to have derived from a need to ensure vehicular movements to and from the site were only infrequent. Provided this can be demonstrated as being the case for the alternative type of storage I don't believe there would be any in principle objection to the condition being varied.'

- Relevant Planning applications;

Ref: I/24/99 – Retention of use of warehouse for storage of radio & electrical equipment – Approved.

Ref: 1/20/96 - Continued storage use B8 Muntham Home Farm Muntham - Approved

Ref: I/13/94 - Retention of use for storage Site: Muntham Home Farm Muntham - Approved.

Planning Policy:

- *Policy 10 - Rural Economic Development - In the countryside, development which maintains the quality and character of the area, whilst sustaining its varied and productive social and economic activity will be supported in principle.*

…& Demonstrate that car parking requirements can be accommodated satisfactorily within the immediate surrounds of the buildings,

The development is already in B8 Storage usage. There will be no change other than to allow a wider range of items to be stored within the warehouse. Although there will be no employment directly on the land, as has been demonstrated by its occupation over the past 20years, there is a need for smaller scale storage of this nature in this area and makes good use of the former agricultural buildings on site. With the benefit of its own enclosed forecourt, there is sufficient off-road parking for any visitors to load/offload & turn on site without detriment to other users of the shared access drive.

- *Policy 25 - The Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats will be protected against inappropriate development.*

The site is already in established use and externally will remain as existing in terms of scale, massing and development pattern.

- *Policy 26 - Countryside Protection – Outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development…. In addition, proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location. Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and/or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located*.

  The site is already in established use and other than the initial bulk moving of their items, traffic generated to/from site would be no greater than previous use by the commercial electrical business and due to the infrequent traffic generated by their visits to the stores, unlikely to give any increase in overall activity on this rural site.

- *Policy 33 Development Principles In order to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment developments shall be required to: 1. Make efficient use of land, and prioritise the use of previously developed land and buildings whilst respecting any constraints that exist;*

The building has recently changed hands and as such the previously prescriptive nature of the condition could hinder this building to remain empty. By varying or removing the types of materials that can be stored, it allows a greater flexibility to encourage ongoing usage and ensure that this building is retained for a use appropriate to its situation.

Scale & Appearance:

The barn is built of steel frame clad in corrugated agricultural sheeting to the roof, with half-height blockwork walls with timber hit & miss boarding to the upper parts. There is a large opening in the south-east elevation which consists of the only entry point to the building and is secured with painted metal doors. The proposals are to tidy up the site and overhaul the walls and guttering. The timber cladding will be repaired and boarded to increase security and water-tightness. Overall the building will remain as is, i.e a visibly agricultural type, vernacular in this rural setting.

Amount:

Total Site Area: 714m2 / 0.714Ha

Total Building Footprint: 378m2

Total GIA Existing: 357m2 Ground Floor + 130m2 mezzanine = 487m2 Total GIA

There would be no increase in footprint or GIA

Water Neutrality:

The application site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone. Natural England advises that any development proposals affecting sites where an existing adverse effect is known will be required to demonstrate that they will not contribute further to an existing adverse effect. The building currently does not have mains water. As it is proposed that the ongoing use will be for storage use only there would be no requirement to connect to the mains. Any water for use on the site i.e maintaining any landscaping to the forecourt, washing down etc. will be taken from rainwater harvesting/private collection for the little amount required for the site.

Layout:

The building consists of 1no large clear span steel-framed building racked-out with shelving and an inserted mezzanine level, providing additional storage. The proposal seeks to retain the same amount of floorspace, although potentially with some readjustment of the mezzanine formation to allow easier access into the buildings in front of the main doors. There will be no change in internal floorspace.

Access & traffic generated:

The site is accessed via the shared driveway road, Muntham Drive. The access is also noted as a bridle way and due to its very nature has a very low speed limit. It serves a number of properties including the nearby residential dwellings, other storage buildings forming part of the former Banks Farm and the rear entrance from Muntham House School. Although not significant or constant amounts of traffic, it appears to be a well used section of driveway by the surrounding private properties. It is noted that nearer to the cross roads with Sandhills/Plumtree Cross and Chapel Road, that users of the park and pavilion also use a section of Muntham Drive. There would be no change to access to and from the site.

It is understood that the site was previously used by a commercial electrical company with headquarters in Billingshurst. This secondary building would provide additional storage needs and allow stores to be supplied/collected by light-goods/van. The stores would be accessed during daylight hours to pick up various components. The traffic generated would have been fairly sporadic and subject to commercial logistical requirements. Without any further information available, it is not known the actual traffic movements to and from the site. Going forward, the applicant has considered how they propose to use the site and would anticipate that after the initial bulk move to the site from their current stores and a period to allow for the repair and maintenance work required to undertake repairs to the building, they do not anticipate there being any more than 13-15 vehicle movement per day. These are based upon small light goods vehicles (Transit and Luton vans) and motor cars only.

Although due to the infrequent nature of the storage use, this is expected based upon any **one typical full day** on site for the following;

1. journey to site from home – 2. Collecting and delivering out. 3. Back to stores in – 4. Collecting and delivering out – 5. Back to stores - 6. Poss. Lunchbreak out – 7. Poss. Lunchbreak in – 8. Collecting and delivering out - 9. Back to stores in - 10. Collecting and delivering out. - 11. Back to stores in - 12. Sorting and stock-checking – 13. journey from stores to home.

Hours of operation:

It is noted that that under Approval ref: I/24/99 no work shall be undertaken between 7:00am to 18:00pm, Monday to Friday and 7:00am to 13:00 on Saturdays. No work shall be undertaken on Sundays and Bank Holidays. The space will continue to be used for storage of general goods and will not be a place for employment the would be no change to the current hours of work applied previously under condition 2 of I/24/99.

Landscaping:

The existing forecourt is primarily laid to hardstanding which has been left to become overgrown in areas with thick blankets of brambles. The proposal is to clear back the overgrowth and return to hardstanding with planings / hoggin to match in with existing. The existing access gate will be strengthened for security. It is acknowledged that on the previous approval that crates and boxes cannot be stored outside of the building.

Conclusion:

The site is no longer suitable for its original agricultural purpose or the restrictive later conditions applied to its later change of use to B8. To promote diversification in the countryside, the ongoing use of this building for B8 Storage will be protected to ensure that no inappropriate or noisy light industrial or business activity takes place on site to the hindrance of surrounding neighbours or rural nature of the setting. The building will remain, visually in the same form as it always has and assimilate within the vernacular or this group of buildings. The need for storage of the mixed items including personal effects such as furniture, clothing, trailers and other goods that the applicant seeks to store within are not disruptive. Anticipated traffic movements will be infrequent and no greater than any previous commercial tenancy which were understood to be a much larger commercial enterprise. Having no on-site employment, further reduces any real noticeable presence on site. The building is showing signs of deterioration and the new owner is prepared to overhaul to ensure that it remains in good order and serves a purpose for their needs.

S.Harvey Dec’23

Appendices

Further Photographs:



Internal view showing racking



Internal view showing mezzanine level with further racking below.



Overgrown forecourt. Hardstanding in evidence below



Forecourt with brambles and undergrowth.



Muntham Drive looking South (Site due right)



Muntham Drive looking North (Site due left)