

Reference: 06/19/0625/F

Parish: Mautby

Officer: Mr G Bolan

Expiry Date: 17-03-2020

Applicant: Mr S Hewitt

Proposal: Change of use from an agricultural field to storage of timber, wood fuel and firewood.

Site: Hall Farm, Hall Road, Mautby, NR29 3JB

REPORT

This application was previously considered by Development Control Committee on 17 March 2021; at that meeting the Committee voted to defer its determination in order to fully consider a late representation received at 16:59 on 15 March 2021. Members will recall being briefed verbally during the meeting, and requesting a written report and assessment of the issues raised.

This report is an updated version of the Report considered on 17 March 2021. It has incorporated all representations and officer responses and should ensure the application can be considered 'afresh'.

Members may wish to note that in the intervening period since March the applicant has been asked to provide additional information to address some of the issues which Officers identified as needing to be subject to proposed planning conditions. Further information has not been forthcoming, and there has been no requirement for additional public consultation and as at 10/05/21 no additional public or consultee comments have been received.

Notwithstanding the matters raised on 15th March, the recommendation remains for approval, subject to new / revised conditions proposed herein.

1. Background / History :-

- 1.1 The application site is part of a field, measuring 1756m² (0.18ha) to the south of the group of farm buildings at Hall Farm, at the southern end of Hall Road, Mautby. There is a dwelling to the north east of the site (Hall Farm Cottage) and another to the west (Hall Farm House), as well as the occupied recent barn conversion within Paston Farm adjacent to Hall Farm, to the west.
- 1.2 The land to the south of the application site is open farm land. The application site is approximately 35 metres from the boundary with the Broads Authority National Park to the south.

- 1.3 The application site land is currently without an authorised planning use, but is being used as part of the operations of Maple Tree Services, a business operated by the applicant from the farm buildings at Hall Farm, directly to the north of the field which forms the application site.
- 1.4 The applicant's business at Hall Farm involves importing, cutting, splitting, storage and distribution of firewood. This use within the buildings and their immediate curtilage at Hall Farm was established when a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use was granted approval on 13th July 2016 (GYBC ref. 06/16/0280/EU) following 10 years' continuous woodyard use / activity. The planning use of the group of buildings is now established as a permanent woodyard use for: *"importing, cutting, splitting, storage and distribution of firewood with an average of 60 loads to 668 loads being bough to the Site each year (one load weighing between 0.7 tonnes and 0.9 tonnes)."*
- 1.5 Over time, storage of logs for the business has extended beyond the existing buildings and shelters of Hall Farm and onto the field to the south of the woodyard.
- 1.6 Originally, without the benefit of planning permission, external storage began on part of the field to the east of this application site, for which temporary planning permission was subsequently granted for a period of one year (ref. 06/16/0590/CU), which expired on 17th November 2017.
- 1.7 A subsequent planning permission for temporary wood storage on that same site was granted permission for two years, which expired on 1st December 2019 (ref. 06/17/0743/F). As a result, all planning permissions for use of the land to the east of this current application site for wood storage have now expired, and wood has gradually been moved from the original temporary site to the east across towards the current application site.
- 1.8 The previous temporary planning permissions were granted subject to a number of conditions in addition to being temporary in nature, and included the following:
- the permission was made personal to the applicant, such that only the applicant could benefit from the permission;
 - no deliveries to the site or movement of wood within the site were to take place outside the following hours:- 08:00 to 18:30 Monday to Friday;
 - the site was to be used for the storage of timber/firewood only;
 - no mechanically powered cutting, sawing or splitting of timber (or other similar operation) shall take place within the site.

The reason for granting temporary approval subject to the above restrictions was in order for the LPA to retain control over the use of the site until the effects of the proposal have been experienced, and in the interest of protecting the amenities of the locality. When the applicant applied for a temporary two-year permission in December 2017 they did so with the expectation that a temporary permission would allow the applicant's business to operate whilst an alternative location was being arranged for the entire business, and with

that the cessation of the permission would allow the site to be cleared. Relocation may not have proven possible in practice, but the LPA's reasons for issuing temporary permissions were only for the purposes of monitoring the activities and impacts and being able to control the use overall, as stated on the decision notices.

- 1.9 Norfolk County Council did propose an alternative location for relocating the applicant's business to Decoy Wood, Mautby. However, the formal application was subsequently refused by Development Committee on 11/09/19, in line with the Officers' recommendation (application ref no. 06/18/0384/F).
- 1.10 The current application is for open storage on the field south of the woodyard, and is proposed to continue the same use as was previously permitted on the adjoining part of the same wider field. This is a different area of land but is more central to the overall site and covers 1756 sqm in area.
- 1.11 The current application is to regularise the use which has already begun on this site without planning permission. It is therefore a retrospective application, at least on part of the site.

2. Consultations :-

- 2.1 Mautby Parish Council – No objections.
- 2.2 Cllr Adrian Thompson, Fleggburgh Ward - supports the application due to the potential economic benefits for the rural area.
- 2.3 Highways Authority – No objection.
- 2.4 Environmental Health Officer – No objections subject to use of conditions: Working hours to be 0800 – 1700 Mon-Fri and 0800 – 1300 Sat only, with no work on Sundays or Public Holidays; and the site shall only be used for storage of timber and not for plant and machinery.

Comments are provided for information at the Appendix to this report.

- 2.5 GYBC consultant Arboriculturalist – comments –
 - Tree screening is an imperative, and requires a mix of native species.
 - A recommended list of trees to be planted includes Oak, Ash, Sycamore, Monterey Cypress, Rowan, Bird Cherry, Beech, Crab Apple, Hazel, Hawthorne, Blackthorn, and Scott's Pine.
 - At least 50 trees would be needed, with specimens of 12-14cm 'stem diameter', to both extend the tree line and infill any gaps.
 - This will create a habitat and food source for wildlife in the winter months, as well as screening throughout the year, complementing the existing conifer trees which are now c. 7 years old which cause concern to the Broads Authority.

