

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990**

**APPLICATION BY MR M ALMOND, CHICK CHICK CHICKEN  
LTD**

**ROMAN FARM, OLD HEATH ROAD, SOUTHMINSTER,  
MALDON, ESSEX, CM0 7BW**

**ERECTION OF CHICKEN SHED INCLUDING HARD  
STANDING**

**DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

SPL REF: APP.695

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The following is a Design and Access Statement, which is submitted under the provision of Circular 01/2006 Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System. The purpose of this Statement is to ensure the development proposals are based on a thoughtful design process and a sustainable approach to access.
- 1.2. The site comprises a free range chicken farm, which primarily distributes its produce to local markets. The applicant has been running his business from this site for approximately four years.
- 1.3. The site has been developed systematically with relevant planning permissions endorsing the integrity of the farming operation. These include planning permission for a substantial barn and associated hardstanding (Council Reference FUL/MAL/06/01232, dated 19 December 2006.) Following this, the functional need and financial viability of the holding was recognised through the grant of planning permission for the stationing of a mobile home to house a full time farm worker (Council Reference FUL/MAL/06/01247, dated 19 December 2006.) This was in accordance with National Planning Policy in the form of Annex A to Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.
- 1.4. Historically the chickens have been housed in temporary straw bale type structures up to a maximum of seven 'houses' accommodating a total of about 2000 birds. Following each building life cycle the bale houses would be recycled, the area disinfected and a new bale house 'constructed' in a new position. This process is labour intensive and the accommodation provided, whilst adequate, poses a number of operational and practical problems. This adversely affects the efficiency of the holding, provides reduced chicken welfare and ultimately affects the productivity of the holding.
- 1.5. The two most significant aspects of this historic bale house regime are the drain on labour resources and the constant battle against rodent infestation. It is almost impossible to keep rats out of the bale houses and chickens need food constantly rather than being fed at specific times throughout the day. Hence rats will eat a significant proportion of the chicken feed whilst also pestering the chickens, causing them to go off lay. Rats will also kill chickens from time to time and eat the eggs. The applicant estimates that rats may reduce profit by about 35-45%.

- 1.6. It is also important to note that the applicant's partner died suddenly last year, which apart from the obvious personal impact on the applicant, made a significant impact on the operation of the holding and the immediate availability of farm labour. Whilst permanent chicken sheds were always part of the overall plan, the premature loss of the applicant's helpmate has crystallised the immediate importance of improving the efficiency of the farm through investment in building infrastructure.
- 1.7. This planning application is proposing to erect a permanent chicken shed for the housing of the applicant's chickens, with associated hardstanding. The proposal will be of permanent and substantial construction, designed to be vermin proof thereby ensuring the security of the chicken feed and the safety and welfare of the chickens.

## **2.0 AMOUNT**

- 2.1. The chicken shed has a design capacity of about 1200 birds although in the first instance a first phase order of 600 birds is scheduled to arrive on holding in late January/early February.
- 2.2. In order to maintain profitability a significantly lesser number of bale houses, probably no more than three, will be maintained in the short term whilst the transition to permanent housing takes place.
- 2.3. Ultimately a second chicken house of the same order of size is likely to be added, in a manner which complements the evolving range of farm buildings.
- 2.4. The proposed hard-standing is of a size only necessary to provide dry access between the proposed chicken shed and the existing barn.

## **3.0 LAYOUT**

- 3.1. The proposed chicken shed will be located to the rear of an existing barn. This position has been specifically chosen to enable efficient transfer of the collected eggs from the chicken in to the adjacent barn for grading, labelling and packing.
- 3.2. This transfer will be enabled by a personnel door on the side of the chicken shed closest to the existing barn.
- 3.3. Externally there are proposed chicken hatches which give the chicken's sight of satisfactory free ranging territory immediately adjacent to the proposed building.
- 3.4. Internally there will be chicken boxes and perches and walkway spaces to clean the

shed and collect the eggs.

#### **4.0 SCALE**

- 4.1. The chicken shed will cover 140sqm. It will be of a much lesser scale than the adjacent barn. It will be a single-storey building designed for a specific agricultural purpose and of scale commensurate with a typical working flock size.

#### **5.0 LANDSCAPING**

- 5.1. There are no significant trees or planting within the main body of the site that would be affected by the proposals. Any requirements for supplementary landscaping, as required previously should reasonably be the subject of a landscaping condition.
- 5.2. The proposed building will be set immediately behind the existing barn. The barn is a much larger and visually apparent building in the landscape. The proposed chicken shed is of single storey design and will be screened from public view by the existing barn.
- 5.3. There is a dense mature roadside hedgerow to Old Heath Road which deflects any potential views by observers upwards. Any such views would be of the existing barn and not the proposed chicken shed behind.
- 5.4. The proposed chicken shed will permanently replace at least four and maybe five of the temporary bale houses. Overall this will provide a much less cluttered rural scene and represent a net improvement in landscape terms.

#### **6.0 APPEARANCE**

- 6.1. The chicken shed will be of functional appearance but in a rural agricultural tradition. It will be constructed from a combination of block work and timber frame but weather boarded, like the barn and painted black. The roof will be of a simple wooden construction covered in dark/black felt for weather proofing.
- 6.2. Seen only at the rear of the barn in will blend into the rear elevation of the black weather boarded barn which it will be seen against.
- 6.3. The small chicken-hatch openings, small high-level windows and single personnel door will all add to the correct perception of this building, appearing as a functional farm building.

## **7.0 ACCESS**

- 7.1. The site will be accessed via Old Heath Road. This is an existing situation and will not change.
- 7.2. The proximity of the existing barn to the proposed chicken shed will make personnel and daily pedestrian access to the proposed shed convenient and efficient in all respects.
- 7.3. The chicken shed will be located broadly within an area of the site that is presently utilised by the applicant for the bale houses and as such will endorse the existing site access parameters.