

APPLICATION REPORT – 23/01094/FULMAJ

Validation Date: 15 December 2023

Ward: Adlington And Anderton

Type of Application: Major Full Planning

Proposal: Demolition of two poultry sheds and the erection of two replacement poultry sheds and three feed silos

Location: Adlington Hall Farm The Common Adlington Chorley PR7 4DT

Case Officer: Mike Halsall

Applicant: Lucus Breeding Company Ltd

Agent: MacMarshalls Ltd

Consultation expiry: 8 April 2024

Decision due by: 24 May 2024 (Extension of time agreed)

RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that planning permission is granted, subject to conditions.

SITE DESCRIPTION

2. The application site is located in the Green Belt in a rural part of the Parish of Adlington, to the east of Chorley Road where the site access is located, which falls within the borough of Wigan. The site relates to Adlington Hall Farm, a substantial broiler (chicken) and beef farm, including approximately 50 hectares of agricultural land in grass production.
3. The buildings situated at Adlington Hall Farm comprise 7 poultry sheds, cattle buildings and yard silo / feed stores, agricultural workshop, slurry handling facilities, and biomass boiler shed. Lucas Breeding Company Limited (LBCL) is operated from Adlington Hall Farm and comprises; 77 breeding beef cattle; 110 steer and heifer calves and approximately 200,000 broiler chickens at any one time.
4. Lucas Breeding Company Limited (LBCL) is operated by Mr & Mrs Bowling who live in the farmhouse and Mr & Mrs Meacock (daughter and son in law) who live in the agricultural workers dwelling that gained planning consent in 2017. Accordingly, they all reside on the agricultural unit.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5. Planning permission is sought for the demolition of two of the poultry sheds, the smallest and northernmost of the existing buildings, and the erection of two larger buildings in their place and three feed silos, that would be of a consistent size to the existing adjacent larger buildings. The following information has been provided in support of the planning application.

6. The farm has been owned by the family since 1954 with the applicant's father-in-law taking charge in 1982 when his father died. Chickens are delivered to the site and are then grown to slaughter weight over a 7-week period, there are then two weeks of no birds on the farm as the sheds are cleared out then the cycle repeats.
7. Over the past 7 years, significant investment in excess of £2 million has been made in installing two new, 'state of the art' poultry sheds, modern equipment and the agricultural workers dwelling at Adlington Hall Farm. The new poultry sheds (approved under Reference 16/00213/FUL/MAJ) houses approximately 84,000 broiler chickens at any one time. The investment was made by LBCL to secure the applicant's family's future as farmers in Chorley. The existing sheds have come to the end of their lifespan and although the farm operates the highest of welfare and biosecurity standards, it will get increasingly difficult to maintain due to increasing repairs and maintenance. It then becomes uneconomical to continue operating from them.
8. Recently, the farm gained an integrated pollution prevention and control licence (IPPC) from the Environment Agency to house up to 260,000 birds if the new sheds gain planning and are constructed. However, it is unlikely that this number will be reached even with the new sheds, due to most major retailers requiring 20% less birds in each shed in order to obtain contracts with them. Accordingly, not only will the larger new sheds reduce the amount of repair and maintenance work and increase efficiencies, they will also ensure the farm maintains profitability to provide income for the two families and their 6 employees. Employment numbers will therefore be maintained in the future as a result of the new sheds.

Dimensions of each of the two existing buildings to be replaced

Length - 76.0m

Width - 15.5m

Height to eaves - 2.2m

Height to ridge - 4.7m

Dimensions of the two proposed buildings

Length - 97.7m

Width - 21.6m

Height to eaves - 2.9m

Height to ridge - 5.8m

Length - 103.4m

Width - 21.6m

Height to eaves - 2.9m

Height to ridge - 5.8m

9. The three new silos would be located between the two new buildings and would be slightly taller than the new buildings.

REPRESENTATIONS

10. No representations have been received.

CONSULTATIONS

11. The Coal Authority: no objection, subject to conditions.
12. Cadent Gas: have not responded.
13. Environment Agency: have responded with no objection to the proposal.
14. Greater Manchester Ecology Unit: initially responded to request the applicant identify how a net gain in the biodiversity value of the site could be achieved. Such a plan was submitted by the applicant to the satisfaction of the Council's ecological advisors.