2.6 Broads Authority – Objection –

Full comments are discussed in the report and attached at the Appendices.

2.7 Neighbours / Public Representations – Objections – See Section 4.

Detailed comments from the closest neighbouring residents are provided attached at the Appendix to this report.

3. Policies:

The following policies are relevant to the consideration of this application:

Borough Local Plan 2001:

- EMP18 – Small scale businesses within existing settlements
- NNV6 – Areas of local landscape importance

Great Yarmouth Core Strategy 2013 – 2030, adopted policies:

- CS 1 – Focussing on a sustainable future
- CS 6 – Supporting the local economy
- CS 11 – Enhancing the natural environment

Policy CS6 – Supporting the local economy, states:

“The Borough of Great Yarmouth has a diverse local economy. It is the main service base in England for the offshore energy industry and has a thriving seasonal visitor economy. To ensure that the conditions are right for new and existing businesses to thrive and grow, there is a need to continue to strengthen the local economy and make it less seasonally dependent. This will be achieved by:

- a) Encouraging the redevelopment and intensification of existing employment sites, particularly those sites with good access by a variety of transport modes*
- b) Safeguarding existing local employment areas identified in Table 10 and future local employment areas allocated in other Local Plan Documents for employment use. Alternative uses will only be allowed where it can be demonstrated that:*
 - There is a satisfactory relationship between the proposed use and any pre-existing neighbouring uses, without significant detriment to the continuation and amenity of existing or proposed uses*
 - There is no commercial interest in the re-use of the site for employment, demonstrated by suitable marketing at an appropriate price for at least 18 months*
 - A sequential viability test has been applied following the unsuccessful marketing of the site, based on the following sequence of testing: mixed use*

of the site that incorporates an employment-generating use, then non-employment use

- c) Allocating approximately 10-15 hectares of new employment land at Beacon Park Extension, South Bradwell, through Policy CS18*
- d) Exploring the potential for up to 22 hectares of land reclamation to the north of the Outer Harbour at South Denes*
- e) Supporting port-related development proposals relating to the Outer Harbour and existing river port, in particular encouraging cargo handling and other port-reliant activities*
- f) Encouraging a greater presence of higher value technology and energy-based industries, including offshore renewable energy companies, in the borough*
- g) Supporting the local visitor and retail economies in accordance with Policies CS7 and CS8*
- h) Encouraging the development of small scale business units, including those that support the rural economy and rural diversification*
- i) Supporting the provision of development essential to sustain a rural workforce, including agricultural workers' dwellings and rural community facilities*
- j) Minimising the potential loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land by ensuring that development on such land is only permitted if it can be demonstrated that there is an overriding sustainability benefit from the development and there are no realistic opportunities for accommodating the development elsewhere*
- k) Supporting the delivery of high speed broadband and communications technology to all parts of the borough*
- l) Encouraging flexible working by:*
 - Allowing home-working where there is no adverse impact on residential amenities*
 - Allowing the development of live-work units on residential and mixed-use sites, subject to the retention of the employment element and safeguarding of residential amenity*
 - Allowing the development of relevant ancillary facilities, such as childcare facilities and eateries, in local employment areas, where appropriate*
- m) Improving workforce skills by:*
 - Working with local education and skills agencies and local business organisations to establish training facilities to enhance workforce skills*

- *Encouraging the provision of new training facilities on employment sites”*

Other Material Planning Considerations:

Local Plan Part 2 (final draft) emerging policies:

- A1 – Amenity
- B1 – Business development
- E4 – Trees and landscape

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) policies –

- Section 4: Decision making
- Section 6: Building a strong, competitive economy
- Section 11: Making effective use of land
- Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

In particular, the principle of rural economic growth is considered by:

NPPF Paragraph 83.

Planning policies and decisions should enable:(partial)

- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside;*

and

NPPF Paragraph 84.

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.

4. Public Comments received:

- 4.1 There have been 13 objections to the application. The main objection is from the occupiers of Hall Farm Cottage which is the closest neighbour to the north east (see Appendix to this report). Other objections were received, including submissions from visitors to the area. The reasons for objecting include:

- Noise Nuisance.
- The storage facility will lead to much larger and longer-duration operations at the woodyard site to the north, with consequent noise, dust and fume impacts.
- Expansion of business not appropriate to the location.
- Industrial operation encroaching into the countryside and open rural area.
- Detriment to the setting and character of the Broads National Park landscape
- Impacts on high quality agricultural land.
- The proposed hours of use should exclude use of the site on Saturdays, as well as Sundays and public / bank holidays.
- Detriment to the enjoyment of using the Public Rights of Way network.

The above list includes comments from local interest / amenity groups the Broads Society and The Ramblers (formerly the Ramblers Association).

5. Assessment:-

Section 38(8) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework state that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Principle of development

- 5.1 The proposal is to provide a facility to extend and support the operations of an existing business in a rural location. Although the application site is very remote, and inaccessible by means other than the private car, the intention to use the site for the same business as exists in the adjoining woodyard is considered to be sustainable growth. The scale of development proposed is not so extensive as to represent significant growth or result in notable levels of additional employees creating additional traffic movements, and will provide ongoing operational support to the existing business.
- 5.2 It has been suggested that the storage use should be located elsewhere and that previous temporary permissions were granted only to enable relocation. That argument becomes problematic given that the woodyard is an established use in planning law, with no restrictions on the length of time that the woodyard use can continue.
- 5.3 Seeking an alternative location for just the woodyard storage would be problematic for the applicant, operationally, and for the nearest residents; the storage site is so interlinked with the woodyard operation that separation would create more movements between the two sites and lead to a spread of activity further afield from the woodyard. Relocating the storage area would also not remove the established woodyard use from Hall Farm. Previous temporary permissions have provided an insight into the nature of the woodyard storage operations in this location, and these are considered able to be accommodated on a permanent basis (see below).

