

SUPPORTING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

AGRICULTURAL GRAIN STORAGE BUILDING

RESUBMISSION

W BENNETT & SON

“FIELD FARM”
LAND AT PRESCOTT ROAD
WIDNES
WA8 5PS

DECEMBER 2022



07815 105595 olivia@osplanning.co.uk

Orchard Cottage, Town Farm Lane, Norley, Cheshire, WA6 8NH



In respect of land farmed:

Owned land

- Home farm Rainhill L35 6NX - 120 acres
- Land At Penny Lane farm, Cronton WA8 5PU - 120 acres
- Land At Springfield Farm Tarbock L35 1QN - 160 acres
- Land At Foxes bank field, Prescott Rd, WA8 5PS (The subject site) , 15 acres

Rented land

- Yew tree Farm Tarbock - 70 acres
- Higher Park Farm (opposite site) - 45 acres
- Land At Cronton Pexhill and Penny lane - 90 acres
- Land At Rainhill - 45 acres
- Land adjacent Springfield farm - 107 acres
- Approx. 100 acres annual grass mowing lets

In terms of current facilities:

Current grain storage facilities (building and 4 silos) are located at Town End Farm, Hall Lane, Widnes, as shown below



However, the unit has recently failed the farm assurance (albeit the applicants undertook temporary fixes) as extracted in the following report from the red tractor:



VISIT RECORD FOR Red Tractor Crops SCHEME Auditor: Tom Whittaker

Business/Unit Name: W Bennett & Sons Membership No: 71063

Date of Assessment: 15.3.22 Arrival Time: 13:00 Departure Time: 15:00 Outstanding N/C from Previous visit: _____ (For Scheme Office and/or TAC info only)

Standard	Major NC Or RECOM	Non-Conformance Detail	Type of Evidence	Description of Corrective Action completed/taken (Applicant/Member)	Office Use Only	
					N/C Code	Box Cat
CR.TI.2		Fail - grain collection <u>note</u> not available				
CR.VC.2		Fail - no env risk assessment for use of bait				
CR.ST.16		Minor - foam filers missing and gap above door in grain store				
				Applicant/Member's Signature, Date: 15.3.22		



The non-compliance(s) recorded above were identified during this assessment which are contrary to the Scheme Standards. You will be required to confirm in writing that corrective actions have been completed together with any necessary supporting documentation. The Scheme Manager will then send you a written outcome of this assessment following technical review. **To confirm corrective action taken following your assessment, please do so by sending this form, along with appropriate evidence by email agriculture-ca@lr.org quoting your membership number. Any queries telephone 0131 335 6600.**

Please note that if admitted to the scheme the business may be re-assessed at any time to ensure continued compliance with the scheme standards.

"I/we hereby agree and undertake in favour of Assured Food Standards, trading as Red Tractor Assurance ("RTA") and Acoura Certification t/as Lloyd's Register (LR):

- (a) at all times to be bound by and comply with the Red Tractor Assurance Scheme Membership Rules as they are amended by RTA from time to time (the "Membership Rules"); and
- (b) to notify LR of any prosecution that has at any time been brought or is or is likely to be brought against me/us or any of my/our Associates, or in relation to any Enterprise, business, site, holding, store or vehicle owned or occupied me/us or any of my/our Associates or referred to in a Membership or renewal application, which relates to any issues covered in the Standards, including food safety, product traceability, animal health, animal welfare, animal identification and movements, veterinary medicine records, trade description, animal transport, environmental legislation or relevant consumer protection legislation (all such capitalised terms having the respective meanings given to them in the Membership Rules and the term "prosecution" including, in respect of farms, any penalty relating to Cross-Compliance requirements that directly relates to issues covered in the Standards)."

I agree to complete and confirm corrective action by the agreed date (12.4.22) and accept that failure to do so could affect my membership status.

Applicant/Member's Signature: [Signature] Date: 15.3.22

Auditor Signature: T. Whittaker

Position in company: Owner/manager/other (please specify) owner

First Review: Form 3 Visit Record RTV1	Date: 30/07/2020	Issue 1	Rev 0
Date:			
Corrective Action Review and Closed:			



Farm assurance monitoring is required annually. The Red Tractor Assurance Scheme exists to certify and signify the conformance by each of its members to a series of integrated standards that apply to different farming enterprises and different steps in the food supply chain.