Conditions are recommended, covering the protection of bats and nesting birds, the control of invasive species and the delivery of a net gain in biodiversity at the site.

15. Regulatory Services - Environmental Health Officer: *"I have reviewed the application and have checked the records held by the environmental health section which shows no history of nuisance complaints from the site. In addition, the application references the Intergrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) permit for the site which is issued by the Environment Agency and gives operating conditions which the site must operate under to minimise the likelihood of issues occurring relating to dust, odour, noise and other issues. I consider the likelihood of nuisance being caused by this application to be low and therefore I have no objection to the application. I would recommend that any demolition and construction work is carried out in accordance with the Chorley Council document "Code of Practice for Construction and Demolition".*
16. Waste & Contaminated Land Officer: no comments.
17. Lancashire Highway Services (LCC Highway Services): no objection.
18. Health & Safety Executive: have stated that as the site of this application is not within any major hazard sites or pipelines this application does not require consultation with HSE via the WebApp.
19. Lancashire County Council Public Rights of Way Officer: have provided comments which can be included as informative notes on any grant of planning permission for the proposal and note that *"Footpath FP09010116 and FP0901017 run along the access track to the proposed development, as shown on the attached plan. The public right of way should not be used to store materials, vehicles or machinery and if found to do so would be deemed an obstruction and the applicant would be subject to enforcement proceedings to remove."*
20. Lead Local Flood Authority: have responded with no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions.
21. Natural England: were consulted due to the site being located within an impact risk zones of Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Natural England responded to request an ammonia assessment from the applicant, stating that livestock sheds are a major source of ammonia emissions, which is directly toxic to vegetation. Such an assessment was subsequently submitted by the applicant and Natural England responded with no objection to the proposal.
22. National Gas: no objection.
23. United Utilities: have responded with information for the applicant in relation to the protection of their assets. This has been forwarded to the applicant and can be included as an informative note on any decision notice for the proposal.
24. Adlington Parish Council: no objection.
25. Wigan Council: have not responded.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of development

26. The application site is located within the Green Belt. Paragraphs 152 and 153 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) state that development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Paragraph 154 states that there are exceptions to new buildings being considered inappropriate in the Green Belt, which includes buildings for agriculture and forestry.

27. Paragraph 85 of the Framework states that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt, with emphasis being placed on taking into account local business needs.
28. Paragraph 88 of the Framework relates specifically to supporting the sustainable growth and expansion of businesses in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. Also, paragraph 85 of the Framework states that planning decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements.
29. Policy 13e of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy 2012 identifies that the local planning authority should encourage appropriate new farm buildings and structures where they can be shown to be necessary for increasing food production.
30. Paragraph 31 of the Central Lancashire Rural Development SPD relates to proposals for agricultural buildings and requires that applicants demonstrate an operational agricultural need for the proposal.
31. The justification for the new development at this existing agricultural business is identified earlier in this report and the proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle in this Green Belt location.

Design, landscape and visual impacts

32. Policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 states that planning permission will be granted for new development, including extensions, conversions and free-standing structures, provided that (amongst other things):
 - “a) The proposal does not have a significantly detrimental impact on the surrounding area by virtue of its density, siting, layout, building to plot ratio, height, scale and massing, design, orientation and use of materials.*
 - c) The layout, design and landscaping of all elements of the proposal, including any internal roads, car parking, footpaths and open spaces, are of a high quality and respect the character of the site and local area;*
33. Paragraph 31 of the Central Lancashire Rural Development SPD, in relating to agricultural buildings, states that new agricultural buildings will be required to protect the visual character of the landscape. It is considered that the location of the buildings close to existing buildings would assist in protecting the visual character of the landscape, whilst they would replace existing building in the same position. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with this section of the SPD.
34. The application site is a plateau of land situated to the south of three existing poultry sheds and four existing associated feed silos. The land is sited between the access road to the farm from Chorley Road (to the east) and a watercourse to the west. The southern boundary of the site is clearly defined by line of trees. It is considered the proposal does not conflict with the five purposes of including land within the Green Belt. Although there will be new buildings of some substantial size they will be adjacent to existing buildings and viewed in the context of them from nearly all vantage points. The site is clearly defined by the existing buildings and other landscape features which the development will be contained within.
35. The proposed buildings would be sited to the north of the existing buildings which were themselves replaced under previous planning permissions. The proposed buildings have been designed to be consistent with the existing poultry sheds with gable ends and a pitched roof. Both proposed buildings would be clad in steel sheeting with materials to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority. It would be appropriate therefore to condition the materials to match those of the existing buildings, i.e. the roof in goosewing grey and the walls in juniper green. The feed silos would match the existing on the site and would be clad in juniper green.

