

25/00312/FUM

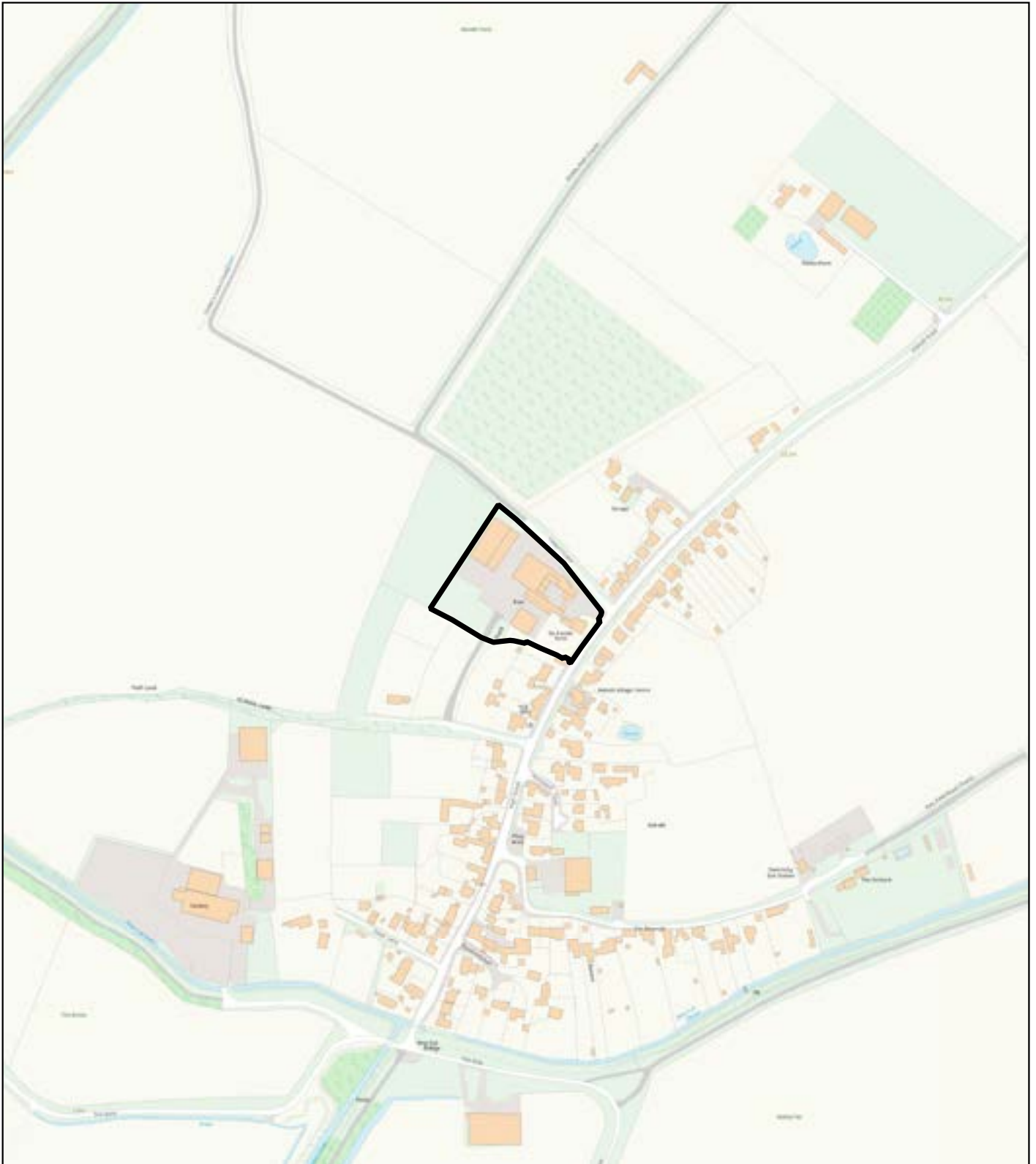
De Freville Farm,
High Street
Aldreth
Ely

Change of use, extension, alteration and part-demolition of Building A to form offices, laboratories and staff facilities for research and development (Use Class E, (g)). Change of use, extension and alteration of Building B to form manufacturing facilities (Use Class B2). Erection of new building (Building D) to form manufacturing facilities (Use Class B2) following the demolition of Building C. New vehicular access with associated parking, hard and soft landscaping and SuDS features De Freville Farm, High Street, Aldreth, Ely, Cambridgeshire

To view all of the public access documents relating to this application please use the following web address or scan the QR code:

<http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=STBSPYGGFIV00>





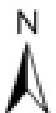
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De Freville Farm
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Cambridgeshire
CB6 3PQ

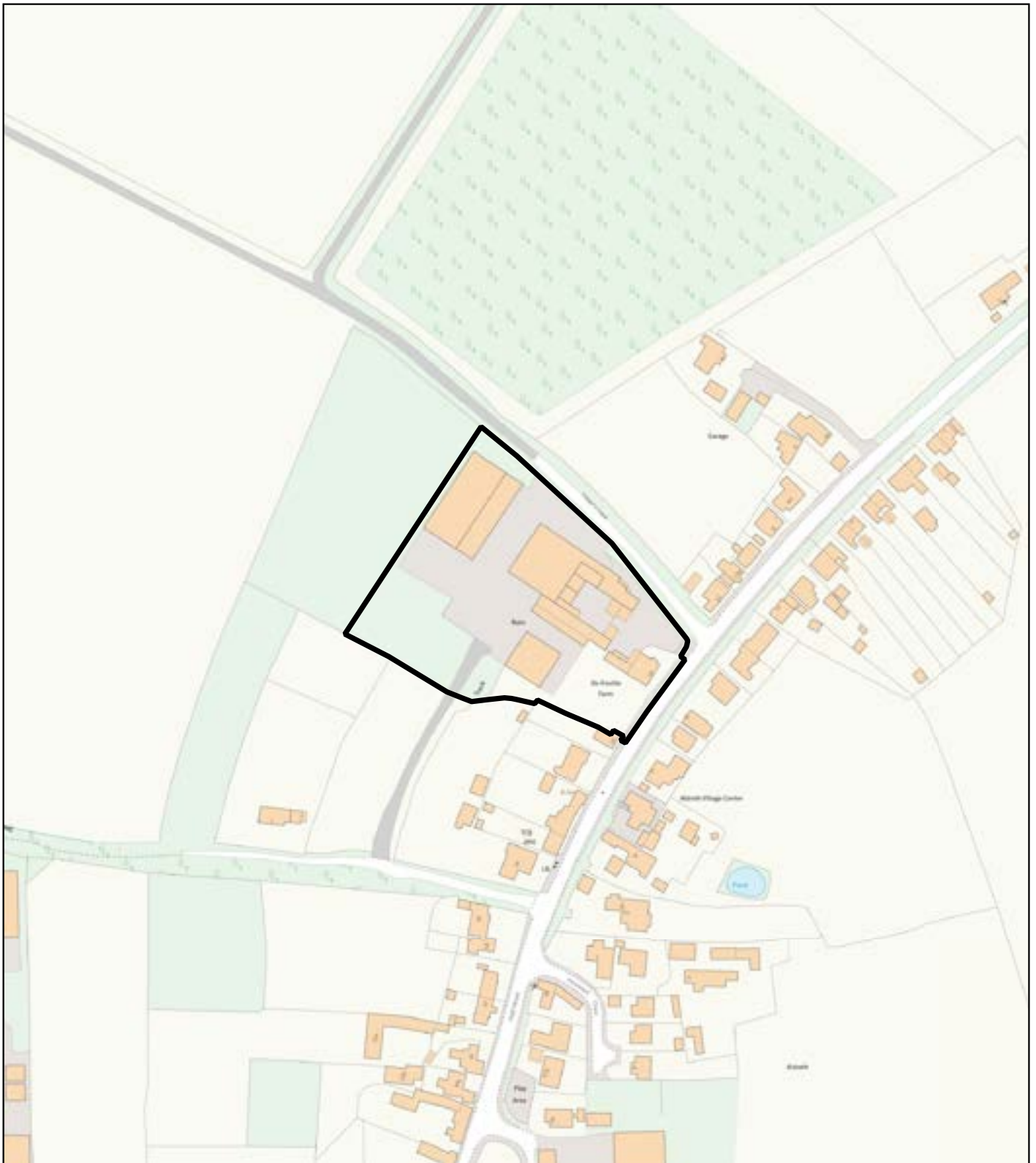


East Cambridgeshire
District Council

Date: 20 May 2026
Scale: 1:5,000



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25/00312/FUM

De Freville Farm
High Street
Aldreth
Ely
Cambridgeshire
CB6 3PQ



East Cambridgeshire
District Council

Date: 20 May 2026
Scale: 1:2,500



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TITLE: 25/00312/FUM

Committee: Planning Committee

Date: 3 June 2026

Author: Major Projects Officer

Report No: AB7

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Site Address: De Freville Farm High Street Aldreth Ely Cambridgeshire CB6 3PQ

Proposal: Change of use, extension, alteration and part-demolition of Building A to form offices, laboratories and staff facilities for research and development (Use Class E, (g)). Change of use, extension and alteration of Building B to form manufacturing facilities (Use Class B2). Erection of new building (Building D) to form manufacturing facilities (Use Class B2) following the demolition of Building C. New vehicular access with associated parking, hard and soft landscaping and SuDS features

Applicant: Taste Flavourings Ltd

Parish: Haddenham

Ward: Haddenham

Ward Councillor/s: Gareth Wilson

Date Received: 28 March 2025

Expiry Date: 8 June 2026

Recommendation

1. Members are recommended to REFUSE the application for the following reasons:
 1. The proposed development would result in a significant intensification in the amount and nature of traffic generated entering and exiting the application site. Due to the location and proximity of the proposed access to neighbouring properties, this would result in unmitigated noise and disturbance to the nearest residential dwellings. Therefore, the application is considered to be contrary to policies EMP 2, EMP 3, EMP 4, COM 7 and ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire

Local Plan 2015, and policies HAD1 and HAD4 of the Haddenham and Aldreth Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031.

