



Bourne Valley Associates Ltd

Planning Statement
to support a new agricultural building under
an Application for Prior Notification of
proposals under Schedule 2, Part 6

At
Bluegates Farm, Ashwell End, Ashwell
Balodock,
Hertfordshire, SG7 5JE

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Issue 1

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1. Introduction

This statement accompanies and supports a prior notification application to North Hertfordshire District Council seeking confirmation that prior approval is not required for a new agricultural storage building. The application relates to the existing farmstead at Bluegates Farm, Ashwell End. The application is submitted by Bourne Valley Associates, acting as agent on behalf of Bluegates Farms, who own the farm and its associated 1,450 acres of land, as well as managing adjacent land held by others.

The proposal is considered, by the applicants and ourselves, to be permitted development under The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as Amended (GPDO). Under Schedule 2, Part 6 of that Order, the details of the proposals need to be set out to the local planning authority, which then has 28 days in which to let the applicant know of its decision whether prior approval is required. Under modifications to the GPDO, enacted in 2024, the maximum footprint of agricultural development that can take place, subject to limitations and conditions, under permitted development rights, is 1,500m². The new building is proposed to cover approx. 341m².

In this statement, we review only those aspects that are covered by the Order, including those that can be influenced by the local planning authority. Accordingly, we have not provided a full review of the development against policy that we would normally do in respect of planning applications. We thus principally consider whether the proposal complies with the terms and conditions as set out in Class A of Part 6, Schedule of the GPDO: whether the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed development is acceptable and whether we have provided enough information to enable the local planning authority to assess the proposed development against the criterion within the GPDO.

2. Site Context

2.1. Agricultural holding and site location

Bluegates Farm is located North-West of Ashwell within a countryside location, accessed from Common Lane in Ashwell End. Figure 1 shows the application site's wider geographical context. The location plan is formally submitted as Drawing 02561-00-A, Sheet 01, a clip of which is shown in Figure 2.

