

P/29/111

Replacement and Extension of Packaging Store
for
Barfoots of Botley
at
Sefter Farm, Pagham Road, Pagham

Objectives

- a. Replacement of existing and introduction of additional covered packaging storage space.

As packaging for vegetables and farm produce moves from plastic to cardboard and other renewable materials additional covered space is needed to store the packaging under cover.
- b. To make the best use of natural resources and existing infrastructure
- c. To achieve a and b in a way that is not significantly harmful to the landscape or the local community. The application proposals are intended to provide the facilities for the applicants to expand and adapt and stay competitive.

Evaluation and assessment of physical context

Based in Pagham, West Sussex, Barfoots business involves the growing, processing, packing and marketing of fresh vegetables. Barfoots, together with other dedicated growers in the area ensure a year-round supply of fresh produce with quality and freshness that is second to none.

Barfoots of Botleys mission is:

"To run a viable farming system which is environmentally and socially acceptable, ensuring the continuity of supply of wholesome, affordable food and enhancing the fabric and wildlife of the British countryside".

The company follows a farming regime that cares for the environment; this philosophy has been integrated throughout the whole business from growing the produce through to its processing, packing and sale to the end customer.

Barfoots of Botley are Europe's most prolific grower of Sweetcorn growing 1700 acres of Sweetcorn. Drilling starts in March and harvest normally from late July until mid to late October.

Through carefully planned growing programmes and working with their grower base, Barfoots have an uninterrupted supply of fresh Sweetcorn 12 months of the year. The range also includes Asparagus, Broad Beans, Courgettes, Globe Artichokes, Marrows, Peas, Pumpkins, Rhubarb, Runner Beans, a variety of Squashes and Sweet Potatoes.

Barfoots customers include the leading UK supermarkets for whom they grow and pack a range of own-label vegetables. Barfoots also supply several significant providers of UK Food Service, International Providers of Prepared Vegetables, Wholesale Markets and Farmer's Markets.



As the largest Sweetcorn supplier in Europe it is Barfoots aim to continue to consolidate and grow with existing Customers and to further develop Foodservice opportunities.

As a result of their holistic approach in taking the product from seed to the Customers' shelves, Barfoot's possess an integrated view and in-depth understanding of the wide-ranging issues involved in the whole production process from the planting of seeds in the ground through to the marketing of the vegetables and planning of supermarket promotions. This allows the company to efficiently produce high quality/least cost crops producing returns that permit a viable farming system.

Sefter Farm lies North West of Rose Green on the west side of Pagham Road, it is an established farm complex with packhouse, coldstore, existing offices and staff facilities.

Amount of Development, Design Principles and Layout

The applicants have assessed the amount of additional covered space that will be required for cardboard, paper and renewable packaging in the short to medium term and consider the proposed extension will provide this space.

The proposed replacement building is designed to extend the existing cold store and packaging store replacing the existing packaging store in keeping with the design of existing agricultural buildings on site. The proposed layout will enable the extension to form the south east corner of the farmyard complex.

Scale and Appearance

The building will be located in the space currently occupied by a small yard adjacent to the existing store. The design is a standard agricultural shed extension in keeping with the existing building and wider farm complex.

Landscape Considerations

The existing mature landscaping to the east will be retained.

Access and traffic

No changes to the existing access arrangements are proposed.

The additional floorspace for the packaging store is not considered likely to generate any further traffic movements.

Planning Context

The proposals have been developed and designed to ensure that they meet with the aims and objectives of Local and National Planning Policies, namely:

Arun District Local Plan 2003



Policy GEN1 Sustainability

The applicants have taken 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.

Barfoots of Botley recognise the importance of environmental considerations in maintaining the quality of life, including access to social and economic facilities, is widely recognised, as is the protection of the environment. Their commitment to sustainability and the protection of the environment is confirmed by the many initiatives they have developed and the awards they have received.

Policy GEN 2 Built-up Area Boundary

The applicants recognise that the site lies in the countryside, outside the built-up area boundary, but consider that the proposed development is consistent with other Local Plan policies dealing with agricultural development.

POLICY GEN3 Protection of the Countryside

As the site lies outside the Built-Up Area the proposal accords with the aims of Policy GEN3. The proposed extension meets the operational needs of agriculture. The applicants understand that the countryside is an important resource and should to be protected; they consider themselves to be to be stewards of the countryside and as a farming business consider the proposals to be essential to the needs of their enterprise.