2. Whilst it is acknowledged that the site previously operated as a farm, it is considered that the proposed development would be substantially different in character, in terms of site layout, access location, on-site activity and frequency and volume of traffic entering and exiting the site which cumulatively would bring about significant change to the character of the site, adversely impacting the rural and relatively tranquil character of the area. This would be in conflict with policies GROWTH 2, ENV 1, ENV2, ENV 9, EMP 2, EMP 3, EMP 4 and COM 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015, and policy HAD 13 of the Haddenham and Aldreth Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031.
2. The application is being heard by committee following a call-in by Cllr Wilson and that the development involves an employment development where more than 1000m² of floorspace is concerned.

Summary of Application

3. The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the land from agricultural, to a mixed-use comprising office space (use class E.g(i)), research and development (use class E.g(ii)) and general manufacturing (use class B2) and the formation of a new access onto High Street. The development proposes to re-use two existing buildings, subject to some extension and modification, and to demolish an existing building (Barn C) and erection of a new building (Barn D) for B2 use purposes. The existing dwelling on site is proposed to be retained and either occupied by an employee of the business, privately let out or sold on the open market.
4. The applicant currently operates out of business units in Chittering where they develop and produce food flavouring chemicals for the food industry. It is understood the applicant is seeking to relocate their business to a new site, in order to develop the business where the current facilities are a constraint to this.
5. The development proposes a new access, to be located to the southeast of the site, in between the existing dwelling, No. 14 High Street (De-Freville Farm), and number 16 High Street. The access comprises a 5m (16.4ft) wide bell mouth which leads into the site to access the proposed car park, capable of accommodating around 70 vehicles. The internal arrangement also allows for the manoeuvring of HGVs, to enable them to enter and exit in forward gear.
6. The main 'U'-shaped building (Barn A) is proposed to be re-used, with some existing elements to be removed and or slightly extended, to provide an area for offices, research and development and associated training and function room. The larger structure at the rear of the site (Barn A) is proposed to be retained and modified to include shutter doors and is proposed to be used as the main area of food flavouring manufacturing and processing (use class B2). It will also include a mezzanine floor to accommodate employee welfare facilities.
7. Barn A comprises an arrangement of connected buildings, most of which appear structurally sound, with some that are proposed to be demolished and replaced to

accommodate the use. A small extension is proposed to replace an existing dilapidated part of the U-shaped building to form the main entrance, lobby and reception along with an intervening pitched roof to replace a flat roof section linked to the main barn.

8. The ground floor proposes approximately 450m² (4,844ft²) of space used for Research and development and around 190m² (2,045ft²) of office space. Further areas provide reception area, meeting rooms, staff room/ canteen, welfare facilities and plant room. The first-floor element proposes 45m² (484ft²) of Function Room and a W.C.
9. Externally, the existing facing brickwork is proposed to be retained. New fenestration in the way of black metal crittal-style windows is proposed, with some existing openings to be bricked up. The roof of the single storey element is proposed to be re-tiled in blue/black slate with the main barn roof to be re-surfaced in fibre cement sheeting. New hardwood shutter doors are proposed at the main entrance and the grain drier vent; the highest part of the barn complex at around 8.6m (28.2ft), is proposed to be covered in vertical timber.
10. Barn B measures approximately 41m (134.5 ft) in width by 28m (91.8ft) in depth, with a ridge height of approximately 9.0m (30ft) at its highest point. It is proposed to be finished externally with blue-green metal cladding and roofing, incorporating solar PV panels along its roof. Its currently open frontage is proposed to be enclosed with roller shutter doors, fenestration and cladding. Internally, the floor will be divided to provide areas for manufacture, quality control, good storage and handling, a bike store and welfare facilities at ground floor, and further welfare facilities and staff room/ function room at first floor.
11. The new building proposed (Barn D) is also intended for use for manufacturing of flavourings (use class B2). It measures 5.7m (18.7ft) to the ridge and approximately 18.5m (60.7ft) in both width and depth and is finished externally with blue-green metal cladding and roofing, with a buff brick plinth wall. It proposes to incorporate solar PV panels along its roof, roller shutter doors along its front and side and personnel doors and fenestration. Internally, the floor will be divided to provide areas for liquid and power blending, quality control, good storage and processing and welfare facilities
12. A SuDS bioretention pond is proposed along the south-western boundary of the site, with an area of landscaping and ecological enhancement continuing along the boundary, between the rear gardens of properties at School Lane to the southwest.
13. The application is supported by the following key plans and documents;
 - Application Form
 - Site Location Plan PL101
 - Design & Access Statement
 - Planning & Heritage Statement
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and preliminary roost assessment
 - Bat emergence surveys and outline mitigation & compensation strategy
 - BNG Statement & BNG metric
 - Proposed Site Plan - PL203 B

- Access Arrangements & Visibility Splays 211064-01
- Existing and Proposed Elevation Plans – Barn A, B and D
- Existing and Proposed Floor Plans – Barn A, B and D
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment Rev 1
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Site Drainage Strategy
- Transport Statement & Travel Plan
- Odour Appraisal

14. The full planning application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link: <https://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/> .

Planning History

15. 21/00145/OUT: Outline planning application for access, scale and layout for residential development (one dwellinghouse) on land adjacent to De Freville Farm. Granted 06.10.2022
16. The applicant undertook pre-application enquiries with officers in advance of the submission. Officers advised that the principle of the re-use of the site was likely to be acceptable, subject to further consideration of and compliance with relevant policies of the development plan, with particular reference to transport and residential amenity impacts.

The Site and its Environment

17. The site comprises approximately 1.17Ha (2.89 Acres) of land associated with De-Freville Farm. The land incorporates a number of structures including the farmhouse, number 14 High Street, which fronts onto High Street. Immediately behind the house is a group of structures which form a 'U' shape around a small courtyard. Further north is a large open fronted building, formerly used for agricultural storage. A smaller barn is located along the south-western boundary. The site is predominantly surfaced with concrete to form a hardstanding, save for the area at the front of the site, immediately adjacent to the south-west of the dwellinghouse, which is grassed and includes a number of small trees. Views into the site from the High Street are achievable through this area of greenspace.
18. The host dwelling is included in the Cambridgeshire Local Heritage List, giving it status as a Building of Local Interest (a non-designated heritage asset). Its associated courtyard is currently accessed via High Street, whereas the main farm buildings and hardstanding areas are accessed via a gate located along the unmetalled Byway which runs along its north-eastern boundary.
19. The area is predominantly characterised by 2-storey residential uses of varying ages, scales and designs, with dwellings fronting High Street along its length, with the farm taking a secondary position in the streetscene.

20. The site lies in Flood Zone 1 and an area at low risk of surface water flooding.

Responses from Consultees

21. Responses were received from the following consultees which are summarised to below;

- Haddenham & Aldreth Parish Council
- Ward Councillor
- County Councillor for Soham South & Haddenham
- ECDC Waste Strategy
- ECDC Environmental Health
- ECDC Trees
- ECDC Ecology
- ECDC Conservation Officer
- ECDC Building Control
- The Ely Group of Internal Drainage Board
- CCC Lead Local Flood Authority
- CCC Local Highways Authority
- CCC Asset Information Definitive Map Team
- Cambridge Ramblers Association
- Cambs Police - Designing Out Crime

The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

Haddenham & Aldreth Parish Council – 14 May 2026

22. Latest comments as follows:

- The odour assessment indicates that the emissions from the proposed development may have an adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents, particularly in unfavorable wind conditions.
- The Haddenham and Aldreth Neighbourhood Plan (2022) priorities protecting the “rural character and amenity” of the village. Any odour fundamentally changes the “ambience” of the village and contradicts the Plan.
- Reports from visits to the applicant's existing factory at Denny Lodge Business Park describe a "sickening" and "nauseating" stench. This real-world evidence suggests that the proposed manufacturing (Class B2) and laboratory uses are high-risk for "Most Offensive" odours.
- The applicant's appraisal appears to rely on generic or "low-sensitivity" source terms. The source term must be based on "worst-case" scenario data from actual operational sites or high-fidelity proxies. Failure to use specific olfactory data from the existing Chittering factory constitutes a major technical omission.
- The impact of this is that Dispersion models are highly sensitive to initial source strength. An underestimated Source Term leads to a false "negligible" impact conclusion at the sensitive receptors on School Lane and the High Street.
- A post-completion survey is an unacceptable 'trial by error' approach that places the residential amenity of Aldreth at extreme risk. Given the comments of extreme odour at the applicant's existing site, there should be pre-determination sensory testing of their current processes to validate the dispersion model. Furthermore,

we seek a planning condition for automatic cessation of works should real-time boundary monitoring detect odour intensities above 1.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

23. Objects to the proposal on the following grounds;
- HGV movements through the villages - roads unsuitable
 - Traffic congestion
 - Highway safety
 - Pedestrian safety
 - Contrary to Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan policies
 - Outside the development envelope
 - Does not fall within the exception categories for rural development
 - Out of character for Aldreth,
 - Significant Residential amenity impacts – odour, noise, chemicals, traffic
 - Concerned about the recent odour appraisal submitted in April 2026.
 - Lighting impacts with regard to policy HAD10 – dark skies
 - Harm to the environment
 - Refers to restrictions placed on planning permission 18/00853/OUT in respect to protecting amenity via closure of the potato store on site.
 - Impacts on waterways – pollution risks
 - Poor sustainable transport links – limited public transport
 - No prior consultation was undertaken with local residents

Ward Councillor - 9 September 2025

24. Opposed to the application;
- Inappropriate for the scale of Aldreth.
 - Contrary to Neighbourhood Plan spatial policies – outside settlement envelope
 - Concerns over HGV movements and highway safety/ congestion
 - Concerns over staff vehicles
 - Lack of sustainable travel options

County Councillor for Soham South & Haddenham – 30 October 2025

25. Comments as follows:
- Contrary to policy– outside settlement envelope
 - B2 industrial use is inappropriate for Aldreth
 - Out of character with Aldreth's setting.
 - Harm to residential amenity - noise, odour, light, traffic
 - HGV movements on narrow village roads.
 - highway safety
 - environmental concerns - risks to local air and water quality and to the tranquillity of the area.
 - Lack of consultation

ECDC Environmental Health (contaminated land) – 2 June 2025

26. Has reviewed the Phase 1 Desk Study Report (Ref: 120005) dated November 2024 and accepts the findings. The report has identified potential risks from asbestos and contaminated soil and recommends that a Phase 2 intrusive investigation is carried out. Recommends that standard contaminated land conditions (in respect to investigation and remediation) are attached to any planning approval.

