

Application for Determination

Parish	Mautby		
Reference	BA/2015/0188/FUL	Target date	24 September 2015
Location	Poplar Farm, Church Lane, Runham, Mautby		
Proposal	Retention of existing extensions to agricultural barns plus further extensions and erection of an additional farm building		
Applicant	Mr J Green		
Recommendation	Approve subject to conditions		
Reason for referral to Committee	Third party objections received		

1 Description of Site and Proposals

- 1.1 The application site is located remote from the main settlement of Runham at the southern end of Church Lane, south of St Peter and St Paul's Church and on the edge of, but outside, the Halvergate Marshes Conservation Area. The site measures approximately 1.5 hectares and has historically been in agricultural use.
- 1.2 Church Lane turns 90 degrees to the west at the application site and on the southern side of the road to the west there is a small group of dwellings. A public footpath runs along the western boundary of the site in a southerly direction towards the River Bure. East of the site there is land used for the grazing of horses and to the south there are open grazing marshes. To the north the land rises gently towards Runham Road which passes through Stokesby, Runham and Mautby. This area has a strong rural and agricultural character. The application site is outside any development boundary and in flood risk zone 3.
- 1.3 The site is roughly square in shape sitting at the corner of Church Lane and the public footpath and the development is concentrated in the northernmost half of the site which is separated from the grazing area beyond by a post and wire fence. The western and northern boundaries have recently been planted with conifer hedges where there are not already established conifers.
- 1.4 It is understood that the site was vacant and dilapidated until the applicant took ownership in 2010 and began to clear and develop it. The application

seeks to regularise some existing development that has been completed without consent and proposes new development to reorder the site.

- 1.5 It is proposed to retain existing extensions to agricultural barns and add new extensions and the erection of an additional farm building. The existing buildings consist of a cattle shed measuring approximately 24m x 10m at the centre of the site with open cattle yard along the southern side, a smaller cattle shed measuring 12m x 14m with adjoining yard and concrete hardstandings along the western boundary and a concrete hardstanding forming a partly enclosed feed pad to the southeast. A static caravan also exists along the northern boundary and is the subject of a separate application (BA/2015/0190/FUL).
- 1.6 The existing buildings have been adapted from previous pole barn structures and are constructed of metal frames with low blockwork walls and metal railings with Yorkshire boarding above. The roofs have corrugated metal sheeting with some clear panels to allow natural light in, the central shed has a low monopitch roof and that to the west has a higher dual pitched roof. It is proposed to retain these and extend them.
- 1.7 The central shed would be extended to the north along the whole length, with the extension measuring 24m x 10m. This would also have a monopitch roof in the opposite direction to the existing, forming a valley between the two, and all materials would match the existing.
- 1.8 To the west, the existing shed would be extended over the attached open yard to match the dimensions and materials of the existing shed at 12m x 10m. A timber feed store measuring 8m x 6m would be built on the existing hardstanding to the north and this would also be extended to provide parking for a livestock trailer.
- 1.9 A new cattle shed measuring 24m x 12 is proposed along the southern boundary, matching the dimensions of the existing central shed and also having an attached open cattle yard. Around all the buildings, concrete hardstanding would be laid to assist with mucking out and managing surface run-off. The cattle sheds are used for housing cattle and sheep during calving, lambing and over the winter, but the animals are predominantly out to graze. The proposal would facilitate an expansion in the cattle herd from 30 to 50 cows and their followers; there are also around 30 sheep, but these are mainly grazed off-site.
- 1.10 To the east of the site, an existing open area would be divided into designated storage areas. The southernmost area would store straw bales, north of this straw trailers, a teleporter and tractor would be parked. A further straw yard would be provided nearer the road, separated from the road by storage for silage bales. These would be accessed by hardcore tracks.

2 Site History

BA/2015/0190/FUL Permission for retention of residential caravan – pending consideration.

3 Consultation

Parish Council – Parish Councillors feel there is an overdevelopment of the land - noise and environment issues could occur. The ditches that the applicant has filled in on the north/western corner of the site should be reinstated. Mr Green's letter accompanying the application paperwork is at odds with the planning application regarding numbers of animals. Accommodating livestock within 400 m of a dwelling - the plans submitted show cattle sheds a lot closer than that. Parish Councillors feel the cattle shed close to the adjacent dwelling should be used for storage of straw and the No3 storage shed for cattle.

Broads Society – No objections.

District Member – No response.

Environment Agency – No objection provided the LPA are satisfied the development would be safe for its lifetime and you assess the acceptability of the issues within your remit.

