PLANNING STATEMENT

PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE AGRICULTURAL LAND TO PROVIDE 20 CONTAINERS FOR SELF STORAGE PURPOSES AND ASSOCIATED WORKS

SOUTH FARM, WATER EATON, WILTSHIRE



DECEMBER 2023

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

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CONTENTS:

		Page No:
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS	2
3.	RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY	4
4.	APPLICATION PROPOSALS	5
5.	RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES	7
6.	PLANNING ASSESSMENT	10
7.	CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY	12

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by RAW Planning Ltd to accompany a planning application which is submitted on behalf of Kes Ventures Ltd ("The Applicant"). The application relates to an area of existing agricultural land at South Farm, Water Eaton, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN6 6JU (the "Application Site").

1.2 The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of land to provide 20 storage containers for self storage (Use Class B8) purposes.

1.3 This Planning Statement is submitted in support of the application and provides a summary overview of the application proposals as well as identifying the Planning Policy Framework within which it should be considered.

1.4 Section 2 provides a description of the application site and the surrounding area. Section 3 sets out the relevant planning history affecting the site. Section 4 sets out the development proposals. The Planning Policy Framework that is applicable to the application is provided in Section 5. Section 6 provides a reasoned justification for the development being proposed and Section 7 sets out a summary and conclusions.

2. THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application site is located approximately 1 mile south west of the village of Castle Eaton on the eastern side of the road that connects Castle Eaton (to the north east) and the A419 (to the south west).

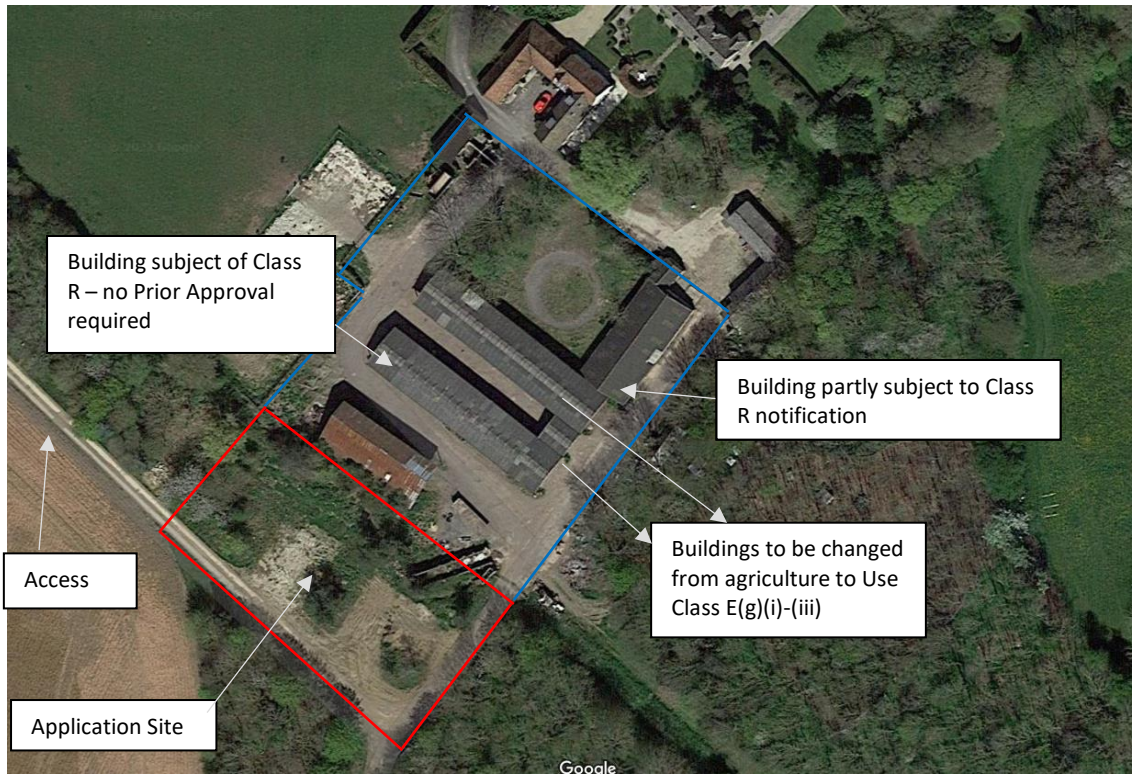
2.2 The site is accessed via a concrete access track that first passes the property known as The Lodge (including the business Prestige Cars) on the left (north) and then runs parallel to agricultural land before leading to the application site on the left (north). An aerial photo of the application site and immediate surrounding area is inserted below.



2.3 The wider application site comprises various buildings which historically were in agricultural use, but over the past eight years, have diversified into commercial uses. The planning history of the buildings at the site is set out in Section 3.

2.4 The application site itself is an area of scrub land that is lawfully agricultural land, but not used as such. It is located between the access track and the range of buildings which are now in commercial use or vacant. The land serves no agricultural purpose.