ECDC Environmental Health – 5 May 2026

[Following receipt of Odour Appraisal (version 2)]

27. Notes the Odour Appraisal finds that there is negligible risk of adverse odour impacts. Raises no issues with the report and therefore withdraws the previous objection (dated 16th March 2026).
28. The report also includes a draft Odour Management Plan (OMP) in Appendix A of the report which is requested to be conditioned for compliance with.
29. Finally, the applicants should be advised that planning permission does not confer immunity from action under statutory nuisance. Either by local authority or a private individual.

[Previous comments 15 April 2025]

30. Recommends that demolition and construction times and deliveries during the demolition and construction phases are restricted to the following:

07:30 - 18:00 each day Monday - Friday
07:30 - 13:00 on Saturdays and
None on Sundays or Bank Holidays

31. Requests that a method statement be produced and agreed before any piling work takes place (if required).
32. A condition preventing external lighting without prior approval from the LPA is recommended.
33. Opening hours require clarification/ control via condition as the submission proposes varying hours of operation.
34. Recommends that the location of the acoustic fencing is extended across part of the northern boundary where there is a gap between buildings A and B.
35. Asks for a Condition which seeks compliance with the specific sound levels outlined in Table 2 on page 9 of the Noise Impact Report. Also recommends a Condition which prevents any additional external mechanical plant without prior approval from the LPA. Recommends a Condition requiring forklifts to be fitted with broadband reversing alarms and that they be battery operated (both for reasons of amenity).
36. Notes that the Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) refers to anticipated Air Handling Units and associated noise output levels to serve the building, but that this is yet to be finalised. Recommends that if the proposed equipment changes, the NIA should be re-run.

ECDC Waste Strategy – 15 May 2025

37. Notes that a commercial waste provider has already been arranged by the applicant.
38. Provides general advice on business waste

ECDC Trees – 16 December 2025

39. The revised layout which now includes the retention of the category B trees previously identified for removal is an improvement from a tree perspective and there are no longer any tree related objections to the proposal subject to the compliance with the Arboricultural Impacts Assessment dated 13 November 2025 and the provision by condition of a detailed Arboricultural Method Statement and detailed soft landscaping scheme to include significantly sized tree planting pits where needed to provide sufficient soil volume for new trees to develop to maturity.

ECDC Ecology – 30 September 2025

40. From the information provided the Ecologist has reviewed this application supports only with conditions applied with the information provided.

ECDC Conservation Officer – 31 March 2025

Recommendation: support

41. The application site is a pre-1878 regular courtyard plan farmstead with later mid C20 and C21 large scale agri-industrial sheds to the north. Model farms are comparatively rare in the district and despite their dilapidations, the C19 farmyard ranges are of some historic and architectural interest, as is the farmhouse itself. Indeed the latter was included on the ECDC register of buildings of local interest under Policy ENV 13 in 2024 through the current Cambridgeshire Local Heritage List Project.
<https://local-heritage-list.org.uk/cambridgeshire/asset/9432>
Having regard to Historic England's national guidance, considers the proposals are in line with orthodox 'barn conversion' practice. Whilst some rebuilding of the C19 farmyard ranges is inevitable, the new elements are complimentary to their character and appearance, and the office use is compatible with their semi-domestic scale. Although the application retains/replaces the modern sheds for industrial purposes, overall the scheme is an exemplar of the sustainable re-use of a redundant traditional farm complex.

The Ely Group of Internal Drainage Board – 28 April 2025

42. Raises concerns over the accuracy of the Flood Risk Assessment in respect of known watercourse locations. The catch water, now classed as part of main river, runs past the south west of the site then via the Aldreth Canal to the Ely Ouse (known locally as The Old West River). This is not noted in the FRA.
43. Concerned with the surface water strategy and potential pollution risks to watercourses, citing a serious pollution incident that occurred in 2017. The applicant has indicated that there will be an attenuation pond and a bio-bed but the surface water will still take the same course as the existing ditch to the catch water. Queries if there is a set discharge rate from the site.
44. Queries whether the intention is to utilise underground storage tanks or soakaways and whether a soakaway would hold the same volume of water as a holding tank, noting a clay subsoil.
45. Requests that serious consideration is given to the effect surface water drainage and the possibility of a pollution incident will have on the surrounding area.

Lead Local Flood Authority - 7 April 2025

No objection in principle to the proposed development.

46. Advises that the submission demonstrates that surface water from the proposed development can be managed through the use of infiltration.
47. The LLFA is supportive of the use of bioretention ponds and attenuation/infiltration tanks as in addition to controlling the rate of surface water leaving the site it also provides water quality treatment. Water quality has been adequately addressed when assessed against the Simple Index Approach outlined in the CIRIA SuDS Manual.
48. Requests a pre-commencement condition to finalise the drainage design, based on the strategy proposed; details of the long-term management and maintenance strategy of the drainage infrastructure; and implementation of the surface water infrastructure works prior to the erection of any built form.

CCC Local Highways Authority – 17 April 2025

49. Has reservations in respect of the proposed development in relation to the lack of sustainable access to the site. However, in view of the limited trip generation is considered that a recommendation of refusal could not be substantiated with due regard to Para 116 of the NPPF, where "development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety".
50. Considers the development would be highly dependent on car use, as acknowledged within the Transport Statement. As such, the Local Planning Authority may wish to consider the sustainability of this site within the context of local and national policies.
51. Notes some areas of highways width are restricted, making it difficult for 2 HGVs to pass. However, considers that given the modest number of HGV movements associated with the proposed development, it is not considered that the limited width will place an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
52. Consideration required as to impact on the A1123 crossroads at Haddenham. The Local Highways Authority would seek, via condition a routing plan to mitigate this impact.
53. In the event that the LPA are mindful to approve the application, please append the following Conditions and Informative to any consent granted:
Conditions recommended;
- Routing plan
 - Access to be constructed as detailed prior to first use, in accordance with CCC highways specification.
 - Gates to be set back 15m from the highway
 - Access drainage not to impinge on the public highway
 - Access to be surfaced in a bound material for the first 5 metres into the site
 - Construction Traffic Management plan to be agreed prior to commencement

CCC Asset Information Definitive Map Team – 14 April 2025

54. Advises that Public Bridleway 20, Haddenham runs to the north east of the site. It must remain open and unobstructed at all times. The Bridleway must not be used to access the development site unless the applicant is sure they have lawful authority to do so. No alteration to the Bridleway's surface is permitted without consent.

55. Provides advice on boundary maintenance (where site boundaries and overgrowth may impact on public rights of way); ecology and temporary closure orders processes (where necessary).

Cambs Police - Designing Out Crime – 17 April 2025

56. Advises that the documents don't appear to mention security. Advises it is important that security and crime prevention are discussed at the earliest opportunity, and it must incorporate the standards of "Secured by Design", to design out crime and reduce the opportunities for crime. The Designing Out Crime Officers (DOCO's) should be consulted at an early stage in these types of planning applications, this enables them to work with the developer on the best security solutions based on local crime issues.

57. The constabulary crime and incident systems covering Haddenham Ward for the last 2 years, infers that the area as low risk to the vulnerability of crime at present.

58. Provides advice on and recommends conditions to address the following:

- External lighting
- Door standards and certification
- Windows, roof windows and roof lights
- Curtain Walling
- Roller Shutters and Grilles
- Alarm
- Access Control
- CCTV
- Manned Reception
- Audio/Video electronic access control
- Secure Cycle parking visitors
- Secure external Bin Storage
- Secure Parking
- EV Charging
- Vehicular/pedestrian access Gates
- Counter Terrorist Security Guidance
- Secured by Design
- Construction Phase Security

ECDC Trees Team - 16 December 2025

59. The revised layout which now includes the retention of the category B trees previously identified for removal is an improvement from a tree perspective and there are no longer any tree related objections to the proposal subject to the compliance with the Arboricultural Impacts Assessment dated 13 November 2025 and the provision by condition of a detailed Arboricultural Method Statement and detailed soft landscaping scheme to include significantly sized tree planting pits where needed to provide sufficient soil volume for new trees to develop to maturity.

Resident Consultations

60. A site notice was displayed near the site, most recently on 2nd February 2026 and a press advert was published in the Cambridge Evening News on 10 April 2024.

61. Neighbours – 35 neighbouring properties were initially notified and the responses received by all contributors are summarised below. A full copy of the responses are available on the Council's website: <https://pa.eastcamb.gov.uk/online-applications/>

- Foul water drainage
- Groundwater issues
- Flood risk
- Highway safety
- Noise pollution
- Odour issues
- Parking and Turning
- Surface water drainage
- Utilities unable to cope
- Loss of privacy
- Affects a Right of Access
- Affects a Right of Way
- Affects public views
- Contrary to Policy
- Impact to Conservation Area
- Impact on heritage asset
- Damage to local heritage sites
- Air Pollution issues
- Surface water drainage
- Visual amenity
- Affects public views
- Affects street scene
- Form and character
- Impact on trees
- Landscape impact
- Overbearing
- Overlooking
- Traffic and parking issues
- Out of character
- Overdevelopment of the site
- Will set a precedent for further expansion
- Traffic will impact both Haddenham and Aldreth
- Biodiversity
- Lack of public transport
- Unsuitable roads
- The acoustic fence should extend across the whole site perimeter
- HGV movements within the site are dangerous to pedestrians
- Hours should be restricted
- Contravenes Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998.
- Asbestos
- Existing cycle paths are unsuitable
- Ground/water contamination
- Lack of staff amenities within the village
- Outside the development envelope
- Access concerns
- Light pollution

- Impact on bridleway
- Form and Character
- Will impact the Village Hall and associated activities
- Lack of technical information
- Disruption during construction
- Damage to property
- Safety concerns regarding storage of chemicals and lack of consultation with the HSE and Fire Service.