GYBC Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions and informatives we believe are necessary to prevent detriment to amenities. Environmental Services has not witnessed a statutory nuisance from flies. Recommended conditions on contamination, fly management plan, hours of work, period of use of farm for livestock and air quality.

Representations

Representations have been received from the two occupiers of 1 Church Lane, both of whom object to the proposals on grounds of amenity (flies, odour and noise), flooding and proximity to residential properties.

Two representations in support of the application on grounds of improving the appearance of the site and the opportunity this development provides for local enterprise.

The applicant has also submitted a copy of a petition in support of the application that they have undertaken. This includes 60 signatures.

4 Policies

- 4.1 The following Policies have been assessed for consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework ([NPPE](#)) and have been found to be consistent and can therefore be afforded full weight in the consideration and determination of this application.

CS1 – Landscape Protection and Enhancement

[DEVELOPMENTPLANDOCUMENT](#)

DP1 – Natural Environment

DP2 – Landscape and Trees

DP3 - Water Quality and Resources

DP4 – Design

DP29 – Development on Sites with a High Probability of Flooding

- 4.2 The following Policies have been assessed for consistency with the NPPF and have found to lack full consistency with the NPPF and therefore those aspects of the NPPF may need to be given some weight in the consideration and determination of this application.

CS7 – Environmental Protection

CS20 – Rural Sustainability

DP28 – Amenity

5 Assessment

- 5.1 In the determination of the application it is necessary to consider the principle of the development and if this is acceptable the issues of design, landscape, heritage assets, amenity, flood risk and water quality.
- 5.2 With regard to the principle of the development, the NPPF is supportive of the sustainable growth and expansion of rural business and the promotion of agricultural businesses (paragraph 28). This site has formerly been used for agriculture and, given the strongly agricultural character of the surrounding area, facilitating this continued use through a redevelopment is considered acceptable in principle. The proposed buildings would all support use of this site as a base for cattle and other livestock farming, with adjoining land and sites elsewhere used for grazing.
- 5.3 The existing and proposed buildings are simple and functional in design and materials, fit for their agricultural purpose. They are relatively modest in scale individually and would be no higher than the existing buildings on site. The Parish Council's concerns regarding overdevelopment are understood, however each building is considered appropriate to the scale of the site and cumulatively it is considered preferable to cluster the buildings than to spread them over a wider area by extending into the marshes.
- 5.4 The footprint of development would increase and remain concentrated in the western part of the site. The applicant has chosen to site the buildings to the west and storage to the east due to the noise created by the movement of machinery associated with the straw and silage storage and

vehicle parking. It is also noted that the siting is supported by the Environment Health Officer due to an overhead electrical wire in the western part of the site which is hazardous for vehicle movements. The proposed layout is therefore considered appropriate, subject to any impacts on amenity which are considered below, and overall the proposal is considered acceptable in design in accordance with Policy DP4.

- 5.5 From the south, the site is open to views from the grazing marshes within the Halvergate Marshes Conservation Area where it is also seen in the foreground of views of the grade II* listed church. Grazing of the marshes is a strong characteristic of the Conservation Area and farms and buildings to support this use on the upland fringes are also typical.
- 5.6 The storage area to the east of the site has been designed so that straw bales would be along the southern edge to screen the machinery behind and the tallest building on site is gable-on to the marshes, reducing the visual bulk of development in views from the south. The established conifer hedging on the northern boundary forms a soft backdrop for the development, but it is considered necessary to reinforce, and in the longer term replace, this with additional planting to provide a natural backdrop.
- 5.7 The church is on higher ground to the north and the tower in particular is seen in views of the existing and proposed buildings. This proposal offers an opportunity to achieve a more ordered solution on site than at present and sensitive materials and new landscaping are considered necessary to ensure the proposal would have no greater impact on the setting of the church than the existing site, with the potential to offer an enhancement of distance views. Subject to conditions, it is therefore considered any adverse impacts on designated heritage assets and landscape character can be satisfactorily mitigated in accordance with Policies DP2 and DP5 and the NPPF.
- 5.8 With regard to amenity, the farm operations have recently given rise to complaints regarding flies and odour and the objections received have reiterated these concerns in light of the proposed extensions and new building. The dwellings to the west are within 40 metres of the site and the impacts of the proposed development require careful consideration.
- 5.9 The Environmental Health Officer advises that, notwithstanding the complaints they have received, they have not witnessed a statutory nuisance with regard to flies and have no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions including a fly management plan. They also recommend restricting the use of the buildings for livestock to the colder months only (October – March), which will help to prevent issues of odour and flies in the spring and summer. During the period April – October, livestock would only be allowed to use the buildings in limited circumstances, such as when they are in transit between grazing sites, in times of flood, when being treated for illness or injury or when calving/lambing and this can be covered by planning condition. These conditions are considered necessary to mitigate any significant fly and odour issues, above those

which may be expected in a rural, agricultural area. A further condition regarding working hours for construction is also considered appropriate to mitigate any unacceptable levels of disruption during the development period and conditions requiring a contamination assessment are also considered appropriate.

