AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING APPLICATION.

1.0	**REFERENCE**	APA/03/0176
1.1	Proposed Development	"Extension to Appleton Barn to provide farm offices and welfare Facilities"
1.2	Planning Authority	Wiltshire Council Central Team
1.3	Planning Application No.	PL/2023/05243
1.4	Applicant	P.R & J.Quick & Sons
1.5	Site Address	Appleton Barn, Ashley Road, Bradford on Avon

2.0 DESCRIPTION

2.1 Location

The application site forms part of Upper Bearfield Farm. Upper Bearfield Farm lies to the north west of Bradford on Avon, to the south of Ashley Road. The farmstead is a short distance from the edge of the settlement on Ashley Road. Surrounding land use is agricultural.

2.2 Land

2.2.1 Area and tenure

The applicants' total farmed area extends to approximately 324 ha (800 acres) of which approximately 202 ha (500 acres) is held freehold with the balance on a variety of short-term agreements.

2.2. Soil Type and Characteristics

The soil at the application site is classified in the Evesham 2 association, which is described as slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils.

3.0 FARMING PRACTICE

Existing

3.1 The farm is run as a dairy unit. The milking herd comprises some 2530 dairy cows, all of which are pedigree Holstein animals. The herd is calved year round; all calves are reared on, either for sale as stores or finished animals or retained as herd replacements.

Proposed

3.2 There are no identified proposals to make significant changes to the current enterprises.

Comments

3.3 The holding is a substantial, well established farming business.

Buildings

3.4 The holding is well equipped with a number of modern livestock and storage buildings, together with the milking parlour and dairy.

4.0 EXISTING ACCOMMODATION

4.1 Dwellings owned by applicant

There are three existing dwellings on the holding. All three dwellings are modern, detached properties and all are owned by the farm partnership. The farmhouse is occupied by Mr and Mrs Philip Quick. Barley House is occupied by Andrew Quick and his family. Chris Quick occupies the third dwelling, known as Appleton Barn. Planning permission for Appleton Barn was granted under Council references 15/02604/OUT and 15/11683/REM.

4.2 The farm's employees all live in their own accommodation away from the holding.

5.0 LABOUR REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Existing

There are four full time units of labour engaged on the farm, comprising Andrew Quick and Chris Quick together with two full time employees. I understand that a further five part time members of staff are employed comprising three men and two women.

6.0 GENERAL COMMENTS

6.1 The proposal is to construct a farm office and staff welfare facility semi-detached from Appleton Barn. The submitted plans show the proposal over two storeys. The ground floor would comprise a shower and toilet block, alongside a kitchen area and staff room. The kitchen and staff room are shown as open plan. Stairs are shown leading to the first floor which is shown divided into two offices and a secure store area. The overall dimensions scaled from the scanned plans indicate 6.8m x 8.2m per storey (with a small omission for existing plant at ground floor). The overall internal area is thus approximately 55m^2 per storey.

6.2 I have discussed the need for the facility directly with Chris and Andrew Quick. They advise that the proposed development is required as:

- The farm employs both male and female staff. At present there are no staff welfare facilities so employees must use the w.c.s in the Quicks' private dwellings.
- Similarly there is no place for staff to prepare and eat food or to take breaks away from the work environment.
- There is insufficient space to use for farm administration in the dwellings and that space is under pressure from family life.

6.3 It is my view that it is reasonable to provide an area for a farm office. A modern, progressive dairy business such as practised at Upper Bearfield Farm requires an area for business administration. It is also my view that given the quantity and mix of staff there is a need for a staff welfare area.

6.4 Having established the principle of the need for the proposed areas it is then necessary to consider the amount of space that is proposed. In my view the ground floor of the proposed development is of an appropriate size to the number of employees. The floorplans for the first floor show two areas, each labelled "office" ("office 1 and office 2). A third area is shown, labelled "store". In the Design and Access statement there is reference to a "general office", a "private office" and a secure store for "files and sensitive items". Whilst I would accept the need for an office and a secure store, there is no specific justification for a second "private office".

6.5 It follows from the above that there appears to be justification for all aspects of the proposed development, aside from the private office area.

6.6 It is noted that the development will be an extension to Appleton Barn, which is a dwelling subject to an agricultural occupancy condition. There is no argument that the proposed space is required as a C3 dwelling and clearly the Council will give thought to how that might be regulated.

7.0 CONCLUSION AND OPINION

There is a need for the proposed development, however in my view there is no specific justification for the second “private office” area.

I trust the above provides you with the information required. If you require any further information, or clarification on the any aspect of the above, please do not hesitate to contact the writer.

A.M Coke BSc (Hons) MRICS

Note: *This Report has been prepared on information provided by the Applicant and or the Applicant’s Agent.*

APA/03/0176/AMC

/Users/tonycoke/Library/Mobile Documents/com~apple~CloudDocs/Documents/APA/03 WWDC/Appraisals/0176 Appleton Barn/rept.doc

29 September 2023

APA Consultants Ltd
Halstead Farm
47 High Street
Easterton
Devizes
SN10 4PE