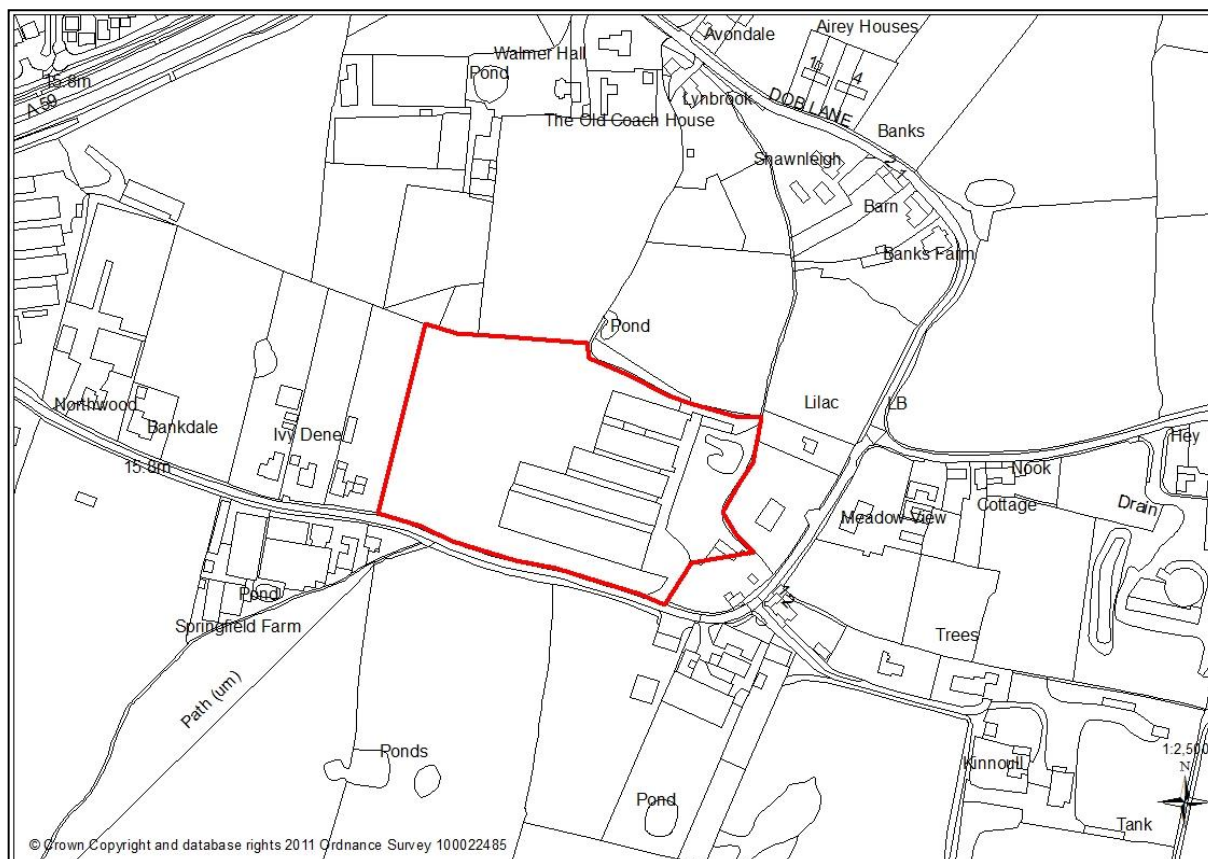


Application Number	07/2016/1329/FUL
Address	Hillock Farm Knoll Lane Little Hoole PR4 4TB
Applicant	Mr & Mrs Wignall
Agent	RS Design Consultancy 281 Leyland Road Penwortham PR1 9SY
Development	Erection of replacement poultry shed (1748 m ²) and 2 no: outbuildings to provide storage for plant/machinery and canteen facilities for employees
Officer Recommendation	Approval with conditions
Officer Name	Debbie Roberts
Date application valid	04.01.2017
Target Determination Date	05.04.2017
Extension of Time	None



1. Report Summary

1.1. Hillock Farm is an established, well maintained poultry farm located on Knoll Lane, Little Hoole; a semi-rural locality in both domestic and small business use.