- 5.4 As such, Officers do not consider it to be reasonable to restrict this application to a temporary use if the reason to do so were to provide more time to relocate the storage activity.
- 5.5 Subject to resolving the impacts on landscape, rights of way, highways and amenity, the principle of this scale and nature of development is appropriate to this location and will enable sustainable expansion of the existing rural business in line with Core Strategy policy CS6, NPPF paragraphs 83 and 84, and emerging policy E4 of the Local Plan Part 2.

Landscape impacts

- 5.6 The application site is an area of land in an adjoining field to the south of Hall Farm. The site is within very close proximity to the boundary with the Broads Authority National Park area, and is visible from the south. Hall Lane passes the site as it continues south and is a public bridleway and a popular route into and connecting with the Broads footpath network.
- 5.7 The site is screened from Hall Road to the east by a mature hedge and trees and is only visible from the road to the south / south-east of the site. The applicant has planted some trees along part of the southern boundary which helps to screen some of the site, but these have only had varying success
- 5.8 Core Strategy Policy CS11 requires development to avoid harmful impacts on landscape assets and requires applications to:
- “(d) ensure that...the Broads and their settings are protected and enhanced; and, (e) safeguard and where possible enhance the borough’s wider landscape character...”*
- 5.9 When considering the landscape importance of the site, the location is also affected by both paragraphs 170 (a) and (b), and 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

NPPF Paragraph 170 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); [and]

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;...”

- 5.10 NPPF Paragraph 172 also requires that:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads...[and] the scale and extent of development in these designated areas should be limited.”

- 5.11 Notwithstanding that NPPF Paragraph 172 is directed towards development within designated areas, these are nevertheless still considered important principles which should be applied to proposals which are likely to have an impact on the setting of the Broads.
- 5.12 Although not yet adopted, the principles of Final Draft Local Plan Part 2 policy E4 should also be noted, as these are considered consistent with the requirements of National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 170, and is considered to ‘bridge the gap’ between sites within designated areas, where paragraph 172 is most relevant, and out with the boundary but where there is nevertheless the potential for causing an impact.

Draft Local Plan Part 2 policy E4 states:

“Development which is...inter-visible within, or otherwise affecting the landscape of...the designated Broads area, will be carefully controlled to avoid adverse impacts on their natural beauty, and the enjoyment of their special qualities, including views out from those areas...”

- 5.13 As the site is close to the boundary of the designated Broads area, it is therefore appropriate to minimise the visual impact of the proposed operations and ensure the development is as recessive and low-profile as possible.
- 5.14 The Broads Authority has objected ‘strongly’ to the application (see their comments attached at the Appendix to this report). The Authority’s objection concerns the impact on the environment and on the setting of the Broads, with specific reference to the encroachment of an industrial process into the open countryside, and an erosion of the remoteness of the area within the Broads landscape and erosion of its National Park qualities. Furthermore, the Broads Authority has concerns that the activities, operations and noise created are incongruous with the sense of empty and undeveloped setting, as distinct from occasional agricultural noise and activity. The Broads Authority considers that retaining the use within this location will be incompatible with the existing quiet environment and character of the surroundings.
- 5.15 The open and unspoilt area to the south of Mautby may stand outside the designated area but it nevertheless provides a complementary landscape and ‘buffer’ to the Broads area. It is noted that in some instances there has been encroachment by the creep of industrial processes and development into the open landscape, which has eroded the setting of the Broads, and this should be prevented from continuing unchecked.
- 5.16 However, it is considered that the proposal is for the storage of timber, wood fuel and firewood in association with an industrial process, and the appearance and character of the use will appear to be ancillary to the industrial process that already

takes place within the established use at the adjacent site to the north. As the use can be required to be linked to that industrial activity, and supports the established industrial process, the use proposed will not cause any further significant detrimental harm to the character, appearance and special qualities of the Broads Authority area.

- 5.17 There are a range of mitigation measures available which can be secured by planning conditions as part of any permission, which will ensure the development retains a suitable, low-impact appearance in keeping with the rural and open nature of the site.
- 5.18 Officers therefore consider that the use can be accepted on a permanent basis in the location proposed, without long-term significant detrimental effect on the landscape, as long as it is controlled by conditions and monitored accordingly.
- 5.19 Wood stockpiles at the site have to date been at least 3m high, due to 3m being the height of the haulier bucket when offloading. Officers and the applicant propose a 2.5m perimeter around the edge of the site, arranged in accordance with a plan for stockpile orientation and boundary markers to be agreed by condition. The height would rise to 3.0m further into the site, which works with the site levels and graduates the impacts on views from south.
- 5.20 Due to the combination of the site's proximity to the Broads, the sensitivity of the location and prominence in the Broads' setting, and the failure of some of the recent planting around the site boundaries, it is considered that any approval must also be subject to a landscaping and tree planting scheme to ensure improved planting and screening establishment measures.
- 5.21 The applicant has stated that they will carry out additional planting to further screen the application site from view, so a condition is recommended to be attached to any planning permission granted. When Development Committee considered this proposal in March 2021 it was proposed that a condition would require an appropriate landscape plan to be provided within 3 months of the decision date, but if a decision is reached in May 2021 it is recommended that the landscape and planting plan should be submitted for approval within 2 months of the decision. An approved landscape plan should still be required to be implemented in the next planting season (October / November 2021).
- 5.22 The landscaping screening planting plan shall need to be undertaken in line with the Council Arboriculturist's suggestions with regards to species and locations, and the applicant has already provided their agreement to the LPA's proposed list.
- 5.23 The Broads Authority has raised concern that any proposed tree screening will either be seasonal, and therefore less effective as a visual screen, or will need to include inappropriate species of trees, such as conifers to provide year-round screening, which bring their own problems. Whilst some types of conifers are native such as Scots Pines, the existing screening has used conifers which are seen to be unusual and rather incongruous in appearance. A sensitive landscape plan and site layout plan will need to take these concerns into account, but the Council's consultant arboriculturalist has confirmed it should be possible to