Full details can be observed on <https://redtractorassurance.org.uk/standard-categories/crops/>



Attached to this submission is a copy of crops standard manual. The applicants have undertaken as stated temporary fixes to adhere to the minors and majors' non-conformances, but the condition of the building and stores are poor, dated and do not have sufficient capacity to store the yield of land farmed. The applicants are concerned if they are to fail on next annual assessment and farm visit then they will lose valuable contracts, affecting the business longevity and certainly cause financial implications.

With established contract to supply Mornflake and a malting barley means that there is a secured local market for the product and the applicant is keen to maintain and develop the business and invest in farm buildings to further support the enterprise.

With the March inspection highlighting the condition of current storage facilities this has made the applicants review. If this site was to fail, there are no alternative facilities to accommodate the need therefore the applicants could be forced to have the grain transported off site to facilities where it can be dried and stored before being supplied to Mornflake and the malting supplier. It can therefore be appreciated that if this was to happen, there would be considerable financial outlay for the applicant and costs that could be avoided if they remain to have appropriate on-site facilities to dry and store grain on land owned.

Investment in farm buildings also represents a better economical approach, from which the applicant will benefit further into the future. Furthermore, as with any harvest the outcome is very much reliant on the weather, the optimum harvest time is during a dry spell and when the kernels have reached optimum moisture content. At this point the crop is harvested and transported for storage. Hypothetically, if the applicants must utilise off site drying and storage, often this window for harvest is small and it would be necessary for the applicant to act quickly to prevent pre-harvest losses, which means arranging for the crop to be transported and stored. This isn't always possible and has resulted in considerable losses in the past.

To have appropriate on-site storage facilities not only eliminate such suggested direct cost incurred, but the reliance on a third party to secure a successful harvest. A grain store on site means that the operation can be much more responsive to climatic conditions to enable an optimum harvest. Whilst we accept the applicant has on site facilities, as expanded these are in a poor state of repair and require significant improvements, notwithstanding aren't large enough to hold the bulk of the season



The applicant also has a critical contract for the barley produce. This is used in the malting process. Malting is the controlled germination of cereals, followed by a termination of this natural process by the application of heat. Further heat is then applied to 'cure' the grain and produce the required flavour and colour. A basic rule is that for malt to be made, the barley must be capable of germination, so maltsters source their barley with a minimum germination of 98%.

Assured UK Malt (AUKM) is a scheme operated by the Maltsters Association of Great Britain (MAGB). It brings together various aspects of new and existing codes of practice making up a set of standards which are unique in the world of malting. For brewers and distillers purchasing malt bearing the AUKM mark of certification, the scheme offers reassurance about traceability and quality. It takes the risk out of malt procurement at a time when food safety issues are critical.

Like other crops, the applicants for the malting industry has prescribed standards in the to ensure they remain as a successful supplier. Compliance with MAGB HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) Guide, externally audited for appropriate cereals assurance schemes, traceability of grain, documented quality management systems, legislation and due diligence in fulfilling these obligations

All of which means that malt from the scheme can be purchased with total confidence, making everyone's job much easier and adding value to brewers' and distillers' customers.

The images show the condition of the extant faculties:



(Foam filler – gaps at the Eaves)



(Holes in the roof – Rusty stanchions)



(Foam filler – gaps in the blockwork – vermin issues)



