



Additional Information in Support of a Retrospective Planning Application for Commercial Re-Use of an Existing Building (Incorporating Design & Access Statement)

Site Address:

Parsons Barn Farm
Shutford Road
Sibford Gower
Oxfordshire
OX15 5AD

Prepared for:

S G White

December 2019

Darren Stanbridge MRICS FAAV

Commercial Re-Use – Parsons Barn Farm, Sibford Gower

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is submitted in support of a retrospective planning application relating to the commercial re-use of an existing building at Parsons Barn Farm, Sibford Gower.
- 1.2 The building in question was originally constructed for agricultural purposes many years ago. The previous owners of Parsons Barn Farm did not use the building for agricultural purposes. Instead, the building was used for the storage and subsequent distribution of wood shavings and other bought in produce in connection with a business enterprise which supplied bedding and other stocks to the equestrian market (ie non-agricultural use). This involved daily traffic movements with HGVs.
- 1.3 The farm is now owned by Mr & Mrs White. They operate an agricultural business from the farm however, as the farm is only small and in light of a difficult financial climate in the livestock farming industry, Mr & Mrs White have had to make use of the under-utilised assets at Parsons Barn Farm to support their agricultural income streams.
- 1.4 The Applicant has met with Jane Law, Planning Enforcement Officer at Cherwell District Council. This application is therefore being submitted in full co-operation and in accordance with the request from the local authority to seek to regularise matters.

2. The Site

- 2.1 Parsons Barn Farm is situated to the north-east of both Sibford Gower and Sibford Ferris, and to the south-west of Shutford. A location plan is submitted with this application.
- 2.2 The farm extends to around 75 acres in all and is owned by Mr & Mrs S G White who operate an agricultural business from the holding, predominantly livestock based around a beef suckler herd. As the farm is only small, it has been important for the business to diversify and this has resulted in the recent letting of one of the buildings for use by a local business for egg storage, packing and distribution. The commercial rent received helps to support the farm business by making suitable re-use of an existing building that was otherwise surplus to requirements for agricultural purposes.
- 2.3 This application relates to a building that has previously been used for commercial purposes by the previous owner of the farm, and also in more recent years for caravan storage. The building is of typical agricultural design and comprises a steel portal frame with UPVC coated box profile steel to the elevations, roller shutter door access and fibre cement roof. In all, the building extends to around 273 sqm (2,938 sqft). This is only a small proportion of the building space at the farm.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 The recorded planning history relevant to the subject building all relates to activities taking place at Parsons Barn Farm before the Applicant purchased the holding.

- 3.2 The subject building was originally constructed for agricultural purposes. Subsequently, the former owners of Parsons Barn Farm diversified their agricultural business to support their income from farming. This resulted in the operation of a commercial equestrian enterprise. This led to the submission of planning application 06/01069/F, a retrospective planning application for change of use from agricultural to equestrian. The application site includes all of the buildings at the farm.
- 3.3 The change of use to equestrian was supported by the local planning authority. Neither the Parish Council or the Highways Authority raised any concern with the application.
- 3.4 The previous use necessitated deliveries to site with large lorries. The photographs included with application 6/01069/F (available on the Cherwell DC website) give an indication of the level of activity, with palletised delivery and onward distribution of horse bedding and other equestrian stocks. The photographs below are taken from application 06/01069/F in 2006 and show the former equestrian storage and distribution use that the previous owners operated from the farm. Activity is now significantly less.



2006 Commercial Equestrian Use



2006 Commercial Equestrian Use

- 3.5 The current commercial use taking place at Parsons Barn Farm is a lot less intrusive than the former commercial equestrian use shown in the photographs above. It comprises a small, low-key rural business with limited traffic movements.
- 3.6 The local authority has also been aware that the subject building was previously used for the commercial storage of caravans, although this has now ceased.

4. The Proposal

- 4.1 This is a retrospective planning application to regularise the use of an existing building at Parsons Barn Farm for B8 use, together with the ancillary parking of two employees' vehicles. The building is shown below:



Subject Building

- 4.2 The building is used by Cotswold Eggs Limited, a local rural business. The business receives one delivery of eggs from its supplier each week. The eggs are then stored within the application building and packaged before distribution to customers throughout the week.
- 4.3 The general hours of operation of the business are Monday to Friday, 07:00 to 16:30. There are currently two employees requiring two parking spaces. In addition to the two business owners also work from the unit, requiring a third parking space. The delivery vehicle is parked within the building when not making deliveries in order to comply with food hygiene requirements. There is ample space at the front of the building for the parking and turning of vehicles as indicated on the plans submitted. The largest delivery vehicles to visit the site are Transit sized vans.

4.4 The access point of Parsons Barn Farm onto Shutford Road is considered adequate for the commercial use taking place. Traffic movements are now significantly below those associated with a former consented equestrian use which had no objection from the local authority from a highways perspective.

5. Planning Policies

5.1 Planning policies on both a local and national scale are generally supportive of the development that has taken place at Parsons Barn Farm. Commercial use of the subject building has been taking place for many years. It is considered that the use can be accommodated without an adverse impact on the surrounding area and whilst supporting the income of a small agricultural business.

