Planning Statement

Middle Conholt Farm, Conholt Lane, Conholt, SP11 9HD

Full application for planning permission for the erection of an extension to The Shoot Barn

Introduction

1. This Planning Statement is submitted on behalf of Conholt Nominees Limited (the applicant) the company managing the Conholt Estate, including Middle Conholt Farm, a long-established agricultural enterprise. This Planning Statement accompanies a full planning application for the erection of an extension to the Shoot Barn within Middle Conholt Farm.

2. The Statement should be read with the submitted planning drawings prepared by BCM and ecological surveys and report prepared by Wild Earth Ecology. We trust that this Statement is useful in setting out the benefits of the development proposals and will assist officers in the determination of the planning application.

The Site

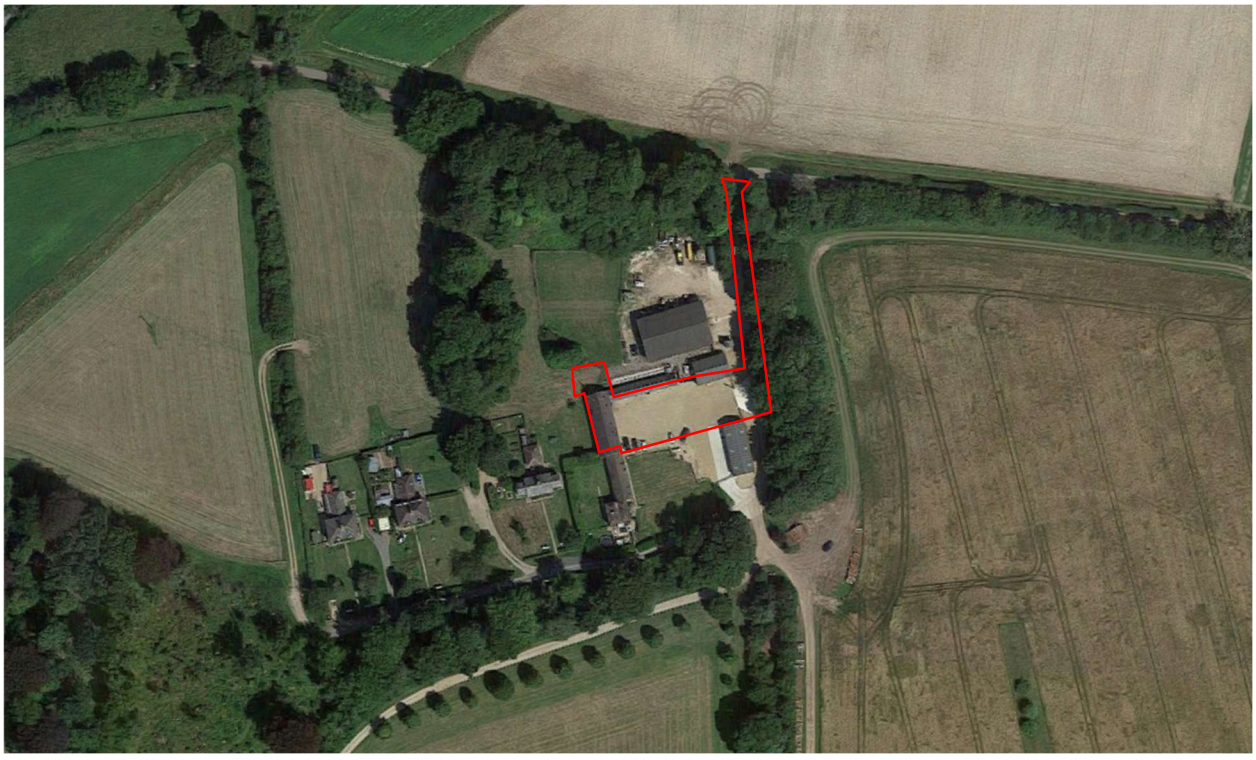


Figure 1 Middle Conholt Farm hereby referred to as "The Site"

3. The Site comprises a part of a substantial agricultural holding located at the centre of the Conholt Park Estate. Conholt Park, the main Grade II* listed house is located approximately 0.5km to the south west, with Middle Conholt Cottages, sited to the south west.

4. The name Conholt is derived from the Old English words "con" (meaning "hill") and "holt" (meaning "wood"). The estate has a longstanding arable farming tradition, and the names of the fields and meadows are also often descriptive of the crops that are grown there, such as "Wheatfield" and "Barleyfield". The shoot is an incidental use of agricultural land, held on a seasonal basis, typically from September to February on a variety of drives, including woodland, heathland, and parkland.

5. The landform of Conholt is typical of the North Wessex Downs. The landscape is characterised by rolling hills and valleys, with a few small streams running through it. The soil is fertile and well-drained, making it highly suitable for arable agriculture.

Proposal

6. The proposals comprise the erection of a single storey lean-to extension to the north (side/rear) elevation of the Shoot Barn to provide for much needed shoot storage and a catering facility for use during the shoot season.

