

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee

5<sup>th</sup> April 2006

**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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**S/0185/06/F - Fulbourn  
Erection of Grain Dryer Building  
Queens Farm, Wilbraham Road, for G. C. Lacey and Son**

**Recommendation: Delegated Approval/Refusal  
Date for Determination: 5<sup>th</sup> May 2006 (Major Development)**

### Site and Proposal

1. Queen's Farm is sited immediately to the north-east of Fulbourn, where Station Road turns into Wilbraham Road, and consists of two houses and two ranges of farm buildings. The farm totals 405ha (1,000 acres) of which 303ha (750 acres) is owned, the remainder is farmed on a full agricultural tenancy under the Agricultural Holding Act 1986.
2. Set back some 225.0m from Station Road/Wilbraham Road, is a range of various barns measuring, in total, 130.0m x 40.0m approximately. At present they are part commercial, part agricultural - see **History** below.
3. Another 220.0m to the north is another range of buildings measuring, in total, 120.0m x 30.0m approximately. This is a former Government Intervention Store part rented out for grain/crop storage.
4. The full application, received 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2006, proposes the erection of a fifteen, 6.0m bay grain storage building measuring 90.0m x 20.5m. It will be sited to the west of the farm road immediately to the south of the former Intervention Store. The building will have an eaves height of 6.2m and a ridge height of 9.0m. The roof and top half of the walls will be clad with profiled steel sheeting, the bottom 3.0m to be grain walling.

### Planning History

5. Two houses approved in mid '70's and 1997. Original barns, grain stores, workshops built in the 1950's. Turkey buildings added 1976 and 1996. The Intervention Store built 1970's with two small additions in early 1980's.
6. Following difficulties in the Turkey market, consent was granted in 2001 and 2003 to use some buildings for B1, B2 and B8 Use (light industrial, general industrial and warehousing.)
7. More recently, 2004, consent was granted to use the 1950's building for B8/storage use. Whilst this latter use has not yet commenced, the former turkey buildings are used by an engineering company.

8. At the January 2006 Committee (Item 18) an identical building, described at that time as a “grain store”, was refused for the reason:-

“With current storage facilities on the farm sufficient to store its annual output of grain, no case has been put forward to justify the need for this second building. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies P1/2 and P9/2a of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies GB1 and GB2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.”

### **Planning Policy**

#### *i) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003*

9. **P1/2** (Environmental Restrictions on Development) restricts development in the countryside unless it can be demonstrated to be essential.

10. **P9/2a** (Green Belt.)

#### *ii) South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004*

11. **GB1** and **GB2** - Green Belt general principles. Development is in appropriate unless it comprises, amongst others, buildings for agriculture.

12. **EN5** (The landscaping of new development)

### **Consultation**

13. **Fulbourn Parish Council** ‘Approves’ the application, but states:

“We are concerned at the proliferation of buildings on this site. However, we have no objection to a new drier to replace buildings not up to standard. We assume this use is for the farm itself.”

14. **Great Wilbraham Parish Council** has asked to be consulted on applications appertaining to this farm and recommend Refusal, stating:

“The proposed development with the additional building (without removing the other two buildings currently used), clearly allows for over capacity. The Parish Council are concerned that this surplus capacity will generate extra drying availability which could be taken up by other farm growers and therefore generate extra HGV traffic, some of which would undoubtedly come through Great Wilbraham.

We therefore recommend REFUSAL for this proposal.”

15. **The Environment Agency** has no objections but asks for safeguarding conditions relating to surface water drainage and pollution control.

### **Representations - Neighbours**

16. None received.

### **Representations - Applicant/Consultants**

17. A covering statement from the applicants is attached as Appendix ‘A’.

18. A response to the application from Acorus, the Council's agricultural advisor, is attached as Appendix 'B'
19. Attached as Appendix 'C' is the response from the applicant's consultant, Roger Balls, to the comments from Acorus, advising this Authority.
20. Appendix 'D' shows the details of the grain drying system.

### **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

21. The issues to be considered in respect of this proposal are need, size of building and position/effect on the landscape and openness of the Green Belt.

#### ***i) Need***

As can be seen from the statements of both consultants, there is clearly a difference of opinion between them, and it is for this reason that the previous application was refused as that scheme was described as a 'Grain Store', not a grain drying facility, - the two having different requirements. I shall up-date Members on any further comments from either consultant.

#### ***ii) Size of building***

There is no argument in that the building is large, 90.0m x 20.0m x 9.0m high but, sited as proposed in an open landscape with any public views being 'long distance', its scale is substantially diminished. The nearest public view is from a public footpath to the east, between 350.0m and 400.0m away. If approved there is scope for landscaping between the public footpath and the building itself to reduce any impact.

#### ***iii) Position and effect on landscape and Green Belt***

The farmland to the west is extremely open but there is a gentle rise in the land of several metres. Standing on the site of the proposed building facing towards Cherry Hinton/Cambridge, one can see the top of Fulbourn Hospital and some of the hangars at Marshalls - all the other "middle distance" is screened by this slight rise in ground level. As mention in ii) above, there is scope for landscaping to help the public view from the east. Although the building will reduce the openness of the Green Belt, it would be sited adjoining an existing complex of buildings in accordance with Policy GB3 of the Local Plan.

22. Whilst I am satisfied that, with appropriate materials and additional landscaping, the building would not be inappropriate in this location, I am unable to put forward a positive Recommendation as much depends on the Consultants opinions which will be reported verbally.
23. The village of Great Wilbraham does experience much of the lorry traffic serving the existing large silo adjacent to the railway crossing, the nearby warehouse estate and traffic from Queens Farm; lorries approach the above from the direction of the A11 trunk road and 'by-pass' the need to use the narrow streets in the centre of Fulbourn. The Local Highway Authority does not wish to comment on the application in respect of this issue and the current farm entrance is to be improved as conditioned on other applications for the commercial use of redundant farm buildings. Whilst I can understand the concerns of Great Wilbraham Parish Council the grain to be stored in any approved building will be grown on the farm, not imported from elsewhere.
24. Subject to favourable comments from the Consultants I shall recommend delegated approval of the application.

## Recommendation

25. In the event that Acorus supports the proposal, Approval is recommended subject to:
1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
  2. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
  3. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
  4. Sc5a – Details of materials for external walls and roof (Rc5a);
  5. Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of surface water drainage shall be submitted and agreed in writing with the Local Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans/specification at such time(s) as may be specified in the approved scheme. (Rc - To prevent the increased risk of pollution to the water environment.)
  6. Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of pollution control to the water environment shall be submitted and agreed in writing with the Local Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans/specification at such time(s) as may be specified in the approved scheme. (Rc - To prevent the increased risk of pollution to the water environment.)

## Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
    - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**  
**P1/2** (Environmental Restrictions on Development)  
**P9/2a** (Green Belts)
    - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**  
**GB1** and **GB2** (Green Belts)  
**EN5** (The Landscaping of New Development)
26. In the event that Acorus is unable to support the application, Refusal is recommended for the reason:

With current storage and drying facilities on the farm sufficient to store and dry its annual output of grain, the case put forward is not sufficient to justify the need for this building. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies P1/2 and P9/2a of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies GB1 and GB2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning Files Ref: S/1963/05/F and S/0185/06/F

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