

AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING APPLICATION.

1.0	REFERENCE	APA/002/0277
1.1	Proposed Development	"Agricultural building including for storage of hay, straw and fodder etc"
1.2	Planning Authority	Wiltshire Council Development Control Central
1.3	Planning Application No.	PL/2025/09652
1.4	Applicant	Mr James Bodman, Bodman Livestock Ltd, Windsmere Farm, Worton
1.5	Site Address	Whyr Farm, Worton Road, Potterne SN10 5PU

2.0 DESCRIPTION

Location

- 2.1 The application site falls within the applicant's larger landholding at Whyr Farm. Whyr Farm lies in open countryside at the southern end of Worton Road, immediately north east and east of the junction with the eastern end of Worton High Street.

Land Area and tenure

- 2.1 The applicant's freehold extends to approximately 26ha (64 acres) in a ring fence at Whyr Farm. In addition to the freehold land at Whyr Farm the wider farming business includes freehold land at buildings at Windsmere Farm, Worton and South Park Farm at Shoddesden. In the context of the proposed business at Whyr Farm the applicant also has the use of land and buildings at Crookwood Farm, Potterne Wick under a leasehold arrangement. I understand that in total some 121ha (300 acres) are farmed, the majority of which is owned freehold within the wider business.

Soil Type and Characteristics

- 2.2 The soil at the application site is classified in the Denchworth association which is described as slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged clay over clay loam.

3.0 AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE

Existing

- 3.1 The current and proposed farming practice for the unit is the production of beef cattle. Cattle are produced from a retained herd of suckler cows, together with the purchase and rearing of calves. Reared animals are sold either as finished at approximately 24 months or as yearling or forward stores.
- 3.2 The enterprise is currently based at Crookwood Farm, which is occupied under a leasehold arrangement. The suckler herd is 50 breeding cows. The cows are calved across the year. There are approximately 100 head of youngstock, which is split 50/50 between 0-12 months and 12 to 24 months.
- 3.3 The land at Whyr Farm is in a mixture of arable and grass and will be converted to grass subject to the relocation of the cattle business to the site.

Proposed

- 3.4 The proposal is to centre the beef enterprise in a new set of farm buildings at the application site. The cattle will be housed in the proposed livestock building over the winter and grazed during the summer. Cows will be brought into the building to calve and unweaned calves will be reared indoors.

- 3.5 The suckler herd will be expanded to 100 head and the yearlings and 12-24 month cattle will be correspondingly expanded. A calf rearing enterprise will also be introduced. Approximately 120 calves will be purchased across the year at up to two weeks old in batches of 20 head, every eight to 10 weeks. The calves will be weaned and taken through to finished animals, subject to cashflow.
- 3.6 The proposal, alongside the temporary dwelling, is to construct a new farmstead. A covered yard and a storage building will be constructed, along with a concrete yard area. I understand the cattle will be bedded on straw. The resultant farmyard manure will be spread on land in the wider control of the applicant's family or other parties' land under a dung for straw arrangement.

Comments

- 3.7 The applicant's family's wider business includes Windsmere Farm, which is an intensive piggery. The applicant advises that he has no intention or proposals to operate Whyr Farm as an intensive livestock unit.

Buildings

- 3.8 There are no buildings on site. The proposal is to erect a new farmstead, of which the proposed storage building will form part.

4.0 EXISTING ACCOMMODATION

Dwellings owned by applicant

- 4.1 There is no dwelling in the applicant's occupation or control at Whyr Farm.

5.0 LABOUR REQUIREMENTS

Existing

- 5.1 One unit part time

Anticipated if Proposals Undertaken

- 5.2 The proposed business will generate a labour requirement in excess of one full time unit. I understand James Bodman will work on the holding full time with part time assistance from family labour.

6.0 REQUIREMENT FOR PROPOSED BUILDING

- 6.1 The Prior Approval, Council reference PL/2025/09652 (now referred to as the "PA"), which is the subject of this report, proposes the construction of a new storage building at Whyr Farm. In addition to the PA, planning application PL/2025/09651 (now referred to as the "FPP") proposes the stationing of a temporary dwelling and the construction of a new farmstead. The Council has previously requested an assessment of essential need and the proposed business plan for the FPP and those aspects are covered in my paper ref 02/0275 dated 4th February 2026. It subsequently requested an assessment of the livestock building included as part of the same FPP, which I provided in my report dated 12 February 2026.
- 6.2 This section of my report assesses the need for the PA proposal. In particular the Council has asked me to explore whether the requirement is specifically allied to the FPP and whether the need for the PA building can be met elsewhere. I start by identifying the proposals submitted in the PA; then I explore the need which the building is intended to meet and finally I explore whether it is practical for that need to be met through other resources available to the business.
- 6.3 The plans submitted with the PA show the proposed storage building with a steel portal frame extending to 10 bays. The building is shown with profile sheet to the roof and upper elevations, with concrete panels to the lower elevations. One long elevation is shown fully open, for mechanised access. The overall dimensions

