

**ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM**

**WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990**

**AGRICULTURAL APPRAISAL**

**of**

**TUESLEY FARM  
TUESLEY LANE  
GODALMING**

**Prepared by**

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**AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING APPLICATION  
IN ACCORDANCE WITH PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 7 (2004)**

**1.0 REFERENCE**

- 1.1 Proposed Development** - (a) Mobile homes park for workers' accommodation. (Application No: WA/2008/1734)  
(d) Change of use of redundant buildings to provide workers' accommodation. (Application No: WA/2008/1735)
- 1.2 Planning Authority** - Waverley Borough Council
- 1.3 Planning Application Nos.** - WA/2008/1734  
WA/2008/1735
- 1.4 Applicant** - Hall Hunter Partnership
- 1.5 Site Address** - Tuesley Farm, Tuesley Lane, Godalming
- 1.6 File/Job Number** - WA/004/MSB

**2.0 DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 Location** - Tuesley Farm is situated in open countryside on the outskirts of Godalming opposite Milford Hospital.
- 2.2 Land** -
- 2.2.1 Area:** - 189.80 hectares (469.00 acres)
- 2.2.2 Tenure:** - Owned
- 2.2.3 Ministry of Agriculture Land Classification Grade 3 and 4**
- 2.2.4 Soil Type and Characteristics**

Type	Main Surface Texture Class	Natural Drainage Type	Natural Fertility	Characteristic Semi-natural Habitats	Main Land Cover
Freely draining slightly acid loamy soils	Loamy	Freely draining	Low	Neutral and acid pastures and deciduous woodlands; acid communities such as bracken and gorse in the uplands	Arable and grassland



Freely draining very acid sandy and loamy soils	Sandy	Freely draining	Very low	Mostly lowland dry heath communities with mixed and coniferous woodland	heath and forestry
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## 2.3 Buildings

- 2.3.1 Steel portal frame with corrugated fibre cement sheet roof and profile steel sheet cladding, former potato store now used partly as cooling/packing shed and partly as machinery store. (Building T on applications plans).
- 2.3.2 Brick structure with corrugated fibre cement sheet roof, former workshop now used as laundry room and games room. (Building Q on the applications plans).
- 2.3.3 Brick structure with corrugated fibre cement sheet mono-pitch roof, garage/store. (Building N on the applications plans).
- 2.3.4 Stone structure with tiled roof general storage stables. (Building M on the applications plans).
- 2.3.5 Stone and brick structure with tiled roof, divided into various sections for chemical store, fertiliser store, general storage and stables. (Building E on the applications plans). **Subject of application 1735.**
- 2.3.6 Concrete portal frame with corrugated fibre cement sheet roof incorporating roof lights and ventilated ridge, open sided cattle yard now used as general storage. (Building G on the applications plans). **Subject of application 1735.**
- 2.3.7 Stone and brick structure with tiled roof, former milking parlour converted to sheep dip now used as general storage. (Building H on the applications plans).
- 2.3.8 Stone and brick structure with tiled roof, store. (Building F on the applications plans). **Subject of application 1735.**
- 2.3.9 Stone and brick structure with tiled roof part stable and part open fronted cart hovel. (Building A on the applications plans).
- 2.3.10 New purpose built cold store for soft fruit. The building is to be an 'L' shaped steel portal frame, 64.5m x 16.0m and 37.5m x 18.0m x 5.0m to eaves, with profile steel sheet roof and cladding above brick plinth walls. The volume of the proposed building to eaves height will be 8,535cu m approximately. Currently under construction.

## 3.0 FARMING PRACTICE/USE OF THE LAND

### 3.1 Existing and Future

- 3.1.1 The land used to be an extensive arable farm growing cereals with some livestock until the then owners retired and sold the land.
- 3.1.2 Hall Hunter Partnership bought the land about five years ago to grow soft fruit for the supermarket trade, particularly Waitrose. Following lengthy planning discussions permission was granted to use 10.6% of the land for polytunnels subject to conditions.