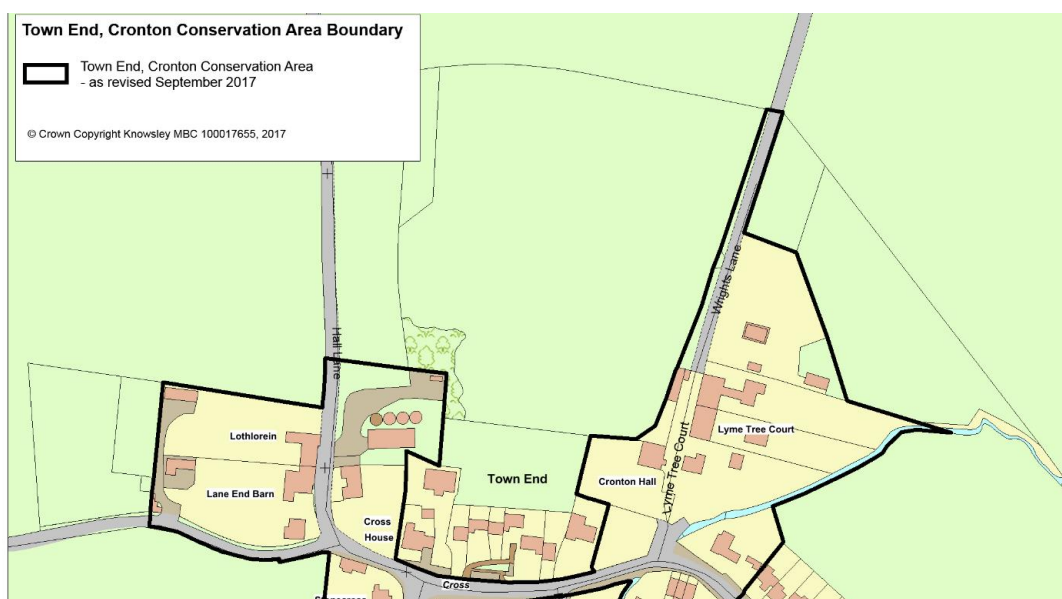
(Unsafe access to monitor moisture content and to load on contract)

Town End Farm has not received any investment, despite the applicant's land holdings growing significantly. Consideration has been given to the refurbishment of this site but to replace the structures would not be feasible, financially and also would remove necessary storage facilities during construction. Critically, it would also encroach on to key agricultural land (green belt) The yard is as extant, limited in the amount of hardstanding and defined yard area. This causes issues daily with the size of agricultural vehicles that operate from this built-up residential location, notwithstanding the HGV vehicles that transport the grain to the applicants' contracted suppliers.

Example of user/ equipment that enters the site is as follows :



Similarly, constraints to the refurbishment of the site at Town End Farm which have made the applicants look at alternative sites is, as stated its position: built-up residential area. The site is also located within Town End Cronton Conservation area as extracted below:



Within the appraisal it states:



Town End, Cronton lies at the convergence of a number of routes making it an ideal settlement, well-connected for early cottage industries. It can be accessed from several roads: Hall Lane runs through the village north to east, Penny Lane from the west and Smithy Lane from the south. Hall Lane is a narrow road and the entrance to the Conservation Area benefits from a low-lying tree canopy creating an interesting and quaint vista in and out of the conservation area. Both Hall Lane and Penny Lane head out of the conservation area past farm land free of construction, creating a sense reminiscent of the agricultural way of life that was once prevalent here. Smithy Lane is more urbanised and heads out of the conservation area past more modern 20th century properties.

The subject site was a new addition to the conservation area in 2017, whereby it was stated

Suggested Boundary Amendments - Proposed Additions Farmyard Adjacent Town End Farm

The extension of the boundary to encompass land adjacent to Town End Farm, currently occupied by silos, would recognise the importance of this site in establishing the agricultural character of Town End, Cronton on the key entry point to the conservation area from Hall Lane. There is a historic stone wall that runs along the eastern bank of Hall Lane on the route in and out of the conservation area, which the extension of the boundary would encompass.

The subject building would encroach on to wider agricultural land and notably remove this recognised site of importance.

Notwithstanding the site has poor access, narrow lanes -Penny Lane and Hall Lane. This is highlighted in the above appraisal.



(Built up village settlement)



(Narrow Lane and junction in the village- Hall Lane and Penny Lane)



(narrow access and site visability)

