

Pilkington Farms Partnership

Lodge Farm, Kings Walden, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 8LL

Planning Statement

**Prior Approval for the Erection of a General Purpose Agricultural Building at
Lodge Farm**

Prepared by:

Stephen Rice

SBRice Ltd

February 2026

Contents

Section	Detail	Page No
1.0	INTRODUCTION	3
2.0	THE PROPOSAL	4
3.0	KEY ISSUES	5
4.0	PLANNING EVALUATION	6
5.0	SUMMARY	8

Appendices

- A: Site Location Plan
- B: Existing Site Plan
- C: Proposed Site Plan
- D: Elevations
- E: Farmed land
- F: Photo of yard from highways access

©Copyright SB Rice Ltd. All rights reserved

This report (including any enclosures and attachments) has been prepared for the exclusive use and benefit of our client and in accordance with the scope of work agreed with the client. Unless we provide express prior written consent, no part of this report should be reproduced, distributed or communicated to any third party. We do not accept any liability if this report is used for an alternative purpose from which it is intended. SB Rice do not verify the content of any third-party reports which may be referred to in this report and we do not accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information or opinions provided by others. SB Rice Ltd has used reasonable skill, care and diligence in compiling this report and no warranty is provided as to the report's accuracy. This report does not account for any legislative or regulatory changes that may have occurred since the report was produced and SB Rice Ltd does not accept any responsibility or liability for loss whatsoever to any third party caused by, related to, or arising out of any use or reliance on this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 SBRice Limited have been instructed by Pilkington Farms Partnership (the Applicant) to apply to Hertfordshire District Council for prior approval for a new general purpose agricultural building to be located within their existing farmyard at Lodge Farm, Kings Walden, Hertfordshire, SG4 8LL.
- 1.2 The application seeks confirmation as to whether the proposal requires prior approval in accordance with Part 6 of Schedule 2, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2024.
- 1.3 This report is accompanied by:
- Application form.
 - Site plans.
 - Floor plan and elevations.
- 1.4 Pilkington Farms Partnership is the in-hand farming operation for the Kings Walden Estate. The Estate extends to approximately 3,000 Ha of agricultural land and woodland. The partnership farms approximately 1,866 Ha of land within the Estate of which 1,500 Ha in arable cropping and 366 Ha in grassland. The Estate has been in the ownership of the Pilkington family for over 140 years.
- 1.5 Lodge Farm is one of a number of farmyards located on the Estate and is where main grain storage facility is located.
- 1.6 The farmyard contains a number of existing buildings including the aforementioned grain storage facilities. These are identified on the site plan submitted as **Appendix B**.
- 1.7 The farm produces a significant amount of baled straw, some of which is used by the farming partnership but the majority is stored and sold during the winter months for use by other livestock farmers.
- 1.8 A new building is required primarily for the storage of straw, although it will also be used for the undercover storage of machinery when it is not in use for straw storage.

1.9 Lodge Farm has an existing vehicular access off the Kings Walden Road.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposal is to construct a new 1,452m² (GEA) steel portal framed agricultural building, 22m wide and 66m in length, 9m to eaves and 10.4m to ridge. The building will comprise of 11 bays and all four elevations will be open apart from cladding on both gable ends from the ridge to the eaves.

2.2 The building will be constructed of steel frame with box profile steel cladding on gable ends between the eaves and ridge. The cladding will be dark olive green in colour. The roof will comprise Big Six profile roofing sheets in anthracite grey. Floor plan and elevations drawing can be found in **Appendix D**.

2.3 The building is required for general purpose agricultural storage to include the following depending upon the time of year:

- Straw.
- Agricultural machinery.

2.4 The building will be located to the north west of the existing farmyard on an area of existing hardstanding.

2.5 The building's location can be seen on the site plan submitted as **Appendix C**.

2.6 The building will be within land wholly owned by the Applicants and access to the new building will be via an existing hard access track that connects the hard standing area to the farmyard and highways access.

2.7 Highways access to the building will be via the existing access located off the Kings Walden Road.

2.8 The building and the site are located wholly in Flood Zone 1. Rainwater from the roof will drain to the existing surface water drainage system on the site. As the building is located on an existing hardstanding area there will be no change to the surface water run off which is directed via an attenuation pond to discharge at greenfield run off rate to the nearby watercourse.

- 2.9 The location of the building has been carefully chosen to make use of existing infrastructure including hardstanding and access track.

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The key issue to consider is whether the proposed new agricultural building requires prior approval under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (hereinafter referred to as “the Order”). The Order allows certain developments set out in Schedule 2, part 6 (Agricultural and Forestry) (Class A (Agricultural Development on Units of 5 hectares or more) to be undertaken without the consent of the planning authority. The Order provides for buildings to be constructed without the need for planning permission subject to obtaining written “prior approval” from the local planning authority for the siting, design and external appearance of the building and for no other matters. The statutory requirements relating to prior approval are much less proscriptive than those relating to planning applications which is the Government’s intention to create a “light touch” process. Guidance suggests that it is important that a local planning authority does not impose unnecessary onerous requirements on the Applicant and does not seek to replicate the planning application system.
- 3.2 Criteria used for assessment under Schedule 2, Part 6, Class A are as follows:
1. The development would be carried out on a parcel of land at least 1 hectare forming part of an agricultural unit of 5 hectares or more;
 2. That there has been no development under Class Q or S of Part 3 of the Schedule carried out within a period of ten years;
 3. It doesn’t include erection, alteration or extension of a dwelling;
 4. The building has been designed for agricultural purposes;
 5. The erected building does not exceed 1,500m²;
 6. If the building exceeds 3m in height it is not within 3km of the perimeter of an aerodrome;
 7. The height of any part of any building not within 3km of the perimeter of an aerodrome does not exceed 12m;