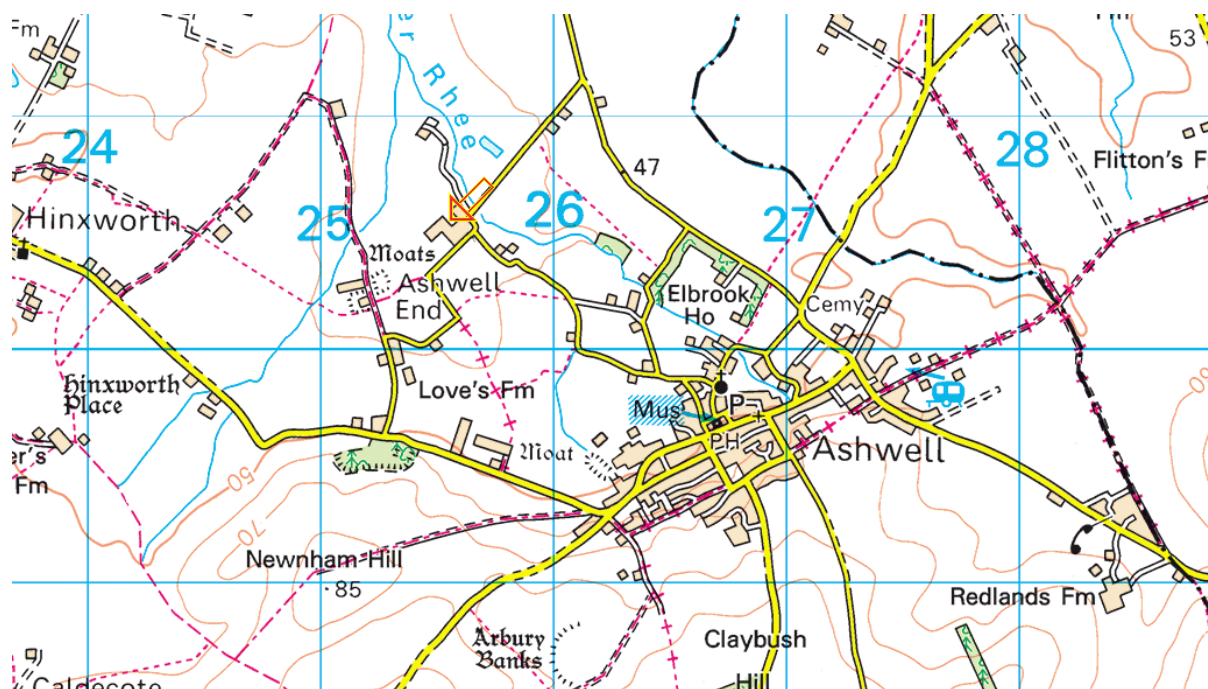


Figure 1 - Geographical context



Figure 2 - Bluegates Farm Location



Bluegates Farm is part of a farmed holding of over 1,450 acres owned and farmed as one agricultural unit by Bluegates Farms. This land is actively farmed in use for agriculture (as defined within D1 of Part 6 of the GPDO Interpretation of Classes A-C) as *'land in use for agriculture and which is so used for the purpose of a trade or business.'* In addition to the land owned by the company, it also manages land held by direct neighbours so a total of around 868 ha (2,145 acres).



Figure 3 - Aerial photograph of the position for the proposed building

Figure 4 shows the ownership of the farm outlined in red. By definition, the image does not show the land managed by the farm enterprise on behalf of others.

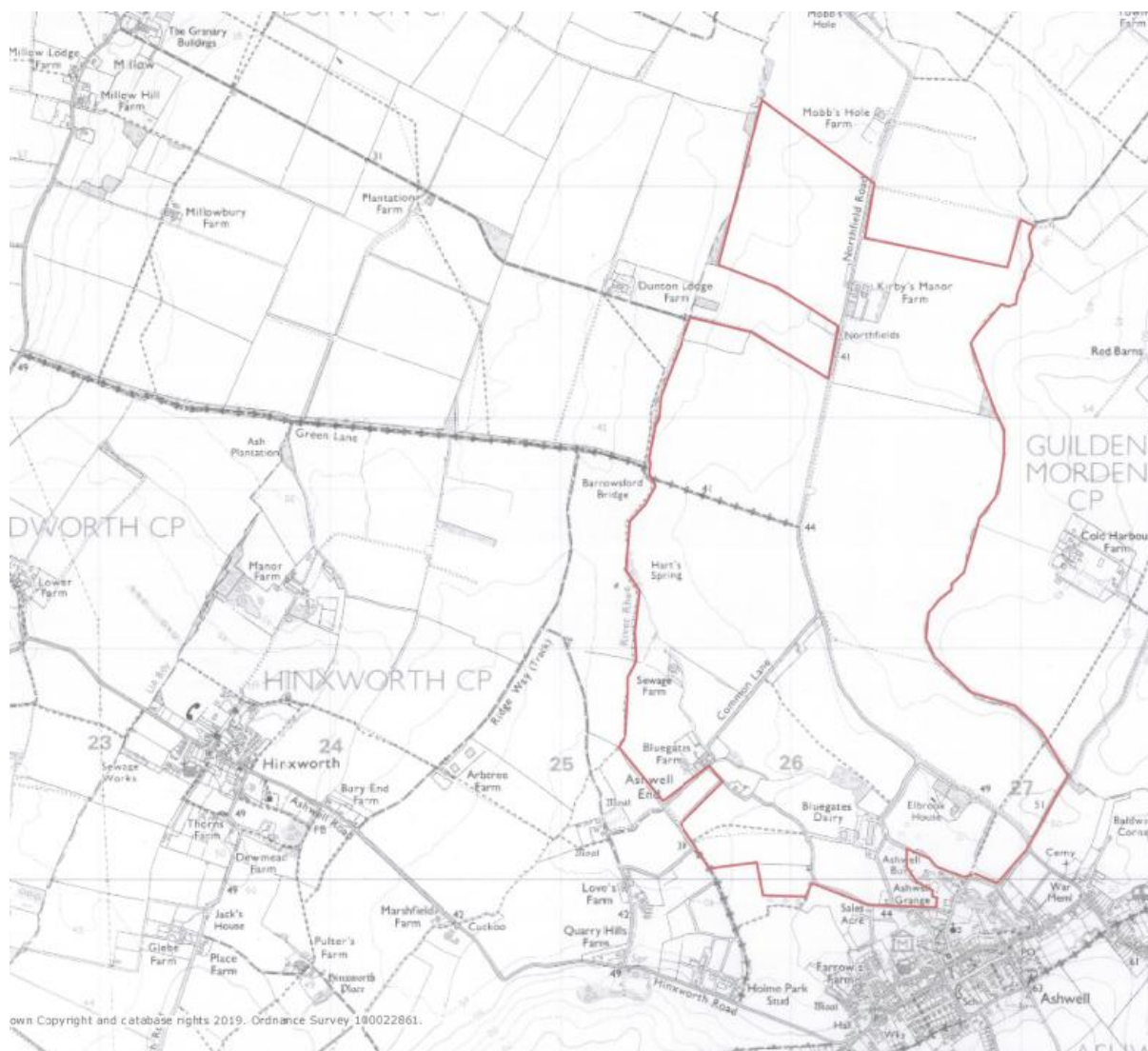


Figure 4 - showing the extent of the agricultural holding owned by the applicant.

