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<b>Application Number:</b>	P/FUL/2022/03143		
<b>Webpage:</b>	<a href="https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-application/P/FUL/2022/03143">Planning application: P/FUL/2022/03143 - dorsetforyou.com (dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)</a>		
<b>Site address:</b>	Walston Poultry Farm Ltd Gaunts Common Dorset BH21 4JR		
<b>Proposal:</b>	Change of use from agricultural to 8 no. self-storage (B8 storage only) units.		
<b>Applicant name:</b>	Walston Poultry Farm Ltd		
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Elizabeth Adams		
<b>Ward Member(s):</b>	Cllr Cook		
<b>Publicity expiry date:</b>	24 June 2022	<b>Officer site visit date:</b>	Visited for previous application.
<b>Decision due date:</b>	13 July 2022	<b>Ext(s) of time:</b>	8 September 2022

**1.0** The application has been referred to committee by the nominated officer having gone through the Council's Scheme of Delegation Process.

**2.0 Summary of recommendation:**

GRANT subject to conditions

**3.0 Reason for the recommendation:**

- Para 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that permission should be granted for sustainable development unless specific policies in the NPPF indicate otherwise
- The reuse of existing buildings is considered to be sustainable and no harm to the Green Belt is anticipated.
- The impact of the proposal on the amenity of neighbouring residents and the village can be made acceptable by the imposition of planning conditions.
- It is not considered that the proposal will result in any severe impact on the highway network.
- There are no material considerations which would warrant refusal of this application

#### 4.0 Key planning issues

Issue	Conclusion
Principle of development	Acceptable on balance
Scale, design, impact on character and appearance	Acceptable as reusing buildings
Impact on highway safety	Acceptable in light of baseline unfettered agricultural use and limited number of self-storage units
Impact on amenity	Acceptable subject to condition limiting hours of operation and external lighting
Impact on heritage assets	No harm
Impact on biodiversity	Benefit from loss of poultry use

#### 5.0 Description of Site

- 5.01 The site comprises approx. 1ha of land east of the C24 highway which runs through the linear village of Gaunts Common. The site is currently in use as a poultry farm and there are four long, single storey sheds/barns on the land with a total internal floor area of approximately 2,860m<sup>2</sup>.
- 5.02 The site is accessed along a single width track approx. 60m in length. For its first 15m (approx.) this runs immediately adjacent to the residential dwelling known as 'Little Thatch'. Thereafter it runs the depth of the gardens of that property and 'The Olde Oak'. The latter is in the ownership of the applicant, together with 'The Bungalow', another residential property which is positioned near the rear of the site.
- 5.03 The site lies on the edge but outside of the village envelope, more than 350m north of the Gaunts Common Special Character Area and within the Green Belt. Gaunts Common has a rural character and the built form comprises predominantly single and two storey housing facing onto the highway in a verdant setting. The road, which has verges but no pavement, contributes to the rural character.
- 5.04 The site is on a hillside. The land on which the barns are sited is lower than the entrance and the site benefits from tree and hedge screening but it is evident in views from houses on higher land to the south and east. To the east, ancient woodland forms part of the Holt and West Moors Heaths Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

#### 6.0 Description of Development

It is proposed to change of use of the buildings on the site from agricultural to provide 8 no. self-storage (B8 storage only) units.

All measurements approximate	Length	Ridge Height	Floor area
Barn A	62m	3.8m	700m <sup>2</sup>
Barn B	62m	3.8m	700m <sup>2</sup>
Barn D	51m	4.1m	697m <sup>2</sup>

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Barn E	51m	4m	697m <sup>2</sup>
Total			2,794m <sup>2</sup>

Parking for customers will be provided on an informal basis on existing hardstanding between the barns and a rectangle of hardsurfacing to the north of the site will provide opportunities for turning for any larger vehicles.

The submitted plans indicate that each of the four poultry barns will be divided into two so each storage unit will have a floor area of approximately 350sqm.

