

Parish: HADLEIGH

Location: Farm Building West of Hill Farm, Hadleigh

Proposal: Conversion of farm building into offices, workshop and store

Applicant: Compass Specialised Services Ltd

Case Officer: Ben Elvin

Date for Determination: 23/04/08

SITE

1. The existing farm building lies in an elevated position to the west of Hill Farm house. The building is currently vacant and is being sold separately to the farm house and the associated cluster of buildings that lies to the east. The building is approximately 432 square metres in area and consists of a weatherboard clad structure over a red brick plinth with corrugated roof.
2. The main part of the building is located to the front but it has a subservient open storage area to the rear.
3. The building lies within 6.4 hectares of grassland.

PROPOSAL

4. The proposal is to convert the building into offices, workshop and storage (being 108 sq. metres of office accommodation, 108 sq metres of workshop and 216 sq metres of storage). The applicant operates an engineering company specialising in machinery installations and movements.
5. The rear part of the building would be filled in on its open side (facing to the west) and a number of windows would be inserted into the side elevations of the building. The large door to the front elevation will be retained.
6. Car parking for 5 cars and 2 lorries and turning areas are to be accommodated on the existing hardstanding that lies immediately to the south of the building. The hours of operation are shown to be 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Saturday with no work on Sundays or bank Holidays.

RELEVANT HISTORY

7. B/06/01444 (2006) – Planning permission granted for change of use of land from agricultural use to equestrian use.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

8. PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
9. PPS7: Sustainable Development In Rural Areas
10. PPG4: Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms

PLANNING POLICIES

11. The following Development Plan policies are applicable to the proposal:

- **CR18** – Buildings in the Countryside – Non-Residential
- **CN01** – Design
- **CR01** – Landscaping Quality

This report only includes policy references. For further details please see Page 4.

OBSERVATIONS

12. PC – Object for the following reason;

- This is a change of use that has the intention of industrialising an agricultural site in the countryside, Lady Lane Industrial Estate would be a more suitable site for such a proposal.

13. LHA – No objections.

REPRESENTATIONS

14. Two letters of objection have been received which make the following points;

- The proposal would be an unnecessary overdevelopment of an agricultural area.
- Security could be a problem due to the isolated nature of the site.
- Security lighting would result in light pollution.
- The sale of Hill farm originally contained restrictions that the land could only be used for agriculture.
- There are owls and deer in the area which could be affected by the proposal.
- There is no mains sewerage at the site and a septic tank could contaminate the watercourse.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

15. Policy CR18 provides the relevant criteria in respect of the re-use of redundant rural buildings. It states that proposals to convert barns or other redundant buildings in the countryside to industrial, business, community or recreational uses will be permitted providing that no adverse impact is caused to the landscape characteristics, highway safety, residential amenity or cultural heritage. It also provides that proposals should not require significant rebuilding, cause risk of flooding or injury to protected species, are well positioned in relation to the highway network and can be connected to a suitable drainage system. This policy reiterates the principles established within PPS7.

16. The building is clearly structurally sound and would not require significant elements of rebuilding. It lies in an elevated position where there would not be risk of flooding. The existing landscaping to the northern boundary is to remain and there is scope for additional planting/landscaping to the western boundary to form a screen from Pond Hall Road.

17. The site is served by an access that leads directly off Pond Hall Road. The land rises up from the road edge and the access also serves the farm house and the cluster of buildings to the east. The proposed access is considered to be acceptable for the levels of traffic generation that such a use will provide (identified to be 2 cars per day, with one LGV and one HGV per month). There does not appear to be grounds to require further access works in light of the relatively low level of vehicle movements and the LHA have raised no objection to the proposal.

18. Hadleigh Business Park is located within close proximity of the site and, whilst the site is some distance from Hadleigh Town Centre, the road does link through Hintlesham to the A1071. The traffic generation associated with the proposed use is not such that would give

undue cause for concern in respect of the road network and should not result in numerous large vehicles requiring access to the site.

19. The site is not served by mains drainage and in this instance the provision of a septic tank is considered to provide a suitable means of waste disposal.
20. In terms of the works to the building, the insertion of additional fenestration in the side elevations is not considered to be such that would cause any particular detriment to the landscape setting of the building. The provision of hedgerow planting to the western boundary will screen the building when viewed from Pond Hall Road. The eastern side of the building is only visible from within the site. However, given the height of the building, it is necessary to consider the potential insertion of a mezzanine floor. In this respect, it would be necessary to ensure that any mezzanine floors are the subject of a condition requiring a new application to be made.
21. In conclusion the proposal provides a suitable alternative use for this redundant agricultural building that will enable further landscape enhancement in the form of a scheme of hedge planting.

REASON FOR APPROVAL

The re-use of this vacant agricultural building is considered to provide a suitable employment use in accordance with the provisions of policies CN01, CR01 and CR18 of the Babergh Local Plan Alteration No.2 (2006). The conversion would result in a use of the building that would not adversely impact on the character of the landscape, highway safety or residential amenity and would not result in risk of flooding or detriment to protected species.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant planning permission subject to conditions, including –

- Scheme of landscaping
- Details of finishes to windows and doors
- Restriction of Mezzanines
- External Lighting to be agreed
- Drainage details to be agreed.