

26<sup>th</sup> August 2020

States of Guernsey Environment Department,  
Sir Charles Frossard House,  
La Charroterie,  
St Peter Port,  
Guernsey,  
GY1 1FH.

Dear Planning Officer,

**PROPOSALS TO CONSTRUCT AGRICULTURAL BARN AT:- BECQUET FARM, BECQUET LANE,  
ST MARTINS, GUERNSEY. FOR:- CLEAL INVESTMENTS & DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED.**

**Introduction**

Thank you for your letter dated 13 February 2020 under PREA/2020/0178 for the property known as "Le Becquet Farm".

Your advice in that letter is summarised as follows:

- The Farm is within an Agricultural Priority Area (APA) "drawn with a tight curtilage";
- The main policies are OC9, GP1, GP8 and GP9;
- The original site location conflicted with the APA intentions;
- The original location cannot be supported but you advised that *"it may be possible to demonstrate that a location immediately to the north of the sand school would not have a significant impact on the Agriculture Priority Area"*; and
- You required an explanation of the methods of construction of the sand school i.e. is it sand on a membrane on land, or has it been engineered.

I followed this advice and submitted a second round of pre-application which you replied to by email dated 25 June 2020, which is summarised as follows:

- If the use of the stable is for personal equestrian uses, then Policy OC9 would still apply;
- If the use is for agriculture then Policy OC5(A) would apply;
- Whilst the location has "improved", further information is required to justify the APA land and including why existing buildings could not be used;
- Further information regarding materials, impact on trees, boundaries and any other works/justification; and
- A repeat of the explanation for the sand school.

**Sand School**

In terms of the sand school, the applicant has previously met on site with Mr Perrio (enforcement) and demonstrated that the sand school is simply sand over grass and is not engineered. Mr Perrio verbally stated that this does not require planning permission. This area is for the exercising of donkeys over the winter and the occasional horse.

**The Use of the Property and New Building (in an Agricultural Priority Area (APA))**

The planning website suggests the following factors for development within the APA:

- Requirements of agricultural industry at that time;
- Land condition i.e. ability to be farmed;

- Area;
- Relation to any agricultural holding;
- Access;
- Topography; and
- Drainage.

The land upon which the store/stable is located is bound internally by existing buildings to the north and east, a short row of lime trees to the west and the sand school to the south. This is not an open area of land. It is a very small area of land that has a closer relationship to the built form and has little or no scope to positively contribute to commercial agriculture (as land) in the APA or be utilised as a small individual holding due to its size, surrounding boundaries and location near buildings. Furthermore, due to having features on all sides, the access for any viable agricultural growing uses is not viable. Also, the quality of the land is hard and not a high grade – hence the laying of the sand upon the adjacent area to give it a viable use for the donkeys that belong to the applicant.

As set out above, this is a small area of land located directly adjacent to the main group of buildings and is a very small piece of land with limited access for any viable agricultural purposes. The topography is relatively flat, but the land is hard and compact and with fast surface water runoff and is not 'good' quality land. However, the size and location of the land would be suitable to erect a new agricultural building for the need to store/house three donkeys (and the occasional horse), a food store for the specific food for donkeys as their diet is bespoke and requires a specific type of storage, and a tractor and ancillary tools storage to store the vehicles and equipment to maintain and care for the circa nine acre site and all other land within the vicinity maintained by the applicant.

It is reasonable to suggest that this new building is more of an agricultural building than a formal horse stable (Policy OC9). However, any horses stored belong to the applicant, are for private uses only and are not used in relation to any business. Therefore, Policy OC5(A) applies.

### **Policy OC5(A)**

The land is 'Agricultural' for the purposes of the planning laws and falls outside of the recognised domestic curtilage. The land (as a whole) is predominantly used for animals – horses and donkeys.

Policy OC5(A) supports proposals where there are no other buildings or structures at the farmstead or on the agricultural holding which could, with or without reasonable adaptation, be otherwise used for the proposed purposes.

As set out above, this building will be for agricultural uses that run with the land and ancillary or ordinarily incidental to the existing principal agricultural uses.

The other buildings on site comprise of a large detached farmhouse "drawn with a tight curtilage" (1), three detached self-catering units (3), one large horse stable to the north (1), one horse feed store (1) and one domestic sheds/store (1) and all as visible on the aerial image – 7 in total and all close together.

Given the limited size of the curtilage and established use of the buildings – 5 as domestic – there is no scope to extend to create a suitable storage for the applicants donkeys, their feed and the machinery that maintains the nine acres site. The other land to the north (and to the east of the larger horse stable) has a significant topographical 'drop'. It was explored as a potential area, but is unviable.

I believe that this answers Policy OC5(A) and the APA 'list' above.

### **Other Policies**

The retention of 'grouping' of buildings also addresses Policy GP1 as the main part of the land stays open and underdeveloped. Also, given the wording of Policy GP15, we could apply for a curtilage extension because of the "tight curtilage" but that would not change the nature of this request.

In terms of Policy GP8 the design is fit for purpose in terms of its height and internal areas for viable, sustainable and welfare for donkey stabling and storing the donkey feed (which is a specific type of feed) and providing enough space to store the tractor and ancillary equipment used to maintain nine acres of land. The design is fit for purpose and 'good' for the purposes of Policy GP8.

On the basis that the land quality is not suitable for growing within the APA, that the relocation is closer to the 'group' and the use benefits the maintenance and upkeep of the much wider area, this is effective and efficient use of land, respects the character of the built form and considers the health and wellbeing of all users (including the animals). Most of the west trees are retained and the remainder are not affected as there is no excavation close to root areas. A couple of these non-indigenous trees are being removed for access reasons. The timber cladding is characteristic of this locality and the proximity (and backdrop) of the new building to other buildings make it very accessible and fit for purpose and is for agricultural uses only and not domestic.

That addressed Policy GP8.

In terms of Policy GP9 the building comprises of a timber clad external finish and green powder coated aluminium roof to adopt the form of a traditional and in keeping agricultural building. The use for shelter (animals, food and machinery) meets all user needs and the structure is designed in full accordance with the Building (Guernsey) Regulations, 2012. The building does not require insulation but it has been designed in aluminium and timber so as it is 100% recyclable. The foundations are also the minimum required and as shallow as possible and work with the contours of the land. The roof profile is east to west and could accommodate photovoltaics at a later date and gutter and down pipe water collection is installed as a natural water collection for animal water/washing and general site/vehicle washing. The site is relatively flat and does not naturally flood so does not aggravate current water management within the site as a whole. There are no immediately adjacent neighbours so there are no amenity concerns.

That addresses the key parts of Policy GP9 and a Waste Management Plan is not required, but I repeat that the building is 100% recyclable.

In terms of Policy GP10, whilst this is an application for an individual building, it will assist the management of the whole site having a proper go to store area for all of the site maintenance vehicles.

### **Conclusion(s)**

I believe this addresses all of the relevant policies raised.

Thank you for your pre application advice which we have followed and if you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact me.

I hope you agree with me that the proposals I have put forward and the design is in keeping with the surrounding areas and does not impact on the remaining historic merit of the property, ticks all the boxes in the Island development plan and I hope for a favourable outcome for my client in the near future.

Yours sincerely

**Niall Bougourd. MCIAT., ACIOB.**

For and on Behalf Of Arctech Freelance Architecture  
cc. Mr. D Cleal C/O Cleal Investments & Developments Ltd.