2.2. Planning History

There has been no development within the last 2 years at the site. On the councils mapping system it is drawn that application '23/00369/FP Installation of agricultural silage clamp and concrete apron' is within this site, however this is incorrect. This was erected at Bluegates Dairy to the Southeast.

Older planning history includes

- 17/01909/1 Erection of grain store with drying facilities. Approved
- 94/00224/1AG Lean-to extension for storage of agricultural machinery. Approved 1994



2.3. Need for the Development

The building is proposed in response to an identified operational need for additional agricultural machinery storage serving the existing farming enterprise at Bluegates Farm. The holding extends to approximately 1,450 acres of owned farmland, and the scale of the farming operation requires machinery and equipment to be stored in a practical, secure and weather-protected manner. The proposed building would provide that additional storage capacity within the existing farmstead, where it can function efficiently alongside the other agricultural buildings already serving the unit.

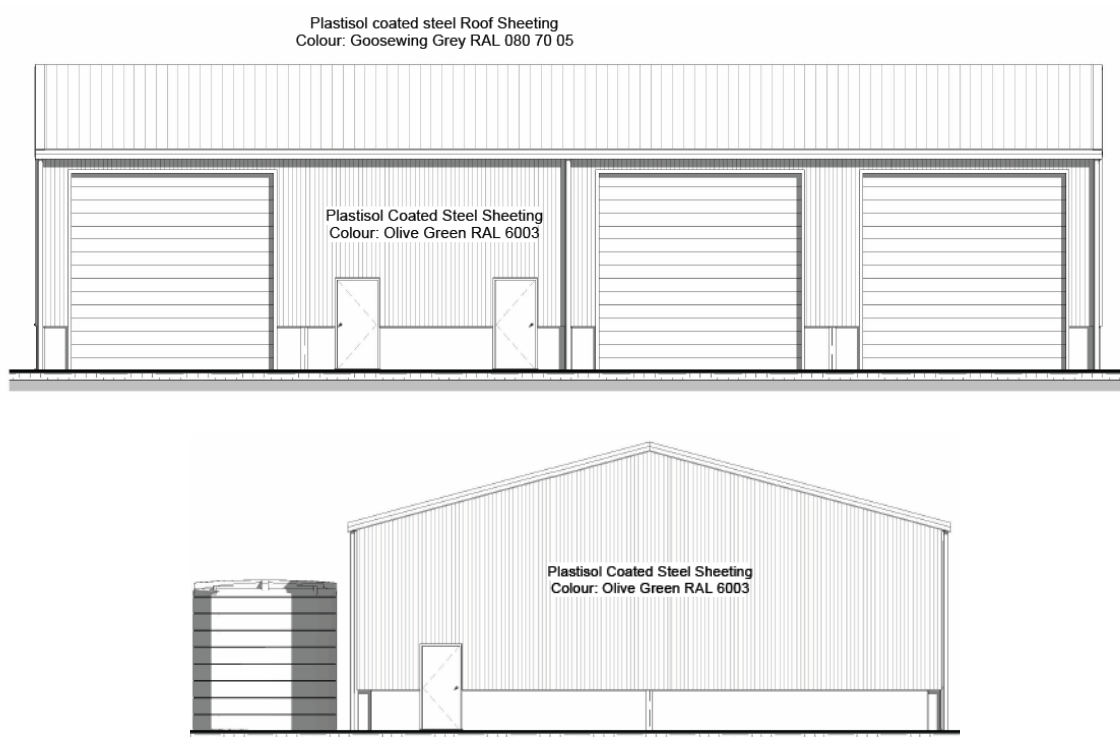
3. Design

3.1. Amount and scale

The details of the proposed building can be found on both the block plan (02561-00-A Sheet 02) and on the elevations drawing 02561-01-A, Sheet 02. The building will be placed within the existing farm yard with a water storage container positioned to the rear to harvest rain water for the building roof.

The water storage tank will be a 40,000l tank.

