



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF THREE ADDITIONAL POULTRY BUILDINGS,
EIGHT FEED BINS AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT AS PART OF AN
EXTENSION OF THE MILTON FARM POULTY SITE

AT

SHOBDON AIRFIELD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR6 9LB

ON BEHALF OF

M & M POULTRY LTD





DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

APPLICANT'S DETAILS

M & M Poultry Ltd

PROJECT

The proposed erection of three additional poultry buildings, eight feed bins and associated development as part of an extension of the Milton Farm Poultry Site

ISSUED BY

Mr Graham Clark BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI
Planning Consultant



APPROVED BY

Mr Ben Corbett BSc (Hons) MSc MRICS
Partner



BERRYS

Newchurch Farm
Kinnersley
Herefordshire
HR3 6QQ
01544 598080
www.berrys.uk.com

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1 INTRODUCTION

This application relates to the existing poultry enterprise at Shobdon Airfield which forms part of Milton Farm, Pembridge, Leominster. The proposed development comprises of the erection of three additional poultry units, eight feed bins and associated development. The three new units will house a maximum of 162,000 broiler birds per cycle. The proposed units will be located directly west of the existing five poultry units, which house 278,000 broiler birds per cycle. The combined number of birds per cycle would therefore be 440,000.

The existing poultry site was granted planning permission in August 2014 (Ref: P141766/F0) and has been operating for nearly two years.

The existing environmental permit (EPR/WP3334/VW/V002) has been varied to allow for the proposed increase in bird numbers at the expanded site to a maximum of 440,000.

The application has been based on advice received from Herefordshire Council following the submission of a pre-application enquiry and scoping opinion.

Further details about the application proposals are set out within this document and the accompanying Environmental Statement, which also assess the potential environmental impacts from the proposed development.


This submission has been prepared on behalf of M & M Poultry Ltd who own and operate the site.

2 BACKGROUND

The needs of a growing population means that demand for food in the UK is increasing considerably.

The value of UK poultry production exceeds £2 billion per annum and the industry continues to grow to meet the demand of home grown produce. In response to this, a number of poultry enterprises have been developed at different locations around the UK during recent years.

The continued growth of the UK poultry sector has made an important contribution to the UK poultry meat production capacity. The proposed extension to the existing poultry site at Milton Farm, Pembridge, Leominster is part of this process. This is part of the development of the



us closer to being self-sufficient in poultry meat in the UK and reducing the need to import meat, reducing greenhouse gasses from fossil fuel in transportation and other associated pollution.

The success of the poultry industry can be evidenced by the fact that additional poultry sites are required by suppliers. It is considered that Milton Farm is well placed to meet this demand as it has a suitable site and the applicant has extensive experience of operating the existing poultry units.

Expanding the existing poultry enterprise will require significant financial investment which will add value to the local and wider economy, create direct and in-direct jobs and help to secure the longer-term viability of the farm business.

3 SITE LOCATION

The site is located at Shobdon Airfield and forms part of Milton Farm, approximately 1km south of the village of Shobdon and 2km north-east of the village of Pembridge.

The existing access arrangement will be utilised to serve the proposed additional poultry buildings. The existing access is off the private industrial road that connects to the C1032 (between Milton Cross and Pembridge) via the main Kingspan entrance. This existing access is also used for the Anaerobic Digestion (AD) plant, which is located adjacent to the existing poultry units.

The site for the proposed development occupies an arable field of low ecological value and is screened to the south and east by existing buildings and mature trees. The closest residential properties to the site are approximately 450m to the south-west. The Kingspan site is located to the south.

The site is within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) designated for surface water and groundwater but is not located within any statutory designations for landscape or nature conservation.

There is an existing footpath to the north-west of the site which will not be affected by the proposed development.

The proposed site can be seen identified on the Location and Block Plan at Appendix 1.

4 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Use

The proposed site forms part of a larger arable field and the existing poultry units are adjacent.

The use is considered to be appropriate in this location as it will remain in agricultural and food production use and will utilise the existing on-site infrastructure that is already in place. This includes the access road, concrete yard, AD Plant and soakaway basin.

The proposed three additional poultry units will accommodate a maximum of 162,000 broiler birds per cycle and operate on a maximum of 8 cycles per annum. The existing poultry units house 278,000 broiler birds per cycle. If approved all the units will operate on the same cycle.