2.5 An aerial photo of the application site is inserted below identifying various buildings at South Farm and photos of various buildings are also inserted overleaf.



2.6 The application site is not subject of any statutory or local landscape, heritage or ecological designations and is located within flood zone 1 which has the lowest probability of flooding.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The application site has been the subject of various applications for Prior Approval as set out below:

- 15/01332/PNCOU – Prior Notification under Class MB – Prior Notification under Class MB – conversion of agricultural buildings to 2 dwellings – Prior Approval refused

- 15/10707/PNCOU – Notification of Prior Approval – Proposed conversion of agricultural building for form two dwellinghouses – Prior Approval refused

- 19/06241/PNCOU – Notification for Prior Approval under Class s Q(a) only for a proposed change of use of Agricultural Buildings to 5 no. dwellinghouses – Prior Approval was required and was approved on 21st August 2019.

- Letter sent to Wiltshire Council dated 20th January 2020 advising of an intended change of use of less than 150 sq. m under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R of the Town and Country planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Order) 2015.

- PL/2021/05142 – Application for Prior Approval for Change of Use from Agriculture to Flexible Commercial Use under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Order) 2015 – Prior Approval was not required 18th May 2021.

- PL/2022/05824 – Application for the change of use and extension of agricultural buildings to Use Class E (g) (i) – (iii) together with associated external alterations and car parking and external alterations to adjoining building which is subject to a change of use under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R of the GPDO – Planning Permission was granted on 4th May 2023.

4. APPLICATION PROPOSALS

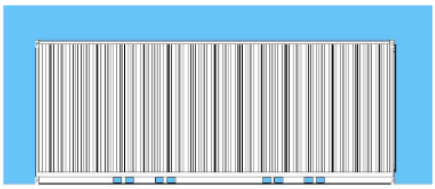
4.1 Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the application site (part retrospective) to provide 20 storage containers for self storage use (Use Class B8).

4.2 A Site Plan is submitted as part of the application showing where the containers would be arranged within the site. The proposed layout provides sufficient space for vehicles to manoeuvre around the site and park in front of containers for loading and unloading. A copy of the proposed Site Plan is inserted below:

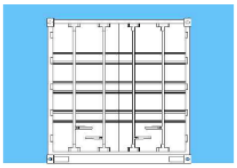


4.3 Each container would be 6m in length by 2.4m in width and 2.6m in height and would be dark green in colour as per the existing row of containers already located at the application site. A copy of the proposed container plans is inserted below:

SIDE ELEVATION:



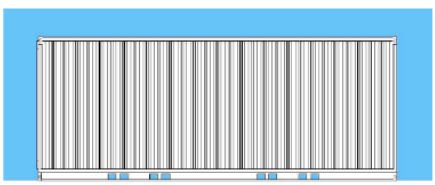
END ELEVATION:



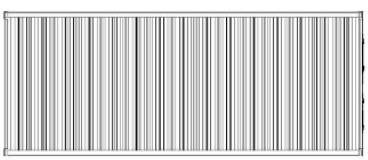
END ELEVATION:



SIDE ELEVATION:



ROOF VIEW:



4.4 A photo of how the containers would appear and how they would be positioned immediately adjacent to each other in a row is inserted below.



4.5 The containers would be served by the existing vehicular access from the existing concrete access track. No alterations are proposed to the access.

4.6 The container storage would operate as a self storage facility with customers renting one or more units. Units are typically rented by customers who are between houses or who require household items to be stored with insufficient space at home. The nature of the use means that customers do not frequently visit. As part of the proposals customers would be able to visit the premises and load or unload their containers between the hours of 8am an 6pm Monday – Friday and 8am and 1pm on Saturdays. There would be no access on Sundays or bank holidays.

4.7 The entrance gates to the site have a pin code so that customers text a number when they arrive and they are given a code that will enable them to access the site. This facility will not operate outside of the stated opening hours.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is considered to be material consideration which attracts significant weight.

5.2 This section refers to relevant national planning policy and guidance as well as Development Plan policies that provide planning policy framework for this appeal that should be considered. It deals with the following layers of policy and guidance:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- The Development Plan (including Neighbourhood Plans)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.3 The NPPF outlines national guidance and the Government's policies on the many different aspects of planning. A third version of the NPPF was published in July 2021.

5.4 Paragraph 2 explains that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.5 Paragraph 10 confirms that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

5.6 Paragraph 11 states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and for decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

5.7 Section 6 deals with building a strong, competitive economy. Paragraph 81 states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity. Paragraphs 84 ad 85 provide support for a prosperous rural economy stating that planning policies and decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings and the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. Paragraph 85 states that planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport.

The Development Plan

5.8 The Statutory Development Plan covering the application site comprises the:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015)
- Wiltshire Site Allocations DPD (adopted February 2020)
- North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 (Adopted June 2006) – There are no saved policies relevant to this application

Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) and Wiltshire Site Allocations DPD

5.9 The application site lies outside the limits of development for Castle Eaton (as defined in the Wiltshire Site Allocations DPD) and as such lies in the countryside. The site is not covered by any other designations on the Wiltshire Core Strategy Policies Map.