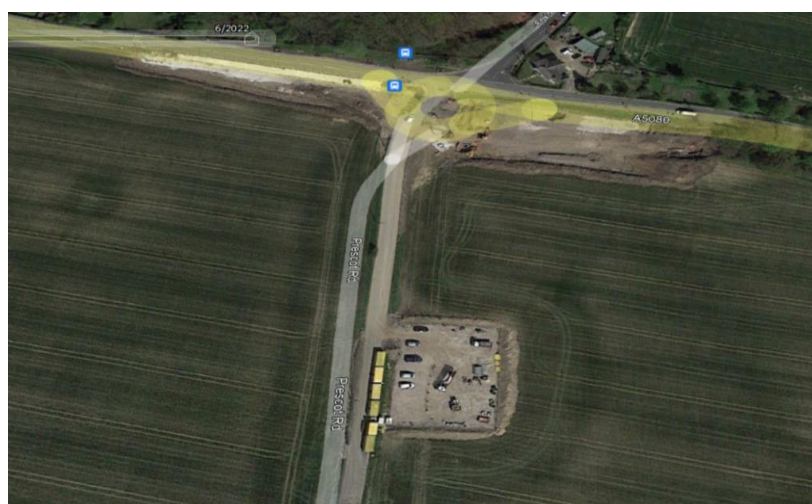
The proposed site is as shown below, land owned, central to the land farmed, with good access and improved road networks. 500m of Cronton Road (new roundabout/ highway improvements) and Junction 7 of the M57 / M62 / A5300 (Tarbock Roundabout). This certainly would reduce pressure on the use of narrow rural lanes as existing.

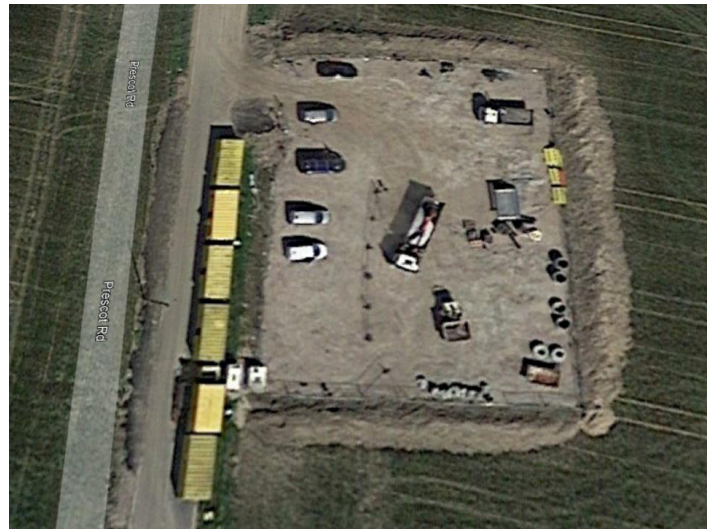


The proposed site is approx. 1 mile from the extant facilities at Town End Farm, as indicated below:



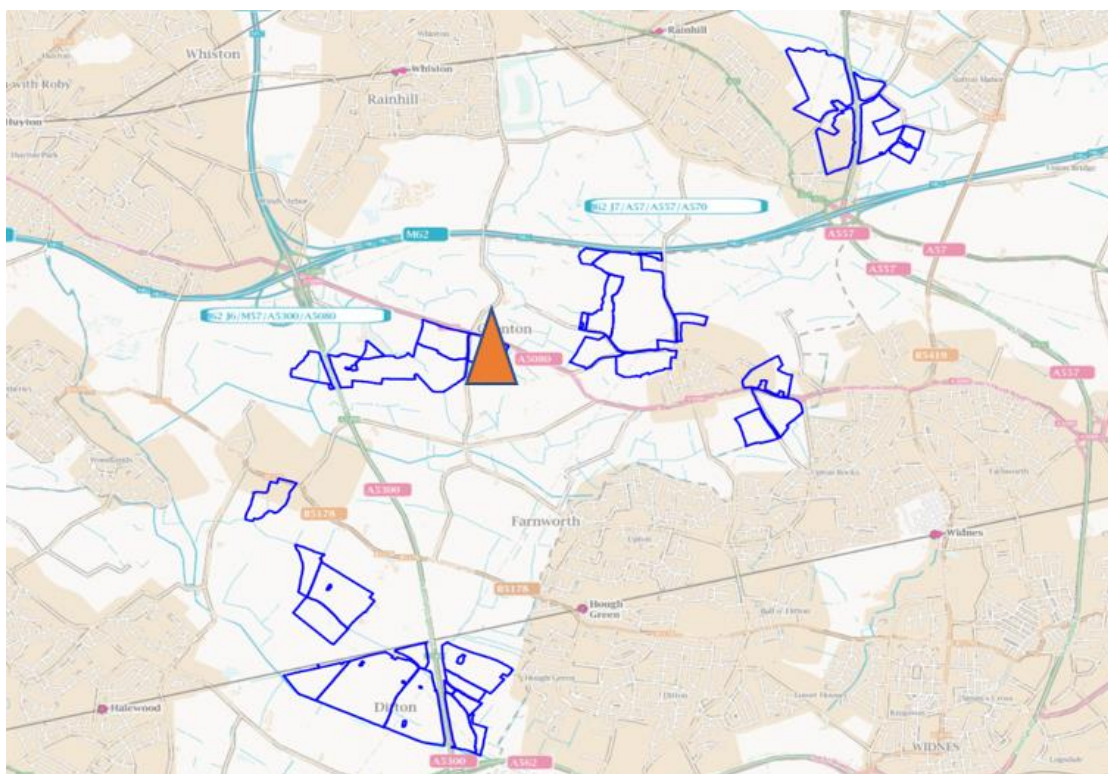
Previous applications referred to the subject site, as “former compound land” that was used by the contractor of the road improvements to the A5080 (Cranton Road) (New Roundabout and road widening) as shown in the following google earth extract