Policy GEN 4 Location and Travel Demand

The proposals are not considered likely to materially add to existing road congestion or air pollution and appropriate provision has been made on site for safe and convenient access by public transport, cyclists and pedestrians.

Policy GEN7 The Form of New Development

As with previous buildings and proposals at Sefter Farm care has been taken to ensure that the proposals meet with the requirements of GEN7. The building has been designed to continue the character of agricultural buildings already on site.

The proposed location makes efficient use of the land, forming the eastern boundary of the farm yard.

The proposals and the applicants actively promote sustainable development. The proposals will not have an unacceptable or adverse impact on adjoining occupiers, land, uses or property they are well screened by existing buildings.

It is considered that the external appearance of the proposals, combined with hard and soft landscaping and appropriate materials will harmonise with the existing farm complex and will be in character with the surrounding area.

The applicants have already demonstrated their commitment to a high standard of design and layout in a farming context and continue to invest in significant amounts of additional landscaping to ensure that the visual amenities of the farm are continually improved.

Policy Gen 9 Foul and Surface Water Drainage

The applicants have adequate drainage facilities on site.

Policy Gen 12 Parking in New Development

There is adequate parking provision on site.



Policy Gen 17 Access for People with Disabilities

The proposals have been designed to ensure DDA compliance where required, an access statement is attached at Appendix B.

Policy Gen 24 Energy and Water Conservation

The farm is actively exploring measures to improve energy and water conservation.

Policy Area 10 Strategic Gaps

The site lies with the AREA 10 Strategic Gap

(iv) Pagham and Selsey

The applicants are aware of the requirements of the LPA. The proposed agricultural building accords with all three aspects of this policy, in that

- a. it is consistent with the plan policies detailed in this statement and will meet the needs of a successful local farm enterprise
- b. it will not individually or cumulatively compromise the integrity of the gap.
- c. the applicants have already demonstrated their commitment to the landscape, amenity and conservation value of the gap, through their investment in high quality landscaping and projects.

By ensuring that the proposed extension is located adjacent to the existing building the applicants have made sure that they retain the use of their best and most versatile agricultural land. It is considered that the proposed agricultural building will not create coalescence and will ensure that separate identity and amenity of settlements is retained.

Policy Area 12 Agricultural Land Quality

The applicants have ensured that the proposals do not use their best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a)

Policy Dev 6 Agricultural Buildings

The proposal complies with the aims and intentions of Policy DEV6 which advises that agricultural buildings will be permitted provided that:

- (i) their scale, siting, design and materials minimise the visual impact on the landscape; and
- (ii) new buildings are grouped with any existing buildings in order to minimise impact on the landscape.

The proposed extension is in keeping in scale and design with that already on site and the site layout ensures the best use of the existing farmyard complex. The applicants have sought to ensure proposed developments do not have an adverse impact on the rural landscape.

Policy Dev 8 Circumstances in which Additional Development may be Permitted Local Firms

Whilst it is considered that this policy is not aimed at existing agricultural and farming businesses it is noted that Arun District Council does support the development of local firms and has identified that the continued health of the local economy will depend to a significant extent on being able to accommodate the future expansion needs of local firms.



Planning Policy Statement 7

Sustainable rural communities, economic development and services

It is considered that the proposals accord with the aims and intentions of national and local planning policy. In particular:

PPS 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

Agriculture, Farm Diversification, Equine-Related Activities and Forestry

Agricultural development

27. The Government recognises the important and varied roles of agriculture, including in the maintenance and management of the countryside and most of our valued landscapes. Planning policies in RSS and LDDs should recognise these roles and support development proposals that will enable farming and farmers to:

- (i) become more competitive, sustainable and environmentally friendly;
- (ii) adapt to new and changing markets;
- (iii) comply with changing legislation and associated guidance;
- (iv) diversify into new agricultural opportunities (e.g. renewable energy crops); or
- (v) broaden their operations to 'add value' to their primary produce.

The proposals that form this application are in line with central governments latest advice on sustainable rural economic development.