## 7.0 Relevant Planning History

Application	Description	Decision	Date
03/444774/HST	Erection Of Bungalow	Granted	01/11/1973
3/21/0935	Change of use from agricultural to B8 (storage or distribution)	Refused	14/03/2022
Summary of reasons for refusal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unsustainable location for storage or distribution use of the scale proposed</li><li>• Anticipated more intensive use resulting in noise and vehicle movements harmful to the character and tranquillity of the countryside</li><li>• Harm to neighbouring amenity from increased vehicle trips along the access</li></ul>			

## 8.0 List of Constraints

Grade II Listed Building – Little Thatch (statutory duty to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Adjacent to ancient woodland, Sub-Type Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland

Adjacent to Holt and West Moors Heaths SSSI

Within the Green Belt

Dorset Heathland 5 km zone

Two protected trees TPO Ref: HT/35, Group Ref: T1 & T2 lie on the southern boundary alongside the access.

## 9.0 Consultations

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All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website.

### **Consultees**

#### **Natural England**

No comments received

#### **Dorset Council Highways** (received 15 July 2022)

- Currently no restrictions on the agricultural use of the site
- the removal of movements associated with the existing agricultural use will be a general highway benefit.
- Individual storage units are typically accessed by cars and light vans so the use by HGVs is anticipated to reduce.
- Trip generation identified by the Transport Assessment are higher than expected for the proposed use.
- The residual cumulative impacts would not be 'severe' when consideration is given to paragraphs 110 and 111 of the NPPF (July 2021).
- A condition to secure the manoeuvring, parking and loading areas is recommended.

#### **Dorset Council Conservation Officers** (received 27 May 2022)

- The proposals do not include any notable changes to the footprint or external envelopes of the buildings so, though the site is in relatively close proximity to Grade II-listed Little Thatch, it is not considered that the proposals have the potential to affect the significance of this or any other heritage assets.

#### **Dorset Council Tree Team** (received 22 June 2022)

- No objection subject to condition if operational development is to take place on site.

#### **Holt Parish Council** (received 6 June 2022)

Objection

- Economic
- The enterprise is not appropriate for the rural parish and site constraints
- Inappropriate commercial activity due to HGV movements, increased traffic, noise and local disruption to neighbouring residents, wider village and surrounding area

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- Lack of suitable infrastructure and highways to support the use
- Social
  - Detrimental to social wellbeing
  - Risk and dangers to residents including children waiting for the school bus and walking on the highway and to other road users
  - Noise and disturbance to residents adjacent to the narrow entrance
  - Concern about proposed hours
- Environmental
  - Need to protect vulnerable rural characteristics (Green Belt and SSSI)
  - Additional costs, pressures and potential danger to rural roads
- Apparent inaccuracies in the application
  - Traffic movements bear little relation to the lived experience of residents
  - No good links to the wider strategic highway network
  - Inconsistencies- site redundant but in continuing use.

**Hinton Parish Council** (received 8 June 2022)

The application is outside our Parish Council area. However, members are concerned about traffic management in Gaunts area, large vehicles in narrow country lands, potential increases in traffic on country roads.

**Ward Member - Stour And Allen Vale Ward- Cllr Cook** (received 23 May 2022)

If granted this application could have a considerable negative effect on the village, therefore I request if officer recommendation is to grant then it be heard by committee.

**Representations received**

Total - Objections	Total - No Objections	Total - Comments
29	0	0

Objections received related to the following (in order of frequency):

- The proposals do not differ materially from the previously refused application

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- Highway danger- inappropriate roads, no pedestrian provision, school bus route with no formal stops, access is inappropriate for large vehicles, trip rates anticipated to increase compared to existing
- Impact on amenity- noise and disturbance for residents especially those adjoining the access.
- Inappropriate development harmful to the character of the area- not a sustainable location for intensity of use proposed
- Light pollution
- Harm to wildlife
- Potential contamination- air and water pollution
- Harm to listed building from use of and need to update access
- Lack of local need or economic benefit for locality
- Harm to Green Belt

## **10.0 Relevant Policies**

### **Duties**

s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the development plan unless material circumstances indicate otherwise.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990- section 66 includes a general duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

### **Development Plan policies**

#### **Adopted Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan:**

The following policies are considered to be relevant to this proposal:

- KS1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- KS2- Settlement hierarchy
- KS3 - Green Belt
- KS11 - Transport and Development
- KS12- Parking Provision
- HE1- Valuing and Conserving our Historic Environment
- HE2 - Design of new development
- HE3 - Landscape Quality

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- ME1- Safeguarding biodiversity and geodiversity
- ME2- Dorset Heathlands
- ME6- Flood Management, Mitigation and Defence
- PC4- The Rural Economy