The birds are grown for 38 days with thinning taking place at day 33. Including cleaning the total cycle is approximately 46 days leading to 8 cycles per year.

4.2 Amount and Scale

A summary of the proposed development is set-out below and is shown in the Block Plan at Appendix 1.

The proposed development of the site will provide the following;

- Two poultry units measuring 110.1m x 24.6m x 6m to the ridge. Plus control room 10m x 3m.
- One poultry units measuring 97.9m x 24.6m x 6m to the ridge. Plus control room 10m x 3m.
- Eight feed bins in total. Six measuring 8.6m in height and two 7m in height.

The three poultry units will be of standard construction and consist of steel-framed, fully- insulated buildings clad externally with profiled sheeting. The poultry units and feed bins will be coloured juniper green to match the existing units and feed bins.

The two larger poultry units will have 23 high velocity ridge fans and the smaller unit 21 high velocity ridge fans.

It is considered that in the context of their location and surroundings that the amount and scale of development is appropriate.

4.3 Layout

The proposed units will be located west of the existing units, off the existing concrete yard, and run in an east to west direction. The units will occupy ground between the existing access road and the existing poultry units as shown on the submitted plan.

4.4 Appearance

The poultry units will be of standard construction and consist of steel-framed, fully- insulated buildings clad externally with profiled sheeting. As previously mentioned the poultry units and feed bins will be coloured juniper green to match the existing units and feed bins on the site.

It is considered that these colours are best to help assimilate the buildings into the landscape.

Lighting on the site will be kept to a minimum to ensure the safe operation of the site but to reduce any light spill outside the unit. Each shed will have a low-wattage, low intensity light above the openings to allow safe working during normal working hours during the winter. Additional lighting may be required during the removal of birds but this will be carried out in low light levels to avoid causing unnecessary stress to the birds. There will be no use of high intensity lighting. All activities will take place in the central yard which will help to reduce light spillage.

4.5 Landscape

A landscaping scheme has been produced, which forms part of the submitted Landscape Statement completed for the Environmental Statement.

The proposal site is intimately associated with an existing industrial/agricultural complex in an area of Herefordshire that is itself unusual because of the presence of the airfield.

The landscape baseline varies from the landscape character type described in the SPG and comprises a unique 'pocket' of flat landscape that is of low sensitivity.

The scheme complies with guidance in SPG (untypical sites) and supports the core strategy of the Local Development Plan.

The receptors of visual impact are situated to the north and west of the site and the visual baseline is dominated by the existing buildings of the industrial/agricultural complex. The proposed scheme is consistent with the dominant adjacent land use and will occupy an area of flat farmland that is currently partly enclosed by these industrial land uses.

The landscape mitigation measures proposed will complete a 'wooded' northern edge to the industrial/agricultural complex and in time this will benefit the landscape setting by providing an

appropriate edge to the remaining arable fields. It will also contribute to green infrastructure by providing a corridor of mainly deciduous woodland and marginal grassland that will link existing woodland areas.

The planting scheme will also be effective in mitigating the visual impact of both the existing and proposed development on receptors situated to the north and west.

As such the proposed development with mitigation is not considered to result in significant impacts on the landscape character or result in significant visual impacts.

5 Access and Highways

A Transport Statement has been prepared by David Tucker Associates, which forms part of the Environmental Statement.

The proposals include 3 No. additional poultry units which will increase total bird numbers at the existing poultry site to 440,000 birds per cycle.

The poultry houses are to be used for the rearing of broiler chickens from one day old chicks, through to their finished weight (approx. 38 days). On the busiest days of the flock cycle; day 32 and day 38, the development will generate an additional 8 two-way HGV movements (4 in, 4 out) and one car/ van movement on day 32. On day 38 the development will generate an additional 17 two-way HGV movements (8.5 in, 8.5 out) and four two-way car/ van movements. The peak movements on day 32 and day 38 only occur once per flock cycle.

It is considered that there are no existing road safety issues that would warrant mitigation measures as a result of the current proposals and it is concluded that the intensification of the site will not result in a detrimental impact on the operation or safety of the existing highway network.

6 Policy Assessment

6.1 National Planning Policy

6.1.1 Overview

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012. The Framework replaces most former planning policy statements and guidance notes and is a key part of Government reforms to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, emphasizing sustainable development and planning for prosperity.