achieve a balance, which should reduce the site's prominence year round whilst still providing the greatest screening during the summer months and busiest tourism season.

5.24 As the adjoining site has now been cleared of wood storage, Officers recommend this area should be sown with a native seed mix, in accordance with a scheme to be agreed by conditions. This will improve the site's biodiversity enhancement contributions, alongside the enhancements to be provided by using mixed native tree species.

5.25 The range of landscape impact mitigation measures to be secured by conditions include:

- limiting the height of the wood stacks to be stored on the site;
- agreeing a plan for the layout of wood in the site and boundary treatments thereof, identifying areas for woodchip and orientation of logs etc to appear more recessive in views from the south;
- providing improved tree screening and planting establishment;
- preventing the storage of anything other than wood, including preventing storage of associated plant, machinery and apparatus, and including no parking of vehicles in the application site; and,
- the provision of improved surfacing within the Hall Farm environment to prevent debris being brought into the public highway and/or scarring the landscape.

5.26 The proposed controls are intended to ensure the operations are seen against the backdrop of the industrial process, which will to some extent actually screen the established industrial uses of the woodyard adjoining this site.

5.27 Subject to the conditions being agreed within a suitable timeframe, to reflect the retrospective nature of the application, the proposal will satisfy paragraph 170 of the NPPF and accord with the principles of emerging Local Plan Part 2 policy E4, and adopted policy CS11 of the Core Strategy.

Impacts on public footpath / rights of way network and highways

5.28 Mautby Restricted Byway RB8 connecting Mautby and the River Bure shares a short section of Hall Road required for the access to the application site. Route RB8 includes a half-mile walk between the Bure and Mautby Bridleway 18, and is noted for its important link to the Broads, and benefits of tourism that offers, as identified by The Ramblers. With hours of use restricted to Monday – Friday, there may be a small detrimental impact for passers-by during working hours, on occasion when the site is in use, but this is temporary and short-term. In general, the proposed hours of use will ensure that quiet enjoyment of the network is maintained during its period of greatest visitor demand at weekends.

5.29 Any suggestion that storage use should be relocated to an alternative site would actually likely increase use of Hall Road and cause more impacts on the footpath route from the increased traffic movements between two separate sites.

5.30 Taken as a whole, it is considered that the mitigations proposed in relation to protecting and mitigating any harm to the character and rural environment of the area would apply equally to minimising the impact on the enjoyment of the footpath.

5.31 A public objection is concerned that NPPF paragraph 98 has not been addressed adequately. NPPF para 98 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.”

In line with the expectation of Para 98, the proposal avoids a direct impact on the public rights of way network, although the experience of using the route may be diluted slightly on occasion.

5.32 On the other hand, providing a storage area for the woodyard potentially minimises the number of vehicle movements that would otherwise be needed to access the woodyard via the short length of Restricted Byway RB8, and affords the opportunity to provide screening of the woodyard through additional planting along the southern and eastern boundaries which has not been possible to date.

5.33 The application does not anticipate any additional vehicle movements above and beyond those which have occurred over the last 3-4 years already, and the proposal would theoretically minimise trips to and from the woodyard and any other storage locations. As such there is no discernible highways safety impact.

Loss of agricultural land

5.34 Core Strategy Policy CS6 seeks to avoid the loss of ‘best and most versatile’ agricultural land.

5.35 According to GYBC and Norfolk County Council mapping data the site is not part of either Agricultural Grade 1 or Grade 2 land. The nearest such areas are at least 300 metres to the north of Hall Farm, so the proposal will not result in the loss of ‘best and most versatile’ agricultural land.

5.36 Notwithstanding, to ensure that the loss of agricultural land is minimised to a use which is related to an existing business, it is suggested that any permission granted should be made personal to the applicant, and conditions will expect the land to revert to agricultural use if the applicant relocates from the existing site.