Works have been completed to the Highway Network (2021) however the hardstanding remains extant (temporary) but is in the process of being removed. We therefore highlight that this is NOT part of the application site nor does the proposed building require any part of this previously developed area that is being removed. The proposal is for an agricultural gran storage building only.

As suggest the following image confirms that the subject site is central within land holdings.





The following is a satellite image of land holdings:



In addition to the accompanying Red Tractor crop assurance scheme, we also append, AHDB Grain Storage Guide and HGCA guide. These documents are not only cross reference to the applicants but also the various assurance schemes and suppliers that set stringent standards, traceability, storage, and quality control.

Good storage practice minimises risk throughout the supply chain and safeguards food safety for consumers. Furthermore, prevent rejection and loss of earnings.

The Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system is now an integral part of the food and feed industry approach to controlling food-borne safety issues and it is a legal requirement for all food businesses after primary production.

As most UK grain enters the human food chain, either as food, drink or animal feed, adopting a HACCP-based approach to grain storage ensures growers are aligning their businesses with the rest of the supply chain on this critical issue.

Compared with selling grain at, or near, harvest, later-sold grain usually receives a higher price (providing market specifications are met). Typically, feed wheat sold for a November movement attracts a £4/tonne premium over the harvest price, with May movement providing a further £7/tonne. Such economic incentives mean grain is often stored for long periods, prior to processing. During this time, grain quality and safety may deteriorate, without appropriate intervention.



2. THE PROPOSAL

The subject application is for a new purpose-built agricultural grain storage building. The building will be of a standard agricultural construction, Steel portal framed. Growth in land area and crop yields has meant that the applicant requires the subject storage facilities to provide critical covered, secure, and dry storage facilities for the grain.

The agricultural unit extends to over 5 hectares of land and the building proposed extends to 128 sqm, none-livestock. This means that the subject application process for this agricultural unit must meet the criteria of The General Permitted Development Order 2015 Schedule 2 Part 6 Class A.

We confirm that the applicants are solely engaged in running the agricultural operations from the site and defined agricultural holdings listed. There are no other suitable locations that can accommodate the proposed structure and growth of the enterprise for the third generation.

Judicial precedent in respect of the proposed application process was highlighted, in the judgement of the appeal of *Murral v Secretary of State* (2010) EQCA 1367 Lord Justice Richards emphasized that where land meets the criteria of the GPDO the principle of the development could not be contested.

He also stated that the prior approval process should be “simple to operate and does not need to be accompanied by anything more than a written description of the proposed development and the materials to be used and a plan indicating the site, together with the required fee”. Where the area requirements of the GPDO are satisfied qualification of building size and reasonable necessity can be considered.