36. The position of the buildings would be close to the existing buildings to the south and would be bound by the access track from Chorley Road, past the site and going on to the farmhouse to the north and east and a watercourse to the west. The ridgeline of the proposed buildings would be parallel to those which exist (on an east-west axis). The topography of the land rises to the east so there would not be views of the buildings in the landscape from this direction. The existing tree line would screen the majority of views from the south and views from the north would be seen in the context of the existing buildings.
37. The topography of the land does drop away to the west so the buildings would be visible from afar in the landscape from this direction, however, they would be seen in the context of the existing buildings and as the land rises beyond them to the east they would be viewed against the backdrop of the landscape rather than on the skyline. The applicant has supplied the colours of the buildings and feed silos and it is considered this would help them blend into the landscape.
38. The proposal is considered to represent an appropriate design response for the site and complies with the aforementioned policies with regards to design and landscape and visual impacts.

Ecology

39. Policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 to 2026 states that planning permission will be granted for new development provided that: *“f) The proposal would not have a detrimental impact on important natural habitats and landscape features such as historic landscapes, mature trees, hedgerows, ponds and watercourses. In some circumstances where on balance it is considered acceptable to remove one or more of these features then mitigation measures to replace the feature/s will be required either on or off-site.”*
40. Policy BNE9 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 seeks to safeguard protected and endangered species and their habitats. Natural England requested an ammonia assessment of the proposal as it is located within the impact risk zone of SSSI. An assessment was subsequently submitted in support of the application, assessing potential impacts of air emissions from the proposed development upon the SSSI. The report was reviewed by Natural England who responded with no objection to the proposal.
41. Conditions are recommended, covering the protection of bats and nesting birds, the control of invasive species and in order to secure a scheme for the delivery of a landscaping scheme that enables a net gain in biodiversity at the site.
42. There are no known ecological reasons why the application should be refused permission, subject to aforementioned conditions being attached to any grant of planning permission. The proposal is, therefore, considered to comply with policy BNE9 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026.

Drainage

43. Core Strategy Policy 29 (Water Management) seeks to improve water quality, water management and reduces the risk of flooding in a number of ways including, among other things, appraising, managing and reducing flood risk in all new developments.
44. A Drainage Strategy and Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted in support of the proposal. The proposed drainage solution is by a soakaway which is the most sustainable method identified in national planning guidance. The Lead Local Flood Authority and United Utilities have reviewed the proposals and have raised no objection, subject to conditions. As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regards to drainage and complies with the aforementioned policy.

Highways

45. Policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 to 2026 states that planning permission will be granted for new development provided that: *“d) The residual cumulative highways impact of the development is not severe and it would not prejudice highway safety, pedestrian safety,*

the free flow of traffic, and would not reduce the number of on-site parking spaces to below the standards stated in Site Allocations Policy – Parking Standards, unless there are other material considerations which justify the reduction;”

46. Vehicular movements are expected to remain as per the existing due to reduced shed bird densities. Approximately 45 wagons access the site over a 50 day cycle and this is expected to remain the same. Birds are caught throughout the night when the roads are quietest. Feed deliveries and waste removal will also remain as existing. Lancashire County Council Highway Services have raised no objection to the proposal, although have recommended that Wigan Council be consulted as the site access falls within their area. Wigan Council have been consulted; however, no response has been received. Given that the proposal would not result in any increase in vehicle movements, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable with regards to highway safety and complies with the aforementioned policy.