3.1.3 The farm now comprises the following principal areas:-

**Main Crops**

Crop	2008		2009	
	Hectares	Acres	Hectares	Acres
Strawberries	30.00	74.13	26.00	64.25
Blueberries	32.00	79.07	32.00	79.07
Raspberries	9.00	22.24	6.00	14.83
Blackberries	5.00	12.35	7.00	17.30
Redcurrants	2.00	4.94	2.00	4.94
Gooseberries	2.00	4.94	2.00	4.94
Propagation Raspberries	4.00	9.88	8.00	19.77

**Break Crops and Miscellaneous**

Crop	2008		2009	
	Hectares	Acres	Hectares	Acres
Vetch/Clover	12.00	29.65	4.00	9.88
Fallow	9.00	22.24	0.00	0.00
Grassland	16.00	39.54	16.00	39.54
Woodland	6.00	14.83	6.00	14.83
Tracks, Waste Etc	36.00	88.97	36.00	88.97

3.1.4 In order to maintain continuity of supply throughout the year crops, particularly Blueberries are chilled and kept in cold store until ready for transport. Obviously it is much better if this can be done on the farm to prevent the fruit deteriorating in transit to a chiller/cold store off site. Also, this is more sustainable than transporting the produce great distances.

3.1.5 Also, long cane plants (Raspberries) and Strawberry plants are conditioned over the winter in a closed store filled with gas to slow down development, which encourages the plants to produce fruit early when planted out.

3.1.6 For cold storage in the summer the following space is needed:-

Blueberries	7,200cu m
Other fruit	<u>3,800cu m</u>
Total	<u>11,000cu m</u>

3.1.7 Winter storage requirements will be:-

Long cane plants (Raspberries)	5,625cu m
Strawberry plants	<u>2,200cu m</u>
Total	<u>7,825cu m</u>

**3.2 Comments**

3.2.1 Tuesley Farm is one holding in the Hall Hunter Partnership business, but each area is self contained.

3.2.2 This is a very labour intensive business, although seasonal. Labour requirement goes in peaks and troughs throughout the year with the maximum need being 250.

3.2.3 The seasonal labour is managed by a team of 50 supervisors who are permanent staff.

3.2.4 In order to satisfy this high labour requirement foreign labour is employed, mainly from Poland but increasingly from other eastern European countries.



**4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 Application No WA/2008/1734. Change of use of land for siting of mobile homes for accommodation of seasonal staff.
- 423 Application No WA/2008/1735. Change of use of buildings to accommodate permanent supervisor staff.

**5.0 GENERAL COMMENTS**

- 5.1 PPS7, Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, provides guidance to Local Planning Authorities in relation to rural development including the following:-

Paragraph 16 When preparing for LDDs and determining planning applications for development in the countryside, Local Planning Authorities should:

- (iii) take account of the need to protect natural resources;
- (iv) provide for sensitive exploitation of renewable energy sources in accordance with policies set out in PPS22; and
- (v) conserve specific features and sites of landscape, wildlife and historic or architectural value, in accordance with statutory designations

Paragraph 27 The Government recognises the important and varied roles of agriculture, including in the maintenance and management of the countryside and most of our valued landscapes. Planning policies in RSS and LDDs should recognise these roles and support development proposals that will enable farming and farmers to:

- (i) become more competitive, sustainable and environmentally friendly;
- (ii) adapt to new and changing markets;
- (iii) comply with changing legislation and associated guidance;
- (iv) diversify into new agricultural opportunities (e.g. renewable energy crops); or
- (v) broaden their operations to 'add value' to their primary produce.

Paragraph 31 A supportive approach to farm diversification should not result in excessive expansion and encroachment of building development into the countryside. Planning authorities should:

- (i) encourage the re-use or replacement of existing buildings where feasible, having regard to paragraphs 17-21 [of PPS7]; and
- (ii) have regard to the amenity of any nearby residents or other rural businesses that may be adversely affected by new types of on-farm development.



5.2 PPS4, Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth, Published on 29 December 2009, contains parts of PPS7 and adds the following policies:-

- EC6.2 In rural areas, the local planning authorities should:
- c. support the conversion and re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside (particularly those adjacent or closely related to towns or villages) for economic development
- EC12.1 Re-use of buildings in the countryside for economic development purposes will usually be preferable, but residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations and for some types of building. In determining applications for economic development in rural areas, local planning authorities should:
- d. approve planning applications for the conversion and re-use of existing buildings in the countryside for economic development, particularly those adjacent or closely related to towns or villages, where the benefits outweigh the harm in terms of:
    - i. The potential impact on the countryside, landscapes and wildlife
    - ii. Local economic and social needs and opportunities
    - v. The suitability of the building(s), and of different scales, for re-use recognising that replacement of buildings should be favoured where this would result in more acceptable and sustainable development than might be achieved through conversion.

