

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR JOHN L BAIRD (HOME FARM)
LIMITED

CONVERSION OF PIGGERY AND USE FOR OFFICES, STORES,
TOILETS, LAUNDRY AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES, THE STREET
CLIMPING NR LITTLEHAMPTON WEST SUSSEX

1. This planning application is for the conversion of a redundant 390 m² piggery from agricultural use to use for offices, stores, toilets, laundry and associated facilities in connection with the Bairds' farmshop. The building is of brick/stone construction with a corrugated roof. The location of the building is at the edge of the farm complex of buildings known as Hobbs Farm.
2. The building is unoccupied at the present time save for part of one end bay used as a candle shop. The farmshop on the A259 has been finding a lack of floor space to house the laundry and also office staff as the business has grown and the requirements of modern health and hygiene regulations and the increased paperwork associated with a 'just in time' business (ie small stocks are held and produce delivered fresh daily).
3. The Baird family originally installed 2 portacabins at the rear of the farmshop, one as a laundry and the other for offices. Arun District Council require that these be removed as a perceived encroachment in the countryside. Therefore the piggery proposal is intended to provide a solution to the farmshop's needs and lead to removal of 1 portacabin off-site and the other relocated to the car park as somewhere for staff to change.

Design and Appearance

- The intention is to retain the character of the piggery by keeping its height, length, bulk and scale largely the same.
- The brick elevations on 3 sides are largely unchanged (save for window openings). The open fronted side elevation will be enclosed by brick/glass or blocks/cladding/glass if preferred.
- The corrugated asbestos roof will need replacement for health and safety reasons but will be replaced with suitably coloured and similarly pitched roof materials as the existing.
- The existing internal partition walls will be used to build upon and create the internal room divisions for the offices, stores, archives, laundry, toilets etc.
- The piggery lies within the existing farm complex of buildings and parking will be formed from the existing hardstanding. The same farm access will be used as currently exists.

- 6 car parking spaces have been allowed for on the basis that 4 staff will work in the building.

Consultation with West Sussex County Council as Highway Authority

See attached correspondence.

PLANNING POLICIES

1. PPS1 DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

- 1.1. Paragraph 1 states that planning shapes the places where people live and work and the country we live in. Good planning ensures that we get the right development in the right place and at the right time. It makes a positive difference to people's lives and helps to deliver homes, jobs, and better opportunities for all.
- 1.2. Paragraph 4 states the government's aims concerning sustainable development which includes the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

2. PPG4 INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND SMALL FIRMS:

- 2.1. Paragraph 13 states that the planning system should operate on the basis that applications for development should be allowed, having regard to the development plan and all material considerations, unless the proposed development would cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance. Development control should not place unjustifiable obstacles in the way of development which is necessary to provide.....investment and jobs.
- 2.2. Paragraph 16 states that in rural areas applications for development necessary to sustain the rural economy should be weighed with the need to protect the countryside in terms of, for example, its landscape, wildlife, agriculture, natural resources and recreational value.

3. PPS 7 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS:

- 3.1. The government's objectives are stated to include having thriving, inclusive and sustainable rural communities and also sustainable economic growth and diversification. Paragraph 5 states that planning authorities should support a wide range of economic activity in rural areas. Paragraph 6 states that people who live or work in rural areas should have reasonable access to a range of services and facilities. Paragraph 30 recognises that diversification into non-agricultural activities is vital to the continuing viability of many farm enterprises. Local planning authorities should set out in their local development documents the criteria to be applied to planning applications for farm diversification projects and be supportive of well conceived farm diversification

schemes for business purposes that contribute to sustainable development objectives and help to sustain the agricultural enterprise.

4. RPG9 REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR THE SOUTH EAST:

- 4.1. The vision for the south east in paragraph 3.1 is to encourage economic success throughout the region balanced with ensuring a higher quality of environment. The focus includes promoting a prosperous and multi purpose countryside. Paragraph 3.2 deals with the four objectives for sustainable development in the UK which recognises the needs of everyone; effective protection of the environment; prudent use of natural resources and the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.
- 4.2. Paragraph 3.15 includes reference to the relative prosperity of the region however significant areas of deprivation also exist in rural areas, the result of poor accessibility and decline in traditional rural based activities including agriculture. The continuing viability of many rural enterprises, local community services and facilities is of increasing concern. Paragraph 3.16 states that integrated packages of policies are required at a local level in order to assist in balancing the need for environmental protection with measures needed to sustain and enhance the economic and social viability of rural communities.
- 4.3. Paragraph 5.19 states that the characteristics of rural areas in the south east vary throughout the region. In some areas the wealth and proximity of urban areas has resulted in a range of threats and opportunities for rural areas whereas other areas remain less accessible leading to fewer job opportunities, problems of isolation and lower incomes. The assessment and delivery of rural policy requires a tailored and integrated approach that focuses on people as well as places, to help maintain and enhance the environment whilst encouraging the development of diverse and sustainable rural communities. Paragraph 20 states that the economic base of rural areas in the south east has been undergoing significant change over recent years, resulting in particular in employment decline in agriculture and related industries. Policy Q7 states that a multi purpose countryside should be secured and where necessary investment and renewal in rural areas should be encouraged. The quality and character of the rural environment should be maintained and enhanced, whilst securing necessary change to meet the economic and social needs of the local people and visitors.