Residential amenity

47. Policy BNE 1 (Design Criteria for New Development) of the adopted Chorley Local Plan explains that new development should not cause harm to any neighbouring property by virtue of overlooking, overshadowing, or overbearing and that the proposal would not cause an unacceptable degree of noise disturbance. It is noted that there are no residential buildings within close proximity of the proposed buildings, reducing the potential impacts on residential amenity.
48. There are several new dwellings located on the former Boles Farm site (over the borough boundary in Wigan), however, it is considered the distance of the proposed buildings to these dwellings (approximately 200m) is acceptable in terms of noise, smells and general amenity. In addition, the prevailing wind direction is the opposite direction to these properties. Wigan Council was also notified of the application, but no comments have been received.
49. Watergate Lodge is the nearest property to the proposed buildings and is sited at the junction of the access to the farm and the A5106 Chorley Road. It is just over the borough boundary in Wigan.
50. The sheds themselves are considered acceptable in relation to this property as they would be approximately 100m away and will not be highly visible due to the land rising away from Chorley Road. There would be no increase in traffic to the site, other than during the construction period, which may cause some increase in disturbance to this property but this would be over a relatively short time period. This property has been notified of the application and no representations have been received.
51. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in relation to neighbour amenity.

Coal Mining

52. The application is within a high risk coal mining area as identified by The Coal Authority. A Coal Mining Risk Assessment has been submitted with the application as required for such areas. This has been reviewed by The Coal Authority and they concur with its findings that the coal mining legacy potentially poses a risk to the proposed development and that intrusive site investigation works should be undertaken prior to development in order to establish the exact situation regarding coal mining legacy issues. They recommend that the Council imposes a condition requiring these works to be carried out prior to commencement of development. As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this regard.

Other issues

53. Waste from the sheds is collected by a local farmer once each crop of birds are collected from the sheds. When the sheds are cleared, they are washed out into internal drains that then collect in self contained tanks (inspected regularly for damage). These are also emptied and collected by a local farmer for use on his arable farm. There is no known history of complaints in relation to this site with regards to odours or other environmental

issues. Further, the site must operate within the confines of the integrated pollution prevention and control licence (IPPC) from the Environment Agency. The EA have commented that, compliance inspections undertaken since the permit was first issued in 2007 have shown a very good history of compliance against the permit conditions.

CONCLUSION

54. The proposal does not represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would allow a long-established agricultural enterprise to fulfil its contractual and Environment Agency licence requirements, whilst maintaining high environmental control standards. There are no identified unacceptable impacts upon ecological or human receptors, highway safety, drainage or coal mining legacy. The proposal is, therefore, considered to be acceptable and is recommended for approval, subject to conditions.

RELEVANT HISTORY OF THE SITE

Ref: 04/00361/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 25 May 2004

Description: Erection of agricultural building,

Ref: 13/01181/AGR **Decision:** PAAGR **Decision Date:** 27 January 2014

Description: Steel portal frame building, concrete panels to 3.0m then steel box profile sheeting (light green colour) to eaves. Steel box profile roof sheeting and a concrete floor.

Ref: 16/00213/FULMAJ **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 17 August 2016

Description: Erection of two new poultry sheds on existing farm (measuring 94m x 24m each) along with two feed silos (7.4m high).

Ref: 17/00452/OUT **Decision:** PEROPP **Decision Date:** 4 August 2017

Description: Erection of a permanent agricultural worker's dwelling

Ref: 18/00004/REM **Decision:** PERRES **Decision Date:** 28 February 2018

Description: Reserved matters application for the erection of a single agricultural workers dwelling (pursuant to outline planning permission ref 17/00452/OUT).

Ref: 20/00366/AGR **Decision:** APPRET **Decision Date:**

Description: Agricultural determination for the erection of the erection of a steel frame building for storing farm machinery.