7. The proposed extension will measure 4.5 metres in depth, with a width of 7.5 metres, and a maximum roof height of 3.8 metres. The proposed materials include a dark stained timber weatherboard on the exterior wall elevations with a mono-pitched, natural slate roof to complement the main barn.

Planning History

8. The available online planning history for Middle Conholt is as follows:

    - **K/19488** – Siting of Seven No Calor Gas Storage Tanks – Mid Conholt Cottages Nos 1,3,4,5,6,7 & 8 Conholt Park – **Approved with Conditions 11.11.1992**

    - **PL/2021/08163** - Creation of a new access to cottages at Conholt Middle Farm, in order to improve safety for cottage residents and farm staff – **Approved with Conditions 20.10.2021**

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- **Chapter 4** – Decision Making
- **Chapter 6** – Building a Strong, Competitive Economy
- **Chapter 9** – Promoting Sustainable Transport
- **Chapter 11** – Making Effective Use of Land
- **Chapter 12** – Achieving Well Designed Places
- **Chapter 15** – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Wiltshire Core Strategy

- **Core Policy 1** – Settlement Strategy
- **Core Policy 2** – Delivery Strategy
- **Core Policy 48** – Supporting Rural Life
- **Core Policy 50** – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- **Core Policy 51** – Landscape

- **Core Policy 57** – Ensuring High Quality Design & Place Shaping

Assessment Context

9. Core Policy 1 of the Core Strategy seeks to focus development at Principal Settlements, Market Towns, Local Service Centres and Large Villages whilst protecting the open countryside.

10. Core Policy 2 advises that outside the defined limits of built up areas, development will not be permitted other than in circumstances as permitted by other policies in the Plan. These other policies include Core Policy 48 relating to Supporting Rural Life.

11. Paragraph 83 of the NPPF requires planning policies and decisions to enable the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses which respect the character of the countryside. It sets out the importance of ensuring that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable.

12. The proposals are reasonably necessary to support shoot activities taking place within the Conholt Estate, and Middle Conholt is at the centre of the main agricultural holding. In the case of R v Secretary of State for the Environment, ex parte Moore [1990] 1 WLR 139, the Court of Appeal held that game shooting was "a normal incident of agricultural land use". The Court also held that game shooting did not "constitute a material change of use" of agricultural land. It should therefore be regarded that the extension of the barn for shoot facilities is consistent with the wider farming activities at Middle Conholt and the wider estate land, and therefore can be accepted in principle.

13. The existing Shoot Barn, also known as the Beater's Room, is well used through the shoot season and has limited space to accommodate storage and facilities. A modest extension to the barn is a reasonable way in which to support the existing shoot activities, particularly where there are no catering facilities available at the site. In summary, the principle of this proposed development is acceptable, subject to compliance with other policies as contained within the development plan.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

14. The proposed site is not widely visible, being located to the side/rear of the main farm cluster with intervening tree and hedgerow screening along the northern site boundary with the highway. The site is well screened from public view and there are no public footpaths cutting through the application site. The proposal is not considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding open countryside.

15. The proposed extension is modest in its design, scale and material and will reads as a sympathetic addition to a functional building. In this respect the proposal is considered to accord with the criterion of Core Policy 51 which seeks to enhance Wiltshire's distinctive landscape character and Core Policy 57 which seeks to achieve good design and place shaping. Materials will be of a high quality and will match the existing building.

Ecology

16. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report has been commissioned (May 2023) by Wild Earth Ecology, including a Preliminary Roost Assessment and Phase 1 Habitat Survey. The report recommends that

that one emergence / re-entry survey should be undertaken, and the further findings of this survey will be provided to the Local Planning Authority on receipt.

Residential Amenity

17. There are no neighbours immediately adjoining the site although 3 and 4 Middle Conholt are located approximately 30 metres to the south west of the position of the proposed extension. Given the separation distance and relatively low key nature in which the building is to be used, no harm is identified regarding residential amenity or relative tranquillity.

Highways and Parking

18. The proposal is a modest extension to an existing building and there is unlikely to be a net increase in traffic movements over and above the existing use.

Drainage & Nitrates

19. Surface water run-off will dispose to a soakaway already on site which is common practice on agricultural holdings in the countryside.

20. The site falls within the Nitrate Vulnerability Buffer catchment of the Solent, where developments must be assessed in relation to their potential to impact on the integrity of the Solent. In this case, there are no net increase in residential units and there are no wash facilities proposed. The extension will not worsen the integrity of protected sites within the Solent and no further assessment is considered to be necessary in this instance.

Conclusion

21. The proposed extension of The Shoot Barn will support the existing shoot functions of the estate, providing an area for storage and occasional catering functions during the shoot season. The uses can be reasonably regarded as incidental to the main agricultural land use.

22. Due to its location to the side/rear of the main farm envelope, the lean-to extension will not be widely visible from the surrounding area and there are no potential impacts on the amenity of the nearest private residential properties. The design is of a sufficiently high quality and will complement the design and materials of The Shoot Barn.

23. We respectfully request that planning permission is granted, and we would be happy to discuss any potential planning conditions with the Authority during the assessment process.

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