8. That no part of the development would be within 25m of a metalled part of a trunkroad or classified road;
 9. That the building would not be used for the accommodation of livestock or the storage of slurry or sewage sludge if within 400m of the curtilage of a protected building;
 10. It does not involve excavations or engineering operations on or other Article 2(4) land which are connected with fish farming;
 11. If used for storing fuel for, or waste from a biomass boiler or anaerobic digestion system it should not be used for storing waste or fuel produced elsewhere and not on the unit, or is within 400m of the curtilage of a protected building;
 12. The erection or extension of the building is not carried out on land or a building that is within curtilage of a Scheduled Monument.
- 3.3 Providing that the Order's requirements are met, the principle of whether the development should be permitted is not for consideration, and only in cases where the local planning authority considers that a specific proposal is likely to have a significant impact on its surroundings would the Secretary of State consider it necessary for the authority to require the formal submission of details for approval.

4.0 PLANNING EVALUATION

- 4.1 The proposed agricultural building is located on agricultural unit more than 5 hectares in size. The parcel of land on which it is located is also greater than 1 hectare. Please refer to the plan in **Appendix F** that identifies the area of land farmed at Lodge Farm totaling 162.84 Ha.
- 4.2 There has been no development under Class Q or S of Part 3 of the Schedule carried out within a period of ten years.
- 4.3 The building has been designed solely for agricultural purposes and is required for the uses set out in paragraph 2.3 above, all of which are associated with the efficient operation of the farming business operating at the Kings Walden Estate.
- 4.4 The building does not exceed 1,500m² in area.

- 4.5 The building is not located within 3km of the perimeter of an aerodrome and is therefore allowed to exceed 3m in height.
- 4.6 Being located outside of 3km of the perimeter of an aerodrome, the building has been designed to not exceed 12m in height.
- 4.7 The building is not located within 25m of a metalled part of a trunkroad or classified road.
- 4.8 The building will not be used for the accommodation of livestock or for the storage of slurry or sewage sludge, neither will it be constructed on or over land which is connected with fish farming.
- 4.9 The building would not be used to store fuel or waste from a biomass boiler or anaerobic digestion system.
- 4.10 The building will not be on land that is or within curtilage of a Scheduled Monument.
- 4.11 The proposed agricultural building therefore complies with the requirements of the Order and meets all criteria of permitted development.
- 4.12 The applicants and their agents have carefully considered whether there are any other suitable locations for constructing an agricultural storage building on their holding. They have concluded that the proposed location, being within the existing farmyard at Lodge Farm, provides the most suitable location for a number of reasons.
- 4.13 The hard standing area on which the building is proposed is already used for the storage of straw. However, storage of straw outside results in significant losses with the top layer of bales being unfit for use. This leads to significant wastage unless the bales are covered with a tarpaulin. Stacks of bales covered with tarpaulins are unsightly.
- 4.14 The land holding farmed by the applicants is crisscrossed by public rights of way. Lodge Farm Yard, however, does not have any public rights of way passing in close proximity. Access to the building is via an existing well maintained and constructed agricultural access from the public highway which would require no further improvement in order to provide access to the new building. The building forms part of an existing farmyard and would not require any further hard standing or improvement to the farmyard in order to fully utilize the proposed new building. The farmyard is

secure and protected with CCTV and locked gates. A photograph of the existing farmyard taken from the entrance with the proposed building sketched in covering the existing stack of stored straw bales can be found in **Appendix G**.

- 4.15 The topography surrounding Lodge Farm means that any other location rather than the proposed would require significant excavation and earth moving to create a level area large enough for the building and access.
- 4.16 We conclude therefore, on the issue of siting, the proposed location is the most suitable on the applicant's holding for locating the proposed building considering the topography, the existing farmyard and the need for it to be located within the existing farm holding.
- 4.17 With regard to design, the building has been carefully designed to replicate the existing grain storage buildings, albeit smaller and lower in height. The external appearance has been designed to match those of the existing buildings.
- 4.18 We therefore conclude that the design and external appearance for this building is acceptable when considered in the context of its location in relation to the existing agricultural buildings and indeed when considering its design in the context of modern agricultural buildings in general.

5.0 SUMMARY

- 5.1 The application seeks confirmation as to whether the proposed agricultural building requires prior approval in accordance with Part 6 of Schedule 2, Class A of the GPDO 2015 (as amended).
- 5.2 The report concludes that the proposal complies with criteria in the Order and that subject to the Local Authority being satisfied with the additional details provided regarding the siting and design of the building that no further permission is required.
- 5.3 The assessment has provided sufficient information to the local planning authority with regard to siting and design for the Local Authority to confirm that there is no requirement for any further prior approval and that the Applicants can proceed with the construction of the agricultural building.