Ref: 23/01094/FULMAJ **Decision:** PCO **Decision Date:**

Description: Demolition of two poultry sheds and the erection of two replacement poultry sheds and three feed silos

Ref: 88/00306/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 14 June 1988

Description: Erection of broiler growing building

Ref: 83/00482/REM **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 9 August 1983

Description: Dormer bungalow and detached double garage

Ref: 83/00017/OUT **Decision:** PEROPP **Decision Date:** 3 May 1983

Description: Outline application for new farmhouse

Ref: 5/2/00464 **Decision:** WDN **Decision Date:** 28 August 1968

Description: Bungalow

RELEVANT POLICIES: In accordance with s.38 (6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the application is to be determined in accordance with the development plan (the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Adopted Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 and adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance), unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Consideration of the proposal has had regard to guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the development plan. The specific policies/guidance considerations are contained within the body of the report.

Suggested Conditions

1. The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans below:

Title	Plan Ref	Received On
Proposed Agricultural Building - Site and Location Plans	C486-1	15 March 2024
Proposed Agricultural Building - Proposed Floor Plans	C486-1	15 December 2023
Proposed Agricultural Building - Proposed Floor Plans	C486-1	15 December 2023
Drainage Plans	C486-1	15 December 2023

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning

3. All external facing materials of the development hereby permitted shall match in colour, form and texture to those on the existing adjacent buildings, roofs in goosewing grey and the walls in juniper green, and no others substituted unless alternatives are first submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, when the development shall then be carried out in accordance with the alternatives approved.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area in general and the existing building in particular.

4. A scheme for the landscaping of the development and its surroundings shall be submitted prior to any works taking place above DPC level. These details shall include the types and numbers of trees and shrubs to be planted, their distribution on site, those areas to be seeded, paved or hard landscaped; and detail any changes of ground level or landform. The scheme should include a landscaping/habitat creation and management plan which should aim to contribute to targets specified in the UK and Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plans. Landscaping proposals should comprise only native plant communities appropriate to the natural area. The content of the plan should provide a net gain in the biodiversity value of the site.

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details within the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of any buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

Reason: To ensure that a satisfactory landscaping scheme for the development is carried out to mitigate the impact of the development and secure a high quality design.

5. Prior to any earthworks, a management strategy for the control of himalayan balsam should be supplied to and agreed in writing to the Local Planning Authority. The agreed method statement shall be adhered to and implemented in full unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA.

Reason: To avoid the spread of an invasive species.

6. No works to trees, shrubs or hedgerows shall occur between the 1st March and 31st August in any year unless a detailed bird nest survey by a suitably experienced ecologist has been carried out immediately prior to clearance and that appropriate measures put in place to protect nesting bird interests on site.

Reason: All British birds nests and eggs (with certain limited exceptions) are protected by Section 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

7. No above ground development shall commence (excluding the demolition of existing structures) until;

- a) a scheme of intrusive investigations has been carried out on site to establish the risks posed to the development by past shallow coal mining activity; and
- b) any remediation works and/or mitigation measures to address land instability arising from coal mining legacy, as may be necessary, have been implemented on site in full in order to ensure that the site is made safe and stable for the development proposed.

The intrusive site investigations and remedial works shall be carried out in accordance with authoritative UK guidance.

Reason: To ensure the development is safe.

8. Prior to the occupation of the development, or it being taken into beneficial use, a signed statement or declaration prepared by a suitably competent person confirming that the site is, or has been made, safe and stable for the approved development shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approval in writing. This document shall confirm the methods and findings of the intrusive site investigations and the completion of any remedial works and/or mitigation necessary to address the risks posed by past coal mining activity.

Reason: To ensure the development is safe.

9. The Chorley Council document "Code of Practice for Construction and Demolition" shall be adhered to throughout the construction period.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of local residents.

10. The development permitted by this planning permission shall be carried out in accordance with the principles set out within the surface water sustainable drainage strategy (Drainage Strategy and Flood Risk Assessment, C486-1, MacMarshalls, 04/12/23).

Reason: To ensure satisfactory sustainable drainage facilities are provided to serve the site in accordance with the Paragraphs 173 and 175 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance and Defra Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems.