

REFERRED ITEM R5

**TITLE: 11/00509/FUL
CONSTRUCTION OF GRAIN STORE
GUSTED HALL FARM GUSTED HALL LANE HAWKWELL**

APPLICANT: RANKIN FARMS LTD

ZONING: METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT

PARISH: ROCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

WARD: ROCHFORD

In accordance with the agreed procedure this item is reported to this meeting for consideration.

This application was included in Weekly List no. 1105 requiring notification of referrals to the Head of Planning and Transportation by 1.00 pm on Wednesday, 19 October 2011, with any applications being referred to this meeting of the Committee. The item was referred by Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill.

The item that was referred is appended as it appeared in the Weekly List, together with a plan.

NOTES

- 5.1 Planning permission is sought for the construction of a grain store at Gusted Hall Farm, Gusted Hall Lane, Hawkwell. The site is within the north eastern corner of an open field within the Metropolitan Green Belt and Special Landscape Area of Hawkwell. To the east of the site is a row of buildings and to the west is open land. To the south is also open land and to the north is Gusted Hall Lane.
- 5.2 The proposal is for a grain store with hard standing that would be located 13m from Gusted Hall Lane and 7m from the buildings to the east. It would measure 18.29m wide, 30.48m deep and 8.4m high with a pitched roof and 6.09m to the eaves. It would have a floor area of 557 square metres. Green box profile sheeting would cover the roof with a similar style cladding to the majority of the elevations. Concrete grain walling would be used on all elevations from ground level to a height of 3.04m. There would be two roller shutter doors to the front elevation and photovoltaic panels on the southern elevation of the roof. The hard standing area would be immediately to the west of the building and would measure 6m wide and 18m deep.

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PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.3 There is no history that relates to this specific area of land. The poultry buildings to the east are not part of Gusted Hall Farm.

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.4 Paragraph 3.4 of Planning Policy Guidance 2 (Green Belt) identifies the scenarios whereby new buildings within the Metropolitan Green Belt would be considered appropriate development. The construction of new buildings for agriculture and forestry purposes is considered to be appropriate development. The supporting statement submitted with the application produced by Whirlledge & Nott explains that Gusted Hall Farm extends to 555 acres of arable land and that the new building would provide storage for grain harvested from the farm. Justification for the building is provided by reference to the fact that previously the crops from this land were hauled back to Great Stambridge Hall Farm or sold directly at harvest. However, the increase in diesel costs and thus haulage costs has increased overheads for the farm. In addition, the price of wheat has become more volatile and there is merit in storing grain to sell later in the year to increase returns.
- 5.5 Planning Policy Statement 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) also needs to be considered in relation to the proposed development. At paragraph 27 of this guidance, the Government refers to supporting development proposals that will enable farms to become more competitive, sustainable and environmentally friendly; adapt to new and changing markets; comply with changing legislation and associated guidance; diversify into new agricultural opportunities (e.g. renewable energy crops); or broaden their operations to 'add value' to their primary produce. It is considered that the proposed grain store complies with this guidance and the guidance within PPG2 and therefore, in principle, is considered to be acceptable.
- 5.6 It should also be mentioned that the Ministerial Statement: Planning For Growth (23 March 2011) supports economic recovery via the planning system and is a material planning consideration with regards to this application, which is aiming to increase profitability for Gusted Hall farm.
- 5.7 Policy R8 of the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan 2006 also needs to be considered. This requires an assessment of the design, external appearance and siting of the proposed building. The building has been positioned so that it is close to existing poultry buildings at the adjoining site, which is considered to be an appropriate location. However, the proposed grain store would be orientated so that its length would run parallel with Gusted Hall Lane. In comparison, the poultry buildings to the east are orientated with their width parallel to this road. Gusted Hall Lane, at the point where the new building would be located, has an uninterrupted open aspect across the fields on either side. It can also be seen from properties in Mount Bovers Lane and there are some, albeit limited, views from the Main Road.

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Its orientation, in particular, is considered to have an adverse visual impact in the landscape contrary to part i) to policy R8. In addition, the green sheeted building proposed, in comparison to the rather modest timber clad poultry buildings directly adjacent, is not considered, due particularly to the design, size and materials proposed, to respect the character and appearance of these nearby buildings contrary to part ii) to policy R8. It states within paragraph 3.39 of policy R8 that if existing buildings are attractive, traditional buildings of timber or brick, as is the case with the poultry buildings, it may not be appropriate to site a large, steel-clad building next to them as the new building could appear discordant and detract from the character of the existing group, which is another concern with the current application.

- 5.8 The site is also within a Special Landscape Area (SLA) where policy NR1 applies. This policy states that development will not be allowed unless its location, size, siting, design, materials and landscaping accord with the character of the area in which the development is proposed. This SLA is Hockley Woods, which is a large unspoilt area, containing a complex of ancient woodlands and farmland on undulating ground between Hockley and Southend-on-Sea. It is considered that the, size, siting, design and materials proposed do not accord with the character of the area in which the development is proposed contrary to policy NR1.
- 5.9 No objections have been received from ECC Highways department, Rochford Parish Council or neighbouring properties with regard to the proposal.