### **Other Material Considerations**

Supplementary Planning Documents/Guidance- Dorset Heathland SPD  
National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development plan proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date then permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of approval would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

Relevant NPPF sections include:

- Section 4. Decision taking: Para 38 - Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available...and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- Section 6 'Building a strong, competitive economy', paragraphs 84 and 85 'Supporting a prosperous rural economy' promotes the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, through conversion of existing buildings, the erection of well-designed new buildings, and supports sustainable tourism and leisure developments where identified needs are not met by existing rural service centres.
- Section 11 'Making effective use of land'
- Section 12 'Achieving well designed places indicates that all development to be of a high quality in design, and the relationship and visual impact of it to be compatible with the surroundings. In particular, and amongst other things, Paragraphs 126 – 136 advise that:

The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is

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indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.

Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

- Section 13 'Protecting Green Belt land' - new development is inappropriate within the Green Belt unless it meets one of the exceptions within paragraphs 149-150 or very special circumstances outweigh harm to the Green Belt resulting from inappropriateness and any other harm.
- Section 14 'Meeting the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change'
- Section 15 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment' - In Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty (para 176). Decisions in Heritage Coast areas should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation (para 178). Paragraphs 179-182 set out how biodiversity is to be protected and encourage net gains for biodiversity.
- Section 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' - When considering designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance (para 199). The effect of an application on the significance of non-designated heritage assets should also be taken into account (para 203).

National Planning Practice Guidance

## **11.0 Human rights**

Article 6 - Right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 Protection of property.

This recommendation is based on adopted Development Plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the Human Rights of the applicant or any third party.

## **12.0 Public Sector Equalities Duty**



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As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have “due regard” to this duty. There are 3 main aims:-

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty.

The proposed self-storage use of the site is not judged to result in any disadvantage to persons with protected characteristics.

### 13.0 Financial benefits

What	Amount / value
Non Material Considerations	
Business rates	Rating assessment to be undertaken by Valuation Office Agency. No estimate available.

### 14.0 Climate Implications

The proposal will result in a reduction of ammonia and nitrogen discharge and vehicle trips associated with the poultry farming. Vehicular trips to the self-storage units utilising vehicles reliant on fossil fuels are anticipated.

### 15.0 Planning Assessment

15.1 The proposal follows refusal of planning permission for an unspecified storage or distribution use of the buildings. The reasons for refusal read:

1. The application site is an unsustainable location for a storage or distribution use of the scale proposed, which is inconsistent with the accessibility of the rural location contrary to policy KS2 Settlement Hierarchy and KS11 Transport and Development of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy.
2. Due to the scale of the proposal and without information about the number and nature of future users or any way to reasonable way to control trip rates, the proposal is likely to result in a significantly more intensive use than the existing single holding poultry farm use. The noise and vehicle movements generated will

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result in harm to the character and tranquillity of the countryside and this harm is judged to outweigh the benefits of the scheme, contrary to policies HE3 Landscape Quality and policy PC4 The Rural Economy of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy and paragraph 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Notwithstanding the opportunity to control the hours of operation, the proposal is anticipated to result in harm to neighbouring amenity from increased vehicular trip rates associated with multiple storage units along the narrow access in close proximity to The Olde Oak and Little Thatch contrary to policy HE2 Design of New Development of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy and paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

15.2 The current application seeks to overcome these reasons. The main planning issues for this application are:

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle
- Impacts on highways and the character of the area
- Impact on the Green Belt
- Impact on residential amenity
- Impacts on biodiversity

These and other issues will be considered below.

#### The principle of development

- 15.3 Paragraph 152 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future. This includes shaping places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and also encouraging the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings.
- 15.4 The current application seeks to reuse existing chicken sheds for self-storage purposes (Use Class B8- storage only). The supporting statement explains that the poultry industry has undergone significant change as a result of regulation, the impact of avian flu and the progressive shift in the consumer market towards free range. The sheds are unsuitable for free range farming and the applicant seeks to diversify. The buildings are permanent and capable of re-use.
- 15.5 The local plan settlement policy KS2 defines Hinton Martell/Gaunts Common as a village where '*only limited development will be allowed that supports the role of the settlement as a provider of services to its home community*', but policy PC4 encourages appropriate economic development in the rural area where it is located in or on the edge of existing settlements where employment, housing, services and other facilities can be provided close together. Policy requirements are set out for

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proposals for the conversion and re-use of existing buildings in the countryside for economic development. These include that the development shall not have a materially greater impact on the Green Belt and where benefits outweigh harm in relation to impact on the (inter alia) countryside, landscapes and wildlife, local economic and social needs, settlement patterns and accessibility and appropriate parking provision which would not adversely impact on the setting of the building in the open countryside. These issues are considered further below.

