

Your ref: PP-10334444
Our ref: 336 17 LMS MAG

18 November 2021

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Dear Sir

**F CRAVEN & SONS LIMITED
CHANGE OF USE AND ALTERATIONS TO AGRICULTURAL BARNs TO CREATE A
GIN DISTILLERY TO INCLUDE A SHOP AND THE ERECTION OF A GLAZED LINK
AND WELFARE FACILITIES.
THE MILL FARM, WIGTOFT ROAD, SUTTERTON, BOSTON, PE20 2EL**

We are instructed to submit a full planning application for the above proposal at The Mill Farm, Sutterton.

The principle of changing the use of the larger of the two agricultural buildings on site into a gin distillery has already received approval under the prior notification process reference B/20/0303, and this represents a material planning consideration. This latest proposal sees the linking of that building with the smaller adjacent building via a new glazed link plus the erection of welfare facilities.

Use

The process of making gin is a relatively straightforward one in that wheat is grown on the applicant's farm, it is then taken to Moulton Mill to the east of Spalding where the grain is milled into flour. The flour is then taken to a specialist alcohol manufacturing location in Oxfordshire where the gin mash water is produced. This is essentially the base liquid. The base liquid is then brought back to the site where the distillation, together with the addition of the botanicals that create the desired distinctive taste is carried out. The equipment needed to create the base liquid is extremely expensive and the facility in Oxfordshire makes the base mix for many customers making the investment there worthwhile, otherwise the entire process would be carried out at The Mill Farm.

The base mix will then be distilled on site and a variety of botanicals added to create the bottled gin that will be sold both on site and exported. Some of the botanicals that can be grown in the UK climate will be sourced from the farm such as sweet fennel, and elderflower from the local hedgerows. The larger of the two buildings will be where the gin is made, bottled, and dispatched from. The existing biomass boiler in the end bay of the building will be used to heat the resultant buildings. The larger of the two buildings will also incorporate a 'gin kitchen' where individuals and groups






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will be able to attend events where they can learn to create and flavour their own gin, together with the creation of welfare facilities for the staff and an office on a small mezzanine. The smaller of the two buildings will be converted into a shop and tasting area and a glazed link will provide a closed connection between the two buildings and toilets will be constructed to the rear.

The proposal will utilise existing but largely redundant agricultural buildings in the south-western corner of the farmyard which is occupied by a number of large agricultural buildings used for the storage of agricultural produce.

Appearance

The larger of the two buildings is an open fronted machinery store and it is proposed to erect a largely glazed frontage to this building to provide views into the distillery as the elaborate stainless steel gin still is both attractive and interesting to look at. The large, glazed areas will also allow as much natural light into the building as possible. A roller shutter door and surrounding cladding will hide the dispatch area. The smaller of the two buildings will be clad in larch and there will be a small open porch at the entrance to the building. Overall the buildings will take on a contemporary look.

The buildings are set within an existing agricultural farmyard and will be largely hidden from public view.

Highways

The access to the proposal will be via an existing entrance and driveway onto the Wigtoft Road. This is not the main access into the farmyard, that lies to the east and will remain unchanged. There will be relatively little traffic generated by the proposal. The wheat produced by the farm will continue to be grown irrespective of the planning proposal and would leave the main yard to a customer. Accordingly, in terms of traffic generation, there is no difference whether that grain is to be used for making bread or gin. Only a small proportion of the grain grown on the farm will be used for the gin making process. The wheat 'returns' to the application site in form of the raw mash water in a 1 X 1000 litre intermediate bulk container (ibc) which will be brought to the site once every two weeks in the back of a transit type van. The finished gin will be sent out on a daily demand basis via a standard courier on average, 2 times per week.

The shop and 'gin kitchen' will attract both casual shoppers and pre-booked groups of up to 12 people. The proposal will, however, cater for a niche market and will not therefore generate the levels of traffic associated with say a small farm shop.



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The access to the proposal will be for the gin distillery and shop only, the grain will leave the farm via the existing access to the east which currently serves the main farmstead.

Parking, including disabled parking will be provided for visitors and staff within the existing farmyard as shown on the submitted plans.

Planning Policy

Policy 7 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan identifies that new small-scale employment development will be supported including the conversion/re-use of redundant buildings to support the visitor economy, including farm diversification. These will be supported provided that proposals: 1. do not conflict with neighbouring land uses; 2. are in keeping with the character of the locality; and 3. demonstrate a functional link with an existing rural attraction or farm enterprise.

The proposal accords with Policy 7 in its entirety and is acceptable in all other respects.

Other Materials Consideration

The proposal lies within Flood Zone 3a and accordingly a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. The assessment considers the risk of flooding and concludes that the proposal is safe from flooding and will not result in surface water flooding to other land uses or users. The finished floor levels will be raised 300mm in accordance with the recommendations.

There are no protected species present within the buildings or within the farmyard. The larger of the two buildings is steel-framed and open-fronted and as such does not provide a suitable habitat for bats or barn owls within the largely enclosed farmyard. The smaller of the two buildings has a cement fibre roof with the inside having been sprayed with an insulating foam and similarly does not provide a suitable habitat.

It is anticipated that the project will generate 5.3 full time worker equivalent jobs.

There are no point source emissions to air from the distillation process.

Roof water is currently piped to a soakaway which will remain unchanged, and the foul water will be piped into the existing system on site as shown on the submitted plans.



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Conclusions

The proposal represents a sustainable form of rural diversification with little or no impact on the surrounding areas or residents, is wholly compliant with the development plan and is acceptable in all other respects.




We trust you will consider the application favourably, but should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

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