5.3 PPG2, Green Belts, sets out the Government's policies that Local Planning Authorities must take into account in preparing development plans. The guidance may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications. In this case the following are relevant:-

Paragraph 1.6 Once Green Belts have been defined, the use of land in them has a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives:-

- to provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
- to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
- to retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;
- to improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
- to secure nature conservation interest; and
- to retain land in agriculture, forestry and related uses.

Paragraph 3.1 The general policies controlling development in the countryside apply with equal force in Green Belts but there is, in addition, a general presumption against inappropriate development within them. Such development should not be approved, except in very special circumstances.



Paragraph 3.2 Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. In view of the presumption against inappropriate development, the Secretary of State will attach substantial weight to the harm to the Green Belt when considering any planning application or appeal concerning such development.

Paragraph 3.4 The construction of new buildings inside a Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for the following:-

- agriculture and forestry;

Paragraph 3.7 With suitable safeguards, *the re-use of buildings should not prejudice the openness of Green Belts, since the buildings are already there.* It can help to secure the continuing stewardship of land, especially by assisting farmers in diversifying their enterprises, and may contribute to the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts. The alternative to re-use may be a building that is left vacant and prone to vandalism and dereliction. (My italics)

Paragraph 3.8 The re-use of buildings inside a Green Belt is not inappropriate development providing:-

- (a) it does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;
- (b) strict control is exercised over the extension of re-used buildings, and over any associated uses of land surrounding the building which might conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it.
- (c) the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;
- (d) the form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings.

Paragraph 3.9 If a proposal for the re-use of a building does not meet the criteria in Paragraph 3.8, or there are other specific and convincing planning reasons for refusal (for example on environmental or traffic grounds), the local planning authority should not reject the proposal without considering whether, by imposing reasonable conditions, any objections could be overcome. It should not normally be necessary to consider whether the building is no longer needed for its present agricultural purposes. Evidence that the building is not redundant in its present use is not by itself sufficient grounds for refusing permission for a proposed new use.

5.4 Policy RD10 of the Waverley Local Plan states:-

"Permission will be granted for agricultural, horticultural or forestry related development provided that:-

- (a) The proposal is related to and located on an existing unit, and is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture, horticulture or forestry within that unit;

## 6.0 CONCLUSION AND OPINION

6.1 Tuesley Farm is a highly productive fruit farm producing crops for sale in local shops as well as for supermarkets. Strenuous efforts have been made to restore hedgerows and preserve the countryside following years of extensive arable farming.

6.2 This use of the land is ideal for the soil structure and complies well with the provisions of PPS7, PPG4 and PPG2 as outlined above.

### 6.3 Application No 1734 – Mobile Homes:-

6.3.1 This is a highly labour intensive use of the land and it has proved impossible to recruit sufficient labour locally. In any case, being seasonal in nature, fruit farming has traditionally used itinerant/foreign labour.

6.3.2 Traditionally, fruit farms have provided some form of accommodation on site, usually in the form of temporary caravans, but occasionally purpose built 'dormitory' blocks. However, in this case because the 'season' is effectively for 11 months per year, temporary accommodation is not practicable.

6.3.4 Overall it is my opinion that a well organised and screened mobile home park is reasonably necessary in this location, especially as it can be cleared if circumstances change.

### 6.4 Application No 1735 – Change of Use of Buildings to workers' Accommodation:-

6.4.1 In order to provide supervision of seasonal staff the farm needs a core of trained workers, often promoted from the seasonal staff. For the reasons stated above it is not practicable to accommodate these people elsewhere and because they are full-time workers temporary accommodation is not adequate to retain them.

6.4.2 Can the buildings be used for agriculture?

Yes, although in many instances they are not suitable for modern agricultural practices being too low or with poor access and not up to current farm assurance requirements.

6.4.3 Will the loss of the buildings affect the suitability of the land for agriculture?

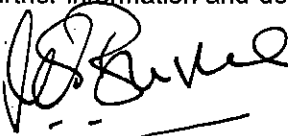
No, there are, or will be adequate buildings for the farm's current use.

6.4.4 Will the loss of the buildings result in the need for a replacement building on the holding?

The loss of these buildings will not lead to the need for replacement buildings. Any new buildings will/have been generated by the requirements of the business.

6.6.5 The change of use of the buildings is broadly in accordance with the provisions of PPS7 and PPG2 outlines above.

Further information and details can be made available upon request.

  
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Senior Associate

Date: 23 February 2010