1.2. The applicant seeks permission to erect a replacement poultry shed, an open barn for storage of larger equipment and a third building to incorporate staff facilities and an area of storage for smaller farm implements. Road widening within the site is also proposed.

1.3 The business is increasingly compelled to comply with stringent, modern farming standards – both for keeping of livestock, machinery storage and with regards to staff on site. The proposal is considered to be the minimum required to fulfil those obligations.

1.4 On balance, and taking all of the following comments into account, it is considered that this proposal accords well to the relevant policies of the NPPF, Central Lancashire Core Strategy and South Ribble Local Plan. The very special circumstances required of green belt policy can be safely demonstrated and as such a recommendation of **approval subject to imposition of conditions** can be made.

2. Application Site and Surrounding Area

2.1. Hillock Farm is an established poultry farm, located towards the junction of Knoll and Dob Lanes, Little Hoole; a mixed residential and commercial locale designated under Policy G1 (Green Belt) of the South Ribble Local Plan.

2.2. Immediately in the east of the facility is a cluster of residential properties; primarily 'Lilac Cottage', 'Brook Corner' and 'Hillock Farm' (applicants own property), whilst the closest property in the west is 'Brentwood'. To north and south are deep tracts of open land, and 750m to the east is the junction with A59 Longton By-Pass.

2.3. The bio-secure site currently accommodates 5 no: poultry sheds of varying sizes, accessed from a deep hardstanding off Knoll Lane. A large ornamental pond sits to the north-east corner of the site.

3. Site Context / Planning History

3.1. There are 6 planning applications on the history of this site:

- 07/1975/0671 – Detached bungalow with septic tank (now Brook Corner). Approved February 1975
- 07/1991/0105, 1991/0395 and 07/1994/0002 – Poultry rearing house. Approved April 1991, July 1991 and March 1994 respectively
- 07/2008/0307/FUL - Erection of poultry house following demolition of existing, and improvements to the existing access. Approved June 2008
- 07/2012/0480/HOH – Two and single storey extensions to domestic property. Approved October 2012

4. Proposal

4.1. *Background Information* – Hillock Farm is one of 3 local farms making up the applicants business. Eggs are hatched at The Hatchery, Tarleton and transferred as day old chicks to Hillock Farm. Here they are reared to approximately 16 weeks old, after which time pullets are transferred to Cedars Farm, Longton. Turnover equates to somewhere in the region of 250,000 chickens per year.

4.2. The business – including ‘catching’ and relocation, works on a 20 week cycle, and as such traffic generation and employees needing to attend the site tend to also be cyclical. Currently there are two full time employees but this is expected to increase to three. In addition 20 part time catchers and drivers would be required, but only every 20 weeks or so for approximately 2 weeks at a time. During this time use of an additional 3 waggons per day is anticipated.

4.3. The application is in four parts, and proposes erection of replacement poultry shed (1748 m²), open barn for storage of large machinery and third building to provide storage for small machinery / farm incidentals, and to provide staff facilities. A small area of internal road would also be widened. The proposal in detail is as follows:

4.4. *Replacement poultry shed* – At Hillock Farm there are 5 poultry sheds within a relatively secluded site which sit parallel to Knoll Lane – 2 are the same size as proposed, and 3 others are of varying size.

4.5. Shed 5 currently measures 50m x 15m but is in a bad state of repair. Its proposed replacement would measure 92m x 19m, with a pitched roof measuring no more than 5.4m and eaves to 2.7m. A small ‘lean to’ extension between sheds 4 and 5 would be removed, and 2 no: silo’s (1.5m diameter / 3m high) relocated to the rear of Shed 5 facing open land. The proposal would result in an additional 850m² of floor space (96% increase).

4.6. The shed would be constructed in profiled metal sheeting to match adjacent buildings, and whilst standards of environmental protection are already high, replacement is necessary to achieve more stringent energy efficiency, ventilation and welfare standards for both chickens and employees, and importantly to prevent potential disease spread to areas outside of the farm. Modern sheds are typically built to hold 16,000 birds (as proposed).