5.10 The most relevant policies in the consideration of this application are as follows:

5.11 **Core Policy 19 (Spatial Strategy: Royal Wootton Basset and Cricklade Community Area)** sets out that over the Plan period (2006 to 2026) 5 hectares of new employment land will be provided, including two allocations totally 4.7 hectares.

5.12 **Core Policy 34 (Additional Employment Land)** is primarily concerned with the delivery of additional employment land in Principal Settlements, Market Towns and Local Service Centres. Outside the Principal Settlements, Market Towns and Local Service Centres the Policy states that developments will be supported that:

i) Are adjacent to these settlements and seek to retain or expand businesses currently located within or adjacent to the settlements; or

ii) Support sustainable farming and food production through allowing development required to adapt to modern agricultural practices and diversification; or

iii) Are for new and existing rural based businesses within or adjacent to Large and Small Villages; or

iv) Are considered essential to the wider strategic interest of the economic development of Wiltshire, as determined by the Council.

Where they:

a. Meet sustainable development objectives as set out in the policies of this Core Strategy

b. Are consistent in scale with their location, do not adversely affect nearby buildings and the surrounding area or detract from residential amenity and

c. Are supported by evidence that they are required to benefit the local economic and social needs and

d. Would not undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations and

e. Are supported by adequate infrastructure.

5.13 **Core Policy 51 (Landscape)** requires development to protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and to not have a harmful impact upon landscape character with any negative impacts mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures.

5.14 **Core Policy 57 (Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping)** requires a high standard of design in all new developments with development expected to create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

6.1 The application site comprises an area of underused and redundant land adjoining commercial development to the west and a residential dwelling adjacent to the main road. The wider site has a number of permissions for commercial uses to operate from the existing buildings. As such, the principle of commercial development on the wider site has therefore already been established.

6.2 The key policy for the principle of development is Wiltshire Council Core Strategy Policy 34 which supports the delivery of additional employment land where the sites are adjacent to settlements.

6.3 The Officers Report for planning permission ref: PL/2022/05824 concluded that the proposals to convert and extend the existing buildings to provide Use Class E complied with Core Strategy Policy 34 (additional employment land) stating:

> *"Core Policy 34 regarding additional employment land supports additional employment development where it is adjacent to larger settlements, to which this site lies a 6 minute drive from the outskirts of Swindon. It is then subject to further criterion including meeting sustainable development objectives, support the local economy, are suitable in scale for their location, would not undermine strategic employment allocations and are supported by adequate infrastructure. It is therefore considered the proposed development is acceptable in this regard".*

6.4 It is therefore concluded that the principle of the change of use of land to a commercial/employment use is acceptable by virtue of its close connection with Swindon.

6.5 Furthermore, as set out in Section 5 the NPPF also provides direct support for encouraging a prosperous rural economy through the conversion of existing buildings for business use.

Highways and Access

6.6 A Highway Technical Note prepared by Nick Culhane Highway Consultant is submitted as part of this application. The Technical Note confirms that the access benefits from good visibility in both directions along the unclassified road to the north west.

6.7 In terms of trip generation the Technical Note advises that the proposed development is likely to generate approximately only eight daily traffic movements.

6.8 It is also confirmed that the provision of eight parking spaces meets Wiltshire Council's parking standards although the site is large enough to accommodate informal parking needs that may arise without the possibility of overspill onto the public highway.

Landscape Impact

6.9 The landscape impact of the proposed development is considered under Core Policy 51 which requires development to protect landscape character and to not have a harmful impact upon landscape character with any negative impacts mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures.

6.10 The application site is set back c. 300m from the road, with the access track being heavily treed. There are no public rights of way in the immediate vicinity. Due to these factors, the site would not be visible in public views and would not harm the landscape character.

7. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

7.1 Planning permission is sought for the change of use of land to provide 20 storage containers for self storage (Use Class B8) purposes at South Farm, Water Eaton.

7.2 The application site comprises an area of existing agricultural scrub land with adjacent buildings benefitting from extant commercial uses. The principle of commercial development on the wider site has therefore previously been established. The officer's report relating to the wider site concludes that the principle of commercial development at the site meets with the key criteria of the Wiltshire Core Strategy.

7.3 The submitted Highway Technical Note confirms that the existing site access meets the required visibility splay standards and that the proposals would generate a total of 8 vehicles per day which would have no material impact on the highway network.

7.4 The proposed operating hours and the low key use which would not require any on site operational machinery would protect the residential amenity of the neighbouring residential property. This would be an enhancement compared to the existing situation where the site could lawfully be used for pallet storage 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

7.5 The proposed containers would make efficient use of this parcel of land providing a use that can be assimilated into the rural location to a greater degree than the lawful adhoc storage of pallets. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.



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