- 15.6 Local objection is predominantly based on the scale of the development and perceived inaccessibility of the site for a use which is associated with potentially significant trip rates. NPPF Paragraph 105 seeks to focus significant development to locations which are or can be made sustainable through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This aim is reflected in Local Plan Transport and Development policy KS11 which requires development to be in accessible locations. However, it is acknowledged within the Framework that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.
- 15.7 In this case the site is remote from public transport and there are limited opportunities for non-vehicular modes of travel so the proposed use has the potential to be associated with significant trip rates. The site lies approx. 5km from any urban area and all routes to the site require travel along non-classified roads without pavements for at least 3km; the previous application was refused on the basis that the site was not an appropriate location for a large storage/distribution facility and conflicted with the aims of policies KS2 'Settlement Hierarchy' and KS11 'Transport and Development'.
- 15.8 The supporting statement claims that the proposal for 8 self-storage units is appropriately located to serve the local rural area in which there is a lack of such facilities. Objectors claim that the lack of facilities reflects the low population and limited local need and suggest that affordability would be critical to the popularity of such a facility so it could reasonably be assumed that future users could travel significant distances. They have also raised concerns about the marketability of such large self-storage units; reference has been made to the 2022 Self Storage Annual Report produced by the UK Self Storage Association where a survey of customers identified that the most popular size of unit for domestic and commercial self-storage was 1-5sqm and only 1% of the 1226 respondents (27% of which were business customers) occupied units larger than 46sqm (p85).
- 15.9 Officers are unable to take account of potential for future pressures to provide more, smaller units should permission be granted and must instead consider the application that is before the Council.
- 15.10 The proposal is to provide 8 storage units for self-service purposes. At approx. 350sqm each the units would be large; the storage of equipment and vehicles is

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therefore anticipated similar to the use of units at Little Owls Farm, Petersham Lane, prior to their demolition (3/16/0284/CLU). Commercial or private self-storage use could take place, for example builders' machinery storage or domestic storage between house moves.

- 15.11 The previous reasons for refusal judged that the location for an unspecified number of storage units was unsustainable but it is recognised that the indicators of sustainability are complicated and finely balanced. Although industrial estates are preferred locations for storage and distribution uses, Officers are satisfied that the proposed re-use of existing buildings for 8 self-storage units could, in principle, be acceptable in this location provided that the requirements of policy PC4 'The Rural Economy' are met. These include that 'the benefits outweigh the harm in terms of (inter alia): 1. The potential impact on countryside, landscape and wildlife...4. Settlement patterns and the level of accessibility to service centres, markets and housing...5. The building is suitable for reuse without major rebuilding...any necessary car parking provision should also not have an adverse impact on the setting of the building in the open countryside'. Additional requirements of policy PC4 include that the development should be consistent in scale and environmental impact with their rural location, should not harm amenity and enjoyment of the countryside through noise and traffic generation and should minimise additional trips on the highway network.

Impact on highways and the character of the area

- 15.12 Gaunts Common has a rural character and the southern part of the village is designated as a Special Character Area (SCA) on account of the high proportion of traditional, vernacular housing on the slope of a small valley. The application site lies more than 350m to the north of the SCA and is not discernible from the public highway as it is accessed via a track between dwellings. The topography and woodland to the east provides a sense of enclosure.
- 15.13 Concerns have been raised by objectors that the proposed storage use would be associated with noise, light and traffic which would be harmful to the character of the area. It is considered that limiting the use solely to self-storage within the existing buildings and restricting hours of operation would reduce the potential for demonstrable harm from noise when compared to the existing lawful agricultural use. External lighting could also be controlled by condition.
- 15.14 In response to the Council's previous reasons for refusal the application is accompanied by a Transport Note by Bellamy Roberts which seeks to demonstrate that the likely trip rates arising from the proposed use would represent a reduction compared to the potential trip rates achievable under the current lawful agricultural use.

