

Case Officer: Gemma Magnuson

Recommendation: Refuse

Applicant: S G & N M White Farming

Proposal: Erection of a farm workshop and secure storage for equipment plus wood store for the Farmhouse

Expiry Date: 17 July 2020

1. APPLICATION SITE AND LOCALITY

- 1.1. Parsons Barn Farm is an isolated site situated north-east of the village of Sibford Ferris/Gower, accessed via a track taken from Shutford Road. There are no listed buildings in the vicinity and the site is not in a designated Conservation Area. The land has been identified as containing naturally elevated levels of Arsenic. There are no other site constraints relevant to this application type.
- 1.2. The site and surroundings consist of a mixed use farmyard, farmhouse and detached bungalow Five Corners to the west. The Bungalow is not associated with the farm.

2. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1. The proposed development would involve the erection of a building with a footprint of 18m x 17m (306m²), a height of 4.5m to eaves and 6.8m to the highest part of the centrally pitched roof. Construction materials would consist of steel profile tin walls with fibre cement sheet roof. The walls would be green in colour and the roof grey.
- 2.2. The proposed building would replace an existing structure in a poor state of repair, upon the same footprint.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1. The following planning history is considered relevant to the current proposal:

Application: 16/01834/Q56 Refused 3 November 2016

Change of use of existing cart shed to 2 No dwellings and associated operational development

Application: 18/00759/F Permitted 26 June 2018

Change of Use of a former agricultural building (subsequently equestrian) to Class B8 storage use and associated external parking of commercial vehicles in connection with the business occupier (Gentlevan Removals) (existing unauthorised)

Application: 19/02967/F Permitted 28 February 2020

RETROSPECTIVE - Change of Use of a former agricultural building to form an egg storage, packing and distribution plant

- 3.2. At the beginning of the year, retrospective planning permission was granted for the change of use of a former agricultural building to form an egg storage, packing and distribution plant under reference 19/02967/F. The supporting statement explained that the farm is "*only small*" and that the applicant had recently let the building that was the subject of the application to a local egg business in order to support the farm business through commercial rent. The existing building was described as "*surplus to requirements for agricultural purposes*". During my site visit I noted that the building appeared to be in a good state of repair.
- 3.3. On 26 June 2018 retrospective planning permission was granted for the change of use of a former agricultural building to Class B8 storage use, Gentleman Removals, whom I understand are tenants, under reference 18/00759/F. The supporting statement explains that the building is "*otherwise under-utilised*" with the rent provided supporting the finances of the agricultural business.
- 3.4. During 2016, the applicant sought to convert another building within the site to form two dwellings under reference 16/01834/Q56 although this was refused.

4. PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

- 4.1. No pre-application discussions have taken place with regard to this proposal.

5. RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY

- 5.1. This application has been publicised by way of letters sent to all properties immediately adjoining the application site that the Council has been able to identify from its records. The final date for comments was **14 July 2020**, although comments received after this date and before finalising this report have also been taken into account. One response was received, objecting to the application.
- 5.2. The comments raised by third parties are summarised as follows:
 - There are already 6 stables and a barn used for storage
 - Approx. 25 cows and calves in one barn during the winter.
 - All fieldwork is done by a contractor so very little farm machinery
 - Wood is already stored in the existing building, no need for an addition
 - Only wood used is for the wood burning stove in the lounge
 - Queries need for workshop dealing with agricultural implements due to contractors
 - Applicant owns a tractor and toppler and these are kept in the barn already
 - Queries need for increase from 180m² to 336m²
 - A house one day
 - The existing shed is not L shaped but rectangular
 - The removal company now have 2 barns in use for storage
 - 1 Dutch barn is an egg packing station

- What was a genuine farm is turning into an industrial site

5.3. The comments received can be viewed in full on the Council's website, via the online Planning Register.

6. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

6.1. Below is a summary of the consultation responses received at the time of writing this report. Responses are available to view in full on the Council's website, via the online Planning Register.

PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS

6.2. Sibford Gower Parish Council – object, on the following grounds:

The property is located in a relatively isolated rural position with one adjacent neighbour whose property was formerly part of the previous farm/hay and straw/shavings business operating from this site. Currently, the site is occupied by three separate business activities small farming operation comprising c 25 cows and calves / Gentlevan Removals removals and associated storage facilities/ Cotswold Eggs Ltd egg storage, packing and distribution plant. This represents a considerable degree of diversification on this modest farmyard site. The proposed new building will have a surface area of 336m² (the existing building is 180m²) which is an increase of 156m². It will be for the Planning Officer to review this 86.7% increase in surface area within the context of the relevant planning law, together with the potential overdevelopment of the site. The design and external appearance of the proposed new building would appear to be broadly in accord with the existing secure storage buildings. However, we are concerned that, due to the siting of this much enlarged new building, it will materially dominate the adjacent property (Five Corners) delivering an adverse impact on quality of life for the resident. There are concerns regarding the proposed wood store, namely:

- the applicant states that it will be located on an existing footprint, although fails to provide supporting evidence
- the indicated dimensions (4.8m x 7.8m) present as excessive for known farmhouse requirements, with identified access only gained via the one shuttered door identified on the Front View
- consideration should be given to incorporating the domestic wood store within the proposed workshop and secure storage area. The previous planning history for the site is identified as a material consideration:
 - 16/01834/Q56 - change of use of existing cart shed to 2 dwellings - refused 03/11/16 18/00759/F – retrospective commercial change of use of former agricultural building to B8 storage and associated commercial vehicle parking (Gentlevan Removals) - approved 26/08/18
 - 19/02967/F - retrospective - change of use of former agricultural building to form an egg storage, packing and distribution plant (Cotswold Eggs Ltd) - approved 28/02/20

There are a number of concerns identified:

- the proposed new building could become occupied by another separate business venture, thereby creating a significant light industrial complex in this rural location

- a subsequent change of use application could be submitted for residential accommodation. Should the application be approved, we would request that due consideration be given to the provision of specific conditions with regard to:
- clearly identified working hours during demolition/construction
- the impact of potentially excessive noise in regard to the close proximity of the adjacent property (Five Corners) to the site
- restricted use for the new building specifically in connection with the existing farm operation, associated machinery and wood store for the farmhouse, and for no other purpose whatsoever.

OTHER CONSULTEES

6.3. None.

7. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

7.1. Part 6, Class A of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)

7.2. Other Material Planning Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

8. APPRAISAL

8.1. The overall agricultural unit is over 5 hectares in total, as detailed in the application forms submitted by the applicant. The parcel of land on which the development would be carried out is more than 1.0 hectares in area. The application therefore stands to be considered against criteria set out in Class A, Part 6, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.

8.2. *Class A, Part A explains that permitted development is the carrying out on agricultural land comprised in an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more in area of –*

- a) *Works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building; or*
- b) *Any excavation or engineering operations,*

Which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit (my emphasis).

8.3. Based on the planning history and information provided by the applicant, Parish Council and neighbour, I do not consider that I could confidently describe the proposed building as being reasonably necessary for the purposes and agriculture.

8.4. Within the last two years, two barns have been converted to non-agricultural uses since they were considered to be surplus to requirements or under-utilised. During 2016 the applicant sought to convert a further barn to form two dwellings, this was refused, although the submission of the application suggests that the barn was also not required in connection with agricultural operations at the site. I understand that a further barn may now be used by Gentleman Removals (see Parish Council comments) although I do not have confirmation of this at the time of writing.

- 8.5. The development description includes “*wood store for farmhouse*” and this is not considered to be an agricultural use.
- 8.6. The applicant has explained that the existing barn has been used as a blacksmiths forge and welding shed, and presumably this would continue within the replacement shed. It is not clear if these are separate businesses, or if these are connected to the agricultural operations within the unit.
- 8.7. Fencing would be stored within the proposed building, although presumably this would only be temporary, until it has been erected throughout the holding.
- 8.8. I consider that the proposed structure is required to store items that have been displaced following the conversion of existing barns, that are in a better state of repair, to non-agricultural uses. Further, I am not convinced that the intended use of the proposed structure is for agricultural purposes. I therefore do not consider that the proposed barn is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture, resulting in the failure to comply with Part 6, Class A of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

9. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

- 9.1. The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposed building to be used as a farm workshop, secure storage for equipment and wood store for the farmhouse is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture. I therefore consider that planning permission is required for the building.

10. RECOMMENDATION

That permission is refused, for the following reason(s):

The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposed building to be used as a farm workshop, secure storage for equipment and wood store for the farmhouse is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture. Planning permission will therefore be required for the building.

Case Officer: Gemma Magnuson

DATE: 15 July 2020

Checked By: Paul Ihringer

DATE: 17/7/20
