



Mount Mill Farm, Wicken



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1.0: Overview

1.1

This Design, Access and Justification Statement has been prepared by J B T Gurney on behalf of B & J Gurney in support of a retrospective planning application for the development of 4 commercial units and associated works at Mount Mill Farm, Wicken, MK19 6DG. The document demonstrates the justification for the diversification of part of Mount Mill Farm by converting one existing steel framed agricultural buildings to create a total of four commercial units. The purpose of this statement is to set out the principles adopted as part of the process of preparing detailed design proposals for the site and how these have taken account of the national and local design requirements. We have considered the accompanying information for the above development, including highways and transportation, heritage, landscape and drainage.

1.2

The agricultural building was converted to mixed industrial use from mid 2019, with occupation of the building commencing in November 2019. The applicant was wrongly advised as to the correct procedure for general permitted development class R and was led to believe that notice was not needed.

Subsequent to notification from Michelle Jarvis of the planning enforcement office an application was made under the GDPO class R. This was subsequently withdrawn due to the nature of the application being retrospective.

1.3 Current status

The units were let prior to completion and are still occupied by:

- Overkill Performance
- A private tenant
- Deanshanger vehicle services
- Gemlar motorsport simulators

All but one of the tenants fall within B1/B8 usage codes as defined with the GDPO class R. Deanshanger vehicle services is B2 usage.

2: Site

2.1

The site is located on a working farm located off of the A422 between Deanshanger and Wicken, the farm falls within the Parish of Wicken, a village in the South Northants district of Northamptonshire, the site is 4.8 miles west of Milton Keynes and 4.8 miles north-east of Buckingham, both of which boast excellent employment, retail and leisure facilities. Junction 15 of the M1 is a 20-minute drive from the site with Milton Keynes Central train station a quarter of an hour away. These both offer excellent transport links throughout the country.

2.2

Currently the complete site is occupied by modern agricultural buildings, residential units, commercial office units and the industrial units being retrospectively applied for under this application.

3: Application information and Justification

3.1

Mount Mill Farm is under the sole ownership of Mr Jonathan Gurney and Mrs Margaret Gurney. Mount Mill farm is an agricultural holding and is within the jurisdiction of South Northampton Council.

3.2

Regard has been given to the South Northamptonshire supplementary planning guidance "farm diversification" which states; With the present need to curb over production of farm products, the government is encouraging farmers to develop other activities as a way of supplementing income.

Regards has also been given to South Northamptonshire local plan saved policies 2007 (revised December 2014) Policy EV1 the countryside 4.17 states "Through the preparation of supplementary planning guidance on farm diversification the council is actively encouraging farmers to develop other activities as a way of supplementing their farming income".

3.3

External market demand has also factored in the conversion as highlighted below by James Paynter, the commercial director of Michael Graham commercial:

MGC specialise in the management and letting of rural premises predominantly in North Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire which are typically offices and workshops with consents for B1, B2 and B8 uses. These rural buildings tend to range in size from circa 500ft² (46m²) to 5000ft² (464m²) providing accommodation for small businesses including new and downsizing companies. For over the last 12 months MGC have been operating across all sites extending to circa 350,000ft² of floorspace at occupancy rate of approx. 98%.

Premises are generally let on relatively short terms ranging from 1 to 5 years reflecting the age and soundness of the business. They will be let on relatively simple terms usually on an internal repairing basis only meaning occupiers are generally liable only for rent, rates and utilities. The simple 'easy-in, easy-out' model suits these types of tenants who do not want some of the obligations that maybe experienced elsewhere. When units become available, they tend to be reoccupied virtually immediately.

4.0 Design & Layout

4.1

The layout and design of the scheme has been carefully considered and respects and responds to the site's constraints, opportunities and surrounding context. Particular attention and references have been taken from the South Northamptonshire design guide.

4.2

All elevations of the building are clad in light grey steel sheeting with a contrasting local brick plinth beneath. The commercial development design guide section 6.48 states *'The walls should be timber or metal sheet cladding. Various shades can be used to break up the perceived mass of the building. Greys, dark greens, bronze and black are acceptable examples'* while section 4.49 states *'any masonry walls should be faced in a locally appropriate natural stone, or an orange or red stock brick, or clad to match the remainder of the building'*

4.3

To break any perceived mass of the building the industrial doors are in a contrasting dark grey colour. The below approved example has been extracted from the commercial development design guide:



(Above: Grange Park, Northampton)

A combination of different shades of grey have been used to break up the elevation of this building, which in turn reduces the perceived mass.