The Planning Policy Context

62. East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023)

GROWTH 1: Levels of housing, employment and retail growth
 GROWTH 2: Locational strategy
 GROWTH 3: Infrastructure requirements
 GROWTH 4: Delivery of growth
 GROWTH 5: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 EMP 1: Retention of existing employment sites and allocations
 EMP 3: New employment development in the countryside
 EMP 4: RE-use and replacement of existing buildings in the countryside
 ENV 1: Landscape and settlement character
 ENV 2: Design
 ENV 4: Energy and water efficiency and renewable energy in construction
 ENV 7: Biodiversity and geology
 ENV 8: Flood risk
 ENV 9: Pollution
 ENV 12: Listed Buildings
 ENV 13: Local Register of Buildings and Structures
 ENV 14: Sites of archaeological interest
 COM 7: Transport impact
 COM 8: Parking provision

63. Haddenham and Aldreth Neighbourhood Plan 2022

Policy HAD1 - Spatial Strategy
 Policy HAD4 - Haddenham Business Park Extension
 Policy HAD8 - Protection of Important Views
 Policy HAD10 - Dark Skies
 Policy HAD12 - Buildings and Features of Local Interest
 Policy HAD13 - Design Considerations
 Policy HAD14 - Sustainable Building Practices
 Policy HAD15 - Flooding and Sustainable Drainage

64. Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Waste and Minerals Local Plan 2021

Policy 14: Waste management needs arising from residential and commercial development

65. Supplementary Planning Documents

- East Cambridgeshire Design Guide 2012

- Flood and Water 2016
- Contaminated Land 2015
- Natural Environment 2020
- Climate Change 2021
- Hedgehog Recovery Design Guidance SPD

66. **National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024 (NPPF)**

- 2 Achieving sustainable development
- 4 Decision-making
- 6 Building a strong competitive economy
- 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 9 Promoting sustainable transport
- 11 Making effective use of land
- 12 Achieving well-designed places
- 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 16 Conserving & enhancing the historic environment

67. On 16 December 2025, the Government published a consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Whilst broad changes to the structure of the Framework are proposed as part of this consultation, these proposals could be subject to further change and can only be given very limited weight at this stage. Regard has therefore been had to the NPPF published in December 2024 in assessing the current application.

68. **National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)**

Planning Material Considerations and Comments

69. The key issues relevant to this application are considered to be;

- Principle of Development
- Access and Highways
- Impact on the Character of the area
- Residential Amenity
- Historic Environment
- Ecology and Biodiversity
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Other Material matters

Principle of Development

70. The proposed access and dwelling within the site lies within the settlement boundary of Aldreth, whereas the main farm buildings and hardstanding lie beyond the settlement boundary having regard to the settlement boundary set out under Neighbourhood Plan ('NP') Policy HAD 1 and Local plan policy GROWTH 2.

71. Policy GROWTH 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 provides the locational strategy for development within the district and provides a hierarchy for the location of housing development. That hierarchy seeks to focus the majority of development on the market towns of Ely, Soham and Littleport. It provides for more limited development within villages within a defined development envelope. The policy states that outside defined development envelopes, development will be strictly controlled to protect the countryside and the setting of settlements and will be restricted to the exceptions listed within the policy. HAD 1 sets out that land outside the development envelope is countryside and should normally only allow for rural or land-based enterprise developments. The preamble to HAD 1, at 5.4 of the NP sets out that development outside the envelope will be considered as an exception.
72. The development will be commercial in nature comprising a mix of office, research and development and general industrial use. NP policy HAD 4 ('Haddenham business park extension and other new employment proposals') primarily focuses on its ambitions for the extension to Haddenham Business Park which is not applicable here. Notwithstanding, the policy does go on to state that subject to compliance with applicable Local Plan Policies, other suitable new employment proposals within or on the edge of the village will be supported in principle, subject to satisfactory mitigation of any landscape, heritage, residential amenity and infrastructure impacts. In this regard, the site is considered to sit within and, on the edge of the settlement. Local Plan policy EMP 3 supports small-scale employment development in the countryside, on small sites closely related to the built framework of a settlement where:
- There is a lack of suitable buildings and sites within the settlement.
 - There is a lack of suitable buildings to re-use or replace in the countryside close to the settlement (in accordance with Policy EMP 4).
 - The proposal would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, or result in a significant increase in traffic; and
 - The site can be easily accessed by foot or cycle from the settlement.
73. The Local Plan does not define 'small scale', therefore leaving this to a matter of judgement. In respect of the size of the site however and anticipated employee numbers, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the employment site would be relatively small-scale (albeit with greater employee numbers than previously experienced) and, by virtue of the access being located within the settlement, it would be closely related to the built framework. The development proposes to re-use a majority of the existing buildings within the sited and as such, Local Plan policy EMP 4 is relevant as it sets out that Proposals for the re-use of existing buildings in the countryside for business (B1, B2, B8), tourism, outdoor recreation or community-related uses which require a planning application will be permitted where:
- It can be demonstrated that the building is of permanent and substantial construction.
 - The form, bulk and design of the building is of visual merit, architectural merit or historical significance, and is in general keeping with its surroundings.
 - The proposal does not harm the character and appearance of the building or the locality.
 - The proposal would not (by itself or cumulatively) have a significant adverse impact in terms of the amount or nature of traffic generated; and

- Other Local Plan policies relating to specific uses are met.

74. Whilst the site already includes built form, much of which is proposed to be re-used, the site itself is not considered to comprise 'previously developed land', or brownfield land as defined by the NPPF, due to its agricultural use, which is specifically excluded from the definition set out in the NPPF (see NPPF Annex 2: Glossary, page 77). Notwithstanding, NPPF Chapter 11 supports the effective re-use of land, particularly in development of under-utilised land and buildings. Furthermore, NPPF Chapter 6, paragraph 88 sets out a desire for decisions to enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings; and, the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.
75. In conclusion, it is considered that the re-use of the site and introduction of new development for the employment use of the site is acceptable in principle, subject to the consideration of the sustainability criterion as set out within the specific policies above and other relevant development plan policies as considered below.

Access and Highways

76. Local Plan policy COM7 seeks to ensure, amongst other things, that development provides safe and convenient access to the highway network, is designed to reduce the need to travel particularly by car and should promote sustainable forms of transport appropriate to its particular location. Development should also be capable of accommodating the level/type of traffic generated without detriment to the local highway network and the amenity, character or appearance of the locality. Local Plan policy COM8 requires development proposals to provide adequate levels of car and cycle parking and make provision for parking broadly in accordance with the Council's parking standards (including parking for people with impaired mobility). The application is supported by a transport statement and Travel Plan which seeks to demonstrate compliance with COM 7 and the transport aims of the NPPF.

Access and layout

77. Firstly, in respect of the access layout and design, the applicant advises that the introduction of a new access was necessary, as the existing byway which formerly served the agricultural use and the access serving the dwelling were not appropriate options to serve the new development. As such, the development would not directly impact on the rights of way close to the site. The proposed access arrangements comprises a bell-mouth arrangement with footway either side and tactile paving at the crossing point. The access road within the site measures approximately 6.4m (21ft) along its length before meeting with the wider hardstanding and car park and turning areas.
78. The Local Highway Authority (LHA) has raised no technical objections to the access arrangement, and it is therefore considered that the development can be served by safe and suitable access and which makes provision for pedestrians to cross the access safely and therefore in accordance with Local Plan policy COM 7. Furthermore, the development is served by adequate parking spaces to serve the nature and scale of the development (including disability spaces and EV charging points), having regard to the requirements of policy COM 8.

Highway safety

79. A significant number of concerns have been raised regarding the adequacy of existing roads to accommodate the nature and volume of vehicles anticipated to access the development, with concerns raised in respect to predicted HGV movements, the narrowness of some approach roads and the suitability of the access location with regards to existing on-street parking which can cause obstruction. It is noted that HGVs entering and existing the site may need to use both lanes of the highway in order to manoeuvre. In respect to the latter concern, it is recognised that the High Street often sees a large number of vehicles parking on-street. However, there is no legal right to park on the highway and causing an obstruction is an offence. As such, were the development to come forward, any persons who have enjoyed the ability to park on the street at this location would not be permitted to obstruct the access. Given that there is no legal right to park on the highway, planning weight in respect to loss of amenity/ facility in this regard cannot be applied to this matter and it would seem that there are still a number of spaces to park on the highway if required, albeit these may be further away than is currently experienced.
80. The LHA has considered the adequacy of the highway in respect to the number of cars anticipated to visit the development and, more specifically, potential for HGV-to-HGV conflict, noting that some sections of the highways are constrained, meaning that 2-way passing of HGVs may not be possible without mounting of footways or giving way. Whilst the LHA acknowledges that this is not an ideal scenario, they have considered the likely anticipated HGV movements associated with the development (predicted to be up to 10 two-way trips per day in the worse-case scenario) and has concluded that conflict of this nature would be infrequent and would therefore not be grounds to warrant refusal, having regard to the tests set out in the NPPF para. 116. Notwithstanding, a condition requiring a routing plan has been recommended, to encourage HGV drivers to use main roads i.e., avoiding short cuts through secondary streets which has caused concerns and issues previously, particularly in Haddenham, where the Parish Council has engaged with local hauliers to reduce this occurrence.

