PLANNING STATEMENT

Prior Notification application for a proposed change of use of part of an agricultural building to a flexible commercial use within the provisions of Class R of Schedule 2, Part 3 of the GPDO 2015 (as amended 2021)

at

Aglands Farm
Picts Lane
Cowfold
West Sussex
RH13 8AN

ON BEHALF OF

South Lodge Estate LLP

PREPARED BY

Clare Bartlett MRTPI PIEMA
c.bartlett@batchellermonkhouse.com
01798 877555

November 2023

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION 3

2 SITE DESCRIPTION 4

3 DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE 6

4. APPRAISAL AGAINST CLASS R CRITERIA 7

5 SUMMARY 11

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Statement has been prepared in support of a Prior Notification application which proposes the following:

Change of use of part of an agricultural barn to a flexible commercial use for use as commercial storage (Use Class B8)

1.2 The change of use is proposed under Part R of Schedule 2, Part 3 of the GPDO 2015 (as amended).

1.3 This Statement includes a discussion of the following matters:-

- Site Description
- Details of the proposed change of use
- Compliance with Part R criteria

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site forms part of Aglands Farm on the South Lodge Estate which comprises 900 acres of farmland. The application site comprises the southern half of a large agricultural building. The building measures 780sqm in total and the application relates to 390sqm of it.

Figure 2.1 – Application Building





2.2 The application building was purpose built for agriculture and was granted consent under reference CF/21/97. It was originally used for housing livestock and later for storing grain with a capacity of approx. 600 tons, and for general agricultural storage - tractor storage and a viewing platform remains within the centre of the building which acts as a divider. The building has more recently been used just for agricultural storage but is underutilised as is evident from the photograph above.

2.3 The building has a concrete base and an area of hardstanding surrounds it. Toilet facilities are located inside the building.

2.4 The building is located within the southern part of the farm yard accessed via Picts Lane. Buildings in ongoing agricultural use are elsewhere in the yard to the north of the application building.

Figure 2.2 – Site Location



3 DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE

3.1 As the building is so under-utilised, the applicant would like to be able to rent out part of it for commercial storage to provide useful income to the farming business. A storage use is considered a good use for the building for a number of reasons.

3.2 Firstly there is known demand for storage facilities in the area. The applicant has already received interest in the building from someone needing space for storage with no light industrial operations and a small room in the interior for administration/no external visitors; the client would like to build shelving units on which to store materials and some vehicles (e.g., a digger) when it is not in use.

3.3 Secondly, storage is a relatively inert use that does not generate significant associated activity and can therefore operate comfortably alongside ongoing agricultural uses.

3.4 The building is of modern construction with good head height and a large internal open space that is suitable for storing a wide range of items. No alterations are currently envisaged as being required to accommodate the storage use.

3.5 Access to the buildings is directly off Picts Lane through the made yard.

3.6 The existing area of hardstanding to the front (west) of the building provides a suitable area for parking which would not interfere with ongoing agricultural uses and traffic.

4. APPRAISAL AGAINST CLASS R CRITERIA

4.1 The change of use is proposed under Class R of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) which provides for the following as a form of permitted development:

Development consisting of a change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use as an agricultural building to a flexible use falling within Class A1 (shops), Class A2 (financial and professional services), Class A3 (restaurants and cafes). Class B1 (business), Class B8 (storage or distribution), Class C1 (hotels) or Class D2 (assembly and leisure) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order.

4.2 R.1 of the Order sets out the criteria that the site must meet to benefit from the rights. Compliance with the criteria is summarised below.

a) the building was not used solely for an agricultural use as part of an established agricultural unit: (i) on 3rd July 2012 ii) in the case of a building which was in use before that date but was not in use on that date, when it was last in use, or iii) in the case of a building which was brought into use after 3rd July 2012, for a period of at least 10 years before the date development under Class R begins.	The building formed part of an agricultural unit on 3rd July 2012, that agricultural unit being Aglands Farm. It remains in agricultural use to this day and has not been used for any other purpose.
b) the cumulative floor space of buildings which have changed use under Class R within an established agricultural unit exceeds 500sqm.	The part of the building to which the proposed change of use applies extends to 390sqm, within the 500sqm limit.

c) the site is, or forms part of, a military explosives storage area.	The site is not and does not form part of a military explosives storage area.
d) the site is, or forms part of, a safety hazard area.	The site is not and does not form part of a safety hazard area.
e) The building is a listed building or a scheduled monument.	The building is not a listed building or a scheduled monument.

4.3 Where the cumulative floorspace of the building exceeds 150sqm, paragraph R.3 (1) (b) requires an application to be submitted to the planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the following matters:

i) Transport and highways impacts of the development

The access has historically served cars, tractors with trailers and lorries in association with farming operations. The existing access allows for vehicles to enter and exit in forward facing gear. The proposed storage use will be a fairly inactive use with a likely decrease in the number of vehicle movements in comparison with the full historical agricultural use that has historically been made of the building.

There is an area to the west of the building which can be used for parking.

In terms of the existing access arrangements, these are regarded as being safe with good visibility of at least 70m in both directions. Picts Lane is a relatively quiet road with infrequency of traffic movements which will also ensure that the existing access is capable of handling associated traffic.

One incident further along Picts Lane was recorded on www.crashmap.co.uk in July 2022 involving two vehicles. This did not however relate to the use of the site access and is just one incident recorded in the vicinity of the site in 24 years.

ii) Noise impacts of the development

The storage use will not generate significant noise being a relatively inactive use. The nearest neighbours to the site reside at Pound Cottages to the north-west. These are owned by the applicant and are circa 98m away from the building separated by

established trees. It is likely that the storage use will generate less noise than the historical agricultural uses.