Noise and disturbance to neighbouring amenity

- 5.37 The proposed use of the site is for storage of timber awaiting processing at the established adjacent woodyard site at Hall Farm to the north, so the only direct noise that will occur is when material is delivered to the site or when it is moved to the processing area. However, another consequence is that the storage does allow for longer-duration operations at the woodyard. Objectors are concerned that the storage area will allow 'larger operations' at the woodyard, but the capacity of processing will still be limited to the scale of the woodyard operations itself. Whilst the storage area will allow a quicker 'turnaround' of processing the timber, the hours of use of the actual woodyard are not able to be controlled by this application and timber could be imported at any time of day or night from storage off-site, with consequential movements, in contrast to having an ability to control hours of use of this site.
- 5.38 Within the storage area, some of the related impacts will be the associated revving, manoeuvring and idling of lorry and tractor engines, and the noise of reversing alarms. It is not impossible to remove or disable reversing alarms on occasion, and replace them with other safety features such as white noise alarms or requiring banksmen to attend the delivery, for example, but any such measures must be proportionate to the circumstance. Whilst concerns have been raised about the noise of forklifts and reversing alarms, it is not considered necessary or reasonable to require their removal during the relatively infrequent occasions of making deliveries or moving stock to the woodyard. Furthermore the applicant is understood to usually be the only employee at the site so to introduce a banksman could be disproportionately expensive and impractical.
- 5.39 The applicant proposed hours of use of the storage site within their application on 11/12/19, as: 0800 – 1700 Monday – Friday with no proposed use on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holidays. In comparison, the temporary permissions on the adjoining land previously allowed use during more unsociable hours, of up to 1830 Mon-Fri.
- 5.40 Although neighbours have raised concerns about noise, the Council's Environmental Health officers have raised no objections, and have suggested hours of work could be restricted to 0800 hours to 1700 hours Monday to Friday and 0800 hours to 1300 hours Saturday with no work on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- 5.41 If Saturday morning operations were to be allowed this would be more detrimental to neighbours and to tourism and visitors using the Public Rights of Way network, both in terms of noise and traffic. Notwithstanding that the use proposes an industrial character, it is close to residential neighbours and in a prominent location on public footpaths so it is considered necessary to prevent Saturday operations. The hours of use are therefore recommended to be only 0800 – 1700 Mondays - Fridays, with no use on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank / Public Holidays. This has been discussed with the applicant who has confirmed these are suitable to his operations.

- 5.42 In terms of disturbance and sense of activity, the rural setting and proximity of neighbours are relevant. As proposed, the application site field and the buildings of the woodyard at Hall Farm are both owned by Norfolk County Council, and it is expected that the storage operations in the field the subject of this application site will be ancillary in nature and associated with the woodyard activity.
- 5.43 It is proposed that any permission granted should be subject to a condition which enables the permission to be used only by the applicant, which will ensure the Local Planning Authority retains control over the future use of the land in question. This prevents aggregation of more industrial or commercial activity in an otherwise-inappropriate and unsuitable location for business uses not linked to the operations of established businesses in the immediate locality.
- 5.44 Such a condition will also ensure the operations are limited to those specifically requested by the applicant and their current business model. The use, though permanent, would be linked to the established use of Hall Farm, and would benefit the business whilst ensuring any impacts on surrounding properties are limited to those which have been monitored and understood over recent years.
- 5.45 Furthermore, a condition would be used to prevent sales of timber from the site, in the interests of minimising traffic, disturbance and impact on neighbouring amenity.
- 5.46 The proposed conditions can therefore restrict the operations to those of the applicant, which can also be monitored and controlled by the landowner and the Local Planning Authority.
- 5.47 Any permission granted should also include conditions limiting deliveries to Monday to Friday, and prohibit mechanically powered cutting, sawing work etc. taking place on the application site, in order to prevent activities on the open sided storage area creating noise and dust which could affect neighbours or visitors.
- 5.48 In summary, whilst the application seeks permission for permanent use of the land to store a volume of logs, the nature of activities would be consistent with that allowed by the two temporary planning permissions previously granted on adjacent land. As the proposal would be subject to more controls than those which were imposed previously, and the site is located slightly further from neighbouring residents to the east, it is therefore considered that a long-term use will have an acceptable impact on nearby residential amenity.

Economic benefits

- 5.49 Expanding an appropriately-sited industrial use can have benefits to the local economy but these must be assessed against the social and environmental impacts and scale of the proposal.
- 5.50 Core Strategy Policy CS1 seeks sustainable growth through development of an appropriate scale to the location, character and function of individual settlements. By restricting the use, hours and nature of operations the development will be

ancillary in its role as an associated function of the woodyard, and will comply with policy CS1.

- 5.51 Whilst not necessarily directly creating additional employment, the proposal will improve stability and resilience of the existing business, so engaging Policy CS6(i) which states it: *“Supports the provision of development essential to sustain a rural workforce.”*
- 5.52 Emerging policy B1 of the Local Plan Part 2 (final draft) also expects development to be allowed where it is small scale and rural in character, or where it comprises an extension to an existing business premises which does not result in a major change in the scale and impact of the premises or use. This should attract notable ‘weight’ in the decision making process as the policy intent is consistent with NPPF paragraphs 83 and 84.
- 5.53 As such, whilst the proposal can be acceptable in principle to support the local business in its established location, it is recommended that any permission to be granted should be subject to the controls set out in the proposed conditions, as doing so will ensure the business operates as expected by both existing and emerging policy.

Conclusion

- 5.54 The applicant has previously been granted temporary permissions for the same use on an adjoining area of land, which has enabled the Local Planning Authority to assess whether the character and activity of the use can be acceptable in principle, and establish possible areas which should be controlled.
- 5.55 As the use proposed is for storage of timber only, it is unlikely to cause any significant harm to the amenities of the nearest dwellings and it is considered that the use can be controlled to an acceptable level, and the arrangement of wood storage on site can be compatible with the landscape impacts.
- 5.56 Taking all the above issues into account, it is considered that the potential harm associated with the proposed use of the site solely for storage of timber will be minimal if appropriately conditioned, and the economic benefits will outweigh the limited extent of detrimental impacts.
- 5.57 The proposal will therefore comply with Policies CS1, CS6 and CS11 of the Great Yarmouth Local Plan: Core Strategy, and Paragraphs 83, 84, 98 and 170 of the NPPF, and is consistent with the aims set out in emerging policy E4 of the final draft Local Plan Part 2.