4.7. *Open barn* – To the rear of the site – 3m beyond the existing pond, is proposed an open barn of 13.8m x 9.2m, with eaves to 3m and a 4.9m maximum ridge height. Constructed in brown profiled metal sheeting, this unit would be used to store large machinery (tractors, trailers etc.). It would be relatively well screened from the highway, and by existing mature trees from Lilac Cottage (38m east).

4.8. *Staff unit/storage building* – Similarly constructed, this 14m x 9m x 4.9m (additional 126m²) building would be divided into two distinct section. Part would be allocated for storage of small farm machines and other incidentals, whilst the rest of the building would offer staff shelter, kitchen, toilet and shower facilities. This building would be located 50m from the entrance to the site.

4.9. *Internal road widening* – a 65m length of roadway – currently grassed, would be widened by 2.4m to allow for safe vehicle passing.

5. Summary of Supporting Documents

5.1 The application and scaled drawings is accompanied by the following documents:

- Design & Access Statement (RS Design: Nov 2016 / Rev A Jan 2017)
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment (Arbtech V4: 08.02.17)
- Construction Management Plan (R S Design: Jan 2017)

6. Representations

6.1. Summary of Publicity

6.2. A site notice and newspaper advertisement have been posted and nine neighbouring properties consulted.

6.3. Letters of Objection or Support

a) One letter of support received from the resident of Brook Corner who is '*confident that the proposal will have no adverse impact on us, but will maintain the well-kept nature of the farm*'. No objections lodged.

6.4. Town/Parish Council Response

6.4.1 Little Hoole Parish Council have not responded

7. Summary of Responses

7.1. Lancashire County Council Highways are of the opinion that increased traffic during the short-term transportation period should have a negligible impact upon highways safety and capacity.

7.2. South Ribble's Ecologist is happy that subject to precautionary measures the proposal will not adversely impact upon protected species or their habitats. The Great Crested Newt assessment is considered appropriate, and a condition to ensure Reasonable Avoidance Measures as detailed within the ecologists report (Arbtech V3: 16.11.16) is considered acceptable.

7.3. South Ribble Environmental Health requested that conditions are imposed with regards to animal waste containment and drainage. The applicant's IPPC permit (see EA comment below) annually monitors and requires documentation of a series of controls including fly and odour nuisance, and removal of animal waste from the farm in line with BS5502 – waste is not stored on the farm itself. Confirmation of adherence to these standards have been verified and as such the recommended waste condition is not required.

7.4. Environment Agency – The Environment Agency has no objection in principle to the proposed development, noting that the farm has operated under an environmental permit since 2008, during which time they have demonstrated an excellent compliance record, and against which no complaints have been made. As the proposal would result in a slight increase in livestock numbers a variation to this permit would be required for which discussions are already in place. A discussion with the applicant and a representative of the Environment Agency confirms that the site is registered with the EA's IPPC Scheme which amongst other things includes the need for a regularly updated Environmental Impact Assessment. For this reason a separate EIA is not considered necessary.

8. Material Considerations

8.1. Policy Position / Green Belt Allocation

8.1.1 The application site is designated as Green Belt by Policy G1 of the South Ribble Local Plan 2012-2026; the National Planning Policy Framework is also relevant.

8.1.2 Both policies seek to achieve a balance between developments required to meet the operational need of agriculture and protection of the landscapes visual character. Both also state a need for strict development control and a general presumption against inappropriate development in green belt areas unless there are 'very special circumstances'. There are exceptions to this however; three of which are particularly relevant in this case:

- Buildings for agriculture and forestry use
- Limited infilling or partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land) whether redundant or in continuing use which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the green belt
- The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

8.1.3 The Central Lancashire Rural development SPD adds weight to this argument saying that new agricultural buildings will be required to meet operational needs, but must protect the visual character of the landscape (Para 30). Para's 58 and 59 of the same document echo the above sentiments adding that '*Councils will deal with each development on its own merit, including extensions and groups of industrial buildings*' where proposals do not impact upon the openness, character or appearance of the countryside, are of a high quality design and protective of the amenity of existing and future occupants of the area. This aligns with the more prescriptive design requirements of Policy G17 (Design Criteria for New Development)

