

Application Number:	PL/2026/04051
Location:	Ford Farm, Old Malthouse Lane, Ford, SP4 6DR
Proposal:	Prior approval Part 3 Class R for the change of use of an agricultural building to a flexible commercial use within Class E(c)(i), E(c)(ii) and E(c)(iii) - Financial Services, Professional Services and Other Appropriate Services.

[SP4 6DR - Google Maps](#)

[Old Malthouse Ln - Google Maps](#)

The proposal seeks prior approval for the change of use of an existing agricultural building (460.59 sqm) to a flexible commercial use under Class E(c)(i), E(c)(ii) and E(c)(iii) - Financial Services, Professional Services and Other Appropriate Services.

As the floorspace exceeds 150 sqm, prior approval is required in respect of highways and transport impacts.

Assessment

The application seeks a determination as to whether prior approval is required under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R of the GPDO, with assessment limited to:

- Transport and highways impacts
- Noise
- Contamination
- Flood risk

Given the proposal relates to 460.59 sqm of floorspace, it exceeds the 150 sqm threshold and therefore prior approval is required for highways matters.

This response addresses transport and highway impacts only, in line with HDM remit.

Existing Use and Fallback Position

The building is an established agricultural storage building which houses agricultural machinery, seed and fertiliser in connection with the farming enterprise at the site.

The submission does not provide any details regarding the level of traffic currently associated with the agricultural use of the building. In the absence of this information, it is not possible to undertake a comparison between the existing lawful use and the proposed flexible commercial use.

Planning History

There is planning history on the wider site, with access served by the common access from Malthouse Lane, which would serve the application site.

S/2006/0399 Change of use from Agricultural Storage Building to Agricultural Storage, Storage of Trailer / Vehicles / Caravans – Refused 2 May 2006

13/02483/PNCOU Prior approval of proposed change of use of 500 sq metres of agricultural building to relocate applicants existing business 'Fieldfare Trailers' which specialises in sale

and hire of new and used trailers and associated equipment, parts and accessories – Prior Approval not required

16/07514/FUL Retrospective Change of Use of farmyard area to outdoor storage of vehicles – Refused 2 May 2017

Access and Highway Network

Access is taken directly from Malthouse Lane (C287), which connects to the A30 to the east and the A338 to the west.

The access geometry and visibility at the junction with Malthouse Lane are considered acceptable and the site benefits from a large existing yard area capable of accommodating parking, turning and servicing activity.

Based on the submitted information, the existing access arrangement appears capable of accommodating traffic associated with the site. However, the route beyond the initial access point comprises a split driveway arrangement serving both neighbouring residential and commercial uses, with the access route to the application building appearing generally restricted in width.

The applicant has not provided sufficient information to demonstrate how this internal route would safely accommodate the level and type of traffic associated with the proposed flexible commercial use, including staff, visitors, servicing and delivery vehicles.

Proposed Use and Traffic Impacts

The proposal seeks flexible commercial use under Class E(c)(i), E(c)(ii) and E(c)(iii) comprising Financial Services, Professional Services and Other Appropriate Services.

Whilst the building could be occupied by a relatively low-intensity office-based use, the application seeks a flexible Class E consent and the level of vehicle movements could vary significantly depending upon the eventual occupier, staffing levels, visitor demand and servicing requirements.

The submission contains only a qualitative assessment of the access arrangements and does not provide:

- Existing traffic generation associated with the agricultural use;
- Anticipated traffic generation associated with the proposed use;
- Staff, visitor or servicing trip estimates;
- Vehicle type information; or
- Any assessment of the likely impact on the surrounding highway network.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the site has previously benefited from a Class R approval elsewhere on the holding, each proposal must be assessed on its own merits having regard to its scale, location and likely transport impacts.

Furthermore, previous planning applications in the locality have raised concerns regarding increased traffic using the wider highway network, particularly the substandard junction arrangement with the A30 to the east. Whilst this matter would not necessarily preclude development, insufficient information has been submitted to enable a full assessment of any likely impact arising from the proposed change of use.

In the absence of information regarding existing and proposed trip generation, vehicle types, customer visits, servicing requirements and likely traffic impacts arising from the proposed flexible Class E use, the Local Planning Authority is unable to adequately assess the transport and highway impacts of the proposal.

It is therefore considered that a Transport Statement should be submitted to support the application and enable a robust assessment of the transport and highway impacts associated with the proposed development.

Parking and Servicing

The site benefits from an existing agricultural yard which appears capable of accommodating parking, servicing and turning movements within the site. However, the operational requirements of the development cannot be adequately assessed without further information regarding the intended scale and nature of occupation under the proposed flexible commercial use.

Summary and Conclusion

The application seeks prior approval for the change of use of an agricultural building to a flexible commercial use under Class E(c)(i), E(c)(ii) and E(c)(iii). The proposal exceeds the 150sqm threshold requiring consideration of transport and highway impacts.

Whilst the point of access onto Malthouse Lane is considered acceptable and adequate space appears to exist within the site for parking and turning, insufficient information has been provided to assess the likely traffic impacts arising from the proposed flexible Class E use.

The submission does not provide any assessment of existing traffic levels, anticipated trip generation, vehicle types, servicing requirements or the impact of the development on the surrounding highway network. As such, the Local Planning Authority cannot reach a fully informed conclusion regarding the transport and highway impacts of the proposal.

It is therefore considered that further information is required in the form of a Transport Statement before a definitive highways recommendation can be made.

Amanda Hall
Highways Development Management Engineer