

LANSDOWNE NURSERY NORTH BARN
LITTLEHAMPTON ROAD FERRING
WEST SUSSEX BN12 6PB

Arun District Council
Arun Civic Centre,
Maltravers Road,
Littlehampton,
W Sussex
BN17 5 LF

21st September 2010

Dear Sirs

Application for a Replacement Agricultural Dwelling and Garage. Lansdowne
Nursery – formally North Barn Nursery, Littlehampton Road, Ferring.

I am writing in support of the above application and to provide the evidence required by annex A of PPS7. The numbers refer to Annex A with my response in italics.

1 There is a case where the nature and demands of the work concerned make it essential for one or more people to be engaged in the enterprise to live at the site of work. . . *This is the case now, as it was in 2005. If anything the risks of not being on site are greater today than they were 5 years ago.*

2 It is essential that all applications for planning permission for new occupational dwellings in the countryside are scrutinised to detect abuse. Whether it is genuine is reasonably likely to materialise and sustainable over time. Also to establish a need to live there. . . *I have been scrutinised and am known to ADC - there has been no abuse, I have run Lansdowne Nursery since 1975. The business has been running profitably for 35 years. The business cannot run any longer without an onsite dwelling. There is a need to safeguard greenhouse crops from frost – boiler breakdown, and vigilance with regard fox attacks on the free-range hens.*

Permanent agricultural dwellings.

3 New permanent dwellings should only be allowed to support existing agricultural activities on well-established agricultural units.

(1) There is a clearly established existing functional need, as mentioned. . . *The business cannot run without an onsite dwelling. There is a need to safeguard greenhouse crops from frost – boiler breakdown, and vigilance with regard fox attacks on the free-range hens.*

(11) The need relates to a full time worker... *Yes the application relates to a full time worker.*

(111) The activity has to be established for at least 3 years and has been profitable. . . *Lansdowne Nursery has been run under my control since 1975 and has always been profitable and the intention is to keep it profitable.*

(IV) The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling. . . *There is a mobile home on site which is dilapidated will be removed on occupation of the new dwelling . . . The siting of the new dwelling has been agreed in the past and the criterion has not changed.*

(V) Other planning requirements / access / impact on the countryside are satisfied. . . *WSCC (Highways) had no objections and the impact on the countryside was satisfied in Mrs Leeson's previous report on FG/111/05. (Application still Live).*

4 A functional test to establish whether a worker is needed/available most times day or night.

(1) In case animals require essential care at short notice. . . *Someone is required immediately should there be a fox attack or vandalism from humans (which has occurred in the past)..*

(2) Emergencies regarding serious loss from frost or failure of systems. . . *With three boilers within the greenhouses it is essential to have someone living onsite.*

5 Possible abuse – concerns from ADC . . . *My history will show there is no abuse, nor will there be. ADC are aware of my intentions and my honourable plans of running Lansdowne Nursery.*

6 The protection of livestock from theft or injury *Mentioned earlier, there is a huge risk/threat from fox attack of which there have been many. Also it is hard to prove, but we have lost hens to theft, and we have had chicken coops violently broken into with many mortalities. (one particular case reported to the police). Such cases cause hens to go "off lay" and is a serious condition.*

7 If a functional requirement is established. . . *As the requirement has been established, the build of a dwelling for one family today is at the very least satisfied.*

8 Is the enterprise economical in relation to size of dwelling... *This point has been satisfied in the past by ADC. Since 2005 turnover has increased. Lansdowne Nursery has been profitable for 35 years.*

9 Agricultural dwellings should be of a size commensurate with the established functional requirement. . . *The turnover of Lansdowne Nursery fore fills this requirement in relation to the application.*

10 Planning permissions subject to conditions . . . *We know Lansdowne Nursery is able to justify the functional requirement and this application would not wish for a restriction to permitted development rights.*

11 Agricultural dwellings should be sited so as to meet the identified functional need. . . *This is justified as stated in 1, 3(1), 4(1), 4(2), and 6. Also the siting is well related to existing buildings.*

The following information may be useful in aiding the determination of the application.

HISTORY

In 1912 my grandfather established the family horticultural business, G W Boxall and Sons at Lansdowne Road, Worthing, growing flowers and tomatoes. The nursery was surrounded by fields with unbroken views towards Goring church. With an increasing town population together with a need for more housing the nursery was sold and moved to Goring. It wasn't long before larger premises were required and in 1933 new premises were purchased in Dappers Lane, Angmering. This was jointly run by my grandfather and my father Harold Boxall where the business flourished. During the war years my father and his brother ran two successful nursery businesses here in Sussex. During the late 50's and 60's the horticultural industry went into decline as a result from competition from abroad, high labour and heating costs. It was at this time we entered into the new bedding plant business. However, with strong competitive corporate markets such as large supermarkets etc. and with the ever-popular television garden programmes of today, the bedding plant business is not as it used to be. There is a clear move towards offering a more personalised service, offering pot plant displays, shrubs, perennials, bamboo, exotic plants, decking and fancy garden designs.

PRESENT

FREE RANGE EGGS

I am responsible for two flocks of free-range hens totally up to 1500 birds. I would like to see this number increase and believe this can be achieved when the current recession of ends. When I purchased North Barn Nurseries in 2000 the hens were housed in nine dilapidated unserviceable inadequate coops. We have replaced them with two new walk-in coops, which have been designed for easy cleaning and improved bird husbandry. This has resulted in cleaner, better eggs. The new facilities are better ventilated with feed and water available 24 hours. The chicken runs have been improved with a new perimeter fence, which incorporates an electric fence for a tighter security against fox attack. Two new low-level shelters have been constructed to provide protection against wet and extreme weather conditions.

THE NURSERY

Since relocating from Mayflower Way to our new premises at North Barn the combined nursery and eggs sales have increased overall. The expansion has allowed the family business to achieve exciting prospects. We have invested in plant transplanting machines, pot and tray filling machines and a new irrigation system. The number of boilers has been increased from one to three and the propagating area has also been updated with better equipment and benches. We have introduced over the years a wider range of plants for sale as mentioned above. This greatly enhances the bedding plant side of the business.

Although recessions are good for growers we know from experience the competition from the supermarkets (now selling plants etc) is a threat. These large corporate companies have the effect of forcing prices down resulting in less profitable sales. As a nursery plant retailer there is a limited time scale of only 16 weeks to sell spring, summer and autumn bedding. So we seriously need to look closely at other means of income to remain competitive throughout the rest of the year. We therefore need to engage in some kind of diversification to maintain profitability and growth for the on-coming years once this recession is over.

EMPLOYMENT

The previous owner of North Barn Nurseries in 1999/2000 had one full time employee. Today there are six, plus one part-time worker. With the Planning Approval we are seeking, the figure could undoubtedly increase, offering greater opportunities for local employment.

IN CONCLUSION

May I make a note regarding the contents of the above information. I have written about the relocation of the dwelling to the north of the greenhouses. The prime reason being its close proximity to the chickens and their protection and the need to be close to the greenhouses during inclement winter weather. This is a necessity for boiler breakdown at below zero temperatures. With the relocation of the house we can accomplish future plans at Lansdowne Nursery. I have no desire to become a blue chip garden centre. I would like to see the family business keep up with modern trends and a standard of living fit for the twenty first century. A small respectable development in the local landscape would not be out of place with rural looking buildings that blend in with the present countryside.

My final point hardly needs pointing out, but must be mentioned as it has a direct bearing on this application:

Up to this point in time due to the recession I have not had finance to implement the permission (FG/22/06). Finance is now available and building will start as soon as the permission is granted.

Yours faithfully

Barry Boxall

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