8.1.4 Policy G1 (Green Belt) also includes a caveat which states that '*there are a number of developed employment sites within the green belt. These sites can be developed within their curtilage ... to continue to secure jobs and prosperity*'

8.1.5 It is considered that in terms of green belt development, this proposal is both compliant with, and demonstrates the very special circumstances required of green belt policy as follows:

- Proposals wholly support an established agricultural business which should be offered operational protection in line with green belt policy. Proposals are well designed, discreet and ensure the longevity of the business
- Relatively low key changes have been designed with both agricultural use and rural locale in mind, and are not considered to impact in terms of green belt openness.
- The replacement poultry shed, staff unit, additional roadway and storage cabin would utilise areas already in operational use, which are in part previously developed and within the confines of an established site.
- The applicant has demonstrated that the development is reasonably necessary for the purposes of modern agriculture in accordance with local and national green belt policy.

8.2 Impact of Development on Neighbouring Properties

8.2.1 There are three properties immediately east of the site which might be affected by the proposed scheme. 'Lilac Cottage' and 'Brook Corner' would be located approximately 40m from the smaller buildings and between 66m and 73m from the proposed poultry shed. It should be noted however that the existing shed is already present at this distance with any new space being at least 120m away from either dwelling. The applicants own dwelling would be slightly further away from proposed structures. The residents of 'Brook Cottage' have offered their support to the scheme.

8.2.2 Other properties in the south-east enjoy more than adequate separation at a minimum of 130m from the proposed poultry shed and 180m to the closest ancillary building.

8.3 Highways Impact

8.3.1 None anticipated – see Highways response above.

8.4 Area Character and Economic Protection

8.4.1 This development would relate well to neighbouring buildings and the extended locality, is well screened already but proposes a high quality design to align with the existing, well maintained site. It is considered that this scheme would respect local character whilst offering necessary levels of livestock and ancillary accommodation, internal parking and servicing space.

8.4.2 Adopted national and local planning policy aims to preserve where practicable existing employment sites, as long as development proposals accord to other planning policy such as that afforded to green belt protection. It is considered that changes to this established commercial facility which provides local employment, helps to support the local economy, and

would benefit the business's long term future impact little on the character or amenity of the immediate area.

8.4.3 Despite its green belt location, the very special circumstances of this designation can be safely demonstrated (see discussion above). Proposed changes would be significant in terms of the business, but not excessive in the context of the site itself.

8.5 Natural Environment

8.5.1 The application is accompanied by Preliminary Ecological Assessment (Arbtech V3: 16.11.16) which has been fully assessed by the Council's ecologist (see comments above)

8.5.2 The report suggests that proposed development is unlikely to impact in any way upon protected species. Precautionary conditions however are recommended should permission be granted.

8.5.3 Although under normal circumstances a proposal of this nature would be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, one is not necessary in this case (See Environment Agency discussion above)

8.6 Drainage, Lighting and Noise

8.6.1 Conditions to require pre-commencement drainage detail are recommended, and noise impact has been assessed as acceptable. Additional lighting on this occasion is not proposed, and an acceptable construction management plan in line with the sites bio-secure status has been submitted.

9 Conclusion

9.1 The application site is an established, well maintained business increasingly compelled to comply with stringent, modern farming standards – both for keeping of livestock, machinery storage and with regards to staff on site. The proposal is considered to be the minimal required to fulfil those obligations.

9.2 Although a semi-rural locale, there are several other commercial complexes along Knoll Lane of the same size and style; none of which detract from the visual appearance of the area but which contribute significantly to the local economy.

9.3 On balance, and taking all of the above into account, it is considered that this proposal accords well to the relevant policies of the NPPF, Central Lancashire Core Strategy and South Ribble Local Plan. The very special circumstances required of green belt policy can be safely demonstrated and as such a recommendation of **approval subject to imposition of conditions** can be made.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval subject to imposition of conditions

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
REASON: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2. The development, hereby permitted, shall be carried out in accordance with the following submitted approved plans
 - Dwg's PR03A and PR04A (Powell & Co),

- Dwg's PR01 and PR02 (RS Design)
- Arbtech Preliminary Ecological Assessment V3 (16.11.16).
- Construction Management Plan (Jan 2017)
- Planning/Design & Access Statement (Nov 2016 Rev A Jan 2017)

