

Planning Statement and Agricultural Justification Report to Support
an Application for an Agricultural Storage Barn, and Associated
Concrete and Hardstanding Yard Areas (Partly Retrospective) at Land
Lying to the West of the A350, Near Sedghill, SP7 9JT

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On behalf of H & G Mclean
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1. Introduction

Holly Greenman of Foscoote Rural Consultancy Ltd has been instructed by Henry and George Mclean (Trading as H&G Mclean) to prepare an application for planning permission for an agricultural storage barn and yard areas to be located on land owned by the applicants near to the A350. The proposal seeks to expand upon storage facilities at the site, which is away from their other farmyard at Church Farm, Semley, and provide a more central base to serve a block of land that the family has been expanding in recent years, through multiple opportune purchases.

The purpose of this Planning Statement is to review the site's planning history, design and access specific context and the proposal's conformance with both National and Local Planning Policy. It will also address the essential need for such a building in terms of agricultural activity and in the context of the farming business.

2. Background

Brothers Henry and George Mclean farm as a family farming partnership (H&G Mclean), farming circa 100 hectares (250 acres) in and around the Sedghill area in a mix of grass and cereal crops. The farming business is a progressive one, and the family have recently invested in 70 acres of land that adjoins their existing land, extending the land block and enabling a wider rotation of arable crops. A plan of the farmed area can be seen in Appendix 1.

Much of the field work across the farm has previously been carried out by local contractors, but now that the farm area is expanding, the family are eager to look into ways of streamlining the inputs deployed within the business, particularly avoiding the high costs of contractors for non- specialist field work (such as hay making, hedge cutting, topping and seed- bed preparation) and are looking to take more of this in-hand.

As such, a new building that is sited centrally and easily accessible to the main block of land that will serve as a store for machinery, inputs and commodities is needed as the business expands its own fleet of machinery. The application also seeks to formalise an area of hardstanding yard areas and access pathways, as well as a concrete yard that

surrounds the existing grain store on site, and a small concrete wash bay used to clean agricultural machinery on the site.

The proposed site lies next to a grain store that was granted permission in 2022 (planning reference PL/2021/06329), making use of the same access point and yard infrastructure.

3. The proposal

The proposed 817 square metre storage barn will be located near to the recently built grain store at the site adjacent to the A350. The site has been selected to make best use of the existing yard infrastructure (which is to be formalised as part of this application) and its accessibility to the land block owned and farmed by the applicant. The proposed building is of a steel portal framed construction, with cladding on the north, east and southern sides and open on the Northeast elevation to allow ease of access to park machinery or deposit agricultural commodities such as fertilisers, sprays, seed etc. and be accessed by tractor.

The site is already being used to store agricultural machinery on, as can be seen in photographs of the site presented in Appendix 2. Such machinery will spoil if left open to the elements, so a covered store such as being proposed is essential to the longevity of this expensive and essential kit.

In addition to the building, permission is sought, partly retrospectively, for the associated yard and access areas that extends to a total of 9,500 square metres. The site has been laid into a mix of concrete areas and hardcore since the erection of the grain store in 2022.

A 1,295 square metre concrete yard and adjoining tarmac drive lies to the north of the grain store providing a turning yard at the access point to this building.

The remaining existing hardcore area of yard extends to approximately 6,830 square metres which is used and will be used to store agricultural machinery; agricultural produce, such as silage; and to ensure the site is accessible to all traffic, safely navigable by said traffic and causes no wider issues relating to soil compaction, water quality and safe operation of the site.

Included within this area is an 84 square metre concrete wash bay, which has been installed for washing off agricultural machinery.

As well as the retrospective formalisation of the existing hardstanding and concrete yard areas referred to above, this application seeks to gain permission for an additional 706 square metre area of hardstanding that will extend to the western elevations of the proposed new storage building. This will enable a good turning circle in front of this

building, and ease of access to the site, as well as plenty of space to manoeuvre vehicles.

The plan beneath shows the site, with the different yard areas both existing and proposed identified.



