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Our Ref: MRH/SO843

24 June 2011

Alex Jelley  
Kettering Borough Council

BOROUGH OF KETTERING  
DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

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Dear Alex

**ROCKINGHAM CASTLE FARMS  
YOUR REF: KET/2011/0230  
PROPOSED NEW AGRICULTURAL BUILDING ADJACENT TO HANGAR 1,  
DESBOROUGH AIRFIELD**

Thank you for your email of 17 June which we have now discussed earlier today and I write in response to the questions you have raised as follows:

1. I am attaching a plan showing the Estate boundary edged red totalling approximately 4,000 acres, together with the land managed within our client's in-hand farming enterprise comprising approximately 2,400 acres of arable land (shaded brown) and approximately 400 acres of grassland (shaded green). I can confirm that the proposed new building will be used solely in conjunction with our client's in-hand enterprise.
2. In respect of the existing use of Hangar 1, I can confirm that our client currently uses Hangar 1 for storage of fertiliser used for the land identified on the plan and the storage of harvested crops from this land.

We are in the process of installing a new grain drying plant within the existing hangar building and therefore an area of the hangar will no longer be available for storage, either of harvested crops or fertiliser. Therefore, both the existing hangar and the new building will be used in conjunction with each other; with the new building principally providing a secure and covered area for fertiliser storage.

3. We have not included a floor plan showing any split within the new agricultural building between workshop space and fertiliser storage, however, I can confirm that the intention is that approximately one fifth to one quarter of the new building area will be used for workshop facilities. This will be to maintain the machinery used on the in-hand arable land. As stated above, the remaining building area will be used for fertiliser storage, with dividing walls between the two uses being moveable concrete panels.
4. I confirm that the machinery maintenance referred to in the Planning Design and Access Statement is referring to maintenance of farm machinery used with our client's in-hand farming enterprise.

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5. I attach a plan showing the location of another building in the Rockingham Village, part of which is currently used for fertiliser storage, with the other part being used by our client for firewood storage. This combined use has become unviable; not least because our client can only store just less than one quarter of their annual fertiliser requirement in this building and results in additional issues relating to transportation of fertiliser and security.

There are also a number of economic and agronomic reasons for the new building as follows:

- (i) Crop separation and traceability is paramount in arable farming and this requires commodity stores are managed to ensure that not only different crops are stored correctly, but that different varieties, particularly of wheat, are also stored separately. In reality this means an increased number of separately stored crops results in total storage capacity being reduced as the building is further divided by additional internal grain walling.

Therefore, in this instance, the use of the existing hangar building for fertiliser storage presents problems for crop separation and therefore the new building is required to provide additional storage for fertiliser (approximately 450 tonnes)

This is further supported in the context of farming profitability as having sufficient on farm storage provides the ability to take delivery of fertiliser products in July/August each year at a lower cost compared to the peak usage period of fertiliser in February/March/April the following year.

For example, the price differential between fertiliser purchased and delivered in August 2010 and fertiliser purchased and delivered in February/March 2011 was approximately £100 per tonne; equivalent in that year of a 30% price increase over the period or £45,000 based on a storage requirement of 450 tonnes.

- (ii) Given the volatility of commodity and fertiliser markets at present and for the foreseeable future, our client would like to be in a position to make commercial decisions, for example purchasing two years' worth of fertiliser in one year where price volatility could have an impact on the profitability of the farming enterprise. In order to have the flexibility to make these commercial decisions, our client requires secure and covered building space which provides sufficient storage capacity.
- (iii) As with many farming enterprises throughout the UK, and particularly in the areas of the Midlands and East Anglia, having all a farm's storage requirements on one site, in this case the Airfield, will mean that there is less travelling around the farm, particularly given current diesel prices. The carbon footprint of farming is under constant scrutiny and this is one way in which our client's in-hand farming enterprise can develop its commercial viability whilst at the same time aiming to reduce its carbon footprint through reduced vehicles movements around the whole farm area. There are many examples of farm building restructuring in this way in the area and in our view, this provides justification for why the new building should be located adjacent to Hangar 1 in order to achieve this objective.

I hope the above information is sufficient to answer your further queries but if you require any further clarification, please contact me or my colleague, David Featherstone.

I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Yours sincerely



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