of the building are not shown on plan but scale as 45m x 32m. I have scaled the eaves height as 6.5m. The building thus has a floor area of approximately 1,440m² and a volume to eaves of 9,360m³.

- 6.4 The PA includes a document titled "Assessment of Need for Agricultural Storage Building" which has been prepared by Farm Consultancy Group (now referred to as the "FCG paper"). The FCG paper sets out the storage requirements to be met by the proposed building. The FCG assessment is based on a building 50m x 30m with eight bays, each 6.2m x 30m, thus providing a total area of 1,500m². The eaves height of the building is not identified. There is therefore a mis-match between the building in the submitted plans and that described in the FCG paper.
- 6.5 The FCG itemises the fodder, bedding and cereals that will be stored in the building. It does so through reference to individual bay accommodation. Clearly the bay sizes of the reference building in the FCG paper are different to those in the submitted plans. In order to equate the two I have taken the overall quantities and dimensions of the identified fodder, produce and machinery in my assessment.
- 6.6 The hay & straw requirement is identified in the FCG paper as 1,850 bales of hay and straw at 1.2m x 0.9m x 2.13m with a safe stored height of eight bales. The volume of each bale is thus 2.3m³, producing a total volume of 2.3 x 1,850 = 4,255m³. Each bale has a height of 0.9m and the proposed eaves (in the submitted plans) is 6.5m, thus bales could only be stacked six high. Each bay has a floor area of 4.5m x 32m = 144m² and a useable stack height of 7 bales. The effective volume of each bay is thus approximately 1,000m³ so approximately **five bays** (of the 10) would be required for the stated hay and straw requirement.
- 6.7 The grain requirement is identified as 360 tonnes. Adopting a relatively generous 1.5m³ per tonne of stored grain the total volume required would be 360 x 1.5 = 540m³. Assuming a stored height of 2m the floorspace needed would be 270m² or **two bays** as a half bay would not be practical and space would also be needed for access and the angle of repose. In this context it is noted that the lower elevations have structural walls, which would facilitate the storage of loose grain.
- 6.8 The running total for hay, straw and grain is thus **seven bays** of the 10 proposed bays. The remaining three bays would be used to store machinery, (tractors, trailers, implements, loaders, straw chopper and feeder wagon), together with a farm workshop area and space for milk powder, medicine and cattle sundries.
- 6.9 In my view it is reasonable for space to be provided for machinery storage and a workshop, together with the livestock sundries. Much of the identified machinery would be specific to the proposed beef unit, however a full schedule is not provided so it is not possible to offer a full analysis.
- 6.10 The FCG paper identifies the existing storage building on site, at approximately 230m². If it is assumed that it has an eaves height of 3.6m (a relatively common dimension) then it has a volume of c. 800m³, which if used for hay and straw might reduce the requirement in the proposed building by one bay. The FCG paper proposes the use of the existing building for fertilizer and seeds, which clearly would not be specific to the beef enterprise.
- 6.11 Overall it is clear to me that the need for the PA building is to meet the storage requirements associated almost exclusively with the proposal in the FPP. As indicated above, the applicant currently has the use of buildings at Crookwood Farm on a leasehold basis. The applicant's representative, from FCG, has been clear to explain to me that there is no available space at Crookwood Farm in which to accommodate the expanded herd and there is also no additional storage space available at that site. In any event, the applicant's interest at Crookwood is on a leasehold basis which commercially precludes the investment of a significant amount of capital in a wasting asset, quite aside from the operational inefficiencies of running two sites, some miles apart.

7.0 CONCLUSION AND OPINION

It is clear to me that the PA proposal is necessitated to support the FPP proposal at Whyr Farm. The majority of the proposed space is warranted, albeit there is insufficient detail to form a clear analysis of the space required for the bays outside of grain and fodder storage. There may be some scope to reduce the PA proposal by one bay, but that would require greater specific detail on the intended use of the existing storage building at Whyr Farm.

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.*

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