- 15.15 Officers do not agree that a fallback referred to in the transport note, in which up to 500sqm of storage is achieved under permitted development rights can be relied upon, as all four buildings on site exceed 500sqm and no prior approval has been granted. The transport note does, however, provide data which was missing from the previous application in relation to anticipated trip rates at peak times of day:

**Table 2: Summary of Trip Rate and Traffic Generation**

Time Period	Trip Rate (per 100m <sup>2</sup> )			Traffic Generation (2,900m <sup>2</sup> )		
	Arrivals	Departures	Two-way	Arrivals	Departures	Two-way
<b>100% Self-Storage (2,900m<sup>2</sup>)</b>						
<b>Morning Peak</b> 0800-0900	0.084	0.067	0.151	2	2	4
<b>Evening Peak</b> 1700-1800	0.050	0.117	0.167	2	3	5

- 15.16 When a full day of trips is considered, based on the figures provided in the report at Appendix 2 the number of movements would be considerable at approximately 90 per day. Officers recognise, however, that the figures can only be illustrative as they were derived from three self-storage operations on industrial sites on the edge of town with different characteristics to the current proposal. All three sites offer much smaller storage facilities so would be anticipated to have a much larger number of customers; the site in Cumbria offers storage from 2.5sqm to 18.5sqm, the Selby site offers 1-28sqm and in Ipswich you can hire storage from 2-15+sqm. The Council's Highway Team has confirmed that the information used is the best information that can be obtained using TRICS but it is anticipated that with only 8 units available, the trip rates would be significantly lower than those suggested by Appendix 2 of the transport note and Table 2 (above) would be worst case scenario at peak times.
- 15.17 The applicant has submitted that the existing trip rate associated with the poultry use is approximately 7 trips per day to the barns, 50% of which are HGV/tractor trailer combinations. Whilst local objectors have referred to low current traffic levels it is recognised that access to the agricultural site is unfettered and significantly greater trip rates could currently take place without the need for planning permission.
- 15.18 Subject to conditions limiting the number of units to 8 as described by the proposal (preventing sub-letting of the units) and limiting the use to self-storage within the buildings only, it would be difficult to maintain refusal on the grounds of impact on the character of the area as the likelihood of high trip rates is significantly reduced from the previous proposal which failed to specify units numbers or the type of B8 use which can include storage and distribution operations.
- 15.19 It is recognised that the agricultural use of the site can be associated with large and slow moving vehicles such as tractors and HGVs. A change of use has the potential to improve this situation by changing the nature of vehicles using local roads and the

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site access but as the self-storage units could be used for domestic or commercial purposes, there remains a high likelihood that HGVs could continue to use the site on occasion.

- 15.20 It is recognised that the lack of pedestrian refuge means that pedestrians using the local highways, including those walking to school or waiting to catch buses, will experience the effects of any additional traffic movements but highway safety would not automatically be compromised by the proposal.
- 15.21 The Council's highway team has considered the site access and internal layout as well as the potential to impact the safe and effective operation of the local highways network. They have raised no objection to the proposals on the basis that the unfettered agricultural baseline prevents them from objecting to a use which would not demonstrably worsen the situation and could result in lower trip rates.
- 15.22 Objectors have questioned the adequacy of the existing access to serve the site. The owner of the land on the opposite side of the highway has reported requests to move his vehicle from his land to facilitate access. Objections have included reports of damage to the verge opposite and the adjacent property, Little Thatch, by vehicles using the access but it is necessary to assume that road users to operate with due care and attention and a number of bollards now prevent over-running of the verge.
- 15.23 It is understood that the site entrance is already used by Class 1 articulated HGVs with no evidence of any recorded highway incidents in the vicinity between 1999-2020. On the basis of this pre-existing use the Council's highway team are satisfied that the proposal would not result in harm to users of the highway. A condition has been requested to secure parking and turning areas for those using the storage facilities. Existing hardsurfacing areas have been identified for parking.
- 15.24 Subject to conditions limiting operating hours and external lighting it is judged that the revised proposal which identifies a limited number of self-storage units is now sufficiently well defined as to overcome the previous reasons for refusal relating to noise arising from vehicular movements.