4.4

Roof sheeting is the original patinaed dark grey fibre cement roofing. The commercial development design guide section 4.49 states 'The roof should be dark grey or black in colour'

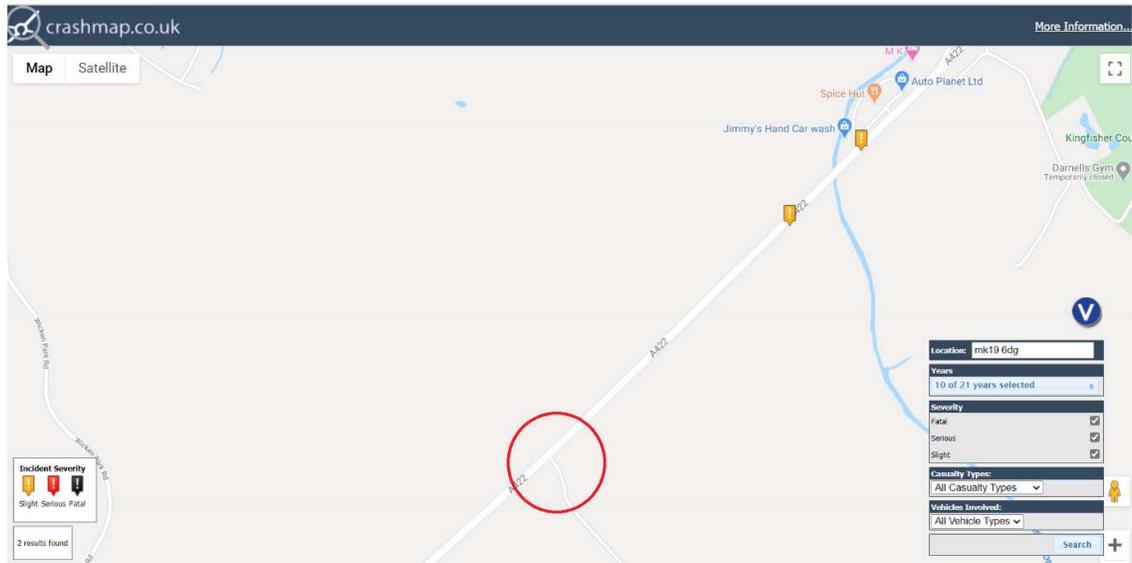
5.0 Access & Parking

5.1

The site is situated with an access to the A422. The access is of good quality and has been used by the farm holding for many years. The light industrial use (i.e. workshop, offices) will not have a detrimental impact on highway safety. It will have its own defined parking area. Any traffic caused by the development would be less hazardous than the established agricultural use, where agricultural equipment can be brought into and out of the site at any time of the day or night.

5.2

A review of the safety record of the highway that passes and adds access to the site has been undertaken. Data from road traffic accidents that result in injuries is collected by the police forces and reported annually by the department of transport. The review covers the last decade and shows that there has not been a single accident resulting in injury at the access junction to the site.



5.4

Chapter 9 of NPPF relates to the promotion of sustainable transport and advises (para 108) that in assessing planning applications it should be ensured that:

- Appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be or have been taken up given up the type of development and its location
- Safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users and -
- Any significant impacts from the development on the transport network in terms of capacity and congestion or on highways safety can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

It is considered that the development proposals meet these tests. Due to the rural nature of the site opportunities to promote sustainable transport are limited, however the proposal is within cycling distance of parts of Milton Keynes, Stony Stratford and Buckingham this form of transport is encouraged.

NPPF recognises that rural areas are not always well served by public transport but that this should not prevent the rural economy from prospering paragraph 84 states that:

Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable

impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

5.5

Safe and suitable access to the site is provided, with the access providing the appropriate amount of visibility. The second test of paragraph 108 is therefore met.