5. WEST SUSSEX STRUCTURE PLAN 2001 – 2016

- 5.1. Paragraph 90 recognises that the appearance and peacefulness of the countryside is valued by many people and that the countryside is valuable for its own sake. This is balanced by paragraph 91 which states that the economic and social needs of people who live and work in the countryside are also to be recognised and change must be accommodated. Paragraph 93 states that farming continues to be an important aspect of the economy of rural areas but diversification into non-agricultural activities is vital to the continuing viability of many farm businesses. Policy LOC2 states that development in the countryside which does

not require a countryside location should not be permitted, however, economic activity in the countryside and limited development to meet identified local social needs should be permitted where it is compatible with a location in the countryside and where it is necessary to sustain the countryside as a place of varied and productive social and economic activity.

- 5.2. Policy NE9(a) states that retail development which cannot be accommodated within the existing town, village, district and neighbourhood centres should not be permitted unless it meets identified need and does not undermine the vitality, viability and retail function of these centres. Local shops should be permitted where they meet the identified needs of local communities.

6. THE SOUTH EAST PLAN DRAFT MARCH 2006:

- 6.1. The core strategy states that over the period to 2026 we need to nurture and enhance the region's assets, maintain its high quality of life, increase its prosperity and meet its reasonable needs through a sustainable programme of better management of our assets, efficiency of resource use and increased adaptation and mitigation.
- 6.2. The South East Plan contains a section dealing with the economy. Paragraph 3.4 states that it is important to support economic diversity through the promotion of small and medium enterprises and businesses in rural areas. A balanced economy requires a range of types of employment space in terms of size, location and cost. In addition there will be an increasing demand for services in the south east due to rising disposable incomes and the ageing workforce. This will require not only new forms of customer focused skills, but accommodation for business services, retail, restaurants, hotels and leisure. Policy RE2 states that local development documents should be supportive of the agricultural, horticultural and forestry industries, and rural economic diversification.....on farm sites where applications show positive benefits, based on clearly defined criteria and evidence based assessments.

7. THE ARUN DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN 2003:

- 7.1. Policy GEN1 deals with sustainability and states that all development must take full account of the need to protect the environment so that present-day demands do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs or enjoy a high quality environment. All development must reflect the need to safeguard and improve the quality of life of residents, conserve energy resources and protect and, where possible, enhance the plan area's essential character and environmental assets.
- 7.2. The relevant parts of policy GEN3 deals with protection of the countryside and states that outside the built up area, as defined on the proposals map, the countryside will be safeguarded for its own sake. Development will not be permitted unless:-

(i) it meets the operational needs of agriculture, forestry, the extraction of minerals or the deposit of waste, or

(iii) for the diversification of the rural economy.

7.3. Policy area 10 deals with strategic gaps and the site where the piggery lies is within the Littlehampton and Middleton-on-Sea strategic gap. Development will only be permitted if it is demonstrated to be necessary to meet the requirements, or is consistent with other policies of the development plan and it would not compromise, either individually or cumulatively the objectives and fundamental integrity of the strategic gap and attention is given to the long-term enhancement of the landscape, amenity and conservation value within the gap and where possible to the improvement of public access.

7.4. Policy DEV1 deals with the conversion of rural buildings for industrial or business uses. That policy requires that the building is structurally sound and of permanent construction; that the use will not have an adverse effect on the rural character of the area due to the level of activity or traffic; and that the traffic generated can be safely accommodated on the existing local highway network. The reason for the policy is to encourage a healthy rural economy and to reduce the need for new buildings in the countryside.

8. APPLICATION OF PLANNING POLICIES IN RELATION TO THE CURRENT APPLICATION:

8.1. Sustainable planning means conservation of the countryside but balanced against the need to ensure economic prosperity in terms of encouraging investment and the provision of jobs in the rural area. There is also the need to encourage the provision of a valued local service and to ensure that it continues to satisfy the needs of the rural community.

8.2. This proposal complies with Policy DEV1 in the following respects:

(i) The building is structurally sound and of permanent construction. There is a structural engineer's report provided with this application.

(ii) There is no adverse effect on the rural character of the area from the conversion of this redundant agricultural building which is already a long-established part of the character of this rural area. The use of the converted building by office/laundry staff associated with the farmshop will be low profile/low key. Traffic movements from up to 4 staff (say up to 8 movements per day plus occasional van deliveries of office/laundry supplies and post is very light when compared with the use of the farmyard as a 365 days per year piggery.

(iii) The resultant building is a typical agricultural/rural building which has been assimilated in its setting for a long period of time and adds to the character of the countryside.

(iv) The building is not of historic or architectural importance.

- (v) The traffic generated by this use is very low in terms of numbers (estimated 4 vehicles per day) plus occasional deliveries by van of office/laundry supplies and post which can easily be safely accommodated by the existing site access and the local road system.

Note: There are no bats or owls affected by the proposal. As said earlier a structural survey is provided with this application.

9. **CONCLUSION:**

This application should be granted as it is an appropriate rural diversification scheme entailing the change of use from agriculture to low-key commercial use in the rural area. It underpins the continued success of the farmshop which provides jobs for up to 25 local people. It accords with Policy DEV1 of the Local Plan and also central government/Structure Plan planning policies as well.