At the heart of NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. Sustainable development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved, without delay.

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that there are three different dimensions to “sustainable” development: economic, social and environmental. In the context of this application these three dimensions are considered below:

6.1.2 Economic Role

Paragraph 17 of the NPPF sets out a number of core planning principles which should underpin both plan-making and decision taking. Amongst these core principles is an objective to “proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local place that the country needs.” Importantly it is stressed that “every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the business needs of an area”.

Chapter 3 of the NPPF is dedicated to “supporting a prosperous rural economy”, stating that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. In promoting a strong rural economy, local plans should promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses. Paragraph 19 of the NPPF states that “significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system”.

The applicant is a well-established farming business, which is looking to expand their existing poultry enterprise. In addition to helping to meet the demand for British chicken meat; the proposed development will help to preserve the viability of the business for future farming generations. In our professional view the proposed development complies with the national planning policy outlined here and weight should be given to the need to support such rural businesses, particularly in ensuring their longevity through sustainable reactions to farming markets.

6.1.3 Social Role

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that “development should support strong, vibrant and healthy communities...with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being”.

Agriculture plays a significant role in the vibrancy of local communities across Herefordshire, performing a social function as well as an economic function. The farming community is a key part of community life and cohesion in our rural villages and towns. In addition, agriculture provides a key source of employment for local people, particularly in peak seasons such as the autumn harvest.

The proposed purpose built buildings will help to ensure that the farming business remains viable for future generations. A successful and growing business will also add value to the local economy and

supply chain by creating further employment and wealth. As such, the proposed development should be supported.

6.1.4 Environmental Role

Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that; “development should contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy”.

In this instance the proposed development site is located outside any environmentally designated areas to included Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, although it is recognised that the site is within 2km of six Local Wildlife Sites, three of which are also designated as Ancient Woodlands. There are also three SSSI's within 5km. As such, full consideration has been given to the potential impact of the development on these sites.

It is considered that the existing landscape is capable of accommodating the development and additional mitigation works will further reduce any impact. Overall, the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment concluded that following mitigation measures (additional woodland tree planting along the northern boundary) there would be no significant residual effects.

The proposed poultry units will be located on agricultural land shown as Grade 2 on the Land Classification Map. Whilst it is recognised that planning policy seeks to protect the best agricultural land the site will remain in agricultural use and food production. The level of food production will be increased with the proposed development. In these circumstances the loss of this arable land is considered acceptable.

In light of the information provided above, it is our professional view that the proposed development complies fully with the policies contained within the NPPF. The proposed development makes a sustainable contribution to Herefordshire's rural economy and farming community, expanding an existing and well established agricultural business.

6.2 Local Planning Policy

6.2.1 Herefordshire Core Strategy

The Herefordshire Core Strategy (HCS) was adopted on 16th October 2015. The most relevant policies in respect of this application would appear to be RA6, SS5 –SS7, LD1-LD4, and SD1-4.

Policy RA6 – Rural Economy

This policy offers a broad-brush approach to the rural economy, supporting farming and expansion in principle, subject to appropriate environmental protection and mitigation.

The proposal presents a means for the applicant to expand the existing established business, which will in turn will support the local supply chain. It is considered to be appropriate in scale, (given the nature of the intensive poultry industry and the need for economic viability) and in its setting is also considered to be acceptable being well screened from views from the south, east and west of the site in particular. Any impacts will be further reduced with the proposed mitigation measures of additional woodland tree planting along the northern boundary.

Having regard to residential amenity the submitted technical reports, particularly those in respect of noise and odour demonstrate that the proposed development would not cause unacceptable adverse impacts to nearby residents, the nearest of which are located approximately 450m from the site. It is also considered that although there are some commercial premises (Kingspan) where people work approximate 75m south of the units at their closest point there will be no significant impact on their amenity.

Cumulative impacts of other poultry sites and known developments have been taken into consideration during the technical assessments and these reports form part of the Environmental Statement.

The impact of the proposed development has been considered within the submission documents and demonstrate that the proposal would not cause unacceptable adverse impacts to the amenity of nearby residents and workers by virtue of design, noise, dust, lighting and odour.

