

Shorne Parish Council

————— Borough of Gravesham —————

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22nd January 2024

Application ref 20240020

New Green Farm Lower Road Shorne Gravesend Kent DA12 3HL

Determination as to whether prior approval is required for the erection of a cold store.

The Parish Council **OBJECTS** to this proposal as **we consider that a full planning application is needed**, with the following reasons and comments:

Published plans/documents; Land ownership:

- The Planning Statement point 1.8 references that four plans have been submitted but only the site location plan has been published on the GBC website.
- The 16-page Supporting Planning Statement contains information that is not confined to matters relating only to the proposal.
- The site location plan shows the land of the proposed building outlined in red and the area of the “agricultural unit” outlined in blue however we understand, and the Applicant seems to confirm this in point 1.5, that the land subject to this application (south of Footpath NS156) is not owned by the Applicant but is to be used through a farm tenancy agreement.
- We are uncertain whether leased land can be considered part of an agricultural unit and consider that it may be regarded as a separate parcel of land under the planning regulations.
- No access track is shown to the proposed new building or associated vehicle parking and turning area.
- The Supporting Planning Statement refers in several places to there being a “farmyard” however there is no existing or previous farmstead in this location.

Existing and proposed buildings and built forms; hardstanding:

- The Applicant has already built a barn measuring 45.5m by 19.0m giving a floor area of 855sqm.
- In addition to the barn, a large hardstanding area was built and also a large circular structure understood to be for water storage.
- The Applicant has permission to site 6 agricultural workers caravans, each 10m by 3.8m which would together cover 228sqm.
- The proposed chiller unit will measure 26.25m by 33.88m by 12m ridge height, and with projections for an electricity substation 10.38sqm, large electrical control room 35.66sqm and chiller unit occupying a further 21sqm of land. A total of 956sqm.
- We are uncertain whether a chiller unit is classified as an agricultural building “designed for agricultural purposes” or Industrial, in which case different size limits may apply.
- In point 5.5 it is stated that “no additional hardstanding is required as the existing access and yard area will provide adequate access to the building in all weathers”. This will not be the case as the buildings are significantly (90m) separated. It seems highly likely that an access road and hardstanding will be needed and subsequently installed.

Impact on public footpath; Lack of landscaping; visual impact:

- Public Footpath NS156 runs diagonally (SW to NE) between the existing buildings and the proposed coldstore.
- The proposed coldstore will therefore have visual and amenity impacts for footpath users and there are potential safety conflicts arising through large vehicles having to cross the footpath to access the coldstore.
- The Applicant states in point 5.4 that they do not propose any landscaping however this is needed as is fencing off for safety purposes. The cold store will not be screened by other vegetation as it is 8.95m high at the eaves and 12m high at the ridge.
- The location is in the Green Belt and the Higham Arable Farmland Landscape Areas, where the introduction and then proliferation of built forms will impact on openness and adversely impact the views from nearby residential properties.

Other comments/suggested Conditions:

- Sustainability: In point 1.2 the Applicant suggests that having a local cold store improves sustainability however carbon emissions might be better minimised by seeking economies of scale through using the centralised facilities that already exist at Flanders Farm.
- Noise concerns: The chiller unit and reversing vehicles could give rise to noise nuisance for footpath users and nearby residents due to the characteristics of sound propagation in the area.
- External lighting: This is not mentioned in the Supporting Planning Statement and we do not have access to the full set of plans however if not mentioned/shown then exterior lighting is not permitted. We note in that context that exterior lighting, on continuously/all night has been placed on the existing barn.
- Security: The proposed cold store is separated from the worker caravans, if occupied.

- Applicant's other intentions: In Supporting Statements for their other planning applications the applicant has stated that they intend to install a second cold store and a packing facility so the possible further expansion of built forms on the site should be taken into account with this application. It is noted that a triangular area of land is left unoccupied to the north of the proposed cold store and there is other space around it.
- Need for a full planning application: The Parish Council considers that **a full planning application is needed for this proposal** so that, if to be permitted, Conditions can be attached regarding various matters including:
 - Siting, design and external appearance as well as landscaping.
 - External lighting intensity and controls
 - Width and safety fencing for public footpath NS156 – KCC Rights of Way should be asked to provide input on these aspects.
 - Hours of operation of the entire agricultural unit and associated vehicle movements
 - Vehicle numbers, sizes and permitted access routes.
 - Signage and advertising banners.
 - Removal of permitted development rights in order to prevent further proliferation of built forms and hardstanding on the site.