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Director of Planning & Development Services
Wiltshire Council
Monkton Park Office
Chippenham
Wiltshire
SN15 1ER



10 November 2025

Dear Sir,

ERECTION OF A HAY / HAYLAGE STORE: SITE AT CHEESLEY HILL FARM, CHEESLEY HILL, GRITTENHAM, SN15 4JX

Introduction

This application is to provide Wiltshire Council (*'the Council'*) with Prior Notification of an intention to erect a new building at the site above, which will be used as a hay / haylage store. The application is submitted on behalf of Mr Tim Sykes (*'the Applicant'*).

Site Description

The Cheesley Hill Farm (*'the Site'*) buildings are located on the east side of Cheesley Hill, although the farm stretches to the North, South, East and West, too. The farm is primarily engaged in the growing, harvesting and baling of hay however it does also derive income from the storage of caravans and boats within some of the portal frame buildings, and another is partially used to store farm machinery. The farm buildings are predominantly portal frame, but there are also some traditional timber and brick buildings - these are generally vacant as they are no longer suitable for modern farming needs. In addition, there is a slurry lagoon on land at the north east corner of the farm complex, which was granted planning permission (ref: 17/11245/FUL) on 26th January 2018.

The farm comprises owned and contract farmed grass, however, the contract farmed land is primarily at Whitehill Lane and Breach Lane, Royal Wootton Bassett, approximately 1 mile distant. The total land farmed is 512 hectares (66.8 hectares owned, and 445.2 hectares long-term tenancy / contract farmed).

Whilst the land surrounding the Site is generally open, views from the nearest public vantage point (the highway) are limited by mature field boundary hedgerows. The height and density of these hedgerows provide extensive screening of the wider landscape, particularly when driving along the highway. There is no footway for pedestrians to view the surrounding land. Indeed, the only views of the Site are taken at long distance from the highway to the north.

The Proposal

The Proposal is to erect a hay / haylage store in proximity to other portal framed buildings that are already used to store hay and straw, and where haylage is stored externally. This building is necessary because of the significant increase in land owned and secured through long-term tenancy and/or contract farmed.

The current proposal is for a 1,250sq.m. building, constructed from materials and coloured so that it will match the existing buildings on Site.

However, because the ground levels gently fall west to east, the building's height (to eaves and ridge) will be slightly lower than those other buildings.

Planning Considerations

Need

The success of the farming operation has seen its operation grow from simply farming 61 hectares of owned land and 191 hectares of rented land to 512 hectares total. The land that is now owned and rented / contract farmed means between 50,000 bales are produced per annum.

Previous applications for buildings occurred when far less land was being farmed and far fewer hay bales / haylage was being produced. Application ref: 19/00748/APD for a machinery store occurred when 202 hectares of land was farmed, producing 30,000 hay bales and 2,000 haylage bales annually. This was not implemented and the subsequent application for a machinery and hay / haylage store (ref: 20/02576/APD) was proposed at a time when 252 hectares of farmed land, producing between 39-41,000 bales annually.

The increase in land farmed by the Applicant has increased exponentially and the need for the Proposal – 512 hectares of farmed land producing 50,000 bales annually - is self-evident.

Landscape Impact

There are no public footpaths or bridleways north, south or east of the Site. This means the only public vantage is the road, approximately 125 metres to the west / northwest. This road has matured hedgerow running adjacent and parallel to it and will prevent any clear view toward the Proposal.

The building will be located northeast / east of other portal framed buildings that are of similar size and height, and which are positioned on higher ground. The existing buildings will largely screen views taken from the road of the proposed building. Where the proposed building might be partially visible, these views will be taken in the context of the other large buildings that are similarly designed and which use the same green coloured profile sheeting on the walls and roof, therefore, the Proposal will blend in with the existing character and appearance and have a low / negligible visual impact.

The combination of factors above, means that there is no clear line of sight to the Site. In addition, the presence of the various existing farm buildings to the south and west and the hedgerow means the Site is screened from public view and even if it were visible, it would be in the context of numerous existing agricultural buildings. This means that there will be no significant adverse impact to the character and appearance of the open countryside.

Conclusions

The foregoing represents justification for the Proposal, in practical agricultural terms and based on impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Accordingly, the Council is respectfully requested to confirm via this application that prior approval is not required.

Yours faithfully

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Paul Smith

Director

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