#### Impact on the Green Belt

- 15.25 Concerns have been raised about the impact on the Green Belt. New development is inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it meets one of the exceptions set out in paragraphs 149 and 150 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposed reuse of existing buildings falls under exception 150 (d) 'the reuse of existing buildings that are of permanent and substantial construction'. The material change of use of the land can benefit from exception 150(e) provided that the proposal preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

- 15.26 The site currently has an open character with the exception of the four low roofed poultry buildings and the smaller structure, but ancillary agricultural machinery and vehicles could be stored in the open. Conditions to prevent external storage and parking by customers overnight (condition 7) would mitigate any potential harm from parking during operating hours. It is not judged that the proposal would have a harmful impact on Green Belt openness, nor would it conflict with the five purposes of the Green Belt, set out in NPPF para 138; the development is not judged to result in encroachment into the countryside as it would be contained within the existing buildings and utilise existing hardstanding and the existing site access.

Impact on residential amenity

- 15.27 Concerns have been raised by nearby residents regarding the overall disturbance from noise, light and pollution arising from the proposed storage use on the site. The most vulnerable dwellings are Little Thatch and The Olde Oak (the latter in the applicant's ownership) which are sited either side of the narrow access serving the application site.
- 15.28 The site benefits from an existing unrestricted agricultural use, albeit on a small scale with the aforementioned chicken sheds. Such a use has no restrictions on scale, timing or frequency of vehicle movements or hours of operation within the site itself and this provides the baseline against which to assess the proposal.
- 15.29 As the proposed use of the site for self-storage in 8 units is of a different character to the existing poultry use, introducing access by multiple customers, it is judged reasonable and necessary to restrict the business hours of the new site, thereby controlling the hours of use of the access track (other than trips associated with the bungalow) and potential for disturbance which are currently unrestricted for the farming operation. Additionally, it is anticipated that the change of use of the units from agricultural to storage units would be associated with some improvements to nearby residential amenity through the reduction in farm odour and noise.
- 15.30 With the imposition of conditions to prevent the subdivision of the self-storage units (condition 6), restrict external lighting (condition 9) and to control opening hours (condition 8) it is judged that the proposal has overcome the previous concerns relating to the impacts on the occupants of Little Thatch and The Olde Oak. It was previously assessed that the impacts on the amenity of other residents including those whose gardens back onto the site and front onto the highway where traffic would disperse, was unlikely to be significant and demonstrably harmful in contrast to the agricultural use of the site subject to the imposition of planning conditions.

Impact on heritage assets

- 15.31 Little Thatch, sited immediately adjacent to the access track serving the application site, is a Grade II listed building. The impact of the proposals on the significance of the designated heritage asset have been considered in accordance with chapter 16

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of the NPPF. The change of use of the Walston Farm site will not result in any notable changes to the footprints or external envelopes of the buildings. Trees within the curtilage of Little Thatch provide screening between the dwelling and the site, while parking and turning associated with the proposed use will take place on existing hardsurfacing on land located away from the dwelling, closer to the centre of the site. Notwithstanding the close proximity of the application site access to the listed building, as the access will be unaltered and traffic associated with the proposed use will replace agricultural traffic, it is not considered that the proposals will harm the setting and significance of Little Thatch which will continue to be viewed in the context of the unchanged streetscene. Other listed buildings to the north are at least 200m away separated by intervening woodland so their setting will also be preserved.

- 15.32 Concerns have been raised by the occupants of Little Thatch, that their property will be put at greater risk from the proposed storage use of the site. Reference has been made to previous incidents where damage has arisen when large vehicles have used the access and it is claimed that this has happened with sufficient regularity to affect their insurance policy.
- 15.33 In considering the proposal before the Council, officers are required to judge the proposal on the basis that those using the access would drive with due caution. The Council's highways team are satisfied that the access can accommodate large vehicles and on this basis, as the access is pre-existing and there is a lawful unfettered use by agricultural vehicles, its continued use for vehicles associated with storage could not reasonably be objected to on heritage grounds; no harm to the fabric of the heritage asset is anticipated and the proposal is judged to preserve the significance of the listed building as required by statute, NPPF chapter 16 and policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