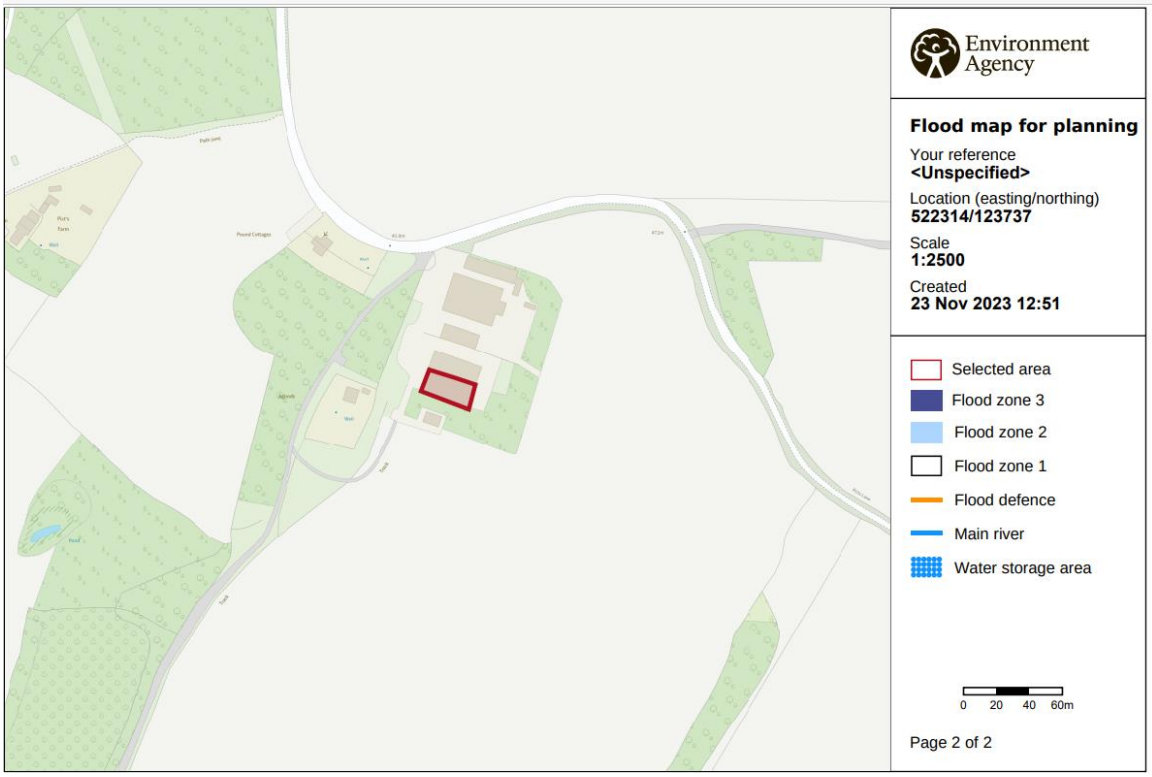
iii) Contamination risks on the site

The building is constructed on a concrete base which is to be retained. As such there is unlikely to be any contamination risks to the future re-use of the building when used for storage. The internal layout would be kept open plan to allow goods and equipment to be easily moved around with the building and no disturbance of the ground would be required.

iv) Flooding risks on the site

The site does not lie in an area at risk of flooding. The application buildings are located within Flood Zone 1 meaning that there is a low probability of flooding at the site, with people within the building will not being at risk. The immediate impacts in relation to the proposed change of use are fundamentally low. This is shown in the Environment Agency Map below.

Figure 4.1 – Flood Map for Planning



In terms of flooding from surface water, the map below confirms the area lies within a low risk of flooding from surface water.

Figure 4.2 – Extent of Flooding from Surface Water



Extent of flooding from surface water

High Medium Low Very low Location you selected

4.4 In respect of the remaining criteria, the building's location complies with the conditions set out by Class R and it is accepted that whilst the use shall be Class B8 the site is to be treated as having a sui generis use as stipulated in the legislation. There are no reasons why the location of the building should prevent prior approval being given under Class R. Whilst external physical alterations are not currently envisaged as necessary, it is accepted that any such alterations will require planning permission.

4.5 It can be concluded that the use would meet all of the applicable criteria within Class R and makes good use of the agricultural building. There have been no other changes of use at the site under class R and permitted development rights have not been removed by condition.

5 SUMMARY

5.1 Class R of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) provides for the change of use of agricultural buildings to flexible commercial use, including Class B8 (storage).

5.2 The application building has been in agricultural use since erection in the late 1990s.

5.3 The building complies with all criteria set down within paragraph R.1, namely:

- The building was in agricultural use on 3rd July 2012
- The floorspace of the building is within the 500sqm limit
- The site does not lie within a military explosives storage area, or safety hazard zone
- The building is not a listed building or scheduled monument

5.4 The proposed storage use would not have unacceptable impacts on transport and highways, or noise.

5.5 The building does not lie within a flood risk area.

5.6 It is demonstrated that the building falls below the threshold of 500sqm and must be considered under Class R, paragraph R.3 (1)(b). The building is in agricultural use and there have been no other changes of use under Class R. It can be concluded from the information given in this statement, that the proposed change of use to a storage use is fully compliant with the conditions of Class R. As such it is requested that the Council confirm that prior approval is either not required or, that prior approval is given for the change of use.