5.2 National Planning Policies

5.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that the Government is broadly supportive of development that helps to build a strong, competitive economy, and that supports a prosperous rural economy.

5.2.2 Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states:

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;*
- *THE DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION OF AGRICULTURAL AND OTHER LAND-BASED RURAL BUSINESSES;*
- *SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM AND LEISURE DEVELOPMENTS WHICH RESPECT THE CHARACTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE; AND*
- *THE RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESSIBLE LOCAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SUCH AS LOCAL SHOPS, MEETING PLACES, SPORTS VENUES, OPEN SPACE, CULTURAL BUILDINGS, PUBLIC HOUSES AND PLACES OF WORSHIP.*

5.2.3 Cotswold Eggs Limited has been operating from Parsons Barn Farm successfully since June 2019. The business is now established at the application site and it works well as a base location for the enterprise.

5.2.4 The commercial re-use of the subject building by Cotswold Eggs Limited makes good use of an otherwise under-utilised building, and at the same time it provides a rent to the agricultural business operated by the Applicant, helping to support its finances.

5.2.5 The commercial use taking place is therefore considered to be in keeping with the principles and policy guidance contained in Paragraph 83 of the NPPF.

5.3 Local Planning Policies

5.3.1 We are not aware of any specific planning designations that affect the site.

5.3.2 Saved Policy EMP4 of the Adopted Local Plan (1996) states:

IN THE RURAL AREAS, PROPOSALS FOR EMPLOYMENT GENERATING DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOLLOWING TYPES WILL NORMALLY BE PERMITTED:

(A) WITHIN AN EXISTING ACCEPTABLE EMPLOYMENT SITE, INCLUDING REDEVELOPMENT;

(B) CONVERSION OF AN EXISTING BUILDING OR GROUP OF BUILDINGS (PROVIDED THAT THE FORM, BULK AND GENERAL DESIGN OF THE BUILDINGS CONCERNED IS IN KEEPING WITH THE SURROUNDING AREA AND, IN THE CASE OF A BUILDING BEYOND THE LIMITS OF A SETTLEMENT, CAN BE CONVERTED WITHOUT MAJOR REBUILDING OR EXTENSION).

(C) WITHIN, OR ADJOINING SETTLEMENTS, FOR A MINOR EXTENSION TO AN EXISTING ACCEPTABLE EMPLOYMENT SITE

PROVIDED THAT:

THE PROPOSAL AND ANY ASSOCIATED EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES CAN BE CARRIED ON WITHOUT UNDUE DETRIMENT TO THE APPEARANCE AND CHARACTER OF THE RURAL LANDSCAPE AND WITHOUT HARMING THE AMENITIES OF SETTLEMENTS OR THE SPECIAL CHARACTER AND INTEREST OF A BUILDING OF ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE;

THE POLICIES OF OVERALL RESTRAINT OF GROWTH IN THE STRUCTURE PLAN ARE NOT BREACHED;

THE PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH THE OTHER POLICIES IN THE PLAN.

5.3.3 The commercial use taking place at Parsons Barn Farm is within an existing building and has been accommodated without extension or significant rebuilding or alteration. The building was originally constructed for agricultural purposes and is in keeping with other buildings at the farm, and reflective of the local rural landscape.

5.3.4 The use taking place is very low key and is fully located within the building with the exception of employee parking and deliveries in.

5.3.5 We are not aware of the proposal conflicting with any other adopted policies and therefore conclude that Policy EMP4 supports this application for the economic re-use of a former agricultural building.

6. Design & Access Statement

6.1 Design

6.1.1 The Process & Use

The subject building is being used for the storage, packing and distribution of eggs in connection with the business of Cotswolds Eggs Limited, a local rural business supplying eggs.

The building has been utilised for the current commercial use since June 2019.

6.1.2 Amount

The building forming the basis of this application measures approximately 14.30 x 19.10m (273 sqm).

6.1.3 Layout

The subject building is of regular shape and forms part of the existing complex of buildings. It therefore has a close relationship with other buildings on the site and its layout is in keeping with the surroundings.

6.1.4 Scale

The subject building is considered to be of a scale that is appropriate for the site and locality. The commercial use is taking place within a building extending to around 273 sqm.

6.1.5 Landscaping

Due to ground contours and existing landscaping and configuration of the buildings, the application site is relatively well screened. The use taking place is low key and mainly takes place within the confines of an existing building. No additional landscaping is therefore proposed.

6.1.6 Appearance

The building is of steel frame and clad externally with dark green box profile steel cladding. The roof is grey fibre cement cladding. It therefore takes the appearance of a typical steel framed agricultural building and is not out of keeping with the local area.

6.2 Access

6.2.1 Parsons Barn Farm is accessible from Shutford Road. The application site is accessed via the main tarmac drive to the house and buildings. There are no changes proposed to the access. There will be no increase in traffic movements as the use has already been taking place since June 2019 and the use is far less intensive than previous consented commercial equestrian use on the holding.