Site Location

81. Local Plan policy COM 7 seeks to reduce the need to travel particularly by car requires developments to promote sustainable forms of transport appropriate to its particular location. The NPPF; paragraph 89 sets out that Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist. NPPF para. 110 sets out that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.
82. It is recognised that Aldreth is significantly constrained in respect of active travel options, with a very limited bus provision (currently Thursdays only) and an unmetalled and unlit footway connecting to Haddenham. Furthermore, the rights of

way are also informal in respect to surfacing and lighting rendering them unsuitable for everyday journeys. In essence, Aldreth is unsustainably located in transport terms, with residents and visitors heavily reliant on private motor car for travel. It is assumed that for this reason, there is limited ambition in the development plan for any significant growth for this settlement. The application consequently does not provide any meaningful mitigation for this limitation. In this regard, notwithstanding NPPF para. 110, the ambitions of policy COM 7 and indeed the aims of NPPF para.89, in respect to improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport cannot be met through this development which carries negative weight, as it severely limits future employee's options to travel to work via sustainable means.

83. Concerns have been raised that the applicant's Transport Assessment was undertaken during the harvest season, where HGV and larger vehicle movements are more prevalent and therefore that the TA does not accurately reflect the average traffic flow through the village. In this regard, if this were the case, the TA would capture a worse-case scenario in respect to cumulative transport impacts, whereas outside of harvest season, larger vehicle movements would be expected to be less. Notwithstanding, the traffic findings in the TA would perhaps show a lower percentage increase in HGVs if taken during peak harvest period. However, the conclusions of the LHA are clear in that the predicted HGV movements are not anticipated to result in severe cumulative impacts or highway safety issues.
84. In summary, whilst the development would yield larger vehicle movements than has been previously experienced from this site and those movements likely to occur during peak periods in respect of staff movements, this would not result in highway safety or significant cumulative transport impacts on the highway, to warrant refusal. Notwithstanding, by virtue of the significant limitations of active travel options to this settlement, the development would place a heavy reliance on staff and visitors to access the site via private motor car, with the site use predicted to result in a worse-case 29% increase in traffic volume in Aldreth, as a result.

Impact on the Character and appearance of the area

85. Neighbourhood Plan Policy HAD 13 requires development to reflect the local characteristics in the Neighbourhood Plan Area and create and contribute to a high quality, safe and sustainable environment. Policies ENV 1 and ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023) require new development to complement the existing built form and relate sympathetically to its surroundings in terms of location, layout, scale, massing, materials, and colour. Proposals must respond positively to local context and architectural traditions, enhance the character and quality of the area, and contribute to the public realm.
86. Much of farm buildings are to be retained and the areas of hardstanding are proposed to be re-used to serve the operations, including car parking. The design of the development is considered to complement the traditional arrangement of barns as per the Council's Conservation Officer's advice, retaining the key building of Barn A and its features immediately rear of the dwelling. The sympathetic re-use of the barns would attract positive weight in this regard.

87. The new building (Barn D) whilst occupying a new position further into the yard and therefore encroaching into undeveloped part of the site, is not considered to cause significant harm to the open character of the countryside or the streetscene, given its scale, appearance and general setting within the wider farm in which it is read. In general the location of the development, particularly given its reliance on utilising existing buildings would not conflict with Neighbourhood Plan policy HAD 8 which seeks to protect key views around the two settlements.
88. Having regard to anticipated employee numbers (around 30 FTE) and conclusions of the Transport assessment that most will use private motor car to access the site, this would likely equate to around 30 to 40 private cars arriving at the site during peak times, based on a worse-case scenario.
89. The new access would introduce an urban form into the streetscene and would emphasise the commercial use of the site, in contrast to the former use of the byway and modest access serving the dwelling, and also the modest access proposed to serve the previously permitted single dwelling scheme at the site (21/01485/OUT). This access is to be used potentially by around 166 vehicles during the day, 40 of which will be between 7am and 9am, and then between 4pm and 6pm, including HGV movements and likely delivery vehicles to deliver supplies etc. Cumulatively, this will bring about a notable change to the rural character and relative tranquillity of the village, notwithstanding any on-site activity e.g., fork-lifts, deliveries/ loading etc.
90. Furthermore, the main car park, whilst partially screened by intended landscaping, would still be visible from views along the access where rows of parked vehicles would be apparent resulting in a more urban feel. Whilst it is acknowledged that the site previously operated as a farm, it is considered that the proposed development would be substantially different in character, in terms of site layout, on-site activity and frequency and volume of traffic entering and exiting the site which cumulatively would bring about significant change to the visual and acoustic character of the site, adversely impacting on the rural and relatively tranquil character of the area. This would be in conflict with policies GROWTH 2, ENV 1, ENV2, ENV 9, EMP 2, EMP 3, EMP 4 and COM 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015, and policy HAD 13 of the Haddenham and Aldreth Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031.
91. Concerns have been raised by residents and the Parish Council about the development's impact in respect of light pollution, with regard to the Neighbourhood Plan's Dark Skies policy HAD 14. In this regard, it is likely that some exterior lighting would be required to serve the development and details would need to be agreed having regard to the need to protect the dark skies, nocturnal biodiversity and residential amenity, while achieving adequate on-site security and visibility. This detail can be reasonably secured via planning condition.

Residential Amenity

92. Local Plan policies EMP 3, EMP 4 and ENV 2 seeks to ensure there is no detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers. Policy ENV 9 of the Local Plan states that all development proposals should minimise, and where possible, reduce all emissions and other forms of pollution, including light and noise pollution. Neighbourhood Plan Policies HAD1 and HAD4 also supports development, subject

to it not resulting in unacceptable impacts on the amenity of residents. HAD13 seeks to avoid sensitive development being located in areas where nearby residents would be significantly and adversely affected by noise, unless adequate and appropriate mitigation can be implemented.

93. Whilst the proposal includes the erection of a new building toward the rear of the site and re-use of existing buildings, including first-floor use, the development as a whole would not result in overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts. The primary concerns raised by residents and the Parish Council concerns potential harm through noise, odour and smoke pollution which might arise from the production processes associated with the business. The impacts of the development have been assessed in respect to all residents and visitors to Aldreth and surroundings, including those residents who may be at home for long periods, and therefore may experience greater or maintained exposure to impacts arising from the development.

Noise and vibration

94. It is acknowledged that former planning permissions 18/00853/OUT and 21/00145/OUT, which granted permission for the erection of dwellings adjacent to the farm buildings, secured a legal agreement to cease the use of potato drying equipment in the larger barn, in order to protect residential amenity. This has been cited by a number of residents. However, the proposal is materially different to the former agricultural operations and requires different mitigation means to avoid amenity harm.
95. In respect of predicted noise, the application is supported by a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) which indicates that background noise levels during the day are generally low. The NIA identifies that due to the low background levels, some noise arising from operations e.g., through HGV arrivals and loading/ unloading may be adverse but not significant. Further to this, internal noise levels of nearby receptors is considered to be lower than acceptable standards set out under BS 8233. Furthermore, the NIA takes into account the context that the site was once a working farm which would have likely created higher noise levels than predicted here, particularly during harvest season. The assessment assumes the recommended mitigation is in place, which includes the installation of a 2.4m (7.8ft) high screen on the site to screen noisy activities from residential receptors to the south and use of broadband reversing alarms. The assessment also considers the plant and equipment proposed to be used which includes sheer mixers and air handling units. The equipment is anticipated to be located inside the buildings and conditions securing further details of this can be reasonably secured, with updated NIAs if required. Furthermore, the Council's Environmental Health team has reviewed the locations of the acoustic fence and considers that additional fencing may be beneficial, specifically in the gaps between buildings at the north of the site, to prevent noise existing the site. This additional detail could be reasonably secured by planning condition.
96. As noted above, the development would potentially result in around 29% increase in vehicle movements during the daytime, mainly from staff and visitors. Whilst the NIA concludes that HGV movements would not 'stand out against the residual acoustic environment and would therefore not attract an acoustic character correction', this is likely due to the limited number of HGVs anticipated. The NIA does not however consider the frequency and potential acoustic character change through the volume

and frequency of general staff or delivery vehicles, which in the officer's opinion will be noticeable and would result in a change to the character of the area through both noise and vibration, particularly for those residing close to the access.

97. Whilst the associated dwelling (No. 14) is cited to be occupied by employees of the business, there is no mechanism in place to ensure this, with the only reasonable mechanism being a legal agreement. It is noted that a number of windows face directly onto the access road from this dwelling, at distances of less than 7m (23ft). Likewise, with the dwelling to the south of the access, (No 12), this lies around 8m from the access road and whilst it is acknowledged that only 1 window is located along its flank wall, it is likely that the frequency of traffic moving along the access will be notable in comparison to existing conditions. It is important to note that whilst the NIA correctly factors in the context of previous agricultural operations at the site, this did not include any movement along which is now proposed to be the single point of access/egress serving the development and which will invite a potential 29% increase in traffic along this access, based on the worse-case scenario modelled in the Transport Assessment. This will bring about a significant change to the acoustic character of the area, to the detriment of residential amenity.
98. In conclusion, it is acknowledged that, subject to the aforementioned mitigation, it is unlikely that day-to-day 'on site' operations would result in significant adverse effects to residential amenity in respect of internal sound levels to the nearest sensitive receptors. However, no assessment has been made as to the characteristic effects of the increase in staff, visitor and delivery traffic at the access in respect of noise and vibration, which is considered likely to be adverse and unmitigated.