Policy SS5 – Employment Provision

This policy recognises that “land-based industries are seen as a strength of the county since they foster other business enterprises” and therefore, the policy states specifically that the “continuing development of the more traditional employment sectors such as farming and food and drink manufacturing will be supported”.

It is suggested that the proposal represents a positive direct contribution to agricultural employment but more significantly represents a much larger means of supporting other local businesses and its employees. Implementation of the proposed development would represent a significant financial investment a large proportion of which is likely to support local suppliers, contractors etc. The operation of the units will also support other local suppliers. This support to the local economy helps support business, and safeguard and create jobs.

Policy SS6 – Environmental quality and local distinctiveness

This policy requires proposals to “conserve and enhance those environmental assets that contribute towards the county’s distinctiveness” particularly where designated sites are affected and in terms of biodiversity improvements. It urges an “integrated approach”, based on information to assess potential impacts on a variety of environmental components.

There are no designated sites affected by the proposals and mitigation measures are proposed that would help to protect and enhance the landscape and biodiversity of the site.

It is considered that the proposal is in compliance with this policy and the applicant is happy to provide such protection, mitigation and enhancement measures that are recommended in the Ecological Assessment and Landscape Plan.

The proposed woodland tree planting on the northern boundary of the site will help enhance the biodiversity value by providing habitat for various species.

Policies LD1 to LD4

These policies focus on the need to demonstrate that the landscape and biodiversity of the site and its surroundings have influenced matters such as site choice and design. They seek to protect and enhance geodiversity, biodiversity and habitats, with particular reference to designations and European Protected Species. Policies LD3 and LD4 are concerned with Green Infrastructure and Heritage Assets.

It is considered that the submitted Landscape Statement, Landscape Plan and ecological mitigation and enhancement measures demonstrate that the proposal is capable of meeting the relevant sections of these policies.

As stated above there will be additional woodland tree planting to create a strong northern boundary which will help enhance the biodiversity value of the site by providing habitat for various species.

The proposed development will not physically impact on the public right of way which is located to the west of the proposed units. In addition, any noise, odour, ammonia or dust will not adversely affect users of the footpaths. The emissions levels are low and any users of the footpaths are passing past the site rather than being static for longer periods.

Policies SD1 to SD4

These policies relate to;

- Sustainable design and energy efficiency
- Safeguarding residential amenity
- Renewable and low carbon energy generation
- Sustainable water management and water resources
- Wastewater treatment and river water quality

Policy SD1

The poultry houses will be constructed to high standards of energy and water efficiency. The houses will contain fibreglass insulation to reduce heat loss from the houses.

The new houses would use minimal energy through low level lighting, lighting movement sensors and would operate with greater environmental efficiency through the use of modern quality controlled equipment such as the proposed ventilation system.

The ventilation fans would be controlled by a temperature-controlled automatic system so that the number of fans operating at any one time depends on the monitored temperature. Therefore heating and cooling would be as required to maintain animal welfare levels and operations would be strictly monitored to avoid excessive energy use.

The drinker system will be fitted with drip cups to minimise wastage preventing excess moisture in the litter.

The poultry units will be heated via from renewable energy produced from the on-site AD plant, which in turn will be partly fuelled by the poultry litter produced from the site.

Whilst natural resources are required for the new development the construction methods and computerised mechanical systems to be used demonstrate that energy efficient and environmental sustainability can be achieved. The buildings will have a life of 40 – 50 years and most materials will be able to be recycled. The production of chickens from the site will for use in the UK, meaning that the requirement to import food will be reduced, therefore having sustainability benefits by reduced food miles and carbon foot-print.

Policy SD2

The submissions made within the application, (including the Odour Modelling Assessment and Noise Assessment which form part of the Environmental Statement) confirm that the development would safeguard residential amenity and would not cause unacceptable adverse impacts from odour, noise, light or air contamination or cause ground water pollution.

Policy SD3 relates to flood risk. The site is within flood zone 1.

An appropriate means of dealing with surface water run-off from the proposed development is proposed with the use of the existing on-site soakaway basin.

There are no significant impacts associated with the development in relation to drainage or flood risk.

An Environmental Permit has also been granted for the additional three poultry units. The Permit controls potential pollution sources including those referred to above.