In reference to reasonable necessity, it was confirmed in *Clarke v Secretary of State for Enforcement* (1992) EWCA that's a building does not have to be reasonably necessary for the particular agricultural activity/ enterprise being undertaken on the unit at that time. They simply have to be reasonably necessary for and design for the purpose of any agricultural use within that unit. The conclusion of this case confirmed that's the distinction of the test” not are the buildings absolutely necessary but are they reasonably necessary

The National Planning Policy Framework supports sustainable economic development and a prosperous rural economy including the development of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses. It is generally acknowledged that the role of agriculture is recognised as being important to continuing maintenance and management of the open countryside and the viability of rural economies.

As stated above the construction of this new agricultural building will allow the applicant to remain competitive in the market by allowing him to supply Mornflake and Malt supplier with a high-quality crop for a premium price.

3. PLANNING POLICY

This application relates to a determination under Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

The application seeks confirmation that the proposed building is permitted development or whether prior approval is required for the siting, design, and external appearance of the steel portal frame building.

In line with criteria:



The proposed agricultural building would be on agricultural land comprised of not less than 0.4 but more than 5 hectares in area. In addition:

- a) the development would not be carried out on a separate parcel of land which is less than 1 hectare.
- b) the development would not consist of the erection of or extension of a building on an established agricultural unit where development under Class Q or S of Part 3 has been carried out within a period of 10 years.
- c) it would not consist of, or include the erection, extension or alteration of a dwelling.
- d) it would not involve the provision of a building, structure or works designed for agriculture.
- e) it would not exceed 1000 square metres
- f) the height of the proposed building would not be within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome and exceed 3 metres in height.
- g) the height of the proposed building would not be within 3 kilometres of the perimeter of an aerodrome and exceed 12 metres.
- h) No part of the proposed development will be within 25 metres of a metalled part of a trunk road or classified road
- i) The proposed development would not be used for the accommodation of livestock, or the storage of slurry or sewage sludge and be within 400 metres of the curtilage of a protected building
- j) It would not involve excavations or engineering operations on or over article 2(4) land which relate to fish farming
- k) The proposed development would include a building for the storage of fuel or waste from a biomass boiler or anaerobic digestion system

In summary the proposed scheme is applicable as follows:

- The building is Not for Livestock.
- The use of the land is agricultural – arable (combinable crops)
- The proposed building extends to 892 sq m
- The unit is over 15 acres of agricultural land (900 acres in total)
- The building is for grain storage.



4. DESIGN

4.1. USE

Agricultural grain storage building (as coloured red on plan and extracted below).

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4.2. AMOUNT

The proposed area of the new build would 892m.

Full details can be seen on the enclosed scale plan, however in summary:

Length: 48.768m

Width: 18.288m

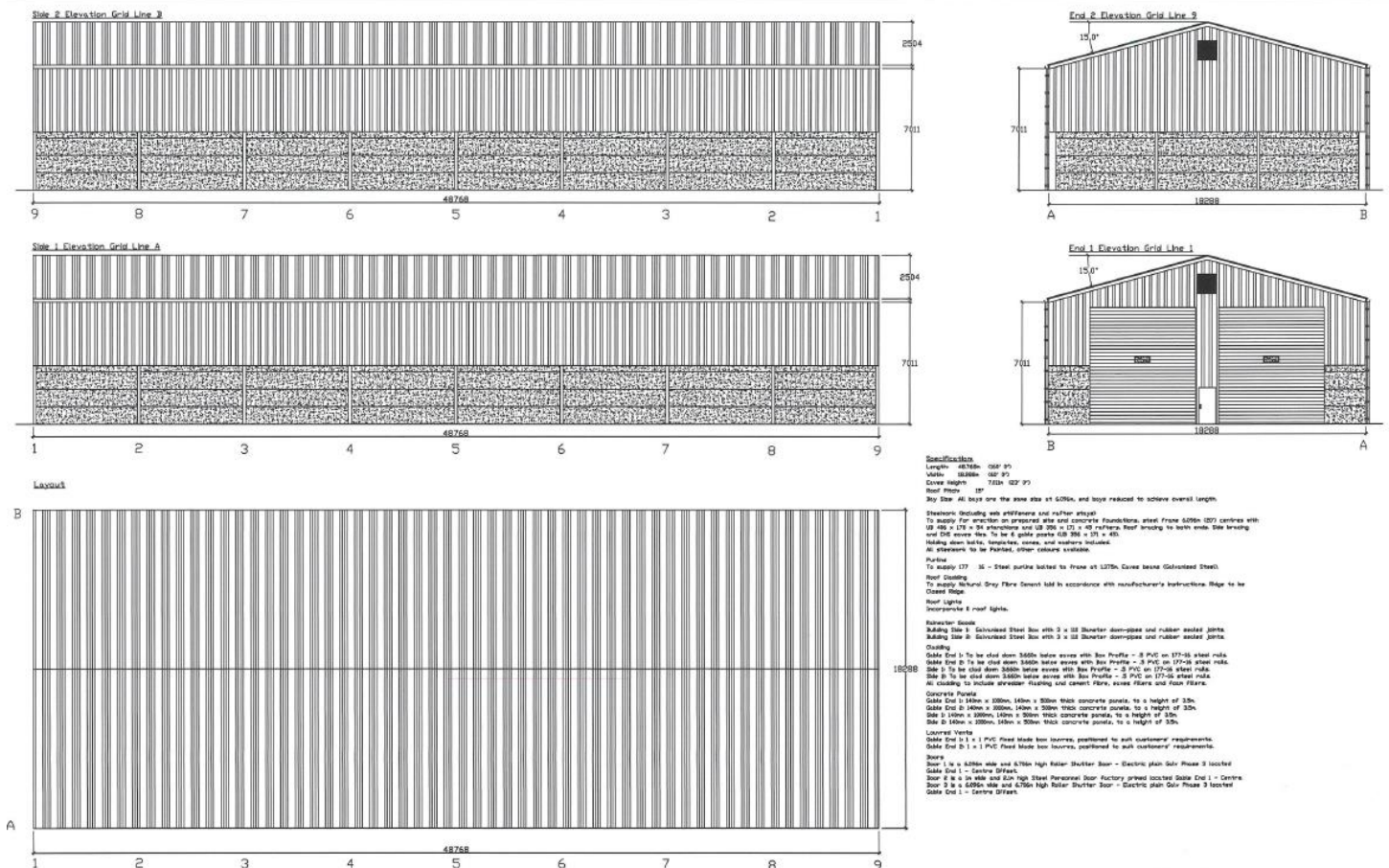
Eaves Height: 7.01m

Roof Pitch: 15 degrees

Ridge Height: 9.515m

4.3. SCALE

The building has been designed to provide purpose built covered storage essential to the operations of the unit. Extract below:



4.4. APPEARANCE

The building is as shown on the enclosed elevation drawings. It is not considered that the development would have any direct detrimental impact upon neighbouring residential amenity.

The building is fully enclosed with the roof to be constructed of profile 6 reinforced fibre cement roof sheets with GRP roof lights (natural grey). Two roller shutter access doors and a pedestrian door to gable elevation (Facing road). As required by current Farm Assurance regulations the building will be fully enclosed to prevent access by birds, rodents, and other pests. The building will be clad with grey precast concrete panels to 3 m.

The building will provide a grain store to support an arable operation and so there are no livestock issues to be considered. Clearly the proposed grain store, by nature of its construction, materials and typical modern agricultural style is designed for the purposes it is intended and not easily capable of conversion. It has therefore been demonstrated that the proposed development is compliant with both national and local policy and that the building will provide an essential grain storage facility where none exists on the holding at present.

This building will incorporate sustainably sourced timber and materials that are compliant with CE Standards set out by Government. A soakaway around or underneath the building will be used to make a low environmental-impact way of dealing with surface water and rainwater unless otherwise specified. Should lighting be required within the building it will be of low wattage LED's.