Odour & smoke

99. It is understood the operations rely on the production of taste flavourings which are produced by mixing concentrated chemical compounds to create flavouring substances. The equipment required would include mixers, driers and ventilation equipment. The applicant initially provided an outline strategy based on the plant and equipment likely to be used, which would rely on airtight rooms to create negative pressure, whereby air is extracted from these rooms and will pass through a pre-filter, carbon and HEPA (High-Efficiency Particulate Air) filtration system. Aroma chemicals present in the extracted air (which "escaped" from the blending process) will be removed by a 3-stage filtration system where the volatile molecules are captured and odour is thereby eliminated. A periodic maintenance schedule will ensure that the performance of the filtration system is guaranteed. No heating is required and no smoke results from on-site processes but odour is possible and can be currently experienced outside buildings at the applicant's present site in Chittering.
100. Following concerns raised by the Council's Environmental Health (EH) team about the limited information provided in respect to odour management, the applicant commissioned a more detailed Odour Appraisal which also includes a draft Odour Management Plan (OMP). The appraisal considers the sources of odour, its magnitude and how factors can impact nearby receptors e.g., residential properties, going on to set out mitigation to avoid any adverse odour impacts on said receptors.
101. The report concludes that given the scale of the manufacturing process and the odour mitigation equipment fitted, the risk of adverse odour impacts is negligible. However, the report acknowledges that this is a new process and operating conditions are

uncertain. Therefore, a draft OMP has been proposed that includes procedures for monitoring and actions to be taken should improvements be required. This OMP would be finalised once planning permission has been obtained and the full details of the proposed development have been agreed.

102. The Parish Council, in their recent meeting, raised concerns over the potential for adverse odour impacts, particularly in unfavourable wind conditions, that the odour impacts would change the character of the area, that the current site produces offensive odours, that the appraisal is not based on worse-case scenarios and underestimates the potential impacts, that relying on a post-completion survey to identify any further mitigation is of concern, suggesting a planning condition for automatic cessation of works should odour exceed acceptable levels. Concerns are also raised that the odour appraisal does not provide a comprehensive list of chemicals or gases that would be released and therefore raises doubts about the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation.
103. The Council's EH team has reviewed the latest proposal and the concerns raised by the Parish Council and has removed their objection. They advise that based on the information and proposals as set out in the draft OMP, odour can be satisfactorily managed, subject to conditions securing the final detailed design of the system and monitoring, to be submitted, agreed and implemented prior to commencement of operations. In conclusion therefore, the Council's EH concludes that odour impacts on residential amenity can be satisfactorily mitigated, subject to agreement of the final odour management specification.
104. In conclusion, it is unlikely that day-to-day 'on site' operations would result in significant adverse effects to residential amenity in respect of internal sound levels to the nearest sensitive receptors and through any odour issues. However, the characteristic effects resulting from the increase in staff, visitor and delivery traffic at the access in respect of noise and vibration on nearby residences, has not been sufficiently addressed and is considered likely to be adverse and unmitigated, contrary to EMP3, EMP4, ENV2 and ENV9 of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan Policies HAD1 and HAD4.

Historic Environment

105. Neighbourhood Plan policy HAD12 and Local Plan policy ENV 13 seek to ensure that any assets of heritage merit, particularly those nationally listed or locally recognised are afforded necessary protections and or enhancement through development schemes. The site does not sit within any designated Conservation area and there are no nationally listed structures or scheduled monuments in the vicinity that would be affected by the development. The dwelling at De-Freville Farm is however locally listed and therefore any harm to it must be assessed against public benefits of the proposal. In this regard, the Council's Conservation Officer has reviewed the proposal and finds no harm and concludes that the development is an exemplar development of reusing traditional agricultural buildings for alternative uses and raises no concerns in respect of any potential heritage impacts or harm. It is considered therefore that the alterations and enhancements to the farm buildings would improve the general appearance of this part of the site and the setting of the house, and this carries positive weight.

106. Local Plan policy ENV 14 seeks to ensure that development considers impacts to sites with archaeological potential, with appropriate mitigation secured where necessary. Whilst no comments have been received from the County Council's Historic Environment team, this is likely due to the site having already been developed on and with only a small area of built form being introduced. As such, in this instance it would not be reasonable to secure any pre-commencement condition in respect of securing any investigation of the site.

Ecology & Biodiversity

107. Policy ENV 7 of the adopted Local Plan seeks to protect biodiversity and geological value of land and buildings and requires that through development management processes, management procedures and other positive initiatives, the council will among other criteria, promote the creation of an effective, functioning ecological network. The Natural Environment SPD requires that all development proposals would be expected to provide environmental enhancements proportionate to the scale and degree of the development proposed. The Neighbourhood Plan, whilst not setting out a specific policy requirement in respect to this development, nonetheless sets out a vision to minimise the impact of development on the natural environment and maximise opportunities to improve natural habitats and biodiversity.
108. The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment. The surveys note the main barn complex (Barn A) supports at least two species of roosting bats and as separate bat survey including emergence surveys have been undertaken to enhance understanding of what mitigation is required. In this regard, the applicant's ecologist has recommended a number of measures including the retention of enclosed roof space linked to a maternity roost, programming of works and supervision by a Licence holder and/or Accredited Agent and ongoing monitoring during construction and for an agreed time post-completion.
109. The PEA also addresses other mammals including badgers and hedgehog as well as birds (including Barn Owl), reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates and a comprehensive strategy of mitigation and enhancements is set out, utilising the existing and proposed buildings and the landscaped area and margins of the site.
110. The Council's ecologist has reviewed the reports and recommendations and, further to the submission of additional detail, raises no objections to the proposal subject to the mitigation and enhancements as proposed. This also includes the provision of a Construction Ecological Management Plan, which can be reasonably conditioned, along with the necessary scheme of mitigation and biodiversity enhancements.
111. Separately, it is necessary for the development to achieve statutory net gain in Biodiversity (BNG) and the application is supported by a baseline survey of biodiversity value and recommendation of how the statutory 10% BNG can be achieved. The BNG statement sets out that there will be a 52% increase in area habitat value and 189% increase in hedgerow habitat value, as a result of the development proposals. This demonstrates that the proposed scheme will meet the 10% BNG targets through onsite habitat enhancement and creation. A biodiversity

Net Gain Plan condition can be reasonably applied, which will be required to be satisfied prior to the commencement of the development.

112. In addition, the application is supported by a revised Arboricultural Impact Assessment which details the retention of category B trees along the site boundaries and, subject to a detailed arboricultural method statement and soft landscaping scheme, the development is considered acceptable from a landscaping point of view.
113. In summary. The development adequately demonstrates that it has fully considered the impacts of the development on features of biodiversity and can appropriately management these impacts through tree retention, ecology mitigation and enhancement. Furthermore, the development demonstrates that a minimum 10% statutory biodiversity net gain is achievable. As such, the development is considered to accord with the requirements of Policy ENV 7 and the ambitions of the Neighbourhood Plan in respect of biodiversity protection and enhancement.

Flood Risk and Drainage

114. Local Plan policy ENV 8 and Neighbourhood Plan policy HAD15 requires all developments to contribute toward flood risk reduction and requires demonstration that appropriate surface water drainage arrangements for dealing with surface water run-off can be accommodated. Policy ENV 9 seeks to ensure, amongst other matters, that development does not result in a deterioration in water quality.
115. The site lies in Flood Zone 1 and in an area at low risk of surface water flooding. The MAGIC Map website (DEFRA) also confirms the catchment areas are not located above a Principal Aquifer and that the site is not within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone. The risk of groundwater flooding on the site is therefore considered to be low.
116. The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (FRA). The FRA sets out the flood risks to the site (considered to be low) and the current known ground conditions and drainage opportunities. Infiltration testing at the site indicates that infiltration is a realistic option and the surface water drainage strategy centres around the use of a bioretention pond proposed to be located along the south-western area of the site, adjacent to the car park, which provides suitable pollution hazard mitigation. Additional attenuation is provided in the form of a geocellular tank system under the areas of hardstanding. The surface water then discharges to the ground via infiltration at the base of both the bioretention pond and geocellular tank. The drainage strategy also sets out a maintenance strategy for the long-term management of the systems.
117. The Lead Local Flood Authority as the statutory body for surface water drainage and flooding has concluded that the strategy proposed is satisfactory and demonstrates that surface water from the proposed development can be managed through the use of infiltration via the use of bioretention ponds and attenuation/infiltration tanks, in addition to controlling the rate of surface water leaving the site while also providing water quality treatment.

118. The Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioner has raised concerns that the development does not fully consider its impacts on local watercourses, citing a serious pollution incident in 2017 and the route of the ditch on the south side of High Street which discharges directly into the catchwater, then via the Aldreth Canal to the Ely Ouse. They have raised question regarding the discharge rate from the site, and concerns over the use of infiltration, questioning whether this is practical. The drainage strategy and evidence to support the approach is set out in the FRA and the LLFA has confirmed they are satisfied with the proposal to use infiltration with the FRA setting out the results of testing, to demonstrate the site geology is suitable for this method. The final drainage design (secured via planning condition) would be expected to confirm this, as well as the treatment train for water which would take into account how pollutants would be managed through the system before infiltration occurs.
119. In respect of foul drainage, the application does not confirm how it intends to manage this, likely because consent would need to be secured with the local water authority in the first instance. In following the sustainable drainage hierarchy, where foul sewer exists, developers are expected to explore connection to this infrastructure in the first instance, unless it is demonstrated that connection is not viable e.g., in the event drainage board consent is refused. Only after this can on-site means e.g., package treatment plants be considered. Given the low flood risk of the site and confirmed ground conditions, it is considered that a suitable foul drainage strategy could be realistically achieved and the final design can be reasonably secured through planning condition.

Other Material Matters

Ground contamination

120. Whilst concerns have been raised over potential ground contamination, the applicant has submitted a phase 1 desk-based ground condition survey. This identifies the possible presence of contaminants and a planning condition securing a strategy for removal and remediation can be reasonably secured through planning condition.

Asbestos

121. Asbestos is confirmed at the site, forming a fabric for some of the buildings and will need to be removed under licence by specialist. This process is overseen by the HSE under Control of Asbestos regulations. Therefore, this is a not a matter that the planning system should look to control, having regard to NPPF para 201 which states that "The focus of planning policies and decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively.