5.6

For light industrial use the following criteria have been applied to arrive at a sample of comparable survey sites:

- Land use – Employment – industrial estate
- Region England (excluding Greater London) Scotland & Wales
- Size up to 800 sqm
- Survey day weekday
- Location Type – freestanding

Time Range	Trip Generation Per 100m2 Floor Space			Trip Generation over 334 SQM		
	Arrivals	Departures	Total	Arrivals	Departures	Total
	am peak hour (08:00 - 9:00)	0.9	0.363	1.263	3	1
pm peak hour (17:00 - 18:00)	0.218	0.835	1.053	1	3	4
Daily Total	6.45	6.232	12.682	21	20	41

5.7

It is predicted through the data and has proven to be less than predicted in reality, that the development will generate no more than 4 peak hour vehicle movements and a total of 41 daily vehicle movements. With peak hour traffic generation expected to be no more than 1 vehicle movement every 15 minutes or so, on average, the proposed development is unlikely to have a significant or material impact on the operation of local roads. It also has to be noted that the reduction in the farming business through diversification has

been reduced and this has to be offset against this data provided. Mr Gurney has estimated farm movements to total some 105 movements per week and the conversion of the shed to reduce the farm capacity by 30%. Therefore, there is also a natural reduction of 6-7 vehicle movements per day to be deducted from this total.

5.8

The recently published guidance (NPPF) directs that: '*applications should only be refused of highway grounds if the residual cumulative impacts are severe*'. In this case these impacts are minimal and there are no grounds to refuse this application on that matter.

5.9

Car parking is provided in accordance with chapter 4 of the South Northants council parking standards and design supplementary planning documentation 2017. 6 parking spaces per unit are available. The parking spaces do not have a boundary so as to allow for flexibility to accommodate the varying range of vehicle sizes that industrial units may have to serve. Through the layout of the existing farm it is possible to provide HGV access entry and exit in a constant forwards direction.

5.10

The parking has been sited adjacent to the industrial unit, with the access road intersecting the parking area and units. This layout conforms to the commercial development design guide 6.52 '*Parking doesn't have to be hidden or screened, but should be secondary to the overall appearance of the building, rather than dominating views of the development*'. The applicant has the intention of planting natural hedging to the East of the car parking area so as to screen any cars parked and reduce their reflection.

6.0 Drainage and sewage

6.1

Rainwater is channelled to a soak system; this system has been used by the building since its construction and has always coped with the roof water.

6.2

The car parking area has been finished with a permeable surface and filtration drains as well as an additional channel drain leading to a newly established soak away.

6.3

The farm is not on mains sewage so a DEFRA approved sewage treatment plant has been installed.

6.4

The site is within flood risk zone 1, so there is no flood risk.

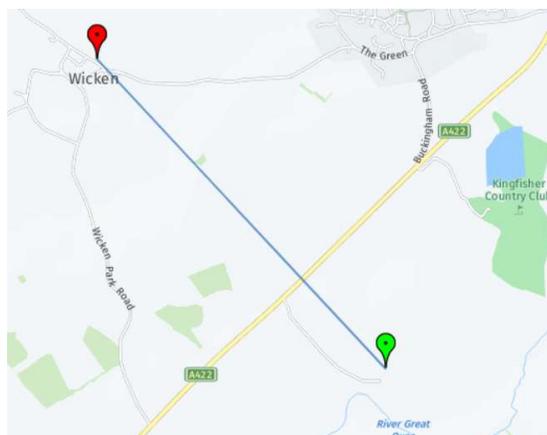
7.0 Usage and implications

7.1

The proposed usage codes for the scheme are B1, B2 and B8.

7.2

Since the occupation of the units in November there has been know known noise impact to the local area. The closest residential dwelling not under the ownership of Mr Gurney is 800 meters to the North and the village of Wicken itself is 1.5 miles from the site. Therefore, with the current usage it can be said that there will be no detrimental audible impact on the local area.



8.0 Conclusion

8.1

This document demonstrates the potential for the continued sustainable development of Mount Mill Farm. The proposal has brought new job opportunities to the area. The combined developments contribute to the economic viability of a diversified farming strategy which will benefit the rural economy in the widest sense.

As such, we consider that in line with the aims of national and local planning policy, the proposals represent an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable future for Mount Mill Farm which will benefit the rural economy and as such should be granted full planning consent.