6. RECOMMENDATION :-

Approve – subject to the imposition of conditions as listed below:

Conditions:

1. Permission shall be granted on a personal basis, for the benefit of the applicant only.
2. The site shall only be used whilst the applicant operates from Hall Farm.
3. Within 1 month of the use ceasing or if the applicant relocates from the existing site, the land shall be cleared of all wood and woodchip and activity and shall be reverted to agricultural use.
4. An appropriate tree planting and landscape plan to be submitted within 2 months of the decision date. The mix of trees shall be native, semi-mature 12-14cm stem diameter, mixed species of Oak, Ash, Sycamore, Monterey Cypress, Rowan, Bird Cherry, Beech, Crab Apple, Hazel, Hawthorne, Blackthorn, and Scott's Pine. The landscape plan and tree protection measures to be implemented in the next planting season following approval of those details.
5. The former temporary use site to the east to be planted with native meadow species in the first planting season in accordance with a scheme to be submitted within 2 months of the decision date.
6. The storage area is to be defined and marked by an appropriate boundary scheme (such as 2.5m tall poles) in accordance with a boundary scheme details to be agreed. Scheme to be submitted within 2 months, and implemented in accordance with the approved details within 2 months.
7. A plan for the layout of the site shall be submitted within 2 months of the date of this permission, detailing areas for wood piles in the site, including areas for woodchip and orientation of logs, distribution of woodpile heights etc – with the aim to appear more recessive in views from the south, and shall be laid out within 1 month.
8. Details of a scheme for the provision of improved surfacing within the Hall Farm environment to prevent debris being brought into the public highway and/or scarring the landscape, shall be submitted within 2 months, and implemented in accordance with the approved details within 2 months.
9. No woodpiles shall be any more than 3.0m in height, at any part of the site at any time.
10. Use / operations within the site to be restricted to hours of 0800 – 1700 Mondays – Fridays only, with no work on Saturdays, Sundays, Bank holidays or Public holidays;
11. There shall be no deliveries to the site outside 0800 – 1700 Mon - Fri.
12. The site shall only be used for storage of timber and not for plant and machinery and apparatus, and there shall be no parking or storage of vehicles on the site when those vehicles are not in use.

13. There shall be no storage of machinery, plant, apparatus or vehicles on any adjoining land in the applicant's ownership / control not covered by the established Hall Farm woodyard use under application ref. 06/16/0280/EU.
14. There shall be no mechanically powered cutting, sawing work, or splitting of timber (or other similar operation) taking place on the application site.
15. No sales of wood, fuel or timber from the site.

And any other conditions considered appropriate by the Planning Manager.

Appendices.

1. Site location plan
2. Location plan and aerial photo
3. Block plan and indicative landscaping / screening proposals
4. Comments from the Broads Authority.
5. Comments from the Environmental Health Officer.
6. Comments from neighbouring resident (Hall Farm Cottage) no.1.
7. Comments from neighbouring resident (Hall Farm Cottage) no.2.

