

**The farming circumstances of the application for a new dwelling at the farmyard on Fenhouses Lane, Swineshead PE20 3HE. REVISED 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

**Background**

Messrs WP&H Laird & Sons farm some 2,400 acres in quite widely spread locations. Some 1,880 acres are located at Market Rasen and New York/Tumby and while some grain is moved to Swineshead for drying and storage, these parcels are mostly a separate entity.

There are 520 acres owned and farmed at and around Swineshead and the land is split into a number of parcels, mostly bare land, with this site being the effective management HQ.

**Farming details**

The buildings at Fenhouses store some 1,600 tons of potatoes and 650 tons of grain and the storage facilities are temperature controlled and (for the grain) also used to dry the crop. Further storage is present and largely used for winter storage of the major farm implements - combine harvester, potato harvester and beet harvester.

The crop stores require visits twice a day at times to check temperatures and switch on/off ventilation fans. Currently Mr Alex Laird, on whose behalf this application is submitted, has to drive to and from the site to oversee this and this loses a considerable amount of time over the season and creates a risk of rot or disease if not attended to efficiently and promptly. It does seem as if the current system works - just about - but this is not an efficient way to farm. Residence on site would improve efficiency and crop safety, prevent disease inception and generally accord with the principles of good crop husbandry.

## **Crime**

Crime does exist in the area and padlocks have been cut here on several occasions, though (so far) no damage has been done or items stolen. However, it cannot be forecast that this halcyon state of affairs will last for ever and prudence suggests it would be wise indeed to create residence on site before anything seriously adverse occurs.

## **National Planning Policy Framework (and Planning Practice Guidance)**

Para 79(a) of the 2012 NPPF supports the need for on-site residence and para 010 (ref ID: 67-010-20190722) in Planning Policy Guidance reaffirms the necessity - speaking of a requirement over 24 hours and the need to deal quickly with emergencies to prevent any serious loss of crops.

## **House search**

Mr Laird has looked for houses in the neighbourhood, but nothing near enough has become available. The house next door, which would have been ideally located did change hands some while ago, [REDACTED]. The other point is that while living closer than at present, any residence that is not actually on site rather misses the point about combatting crime and reducing the likelihood of theft. The conclusion therefore is that a new house on site represents the very best way to secure an efficient business.

## **Management Responsibility**

Additionally Mr Laird has a management function to perform and while not yet moving to majority control (para 79 NPPF) his responsibilities do encompass management needs as part of the family business - additional justification for on-site residence. Lastly is the wish to be able to set up house with his partner who assists on the farm.

## **Siting**

The site suggested is on the edge of a little island of Flood Zone 1 in a “sea” of Flood Zone 3 , but there are a number of locations that would work and the applicants would have no objection to agreeing an alternative site if this seemed to be required. One alternative could be behind Abbey View, but perhaps this would not be well-received by the occupants. (No discussion has taken place.)

The site shown is the extent of the plot and actual siting of a dwelling could be decided at Reserved Matters stage.

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