Other Hazardous substances

122. The applicant advises that they are likely to store up to 4 tonnes of flavour oils and ethanol on site at any one time. This has raised concerns amongst residents regarding safety risks.
123. Hazardous Substances Consent the UK is required where it is intended to store or use ethanol (ethyl alcohol) at or above specific statutory quantity thresholds. Ethanol

is classified as a flammable liquid (Category 2 or 3) with a flashpoint generally below average room temperature (dependant on the alcohol concentration). Under the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 2015, Hazardous Substances Consent is not required to store 4 tonnes of ethanol. As such, statutory consultation with the HSE is not required and the applicant would be expected to follow the HSE's regulations in relation to safe storage and handling. Furthermore, the development does not trigger statutory consultation with the Fire and Rescue Service. Notwithstanding, the applicant would need to ensure their development complies with current fire safety standards and regulations. Again, Paragraph 201 of the NPPF is relevant here.

Damage to property

124. Concern has been raised that development close to existing properties could undermine their structural integrity, particularly give the age of some of the properties. Again, construction of development such as that proposed here would need to satisfy latest Building Regulations and both design engineers and construction personnel would be expected take into account and responsibility for the presence of nearby structures when considering the design and engineering of new development. This is a technical exercise which the planning system is not suited to controlling. The requirements of NPPF para. 201 are again relevant here.

Utilities unable to cope

125. Concerns have been raised that electricity supply to the village may come under strain as a result of the development, citing several occasions of power cuts. No evidence has been presented to indicate that the development would cause or exacerbate what appears to be existing issues in this regard, notwithstanding that the development is not large in scale and the applicant would need to ensure that their operations are supported by adequate energy infrastructure, a matter which would fall outside of the planning regime.

Construction impacts

126. Construction of the development is likely to cause some short-term disruption, but impacts can be minimised, as is standard via a Construction Management Plan (CMP). The CMP can also include a construction traffic routing plan to ensure the aforementioned issues of HGVs using short cuts to access the site are avoided.

Precedent

127. One resident has raised concerns that in approving the development this would set a precedent for further development outside of the settlement boundary. In this regard, this application has been determined on its merits against current local and national planning policies, as would any further development proposals. As such, it is not considered that this development would set any such precedent.

Planning Balance

128. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

129. The development would result in the re-use of the site for new employment purposes, supporting around 30 full-time equivalent jobs and would involve the retention and re-use of the historic arrangement of farm buildings and enhancement to their appearance, where there are currently clear signs of dilapidation and neglect. This would yield social, environmental and economic benefits and carries significant positive weight.
130. Net gains in biodiversity and biodiversity enhancements are achievable through the scheme. This carries neutral weight, given their policy requirement.
131. The use of the site for alternative purposes is acceptable in principle. However, the scale and nature of the development, specifically in respect to the impacts accrued by the volume of traffic, due to the lack of alternative travel options and the location of the access, would have a significant detrimental impact to the relatively tranquil character of the village and living conditions of residents (by virtue of noise and vibration) immediately around the access. These issues carry significant negative weight and are in direct conflict with local and national planning policies, which seek to achieve avoid adverse impacts and secure high quality living environments.
132. In applying the planning balance, it is considered that proposal is in conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole, and there are no material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan in this instance.

Human Rights Act

133. The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, and in particular Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority, such as East Cambridgeshire District Council, to act in a manner that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests / the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance. The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest and the recommendation set out below is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

Equalities and Diversities

134. In considering this planning application due regard has been had to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to put an end to unlawful behaviour that is banned by the Equality Act, including discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. Account has been taken of the PSED and it is considered that the recommendation set out below would not undermine the objectives of the duty.

RECOMMENDATION

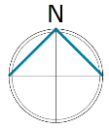
135. Members are recommended to refuse the application for the following reasons.
1. The proposed development would result in a significant intensification in the amount and nature of traffic generated entering and exiting the application site. Due to the location and proximity of the proposed access to neighbouring properties, this would result in unmitigated noise and disturbance to the nearest residential dwellings. Therefore, the application is considered to be contrary to policies EMP 2, EMP 3, EMP 4, COM 7 and ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015, policies HAD 1 and HAD 4 of the Haddenham and Aldreth Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031.
 2. Whilst it is acknowledged that the site previously operated as a farm, it is considered that the proposed development would be substantially different in character, in terms of site layout, access location, on-site activity and frequency and volume of traffic entering and exiting the site which cumulatively would bring about significant change to the character of the site, adversely impacting the rural and relatively tranquil character of the area. This would be in conflict with policies GROWTH 2, ENV 1, ENV2, ENV 9, EMP 2, EMP 3, EMP 4 and COM 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015, and policy HAD 13 of the Haddenham and Aldreth Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2031.

Plans

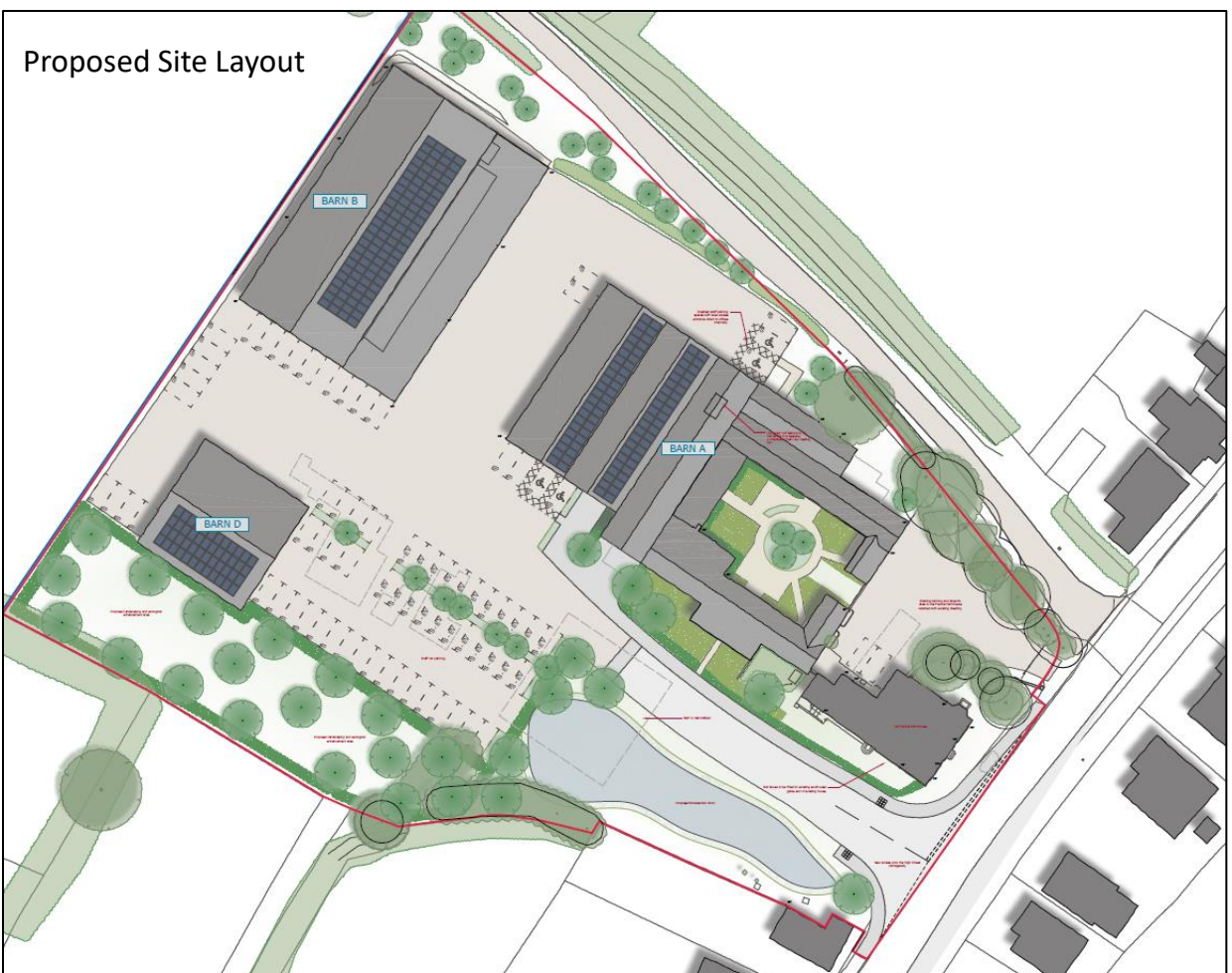
The following plans are a selection of those submitted as part of the application and are provided to illustrate the proposed development. They may not be to scale. The full suite of plans can be found on the Council's website.

25/00312/FUM

Existing Site Layout

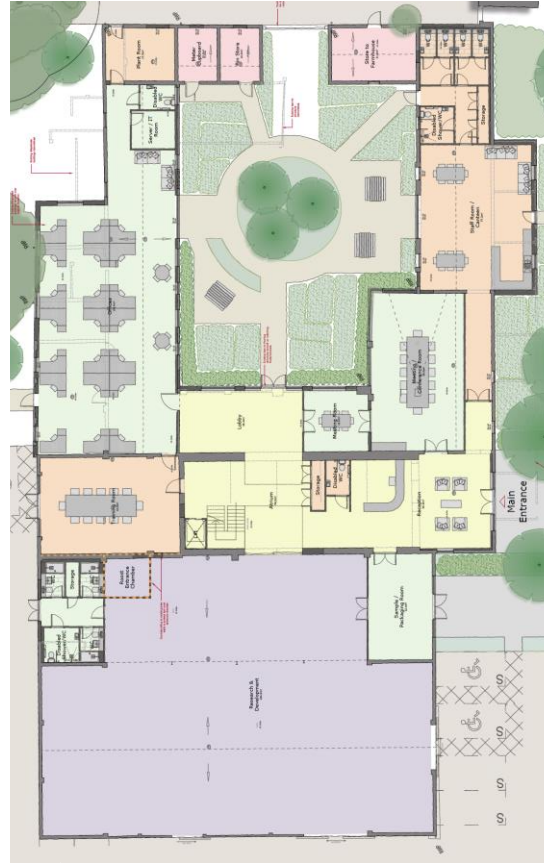
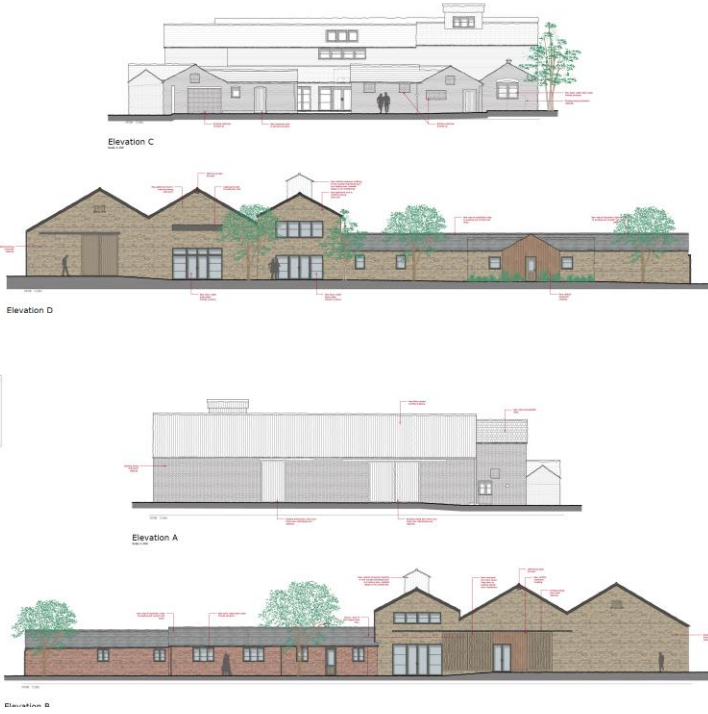