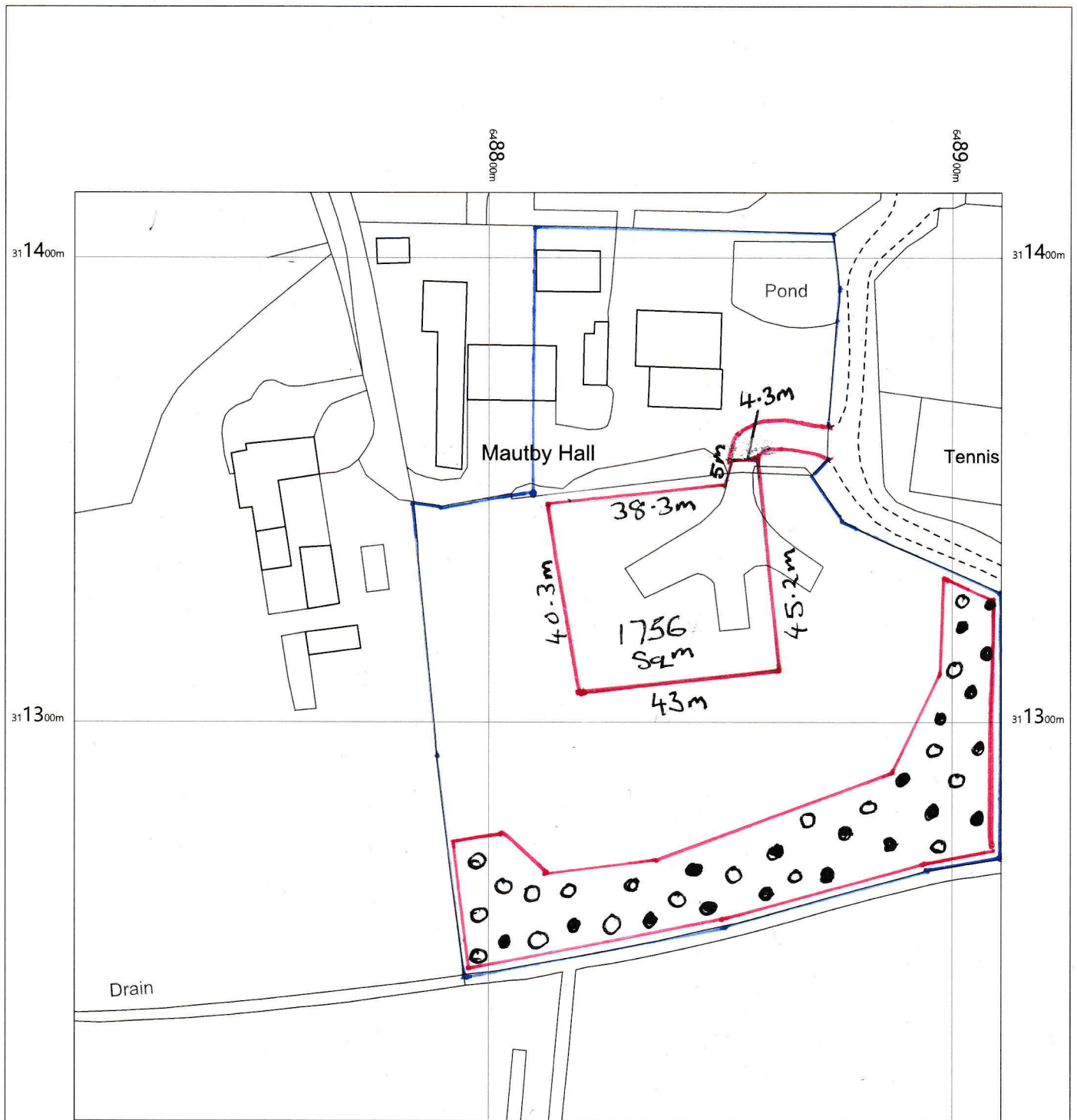




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Hall Farm Mautby



RED line

Blue line

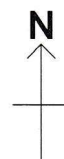
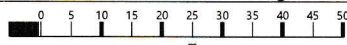


PROPOSED STORAGE AREA AND TREE PLANTING

TENANCY AREA

EXISTING TREES

ADDITIONAL TREE PLANTING



OS MasterMap 1250/2500/10000 scale
Thursday, January 9, 2020, ID: CM-00851600
www.centremapslive.co.uk

1:1250 scale print at A4, Centre: 648811 E, 311314 N

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GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

(S)

copied to Agent 26/11



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Mrs G Manthorpe
Planning Department
Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Town Hall
Hall Plain
Great Yarmouth
NR30 2QF

Ms Cally Smith
Head of Planning
01603 756029
cally.smith@broads-authority.gov.uk

Date 25 November 2019

Our ref BA/2019/0403/NEIGHB

Your ref 06/19/0625/F

Dear Mrs Manthorpe

Application No : BA/2019/0403/NEIGHB
Proposal : Change of use from agricultural field to storage of timber. Tree planting for screening.
Address : Hall Farm, Hall Road, Mautby, Norfolk
Applicant : Mr Steven Hewitt

I write further to the above planning application.

The proposal is for the retention of an existing wood yard on a permanent basis. The wood yard appears to have operated on this site since 2011, and there were proposals for its relocation elsewhere in the village, however planning permission for the new site was refused. It is now proposed to re-order the existing yard, to move the storage area to the centre of the site and do landscape planting to the south.

The wood yard site is located immediately adjacent to the Broads Authority boundary which lies to the south and the east. Due to the topography of the area there are long views from the marshes back towards the village of Mautby and the existing yard is visible on the edge of the settlement. The Broads Authority's Landscape Character Assessment identifies the area as essentially defined by the volume of marshland used for arable, noting the surviving curving dykes, the traditional buildings dotting the valley sides at regular intervals and the small scale pattern of development. I note that whilst the application site sits adjacent to the settlement, it is located within the context of a landscape which is strongly agricultural with a sense of remoteness.

I am of the view that the presence of the wood yard here has an adverse impact on the appearance of the area and is incongruous in this location by introducing an industrial activity into a non-industrial context. The impact is exacerbated by the noise and movements associated with the activity, and these are detrimental to the quiet rural character of the area. It is accepted that there are agricultural activities and operations locally which do generate noise and disturbance, however these tend to be intermittent and are to be expected in an agricultural area. It is not considered that the retention of a commercial industrial operation as proposed here is comparable.

**National
Parks**



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE** Silver
Chairman: Bill Dickson
Chief Executive: Dr John Packman

I do note that it is proposed to undertake landscape planting to the south of the site, however this will only provide limited and seasonal screening, unless conifers are used which would have their own adverse impact.

The Broads is designated as of equivalent status to a National Park and its landscape is accorded the highest level of protection. The retention of the development as proposed adjacent to the Broads Authority boundary would adversely affect the character and appearance of the landscape and the experiential qualities of it. For these reasons the Broads Authority raises a strong objection to the application.

I would be grateful to receive a copy of the Decision Notice for my file in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CS' or 'Cally Smith'.

Ms Cally Smith
Head of Planning

MEMORANDUM

From Environmental Health

To: Head of Planning and Development
Attention: Dean Minns

Date: 6th February 2020

Our ref: SRU/071687

Your ref: 06/19/0625/F

Please ask for: Richard Alger

Extension No: 622

CHANGE OF USE FROM AN AGRICULTURAL FIELD TO STORAGE OF TIMBER, WOOD FUEL AND FIREWOOD: DEVELOPMENT AR HALL FARM HALL ROAD GREAT YARMOUTH NR29 3JB

The following comments are made:-

Hours of Work:

Due to the close proximity of other residential dwellings, the hours of work should be restricted to:-

- 0800 hours to 1700 hours Monday to Friday
- 0800 hours to 1300 hours Saturdays
- No work on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

The hours of work should incorporate all activities including plant and machinery used to move and transport the timber.

Noise from Site:

The use of the site for storage must be restricted to storage alone and other activities such as cutting or other machinery related activities should not be permitted.

Richard Alger
Environmental Health Officer

06/19/0625/F - (S)

Dear Ms Manthorpe

Thank you for sending the amended plans for Hall Farm, *Amended Application 06/19/0625* - the only changes being the proposed screening and the blue line on the plan marking out the tenant's boundary. My objection remains as before: as neighbours we have been grossly affected by this operation and we oppose its expansion.

The screening that exists at present is mostly eucalyptus, which would be more suited to the southern hemisphere. Any new native screening would take decades before it could minimise the impact of the industrial sprawl that's being proposed.