4.5. SITE VIEWS

Northern View from site



Eastern View from the site



View from southerly corner of field





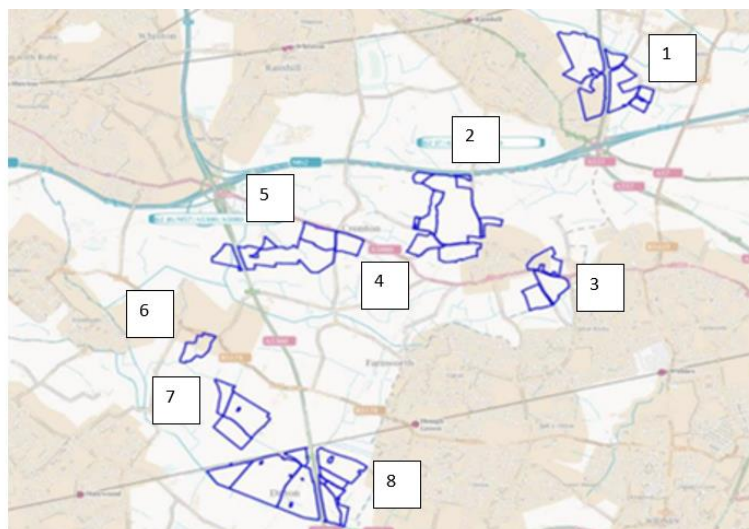
4.6. ACCESS

There will be no changes to the existing access arrangements. The proposal is for an agricultural building only.

5. SITE ASSESSMENT

As detailed in previous submissions, a full assessment of all land holdings was undertaken. This covered a walk over and discussion about each site (Pros and Cons). With this being a significant investment into the farm, the decision has not been made lightly and without due care of all the farming partners and the future of the farm into the next generations. This was presented to the council as part of the original submission.

In respect of land farmed the following summarises the site discussions and confirmation that there is not an alternative site appropriate that that proposed under the subject submission:



In detail below:



Owned land

1. Home farm Rainhill L35 6NX - 120 acres (identified as point 1 above)

Pros

Owned

Cons

Poor access

Access off dual carriageway, slip road is dangerous and has had notable accidents.

3-mile round trip from link way

Busy Built-up urban area with two schools on chapel lane

Notable levels of congestion and parking in awkward places

High levels of pedestrian and cycle activity

Safety concern with the amount of movement and size of the agricultural vehicles especially at peak times.

Congestion causes delay to get trailers back to the combine.

Narrow lanes for carting bales and size of bale trailers and combine

Signed to state not suitable for HGV

HGV already struggle into site and out and on surrounding lanes

- Land At Hall lane / Penny Lane farm, Cronton WA8 5PU - 120 acres

Pros

Owned

Cons

Existing stores are unsuitable (subject site to be replaced)

Poor access

Narrow access lanes with no passing places

New Cycle and Horse path to be constructed

Conservation Area

Signed to state not suitable for HGV

HGV already struggle in to site and out and on surrounding lanes

Busy village location

Used by commuters as "rat run" access through to wider settlements and link roads

Notable levels of congestion and parking in awkward places

High levels of pedestrian and cycle activity – will be increased with new dedicated paths

Safety concern with the amount of movement and size of the agricultural vehicles especially at peak times.

Single access causes delay to get trailers back to the combine as they have to plan on allowing one trailer past at a time.

Narrow lanes for carting bales and size of bale trailers and combine (height catches tress and hedge)

- Land At Springfield Farm Tarbock L35 1QN - 160 acres

Pros

Owned



Cons

Singe track access

Unadopted highway

Restricted access for HGV and large vehicles

Limited passing places

Built up area

Equine and horse use lane which cause issues with tractors and machinery

Bins are left out to impede movement and access

- Land At Foxes bank field, Prescot Rd, WA8 5PS (The subject site), 15 acres

Pros

Owned

Central location

Double lane access – allows easy of tractors in and out without delays to combine.

Improved infrastructure with improvements to Prescott Road – from poor 4-way junction.

Access to motor network for contract supply and access by HGV without impact on residential area

No impact when used at unsociable hours

Allows for greater expansion in the future

Links all farming partners in equal distance

Rented land

Not owned and farm on farm business tenancy

(Plots 3,5, 6 and 7 as identified on the above map)

- Yew tree Farm Tarbock - 70 acres
- Higher Park Farm (opposite site) - 45 acres (Plot 5)
- Land At Crontron Pexhill and Penny lane - 90 acres
- Land At Rainhill - 45 acres
- Land adjacent Springfield farm - 107 acres
- Approx. 100 acres annual grass mowing lets

It should be noted that these parcels of land are either accessed of unadopted highways or poor single-track roads, with limited or no passing places. The same negative constraints affect these land parcels

We therefore have considered all options prior to the submission and have considered both the planning and business implications of the proposed site.