4. Agricultural Justification and Need

Proposed Agricultural Storage Building

The proposed building will provide year- round, weatherproof storage for the agricultural machinery that the farm business needs in order to run its various arable and grassland production enterprises. The business are bringing all field work 'in-hand' and to successfully run operations at this level many different types of machines and implements are needed. These are large, expensive and extremely desirable making them a target to thieves, and a suitable building for housing these is essential.

Multiple tractors, trailers, balers, mowers, slurry spreading equipment, foragers, combine harvesters and numerous other agricultural implements will all need to be stored on site, in a manner where they are accessible when needed.

As well as the machinery, inputs and commodities such as fertilisers, sprays, seeds, hay and straw will also need to be stored under cover. The proposed building is considered commensurate with the needs of the business, and being

of an open-fronted construction will enable quick and simple access by tractor to 'hitch-on' the necessary trailed or mounted equipment.

The partnership have recently expanded their land ownership, farming a total 250 acres in the Sedghill locality, with the largest block of land located on the west of the A350 around the proposed site of this new storage building.

Previously contractors have been relied upon to fulfil the majority of the field work, and whilst this will continue to be the case for certain events such as harvest or drilling, there are many field-based tasks that the family can bring in-hand. Not only does this reduce the reliance upon contractors, ensuring that the tasks can be completed at a time that is most suitable and beneficial for the land and its crop production, but also reduce contractors bills. It also gives the business more control and freedom with farming methods, and ensure compliance with certain environmental schemes is adhered to without the complication of having to communicate these specifics to busy contractors.

There are environmental benefits for the business also; the nearest contractors are based 7 miles away from the farmed land, and so regular visits to and from the land contributes to fuel consumption and carbon emission, something that the business is eager to reduce as they look to farm in a more environmentally focused way.

In short, the development enables the agricultural business to develop and take steps towards farming in a more sustainable and environmentally conscientious way.

Concrete Yard Area (2,341 square metres, retrospective)

The site has been laid into a mix of concrete areas and hardcore since the erection of the grain store in 2022. A 1,295 square metre concrete yard area lies to the north of the grain store providing a sweeping turning area at the access point to this building; essential for grain trailers coming in and exiting the site. The yard area is essential for grain processing, as freshly harvested grain is tipped onto the concrete pad, spread out and left for a few hours to dry in the sun before being pushed and piled up in the grain store. A flat concrete pad is also essential for grain collection, as grain poured from buckets into haulier's lorries regularly needs to be collected back up after it has blown away or been spilled. Such a task is impossible on hardcore, or on bare earth. Suitable and proper access to the site by heavy articulated lorries that will make regular movements during harvest and once the grain is sold is essential.

Harvest is, hopefully, carried out in dry weather however it is not unusual for wet summers to make access to a site such as this extremely difficult if suitable access and large enough driving areas are not provided. Heavy machinery must have tarmac/ concrete/ hardcore to drive on as the site would quickly become unusable in wet periods if this wasn't provided.

Hardcore Yard Area (5,727 Square metres, retrospective)

The remaining hardcore area of yard extends to approximately 6,800 square metres. This will be used to store agricultural machinery, some of which will be housed in the new building also. It also gives plenty of space for the storage of baled silage, which the farm makes and sells to local dairy farmers when the price is best.

The in-filled hardstanding area between the grain store and the proposed location of the new building has been laid primarily to ensure road safety. The site was originally a grass field, however, regular access by large agricultural equipment quickly saw compaction and spoil of the soil in this area. As a result, large amounts of mud were being taken off the site stuck to tyres, and taken out on to the busy A350. The business was very eager to ensure that this stopped, and so the decision was made to hardcore a large area into what is seen today, and is being sought formal permission within this application.

The laying down of the permeable hardcore plainings ensures that the site is suitable for regular movements by heavy machinery, and doesn't cause damage to soil. Not only does this have benefits for the nearby road, it also benefits water quality, by stopping soil erosion and run-off into the nearby ditch which has disastrous consequences for water quality and aquatic life not just at the site, but much further down stream also, as well as the silting up of ditches contributing to localised flooding.