- 5.10 In terms of the operation of the farm, it is appreciated the Parish Council would prefer the cattle shed on the western boundary not to be occupied by animals as this is closest to the neighbouring dwellings, however the applicant's rationale for the proposed layout is considered sound and seeks to minimise impacts on amenity. In accordance with the condition on use of the buildings, the sheds would only be occupied intermittently and at a low density for six months of the year and this would help mitigate any impacts from noise, as well as flies and odour.
- 5.11 This is an agricultural site in a rural area and it is considered that the use of appropriate conditions can mitigate any unacceptable impacts on amenity. Furthermore, there are non-planning regulations and codes of good practice which cover amenity and environmental impacts, as well as animal welfare. On balance, the proposal is considered acceptable in accordance with Policy DP28.
- 5.12 The site is in flood risk zone 3 and, in accordance with the NPPF, this 'less vulnerable' classified development is only acceptable if it passes the Sequential Test. To do so, there must be no other reasonably available site at a lower flood risk which could accommodate this development and the applicant has confirmed that they own no other land. The Environment Agency have no objection in principle but note the site would flood in various flood events if the river were not defended and that this risk will increase over the lifetime of the development with climate change. It is considered that a flood evacuation plan and flood recovery measures can satisfactorily mitigate the residual risk and that, subject to conditions requiring these, the proposal is acceptable in accordance with Policies CS20 and DP29 and the NPPF in respect of flood risk.
- 5.13 A reed bed lagoon for surface water run-off is proposed in the meadow immediately south of the buildings. A surface water management plan including full details of this lagoon is considered necessary to ensure there are no adverse impacts on local water quality in accordance with Policy DP3 or any increase in risk of surface water flooding. Queries have been raised over the infilling of ditches around the site and this is being investigated separately.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 This application seeks to retain the existing development and expand this to support the continued use of the site for agricultural purposes. This is acceptable in principle and the simple, functional buildings and ordered layout are considered appropriate for this use in this location. With agreement on the precise materials and finishes to be used and additional landscaping, it is not

considered the proposal would harm the adjacent Conservation Area or nearby listed church, nor the local landscape.

- 6.2 The proximity to a group of residential dwellings and the potential impacts this may have on the amenity of the occupiers is a significant consideration. It is considered that any unacceptable impacts from flies or odour can be satisfactorily managed through appropriate conditions, as can any disruption from construction noise. Limiting the occupation of the buildings by livestock through the spring and summer months to temporary and low intensity uses will mitigate any significant amenity impacts and ensure the livestock is out to graze for the majority of the year. The recommended Environmental Health conditions are all considered necessary to ensure there are no unacceptable impacts contrary to Policy DP28.
- 6.3 Subject to appropriate conditions, the residual flood risks and any adverse impacts on water quality can be satisfactorily mitigated.

7 Recommendation

7.1 Approve subject to conditions:

- (i) Standard time limit
- (ii) In accordance with approved plans
- (iii) Material samples
- (iv) Landscaping plan
- (v) Surface water management plan including full details of new lagoon
- (vi) Flood evacuation plan
- (vii) Flood recovery measures
- (viii) Contamination report
- (ix) Further assessment if previously unidentified contamination discovered
- (x) Fly management plan
- (xi) Hours of work for construction
- (xii) No livestock to be kept in buildings or within site between first week of April and last week of October save for:
 - transit between grazing sites;
 - periods of flooding;
 - treatment and recuperation from illness or injury; or,
 - calving and lambing.

8 Reason for recommendation

- 8.1 The proposal is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Policies CS1, CS7 and CS20 of the adopted Core Strategy (2007), Policies DP2, DP3, DP4, DP5, DP28 and DP29 the adopted Development Management Policies (2011) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) which is also a material consideration in the determination of this application.

Background papers: Application File BA/2015/0188/FUL

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Date of Report: 26 August 2015

Appendices: APPENDIX 1 – Location Plan

APPENDIX 1

BA/2015/0188/FUL - Poplar Farm, Church Lane, Runham, Mautby, Norfolk, NR29 3EL- Retention of existing extensions to agricultural barns plus further extensions and erection of an additional farm building.