#### Impacts on biodiversity

- 15.34 In terms of the neighbouring SSSI, Holt Wood, the National Trust has previously expressed support for the change of use from – and cessation of – the poultry enterprise due to the associated reduction in ammonia and nitrogen emissions and the positive impact this will have on the neighbouring woodland. The SSSI woodland is currently in unfavourable declining condition – in the western part of the wood this has been linked to the atmospheric ammonia from the poultry units.
- 15.35 The application is supported by a biodiversity plan which identified that the bungalow beyond the application site but within the ownership of the applicant was used as a summer bat roost and identified the need for:
- A sympathetic lighting scheme to avoid harm to bats



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- The provision of bat boxes, bird boxes and four new trees to provide biodiversity enhancement.

15.36 The Dorset Natural Environment Team have granted a certificate of approval of the proposal biodiversity plan. A condition (no. 3) can secure the biodiversity mitigation/enhancements.

#### Other issues

15.37 The supporting document envisages that the number of employees will be broadly commensurate with the existing agricultural use. Two residential properties adjacent to the site are within the applicant's ownership; it is understood that the bungalow on the site is currently occupied by a person involved with the farming operation.

#### Balancing judgement

15.38 It is judged that the benefits associated with the reuse of existing buildings for economic purposes, the reduction in ammonia and nitrogen emissions in close proximity to the SSSI, the removal of slow-moving farm traffic from the highways and the ability to control future use by the imposition of conditions weighs in favour of the application. It is recognised that the location of the application site is sub-optimal in terms of access to main transport routes. The proposal will also introduce new trips on the highway network and the site access in close proximity to residential properties, but in the light of the baseline of unfettered agricultural traffic movements and the limited number of storage units proposed, the likely increase in traffic is no longer judged to represent harm that would outweigh the benefits.

### **16.0 Conclusion**

For the above reasons it is judged that the reuse of the buildings can be reasonably controlled by condition so as to overcome the previous reasons for refusal and that, on balance, the application accords with Local Plan and national planning policies when considered as a whole.

### **17.0 Recommendation**

#### **Grant, subject to the following conditions:**

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:  
21135.01 P5 The location plan

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- 20-1203a Building A- floor plans and elevations
- 20-1203b Building B- floor plans and elevations
- 20-1203c Building C- floor plans and elevations
- 20-1203c Building D- floor plans and elevations
- 20-1203d Building E- floor plans and elevations

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

3. The development hereby approved must not be first brought into use unless and until:
  - i) the enhancement/net gain measures detailed in the approved biodiversity plan certificated by the Dorset Council Natural Environment Team on 07 February 2022 have been completed in full, unless any modifications to the approved Biodiversity Plan or LEMP as a result of the requirements of a European Protected Species Licence have first been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and
  - ii) evidence of compliance in accordance with section J of the approved Biodiversity Plan/the LEMP has been supplied to the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved mitigation, compensation and enhancement/net gain measures must be permanently maintained and retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To mitigate, compensate and enhance/provide net gain for impacts on biodiversity.

4. Prior to the first use of the site the access, parking and turning areas shown on Drawing no. 21135.01 P4 shall be made available and shall thereafter be maintained and kept available for the purposes specified.

Reason: To ensure that highway safety is not adversely impacted

5. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) or any subsequent re-enactment thereof, with or without modification, the use of the buildings shall be limited to self-storage only and for no other purpose whatsoever.

Reason: To control the nature of the use in the interests of the character of the area and neighbouring amenity and to protect the openness of the Green Belt

6. There shall be a maximum of 8 self-storage units operating from the site on any occasion. There shall be no sub-letting of any unit.

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Reason: In the interests of the amenity of local residents and the rural character of the area.

7. The storage use hereby approved shall be limited to internal storage only. No storage shall take place outside of the buildings on the site nor shall any customer's vehicle be parked in the open on the site outside of operating hours.

Reason: To protect the openness of the Green Belt.

8. There shall be no access to the self-storage units by members of the public or by customers and no deliveries to them except between the following hours:  
Monday to Friday 08:00-18:00  
Saturday 09:00-17:00  
Sundays and bank holidays 10:00-15:00

Reason: To protect the character of the area and neighbouring amenity.

9. There shall be no external lighting of the site unless details are first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any lighting shall thereafter be installed and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area and to protect biodiversity

**Background Documents:**

For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the Council's website.