The site is not only accessed by large machinery, but cars regularly visit also; a specially designated car parking area near to the site entrance will enable workers to leave vehicles they have travelled in from home at the site, safely, without the risk that they are using areas occupied and heavily trafficked with farm machinery, ensuring safety for the individuals and preventing damage to vehicles.

84 Square Metre Concrete Wash Bay (retrospective)

Set within the hardcore yard area is an 84 square metre concrete wash bay, which has been installed specifically for washing off agricultural machinery. The concrete pad is fitted with an 8X4 underground catchment tank, so any equipment that has been used to apply potential pollutants, including fertilisers and sprays, can be washed here, and the run-off captured before being properly removed from site.

Such a facility is a requirement under various agricultural accreditations and standards.

706 Square Metres of Additional Hardstanding in place of existing grass triangle area (Proposed)

As well as the retrospective formalisation of the existing hardstanding and concrete yard areas, this application seeks to gain permission for an additional area of hardstanding that will extend to the western elevations of the proposed new storage building. This will enable a good turning circle in front of this building, and ease of access to the site, as well as plenty of space to manoeuvre vehicles.

It is felt by the business that locating the building in the proposed site, and providing it with this additional access area, will sufficiently future-proof the site and prevent the need for expansion or further hardstanding.

5. Planning Policy Context

Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides that, in dealing with proposals for planning permission, regard must be had to the provisions of the Development Plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations.

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the Government's planning policies for England and explains how they should be implemented. It is a material planning consideration.

The following elements are believed to be particularly pertinent to the assessment of the proposal that is the subject of this application:

Paragraph 8- Dimensions of Sustainable Development

Paragraph 11- Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Section 4- Decision Making

Paragraphs 110 and 116- Highways Impacts

Paragraph 88- Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy

Local Planning Policy

The relevant statutory development plans in respect of this application consist of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) adopted 2015. Though it is necessary to consider the development plan as a whole, the parts most pertinent to this application are as follows:

- Core Policy 1: Settlement Strategy
- Core Policy 2: Delivery Strategy
- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Core Policy 51: Landscape
- Core Policy 57: Ensuring high quality design and place shaping

The main issues in the consideration of this application are:

- Principle of development
- Proposed design and the impacts on local character/ amenity
- Highways
- Ecology
- Flooding

6. Planning Appraisal

Principle of Development

The proposal would serve an established and agricultural enterprise, where the principle of other agricultural development has been accepted and instigated in recent years.

Submitted information demonstrates the benefit that this building will bring to an existing and expanding agricultural business, and ensures the sustainability of this business. The proposal is necessary and desirable for good farming practices, and so is consistent with policy and preceding developments for no objection in principle to be raised to development in the countryside where there is an agricultural need.

Proposed design and impacts on local character/ amenity

The proposed structure is likely to be largely concealed from public view, as the eastern boundary of the site (that borders the A350) has an earth bund running along from the access point to the border of the field, where a well- established hedge conceals views from the south.

Nevertheless, the design of the building has been considered along with the practical needs of the function of the building. The building should not appear out of place compared to others of its type within the locality, being of a steel portal framed construction, with a juniper green steel box profile cladding to the roof and three sides, which is consistent with the existing grain store on the site.

The adjacent A350 is the boundary to the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Or National Landscape). Whilst the site does not lie within the designated area, consideration has been given to the proposal's affect on this sensitive landscape. Owing to the concealment of the site, the design of the proposal and the proposal's consistency with the existing and on- going use and management of the landscape in the area, it is not considered to cause harm to the National Landscape.

Highways

The previously secured permission for the grain store at the site (reference PL/2021/06329) was subject to several Highways imposed conditions, and subsequent improvements to the access point have been executed as part of the completion of that development. Images captured from Google Street View can be found in Appendix 2, showing the site's wide and sweeping access point with substantial concrete apron and automatic gates set well back from the road to allow tractors with trailers and large lorries safe access off the highway before accessing the site, avoiding the need for large machinery to be waiting on the main road.