On the plan provided by the applicant the blue line marks out the area included in the tenancy. The general purpose building to the west of the site is outside the tenancy though it's currently being used by the tenant. This building is in breach of Condition 2 and the plan Ref 06/13/0721/F. It is to be removed to make space for proposed access and parking for North Barn. North Barn is owned by Norfolk County Council and cannot be completed and the investment maximised without the building being removed. I question why so much outside storage is required for the one remaining building on the CLEUD site when the operation depends upon dry stored wood ... and the amount dry storage space is due to be halved?

At the Development Control Committee on 11th September 2019 I recall your colleague, Dean Minns, told the applicant that he needed to vacate the site and that it should not continue as a permanent site.

The objection raised by the **Broads Authority** remains in place and echoes your comments to the in the report ref 06/17/0743/F:

4.9 The impact on the environment and on the setting of the Broads with specific reference the encroachment of an industrial process to the open countryside should be considered taking into account the status of the Broads Authorities area being equal to a national park. The encroachment into the open and unspoilt area which provides a complementary landscape to the Broads area has been eroded by the sprawl of industrial processes and this should be prevented from continuing.

5.1 On balance, given the specific circumstances of the applications location and the adverse impact on the character of the area and the application is recommended that the use cannot continue as a permanent use.

I also note on the website a letter sent on 15th January from the main hauliers to the site, D A Garnham & Son in Diss - a picture of a typical delivery vehicle attached. This is not simply a local entrepreneur providing an essential service to the local community by cutting fallen trees to process and distribute locally, this is an ambition operation pushing for storage to expand further, and currently importing wood from much further afield.

We've nurtured our home and garden for 40 years on the edge of a beautiful conservation area and our efforts are being totally undermined by the existence of an unregulated wood yard - now applying for permanent growth. We strongly object to this operation being enabled to expand further and we ask you to see this from our point of view.

Sincerely

Gail Younge

(5)

Helen Ayers

From: Gemma Manthorpe
Sent: 04 December 2019 17:54
To: plan
Subject: FW: Planning Application Ref: 06/19/0625/F

Gemma Manthorpe LLB (Hons)
Senior Planning Officer
Great Yarmouth Borough Council

Email: gm@great-yarmouth.gov.uk
Website: www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk
Telephone: 01493 846 638



To read our email disclaimer visit here: www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/email-disclaimer

From: Gail Younge [REDACTED]
Sent: 04 December 2019 15:58
To: Gemma Manthorpe <Gemma.Manthorpe@great-yarmouth.gov.uk>
Subject: Planning Application Ref: 06/19/0625/F

Dear Ms Manthorpe

I am writing on behalf of my husband, Ruder Younge, and myself to object to the planning application 06/19/0625/F Change of use from an agricultural field to storage of timber, wood fuel and firewood at Hall Farm, Hall Road, Mautby, Gt Yarmouth, NR29 3JB. We are the closest neighbours to the north east of the site; our property is just a few metres away from the marked area.

Whilst I acknowledge this application for storage of timber is separate to the main site, essentially it supports the main site and enables the scale of the business to be more profound. Inevitably a larger operation has a larger impact on us, our home and its amenities.

As neighbours, the impact of the activity on the main site is entirely negative. Prior to the Certificate of Lawful Established Use and Development wood processing took place on a small scale under the guise of diversified farming but it has increased exponentially since then. Having become authorised through a CLEUD it is completely unregulated by the Local Planning Authority in terms of hours of work and noise abatement ... becoming authorised through CLEUD disadvantaged us as neighbours.

When Environmental Health is consulted prior to full planning permission for wood processing, the suitability of the site is assessed in relation to neighbours and their amenities; a full acoustic report is required and conditions recommended to limit any negative impact on the surrounding area. However, following a CLEUD it falls to EH to determine the impact of the operation after it's established. EH's ability to influence the situation becomes far more complex. At this stage, EH can take enforcement action but

much greater levels of proof are required to establish nuisance. The needs of the business, financial and personal, must be balanced against the needs of the neighbours.

During the ten years leading up to the CLUED, the impact on us was negligible. There were two main reasons why 10 years accrued without complaint: firstly, as neighbours we assumed that the landlords - our local council - would comply with planning regulations and apply for change of use if required at the outset and secondly the scale of the business was much smaller. Prior to the CLEUD, we understood the activity to be a County Farms tenant processing wood on a small scale; an ancillary endeavour and we had no objection. In fact, we purchased wood for our own use but this is now one of the largest wood yards in the county ... and it is unregulated! As the owner said at a meeting at Runham Village Hall, he 'can work at midnight' if he pleases

Since we first became exercised by this situation in 2015, we have heard endless laypersons claim incorrectly that wood processing somehow comes under the umbrella of agriculture. In your report 11th September '19, you are unequivocal in describing it as 'industrial'. In response to the previous temporary application for two years, you consider the location of an industrial operation would have an adverse impact on the area, 'The encroachment into the open and unspoilt area which provides a complementary landscape to the Broads area has been eroded by the sprawl of industrial processes and this should be prevented from continuing'. *Meeting Notes GYBC Development Committee 11.09.19* The applicant has suggested a slight alteration to the designated area, but nevertheless this is still an industrial operation in an inappropriate setting and I urge you to apply the same stance to this application.

In the same report you conclude that the owner should clear the site by the end of November '19. I see no evidence of clearance and question why this is? The entire field is strewn with industrial equipment. It is disingenuous to imagine that the marked area will be the only area devoted to this industry. Accessing the piles of wood necessitates industrial machinery taking a broad sweep. The aerial image from Google maps shows the full extent of the scar on what was previously a long-established paddock for grazing livestock.

For the reasons set out above we strongly object to this application.

Sincerely

Gail Younge (also on behalf of Ruder Younge)