Representations:

- 5.10 ROCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL – No objection.
- 5.11 ECC HIGHWAYS – De minimis.

REFUSE

- 1 The proposal, by virtue of its proposed siting, design, size and materials proposed, is considered to have an adverse visual impact in the landscape contrary to the appearance and openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt and it is considered that it would not respect the character and appearance of the nearby poultry buildings contrary to parts i) and ii) of policy R8 of the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan 2006.
- 2 The proposal, by virtue of the siting, design, size and materials proposed, would not accord with the character of the Special Landscape Area in which the development is proposed contrary to policy NR1 of the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan 2006.

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Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals

R8, NR1, of the Rochford District Council Adopted Replacement Local Plan As saved by Direction of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in exercise of the power conferred by paragraph 1(3) of schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. (5 June 2009)

Planning Policy Guidance 2 (Green Belts)

Planning Policy Statement 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas)

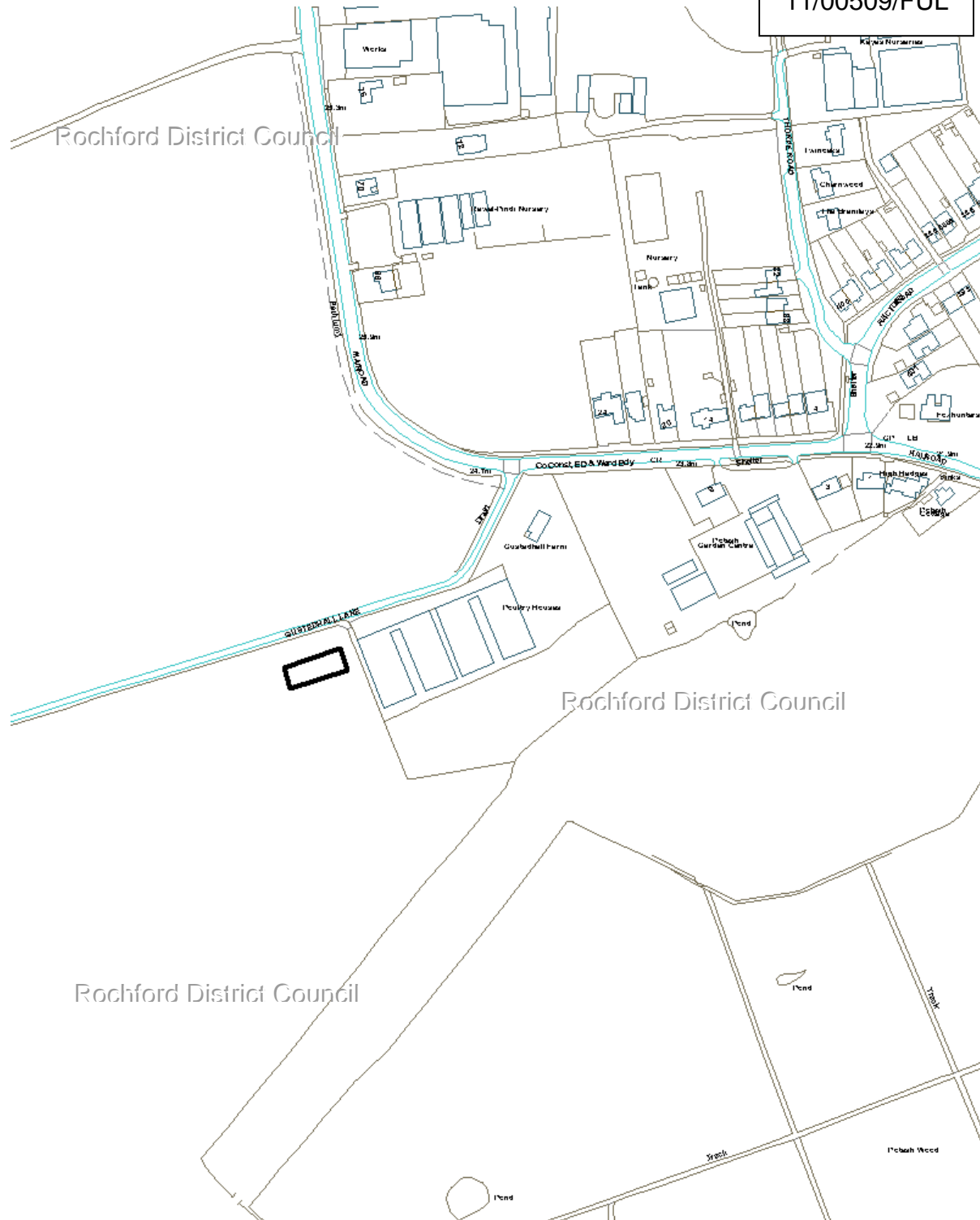


Shaun Scrutton
Head of Planning and Transportation

For further information please contact Robert Davis on (01702) 318095.

The local Ward Members for the above application are Cllrs J P Cottis, K J Gordon and Mrs G A Lucas-Gill.

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Rochford District Council, licence No.LA079138