The visibility splays have been improved also, with visibility in both directions along the A350 achieving at least the minimum 160 metre requirement.

Whilst the development may very minorly increase movements to and from the site, it will remove movements being undertaken by local contractors to the adjacent field parcels, and movements from the Mclean's other farmyard in nearby Sedghill, which is reached via far quieter and smaller roads and poses more of a risk to other road users when being used by large tractors and machinery. As the business looks to move the main base of operations for the farming enterprises to the proposal site, the movements will be concentrated to this area only, not increasing local traffic or movements to and from land parcels. Most regularly, these visits will be one trip out of the site with a tractor, and one return to the site at the end of the day after the work has been completed. Many of the operations associated with the arable cropping have already been accounted for within the calculations submitted for the approved grain store, and the installation of this latest proposal will not affect these.

The proposal is therefore considered to have few highways impacts or considerations in terms of either safety or convenience of the highway.

Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

The proposed location of the new building is over an area of the site that has been excavated and covered with hardcore plainings since the grain store was erected on the site in 2022. This area is regularly used for parking agricultural machinery and equipment on already, and has no habitat or ecological quality.

An ecological survey of the site was undertaken for the 2021 submission for planning for the grain store, and no objections were raised by Ecology at this time. A condition was raised that no external lighting should be placed on the buildings, to

prevent adverse impacts on protected species (such as bats) and the applicant is accepting that a similar expectation be placed upon this latest proposed development.

Latest government guidance has announced a planned change to Biodiversity Net Gain, increasing the threshold for exempt development to 2,000 square metres from 6th August 2026. The proposed elements of this application (the 817.46 square metre barn, and the 706.86 square metre expansion of the hardstanding yard) falls beneath the minimum requirements for BNG. The other elements of this application are retrospective, and under Section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, would therefore be exempt of BNG requirements also.

Flood Risk

The building lies approximately 25 metres near to (but not in) an area that could be at risk of flooding by surface water. However, as the use of the building is agricultural and within a field, this should not be considered a constraint to this form of development.

The site has previously been laid into a permeable hardcore area, so rainfall on the area naturally filters through the ground beneath. Rainwater from the proposed barn roof will be directed to adjacent agricultural land where it will disperse and infiltrate naturally. The proposal therefore utilises a sustainable drainage approach that mimics natural drainage patterns and avoids increased runoff to surrounding land or drainage networks.

Other Designations

Aside from the previously addressed proximity of the National Landscape, the site is not considered to have any further relationship with specially designated sites or buildings.

Public footpaths pass nearby to the parcel, but not on it, and their view of the proposal will be concealed by existing and established hedgerows.

No Sites of Special Scientific Interest are nearby, nor historic or scheduled monuments or features, listed buildings or other conservation area.

7. Conclusion

The building is considered necessary for the purposes of agriculture, and will enable positive business development and enable better management of the expanding land block now in the ownership of H&G Mclean. The siting and design of the building are considered the most practical, making best use of existing infrastructure and offering the most practical solutions to the evolving needs of the business.

The associated hardstanding yard areas are necessary to enable full functionality of the site all year round, reducing soil compactions, preventing water quality decline and ensuring road safety. The concrete yard area to the front of the grain store is essential for grain tipping, loading and haulage by heavy articulated lorries, who will be unable to access the site without sufficient infrastructure in place, and this would have a detrimental impact on the agricultural business.

The building would be considered compliant with the requirements under the General Permitted Development Order 2015, it being under 1,500 square metres, however the applicant has previously secured a Class Q permission on the holding and so such rights are not available to them, and the needs of the agricultural business are such that this development cannot wait until such a time as the rights of the holding renew.

The building will enable growth and development of an established agricultural business and should therefore be considered favourably.

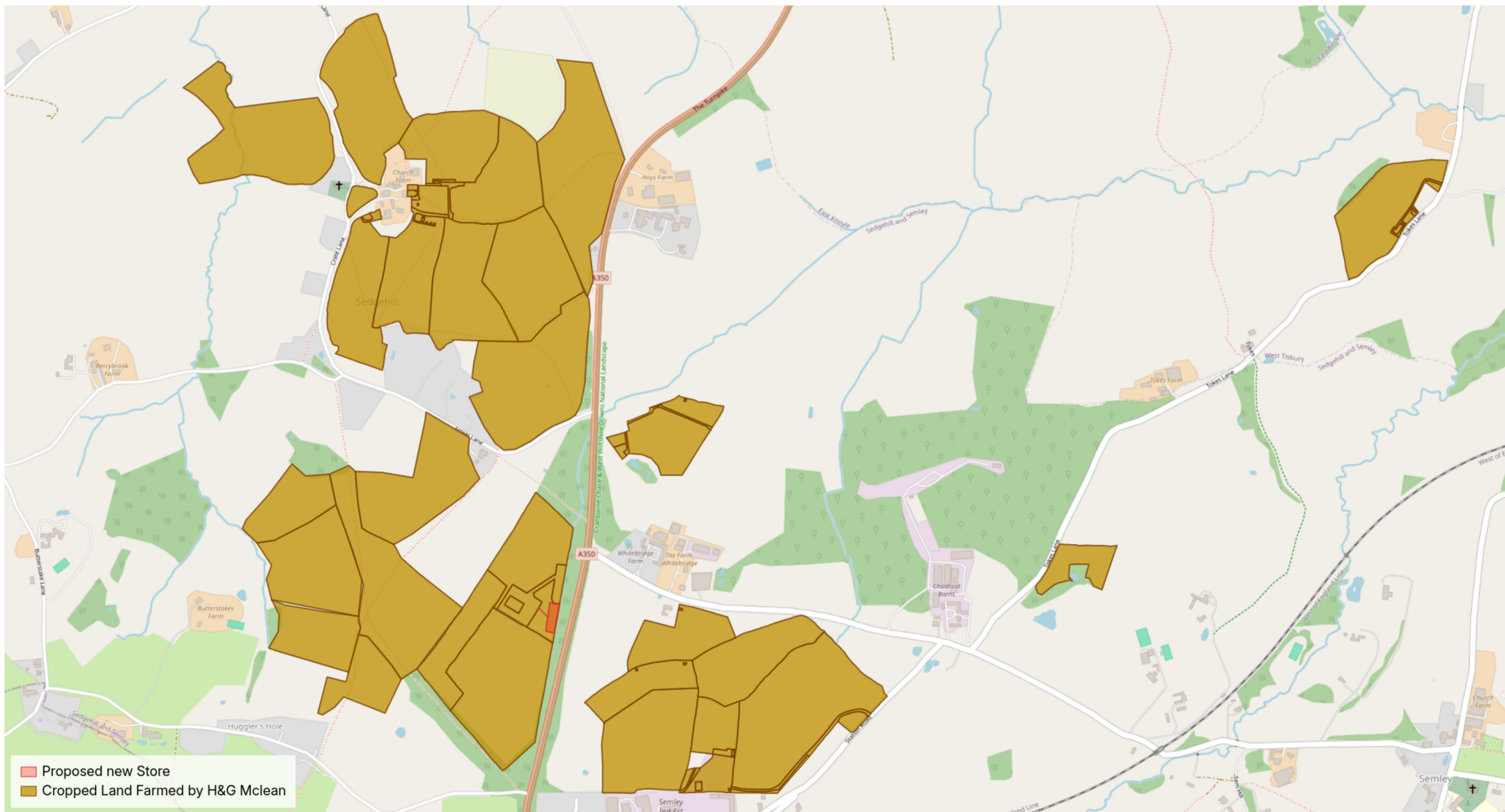




Figure 1 View of site entrance facing due North along A350, showing long and wide access apron



Figure 2 View of access apron facing south on A350



Figure 3 View of earth bund between A350 and proposed site



Figure 4 Photo of earth bund, and demonstrating planting of trees into earth-mound bund for further concealment of the site from A350 view



Figure 5 Photo of proposed site for agricultural storage building



Figure 6 View of proposed site of building facing due south, with site boundary on the left of the photo