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development

3. No work shall be commenced until satisfactory details of the colour and texture of the facing and roofing materials to be used have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
REASON: To ensure the satisfactory detailed appearance of the development in accordance with Policy 17 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and Policy G17 in the South Ribble Local Plan 2012-2026
4. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved a scheme for the disposal of foul water shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall take into account the recommendations of approved Flood Risk Assessment (Mouchel July 2016). Foul shall be drained on a separate system. This scheme, which shall be maintained and managed in accordance with the approved details, shall be implemented during construction and no building shall be occupied until the approved scheme has been completed to serve that building
REASON: In order to satisfy the Local Planning Authority that the final details of proposed foul water drainage are acceptable before work commences on site, for avoidance of doubt and to safeguard local watercourses and avoid pollution of the water environment in accordance with Policy 29 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy
5. Prior to commencement of any development, a surface water drainage scheme and means of disposal, based on sustainable drainage principles with evidence of an assessment of the site conditions (inclusive of how the scheme shall be managed after completion) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
The surface water drainage scheme must be restricted to existing run off rates and unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, no surface water shall discharge to the public sewer system either directly or indirectly.
The development shall be completed, maintained and managed in accordance with the approved details.
REASON: In order to satisfy the Local Planning Authority that the final details of proposed surface water drainage are acceptable before work commences on site, for the avoidance of doubt and to protect the living conditions of future occupants of the site in accordance with Policy 29 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy
6. Before any site activity (construction or demolition) is commenced in association with the development, barrier fencing shall be erected around all trees and hedgerows to be retained on the site. The fencing shall be constructed and located in compliance with BS 5837 2012 - Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations. Within these fenced areas no development, vehicle manoeuvring, storage of materials or plant, removal or addition of soil may take place. This includes ground disturbance for utilities. The fencing shall not be moved in part or wholly without the written agreement of the local planning authority. The fencing shall remain in place until completion of all development works and removal of site vehicles, machinery, and materials in connection with the development.
REASON: To prevent damage to trees during construction works in accordance with Policy G13 in the South Ribble Local Plan 2012-2026
7. During construction and site clearance, no machinery shall be operated, no processes carried out or deliveries taken at or dispatched from the site outside the following times:

0800 hrs to 1800 hrs Monday to Friday

0800 hrs to 1300 hrs Saturday

No activities shall take place on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

REASON: To safeguard the living conditions of nearby residents particularly with regard to the effects of noise in accordance with Policy 17 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy

8. Should the development not have commenced within two years of the date of this permission, a re-survey be carried out to establish whether bats or other protected species are present at the site shall be undertaken by a suitably qualified person or organisation. In the event of the survey confirming the presence of such species details of measures, including timing, for the protection or relocation of the species shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the agreed measures implemented.

REASON: To ensure the protection of schedule species protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and so as to ensure work is carried out in accordance with Policy 22 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and Policy G16 in the South Ribble Local Plan 2012-2026

9. Immediately prior to commencement of works on site, stacked materials to the rear of the site (open barn location) shall be cleared by hand of any features suitable for sheltering amphibians. Any amphibians should be gently removed and placed in suitable habitat nearby.

REASON: To ensure that adequate provision is made for these protected species in accordance with Policy 22 in the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and Policy G16 in the South Ribble Local Plan 2012-2026

RELEVANT POLICY

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

Central Lancashire Core Strategy

17 Design of New Buildings

South Ribble Local Plan

F1 Car Parking

G1 Green Belt

G17 Design Criteria for New Development

Central Lancashire Rural Development SPD

Note:

Other application Informative

1. Attention is drawn to the condition(s) attached to this planning permission. In order to discharge these conditions an Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Condition form must be submitted, together with details required by each condition imposed. The fee for such an application is £97. The forms can be found on South Ribble Borough Council's website www.southribble.gov.uk

3. The applicant is advised that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, it is an offence to disturb nesting birds, roosting birds or other protected species. The work hereby granted does not override the statutory protection afforded to these species and you are advised to seek expert advice if you suspect that any aspect of the development would disturb any protected species