Policy SD4

This policy concerns waste water treatment and river water quality. Dirty water from cleaning the poultry units will be collected in a sealed system and stored in an underground tank. This dirty water will be taken off-site to be spread on farmland on the applicant's farm holding or third party farmland in appropriate conditions. The spreading of such dirty water on farmland is permitted provided that it is done in the correct way. DEFRA guidelines on spreading dirty water and manure is contained within the Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2015 so must be adhered to. DEFRA and the Environment Agency can sanction and potentially prosecute those who do not comply with the regulations or pollute watercourses.

As previously stated all poultry litter produced from both the existing and proposed units will be taken to the on-site AD Plant. The resultant digestate will be spread on the farm holding in appropriate conditions as per the manure management plan, DEFRA guidelines and Nitrate Pollution Prevention Regulations 2015.

Clean surface water from the site will be discharged into the on-site soakaway basin which will filter out any particulates before soaking away. This sustainable system of reducing the surface water run-off rate and filtering the clean water will ensure that local watercourse and designated protected rivers are protected.

The proposed poultry units do not require any foul water services and existing facilities are already available on-site.

6.3 Conclusion

It is considered that the scheme complies with the relevant policies of the Herefordshire Core Strategy and the broader policy objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

This is primarily because the site provides a suitable location for the size and scale of the proposal. Furthermore, as confirmed by technical reports, the proposed development is located a sufficient distance away from residential properties to prevent any harm to residential amenity or workers amenity.

Dirty water and clean surface water will be collected and attenuated to ensure that there is no negative impact on local water courses or rivers. The proposed landscaping will limit any impact on the landscape and limit visual impact. The proposed ecological mitigation and enhancement measures will ensure that no protected species are harmed and that the ecological and biodiversity value of the site and surrounding area is improved.

In our professional view significant weight should be given to the necessity to support and grow the rural agricultural economy which should be read in conjunction with Chapter 3 of the NPPF.

7 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Planning Policy requires all development to be appropriate in scale, density, pattern and design taking into account the local context and character.

The proposed poultry units are to be of standard construction, comprising portal frames, profile sheet cladding, and full insulation to reduce energy consumption. The poultry sheds will use minimal energy through low level lighting and lighting movement sensors.

Ventilation will be through high speed ridge mounted fans. The ventilation fans will be controlled by a temperature-controlled automatic system, which will maintain a dry friable litter to reduce any odour. The heating and cooling through the automatic system allows maintenance of animal welfare and control of operations to avoid excessive energy use.

The drinking system will be fitted with drip cups to minimise wastage preventing excess moisture in the litter.

A Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment report has been produced and forms part of the Environmental Statement. A SUDS scheme has been designed for the dispersal of surface water which will be via the existing on-site soakaway basin.

The poultry units will be heated via the on-site AD Plant which will be fuelled by the poultry litter produced from the units.

Whilst natural resources are required for the new development the construction methods and systems briefly outlined above demonstrate that energy efficient and environmental sustainability can be achieved. The buildings will have a life of 40 – 50 years and most materials will be able to be recycled. The production of chickens from the site will for use in the UK, meaning that the requirement to import food will be reduced, therefore having sustainability benefits by reduced food miles and carbon footprint.

It is also considered that extending the existing site is more sustainable than building units on a green field site. The proposed units will utilise the on-site infrastructure including the access road, concrete yard, AD Plant and soakaway basin.

8 CONCLUSION

The proposed development is required to meet growing demand for poultry products and to grow the existing farm business so that it has a sustainable business plan, which will help ensure that the farm is financially viable for the long-term term.

The expansion of an existing farming enterprise is supported by the NPPF and Herefordshire Core Strategy.

The site has good access and the nearest residential receptors are approximately 450m from the proposed poultry units. Expanding the existing poultry site will ensure that the on-site infrastructure can be utilised in particular the access, AD Plant and soakaway basin.

The Environment Agency has approved the variation of the Environmental Permit to allow for the additional three poultry units and 440,000 broiler birds per cycle. The Permit demonstrates that the operation of the site will not adversely harm the environment or the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers.

Additional information has been provided in the Environment Statement and technical reports, which has been submitted as part of this application. The technical reports demonstrate that the proposed development will not cause significant environmental impact.

In view of the information provided through this Statement and the accompanying documents submitted it is considered that the proposed scheme meets the requirements as set out in the relevant National and Local Planning Policy.

