

Application No: 23/0596C

Location: Hermitage Turkey Farm, HERMITAGE LANE, CRANAGE, CW4 8HA

Proposal: Demolition of the existing poultry units, followed by the erection of a replacement poultry unit with associated feed bins, hardstanding's, and a dirty water tank.

Applicant: Mr Sam Jones, Aviagen Turkeys Ltd

Expiry Date: 04-Aug-2023

SUMMARY

The application site lies entirely within the Open Countryside where Policy PG 6 (Open Countryside) of the CELPS sets out the exceptions for development in the Open Countryside which includes development which is essential for the purpose of agriculture.

The design is acceptable and the impact on the surrounding amenity, trees & hedgerows, ecology and the highway network will not be significant.

While there will be less than substantial harm in relation to existing heritage assets it is considered the public benefit would out way the harm caused and on its own would not warrant a refusal of the application.

On the basis of the above, it is considered that the proposals represent sustainable development, and it is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE with conditions

REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is referred to Southern Planning Committee as it is a small-scale major development (floorspace of between 5,000 –9,999 square metres).

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site comprises of an existing turkey farm located off Hermitage Lane. The site currently comprises six poultry houses, a cluster of outbuildings located beside the entrance to the site, and a large grassed arear surrounding the turkey sheds.

To the east of the site lies Hawthorne Cottage, a small Grade II listed building.

The site lies within the Open Countryside and Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope Consultation Zone as defined by the Local Plan Policies Map.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing poultry units, followed by the erection of a replacement poultry unit with associated feed bins, hardstanding's, and a dirty water tank.

The proposed replacement poultry unit would consists of 3 No. linked buildings, each 104m by 18m, eaves height of 2.4m and ridge height of 6.481m. The 2. No. link corridors connecting the 3 No. units would measure 8m by 4m.

The proposed replacement buildings would house up to 7500 hen and 540 stag turkeys, a reduction compared to the existing operation (9000 hen and 600 stag turkeys)

The site would operate a 36-week production cycle, 28 weeks of laying, removal of the birds after 28 weeks and 4 - 6 weeks of cleaning and preparation between each flock.

The site currently employs 8 full-time workers, which would remain following development.

RELEVANT HISTORY

07/0887/FUL - Building to house upgraded milking facilities, cattle handling dairy, office, machine room in portal frame building
Approved with conditions / 13-Nov-2007

06/0022/FUL - Single storey building for egg wash rooms and staff showers and wc's.
Approved with conditions / 20-Feb-2006

24712/3 - Installation of feed bins to serve existing poultry houses.
Approved with conditions / 20-Oct-1992

15573/3 - Dismantle 3 barns & erect 6 new barns for breeding turkeys.
Approved with conditions / 07-Feb-1984

POLICIES

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2017 (CELPS)

PG1 – Overall Development Strategy
PG 6 - Open Countryside
EG2 – Rural Economy
SD1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
SD2 - Sustainable Development Principles
SE 1 - Design
SE 2 - Efficient Use of Land
SE 3 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity
SE 4 - The Landscape

SE 5 - Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
SE 7 - The Historic Environment
SE 12 - Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability
SE 13 - Flood Risk and Water Management
SE14 - Jodrell Bank
IN1 – Infrastructure
CO1 - Sustainable Travel and Transport

Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD)

GEN 1 - Design principles
ENV 1 - Ecological network
ENV 2 - Ecological implementation
ENV 5 - Landscaping
ENV 6 - Trees, hedgerows and woodland implementation
ENV 7 - Climate change
ENV 12 - Air quality
ENV 14 - Light pollution
ENV 16 - Surface water management and flood risk
HER 1 - Heritage assets
HER 4 - Listed buildings
HER 9 - Jodrell Bank World Heritage Site
RUR 1 - New buildings for agriculture and forestry
HOU 12 - Amenity
INF 3 - Highway safety and access

Cranage Neighbourhood Plan

Regulation 7 - no weight afforded

Other Material Policy considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)
- Cheshire East Design Guide SPD

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Jodrell Bank: No comments received.

Environmental Health: No objection, informatives suggested regarding noise generative works, site specific dust management and floor floating.

Environment Agency: No objection

Natural England: No comments received at the time of writing.

Flood Risk: No objection

United Utilities: No objection raised, applicant/ developers attention to be drawn to the comments provided.

Cadent Gas Ltd: No comments received at the time of writing.

Public Rights of Way (PROW): It appears unlikely that the proposal would affect the public rights of way, although the PROW Unit would expect the planning department to add an advice note to any planning consent to ensure that developers are aware of their obligations.

Head of Strategic Transport: No objection.

VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL

Crange Parish Council: Crange parish Council have considered this planning application and wish to make NO COMMENT.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

None received at time of report writing

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Environmental Impact Assessment

The development does not require an environmental impact assessment. The development is not of a type described in Schedule 1 of the 2017 Regulations.

The development is described in column one of Schedule 2 of the 2017 Regulations; however, it is not located in a sensitive area, and it does not meet any of the relevant thresholds and/or criteria in column two of Schedule 2.

Principle of Development

Policy PG 6 (Open Countryside) of the CELPS sets out that only development that is essential for the purposes of agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, public infrastructure, essential works undertaken by public service authorities or statutory undertakers, or for other uses appropriate to a rural area will be permitted.

This is further supported by Policy RUR 1 of the SADPD which states "proposals for new agricultural and forestry buildings in the open countryside will only be permitted where they accord with other policies in the development plan and:"

- i. it is demonstrated that there is a clear long-term need for the development in connection with the agricultural or forestry enterprise;
- ii. the proposals make best use of existing infrastructure, such as existing buildings, utilities, tracks and vehicular access;
- iii. new buildings are restricted to the minimum level reasonably required for the efficient existing or planned operation of the enterprise; are well-related to each other and existing buildings and do not form isolated or scattered development;

- iv. do not unacceptably affect the amenity and character of the surrounding area or landscape (including visual impacts, noise, odour, design and appearance), either on its own or cumulatively with other developments; and
- v. provide appropriate landscaping and screening.

The proposals relate to an existing poultry enterprise and from the supporting statement it advises that *'the existing farm is around 40 years old and is dated and inefficient and not suited for modern poultry production. As a result, the applicants propose to demolish the existing farm and erect replacement buildings on the same footprint'*.

The new buildings would be located on a similar footprint as to the existing buildings, though the new development would be noticeably smaller, resulting in a reduced floorspace of approx. 402 m².

The buildings would be well screened from public views by the existing mature vegetation bordering the site; however, it would still be visible from certain vantage points, but would be set within the context of a long-established existing poultry enterprise.

The building is justified as for agricultural use and its location is considered acceptable taking into consideration the above factors. For a combination of the above reasons, the proposals are deemed to adhere with Policy PG6 of the CELPS and RUR 1 of the SADPD and would be deemed acceptable in principle.

Design, Character & Appearance of the Area

Policy SD1 states that wherever possible development should 'provide a locally distinct, high quality, sustainable, well designed and durable environment'.

Policy SD2 states that all development will be expected to contribute positively an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness in terms of;

- Height, scale, form and grouping
- Choice of materials
- External design features
- Massing of the development (the balance between built form and green/public spaces)
- Green infrastructure; and
- Relationship to neighbouring properties, street scene and the wider neighbourhood

SADPD design Policy GEN1 is also a consideration.

The proposed design is typical of an agrarian nature and would reflect the existing use of the site within a rural area. The proposed steel portal frame units would consist of walls formed of concrete with mesh above to the north and south facing elevations, to the west and east elevations the units would be clad in timber weatherboard. The roof covering would be polyester profile sheeting, goosewing grey in colour. In terms of the external No. 8 feed bins to the east and west elevation they would be plastic, olive green in colour.

The structures, feed bins are of a standard, functional design and it is not considered that there would be any significant impact on the character of the area over and above the existing scenario.

The proposed development would not result in detrimental impact upon the character of the surrounding area in accordance with policies SE1 and SD2 of the Cheshire East Local Plan and policy GEN 1 of the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document.

Impact of the Proposal Upon Designated Heritage Assets

The starting point for the consideration of the proposal is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ("the Act"). Sections 16(2), 66, 72 require that special regard is had to the desirability of preserving a listed building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses. The statutory duty to consider the impact of proposals upon the setting of a listed building carry great weight.

The adopted development plan comprises of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy ("CELPS") and the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD). The policies most relevant to the consideration of the proposal include CELPS Policies SE 1 (Design) SE 7 (The Historic Environment) and SADPD Policies HER 4 (Listed buildings) and HER 9 (Jodrell Bank World Heritage Site).

Policy SE7 states proposals for development shall be assessed and the historic built environment actively managed in order to contribute to the significance of heritage assets and local distinctiveness. The Council will support proposals that do not cause harm to heritage assets and will seek to avoid or minimise conflict by considering the level of harm in relation to the public benefits that may be gained.

SADPD Policy HER 4 (Listed buildings) states that development proposals affecting a listed building or its setting will be expected to preserve and enhance the asset and its setting wherever possible. As such new development affecting the setting of listed buildings should preserve and enhance the setting.

SADPD Policy (Jodrell Bank World Heritage Site) states development proposals within the Jodrell Bank World Heritage Site, its buffer zone or its setting will be supported where they preserve those elements of significance that contribute to Jodrell Bank's Outstanding Universal Value, including its authenticity and integrity.

In terms of other material planning considerations, guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") is relevant particularly Section 14 'Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change' and Section 16 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'.

In relation to Jodrell Bank the proposed replacement units are located approx. 3.5km from the site and reside within the 'inner-zone', due to residing within the inner-zone Jodrell Bank were consulted; however, Jodrell Bank have provided no comments in relation to the development at the time of writing. As no comment have been received by Jodrell Bank it is deemed there is no objection. Given the development relates to an existing farm and will replace the existing units, as such the impact is considered to be neutral.

To the east of the site lies Hawthorne Cottage, a small Grade II listed building. The separation between the existing units is approx. 120m and the replacement units would continue to respect this.

Following consultation with the Council's Conservation Officer they acknowledge while the scale of development would be reduced the eaves and ridge height would be increased by 0.6m and 2.081m respectfully. Due to the increased height, the Built Heritage Officer is of the view that this would have a negative impact on the setting of the existing heritage assets. As such there would be some harm to the setting, this is towards the be to the low end of less than substantial. While towards the low end, there would still be an appreciable loss of significance which is contrary to CELPS Policy SE 7 and Policy HER4 of the SADPD

Where there is less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 202 of the Framework requires the harm to be balanced against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. Given existing operational turkey farm the public benefit of the proposal lies in the economic contribution of potential employment during the construction phase and continuation of providing 8 full time employees on site.

As aforementioned the supporting statement advises that '*the existing farm is around 40 years old and is dated an inefficient and not suited for modern poultry production*'. While there would be an overall increase in height of the units, given the opportunity to modernise the site and the public benefits accruing from the construction phase, permanent provision for employment and continuation of the poultry enterprise, it is considered the public benefit outweigh the harm caused.

Amenity

Policy HOU 12 (Amenity) of the SADPD, requires that new development should not have an unduly detrimental effect on the amenities of nearby residential properties from loss of privacy, loss of sunlight or daylight, the overbearing and dominating effect of new buildings, environmental disturbance or pollution and traffic generation access and parking.

The nearest residential dwellings are located over 100m away, these being Birchwood to the west, Gorsefield to the north and Hawthorn House to the east.

Given separation distances to the nearest neighbouring properties, the existing established enterprise and overall reduction in accommodation of hens and stags, there would be no significant impact to the neighbouring dwellings above and beyond the existing scenario.

As such the development complies with the principles of policies SE1 CELPS and policy HOU 12 of the SADPD.

Highways

Policy CO2 of the CELPS identifies that '*proposals should adhere to the current adopted Cheshire East Council Parking Standards for Cars and Bicycles set out in Appendix C (Parking Standards)*'

Policy INF3 of the emerging SADPD states amongst others that the development provides '*safe access to and from the site for all highway users and incorporate safe internal movement in the site to meet the requirements of servicing and emergency vehicles*'

The proposal will be a redevelopment to an existing operation on site and there will be no amendments to the access onto Hermitage Lane. The increase in daily traffic generation is considered to be limited and there is an existing provision for off-street parking, which is sufficient.

In addition, the Head of Strategic Transport has no objection to the planning application.

The proposal is deemed to adhere with Policies SD1 and CO2 of the CELPS with regards to highways matters, Policy INF 3 of the SADPD.

Landscape and Trees

The site is located in the open countryside. It has no local or national landscape designations or trees afforded protection via a TPO within or near the immediate site.

The site is relatively flat with areas surrounding the complex laid to grass with a belt of mature trees located to the north and east, woodland to the west and a mature hedgerow to the south.

Given the proposals would replace the existing buildings on a similar footprint to the existing and the screening to the boundary being retained there would be no significant impact to the landscape and trees within the site.

Ecology

The application site falls within Natural England's SSSI Impact Risk Zones, due to residing within the zone Natural England were consulted. However Natural England have provided no comments in relation to the development at the time of writing.

Ecological Enhancement

In addition to the SSSI Impact Risk Zones the site forms part of the Ecological network as outlined in policy ENV 1 of the SADPD, which seeks to deliver benefits for biodiversity from development.

Following consultation with the Councils Ecologist due to the nature of the site and proposal, though limited the proposals present any opportunities for ecological enhancement in relation to birds, bats, hedgehogs and native species planting.

If the committee is minded approving a condition will be attached to secure an ecological enhancement to the site prior to commencement.

External Lighting

The Councils Ecologist notes that while the site offers limited roosting potential for bats, some foraging and commuting is likely around the site. While no external lighting is indicated as part

of the proposals, to mitigate any adverse impacts on bats it is recommended any additional external lighting should be agreed with the LPA prior to installation.

Japanese Knotweed

Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) is present on the proposed development site. Due to the nature of Japanese Knotweed an informative is recommended to be attached to any decision

Flood risk

The site is located within flood zone 1 (lowest risk) and drainage proposals are included in the supporting Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment (FRDA). The drainage proposals include an infiltration basin, bioretention basin and dirty water system.

The LLFA have reviewed application and have no objection in principle. Therefore, it is considered the flood risk and drainage proposals are acceptable.

Waste Disposal

At the end of each flock cycle the buildings are cleaned out and the manure removed via mechanical loader. The supporting statement advises that *'the manure is loaded directly into waiting trailers, which are sheeted when full and removed from site for disposal'*. The buildings are then washed out with drainage via sealed drains to a certified dirty water containment tank. The dirty water is removed from the site by tanker at the end of each washing period.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

The proposed development is the redevelopment of an existing poultry enterprise. The proposals are considered to be in accordance with National and Local Plan Policy and appropriate to this rural location. The proposed development would not cause adverse impacts upon residential amenity, highway safety, and the location of the poultry sheds would be acceptable in the open countryside. The less than substantial heritage harm would be outweighed by the benefits of the proposed development. The application complies with the Development Plan as a whole and is recommended for approval.

Approve subject to the following conditions;

- 1. Standard Time**
- 2. Approved Plans**
- 3. Materials as Application**
- 4. Ecological Enhancement**
- 5. External Lighting**
- 6. Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment**

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) of Southern Planning Committee, to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.