The building itself would be 24.2m by 14.1m, and thus 341m² in footprint. The height of the eaves is 5m and to the ridge 6.9m.





3.2. Siting

The proposed siting for the building can be seen in the proposed block plan, adjacent to existing larger agricultural buildings. The farm is located outside of any designated sites (National Park, Conservation Area, SSSI, SINCE, SAC, NNR etc). The location ensures the proposed building is central within the existing pocket of built form and will have very limited landscape impact over and above the existing situation.

3.3. Design/External Appearance

The new building will be constructed of materials typical of agricultural buildings, which are 'fit-for-purpose' in terms of design and appearance. The walls will be constructed from Olive Green coated steel sheeting above concrete pre-cast panels and natural in colour. The roof will be coated steel sheeting colour Goosewing Grey.

3.4. Landscape impact

The proposed building would be seen in the context of the existing farmstead and adjacent agricultural buildings, rather than as a separate or isolated feature in the wider landscape. Its siting within the established group of farm buildings means it would have limited additional visual impact in local views, including from nearby roads and public rights of way.

4. Access

The existing access routes for Bluegates farm will continue to be used, the rural lanes and internal access tracks to the existing farm buildings will not need to be altered or modified for these proposals.

The proposed building is intended to improve on-site storage within the existing farmstead and is not expected to result in any material increase in traffic movements on the public highway.

5. Lighting

The lighting at the site will not be altered from the existing situation.

6. Ecology

No significant ecological effects are anticipated from the proposed development. The site forms part of the existing working farmstead, no buildings are to be demolished, and the proposal would not result in the loss of any known habitat features.



7. Planning Policy

It is our usual practice to review all planning applications against the development plan, given that development should be “plan-led”. However, consideration of proposals under the Prior Notification procedures do not need to be assessed against policy, but rather against the limitations and conditions set out in the GPDO. That is, they are considered, in effect, against criteria. In order to summarise our interpretation of the accordance of the proposals with these criteria, Appendix A is set out in a simple table.

There are no conflicts with the criteria. The works are clearly “reasonably necessary” for agriculture, and they relate to the activities at Bluegates Farm only.

8. Conclusion

The proposed agricultural building is sited within the existing group of farm buildings at Bluegates Farm and would be read in the context of the established working farmstead, limiting its additional visual impact. The building is proposed to meet an operational agricultural need for machinery storage associated with the existing farming unit.

The proposal is considered to comply with the relevant limitations and conditions of Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A of the GPDO. It falls within the scope of agricultural permitted development rights, relates to the 1,450 acres owned and farmed as the relevant agricultural unit at Bluegates Farm, and is proposed in an appropriate location within the existing farmstead. No significant adverse effects are anticipated in relation to landscape, access or ecology.

We therefore respectfully request that the Council confirms that prior approval is not required for the proposed development.



Appendix A – Summary of compliance with GPDO, Part 6, Class A

Is the farm unit over 5ha in area?	<i>YES – over 1,450 acres</i>
Is the building reasonably necessary for agriculture?	<i>YES, see rationale in statement for agricultural machinery storage</i>
Is the proposal on a separate parcel of less than 1 ha?	<i>NO, the proposed land to which the building relates is centrally located within the agricultural holding</i>
Does the building satisfy agricultural needs for this unit only?	<i>YES. It will be used to accommodate agricultural machinery required by the existing farming unit and to be used within the agricultural holding</i>
Would the development consist of the erection, extension or alteration of an agricultural building on an established agricultural unit where development under Class Q or Class S of Part 3 has been carried out within the preceding 10 years?	<i>NO</i>
<i>Have other works taken place in the last 2 years within 90m of the proposed development that exceed 1500m²?</i>	<i>NO</i>
Do the works relate to a dwelling or non-agricultural use?	<i>NO</i>
Would any works or structure for accommodating livestock or any plant or machinery arising from engineering operations; or any building erected or extended or altered by virtue of Class A exceed 1500 square metres?	<i>NO</i>
Is there an aerodrome within 3Km?	<i>NO</i>
Is the height of the building over 12m?	<i>NO</i>
Is the development within 25m of a trunk or classified road?	<i>NO</i>
Would the building be used to accommodate livestock, or for the storage of sewage or slurry and within 400m of a protected building?	<i>NO</i>
Is the proposal associated with fish farming?	<i>NO</i>
Would the building be associated with biomass production/storage or for anaerobic digestion	<i>NO</i>