Farm: Bartletts Farm, Arborfield

Bartletts Farm Holding Size: Approximately 35.87 hectares (88.65 acres)

Total Holdings: 47.69 ha (117.84 acres)

Agricultural Use: Permanent Pasture used for agricultural production and forage conservation.

This statement has been prepared in support of a Prior Notification application under Part 6 of the General Permitted Development Order for the erection of a steel-framed agricultural building measuring 18.28 metres x 12.19 metres, providing a gross floor area of 222.83m².

The proposal consists of a three-bay agricultural barn measuring 18.28m x 12.19m, which will be used for the safe and secure storage of hay and forage crops produced from the holding.

Existing Agricultural Enterprise

Bartletts Farm comprises approximately 33.46 hectares of agricultural land laid predominantly to grass. The land is actively managed for agricultural purposes and requires regular cutting, harvesting and maintenance throughout the year.

The holding generates significant quantities of hay from seasonal grass production. The grassland is managed through routine mowing and baling operations to produce winter forage and maintain the agricultural productivity of the land.

At present, there is no purpose-built covered accommodation available on the holding for the storage of harvested forage crops. The holding historically had a brick built hay store which measured approximately 15.80m x 3.75m. Unfortunately this was burnt down and now the applicant is without sufficient storage.

Need for the Proposed Building

Hay Storage

The primary requirement for the building is the secure and weatherproof storage of the forage crops produced on the holding.

Hay must be stored in dry conditions immediately following baling to preserve nutritional quality and prevent deterioration. Exposure to rainfall and moisture results in:

- Loss of forage quality;
- Reduction in feed value;
- Increased spoilage and wastage;
- Potential fire risks associated with poorly stored hay;
- Financial losses to the agricultural enterprise.

After conducting calculations on the productive capacity of the holding, we have concluded the entirety of the proposed building would be needed for the storage of forage crops. Below is a breakdown of the requirement calculations.

Holding Details

Total Holding size: 82.68 acres
20% reduction due to fluctuating yields
New Total: 66.14 acres

Yield Details

Assumed Yield: 2 Tonnes per acre
Total Yield: 66.14 x 2 = 132.28 tonnes of forage crop

Output Details

4 Stringer Bale size: 0.8 x 0.9 x 2.5m = 1.8m³
Bale weight = 250kg
Volume per tonne = 7.3m³

Total volume required = 952.42m³

Proposed barn volume: 18.28 x 12.19 x 4.57 = 1,018.35m³

The proposed barn will allow for slightly more than the calculated required space to account for yield fluctuations.

Scale of the Proposed Development

The proposed building measures 18.28m x 12.19m (222.83m^2) and comprises three agricultural bays.

The scale of the building is proportionate to the operational requirements for accommodating the necessary forage crops.

The proposal represents a practical and functional agricultural structure designed solely for agricultural purposes.

Siting Considerations

The proposed building has been located to function efficiently within the existing agricultural unit and sited in the location of the previous hay store that was once on the holding.

Local Agricultural Context

The proposal is consistent with the type of agricultural development regularly undertaken within the Wokingham Borough Council area.

Recent applications for agricultural barns include:

- Full application for proposed erection of an agricultural barn (Application 152140)

- Full application for the proposed erection of a four bay steel framed agricultural barn with lean-to (Application 193255)
- Full application for the proposed erection of an agricultural barn for the storage of tractors, machinery, hay and feed (Application 202003).
- Application for agricultural prior determination for proposed Agricultural Barn (Application 150046).
- Prior approval submission for the erection of an agricultural barn (Application 210194)

These examples demonstrate that agricultural buildings remain a common and necessary component of modern farming enterprises within the local area.