PPS7 advises that Planning authorities should support a wide range of economic activity in rural areas including providing a positive framework for facilitating sustainable development that supports traditional land-based activities

This includes

- (i) supporting development that delivers diverse and sustainable farming enterprises;

The Government has recognised the important and varied roles of agriculture, including in the maintenance and management of the countryside and most of our valued landscapes. Authorities should recognise these roles and support development proposals that will enable farming and farmers to:

- (i) become more competitive, sustainable and environmentally friendly;
- (ii) adapt to new and changing markets;
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- (iv) diversify into new agricultural opportunities (e.g. renewable energy crops); or
- (v) broaden their operations to 'add value' to their primary produce.



Socio Economic Context

The continuing growth of Barfoots ensures that new roles and posts are generated by projects such as that currently proposed.

Due to the cyclical nature of the vegetable industry and the seasonal nature of some of the crops some jobs created will be seasonal but a large number will be permanent and Barfoots have had considerable success from recruiting within the local districts.

Barfoots of Botley are a progressive firm fully aware of the importance of their position in the local economy, they actively encourage local sourcing and procurement using in excess of 100 local West Sussex based businesses on a regular basis, over 35 of which are based in Arun District.

Barfoots have had a unique attitude to producing its vegetables having created strategic alliances with a number of local farmers and growers.

The Chichester/Pagham plain area has a unique micro climate with high light levels coupled with fertile soils and water availability the area can host a thriving farming community.

Sustainability and Environmental Protection

As a farming business firmly rooted in the land, Barfoots are very aware of the importance of sustainability.

Their mission is to run a viable farming system which is environmentally and socially acceptable, ensuring the continuity of supply of wholesome, affordable food and enhancing the fabric and wildlife of the British countryside.

The company follows a farming regime that cares for the environment; this philosophy has been integrated throughout the whole business, not just in the farming and growing but also in the processing and packing of fresh Sweetcorn.

Their production systems are bounded by sustainable practices. Using integrated farm management systems BoB balance the production of high quality food with the creation of a high quality environment. The proposed distribution and holding facility is an extension of this commitment.

Through membership of LEAF (linking the environment and farming) BoB have created an environmentally led crop production system. Pesticide and fertiliser applications are strictly monitored and our system uses far less than many traditional cropping systems.

Close attention to the farming basics such as soil management, water quality, rotation and crop management reduces any negative impacts on the environment.

Sefter farm has an environmental audit each year by FWAG (Farming wildlife advisory group) and has created many areas of wildlife refuge within our farms.



Sustainable Farming

Balancing a sustainable and environmentally structured farming system with the production of high quality products; enhancement and management of the environment and innovative production and marketing processes has made Barfoots of Botley into one of the most progressive farm businesses of its kind in the UK.

As suppliers of fresh produce to Supermarkets in the UK, Barfoots are required to comply with a number of schemes which set out rigorous safety, quality and environmental standards for production.

The schemes and protocols are typified by Tesco's Nature's Choice scheme which sets out standards for the protection of human health through the rational use of plant protection products, fertilizers, manures, energy, water and other natural resources. Pollution control and energy use are a fundamental part of the scheme which includes specific controls on discharges to local watercourses and energy use reviews by independent third parties. As part of the scheme, farms must develop a plan for the management of their environment, detailing the actions to be taken to protect and encourage wildlife diversity such as the planting of hedgerows and the creation of wildlife corridors.

Barfoots actively participate in a number of independent Quality Assurance schemes and achieved 100% in the Checkmate Audit for the Assured Produce scheme which recognises the need for crop production to be both economically and environmentally sustainable. They require their supply base to operate wholly in accordance with these production standards which are laid out by the Assured Produce Scheme as well as a number of customer specific initiatives such as the Tesco's Nature's Choice scheme.

Conclusion

Barfoots continued growth and success is noteworthy. They are award winning market leaders based at Pagham in Arun District.

Their agricultural business is linked to and supports many other local enterprises. The applicant's sustainable and ethically aware commitment to producing high quality produce extends to energy efficiency, recycling, nature conservation, investing in people and community awareness.

The proposed replacement extension and connection of the existing store is essential for the ongoing development and market demands and has been carefully considered and prepared to accord with National and Local planning policies.

Barfoots hope that Arun District Council will enable and support their contribution to the local economy and the countryside environment at Pagham.