Proposed Site Layout

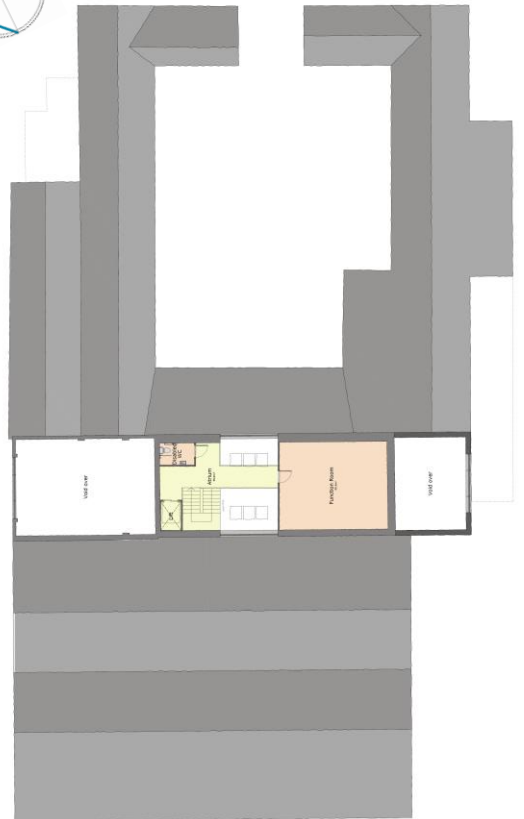


Barn A – Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations

Ground Floor



First Floor

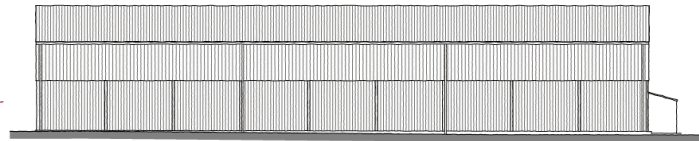
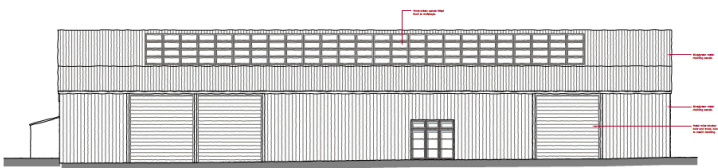
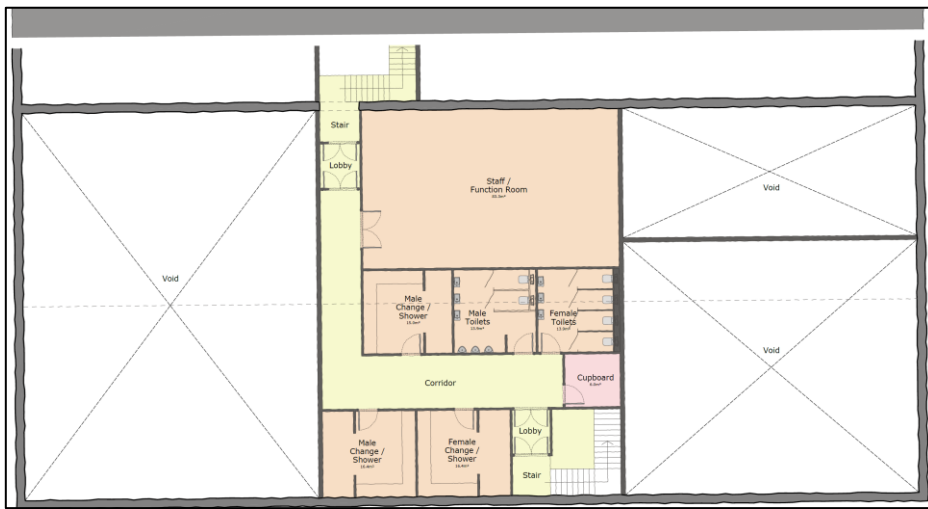


Barn B – Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations

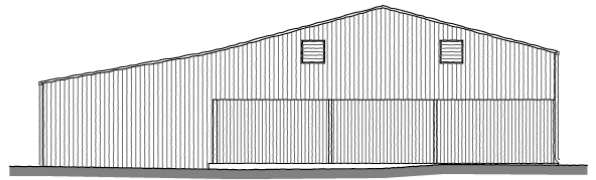
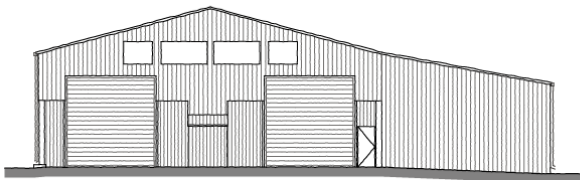
Ground Floor



First Floor



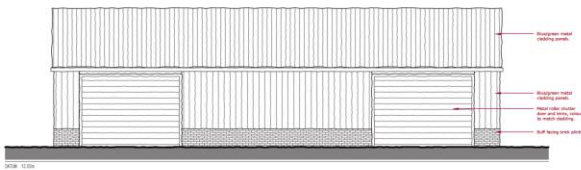
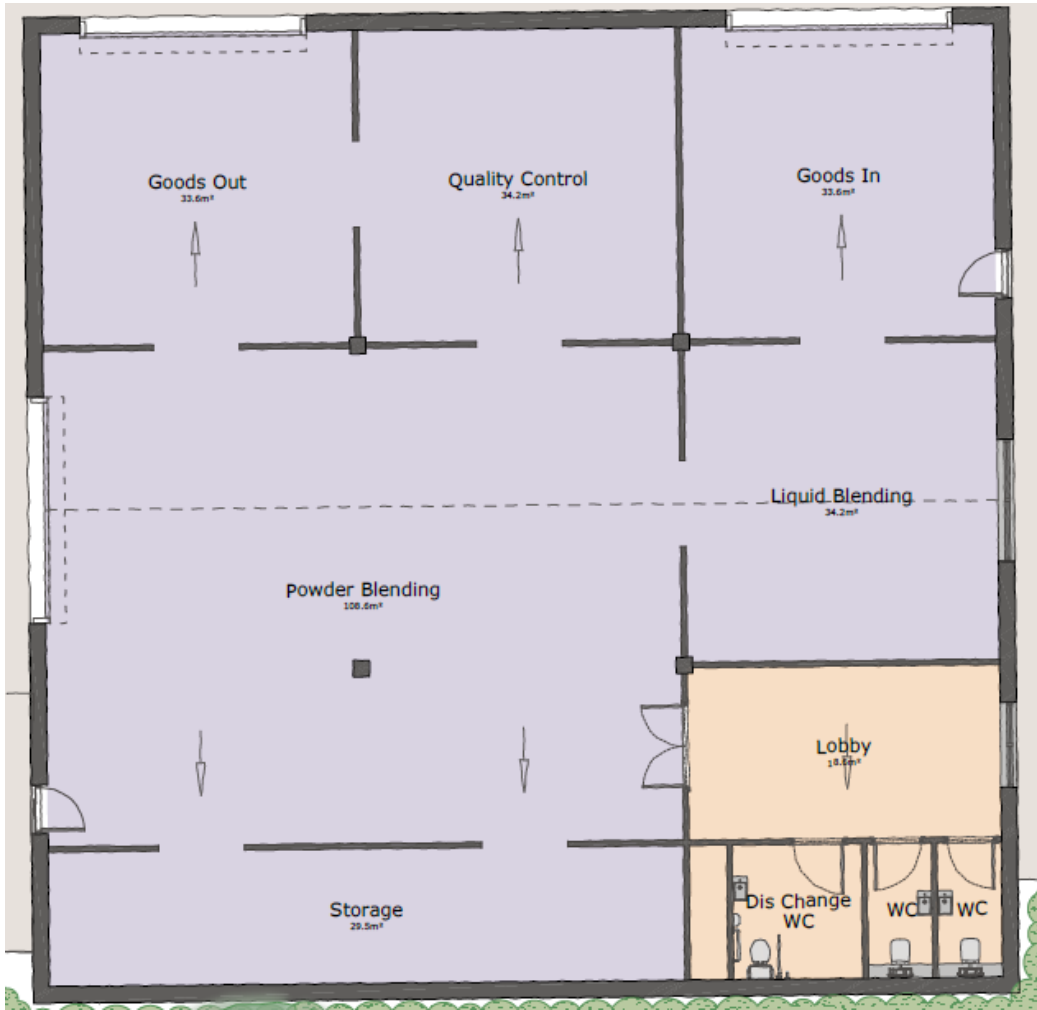
Elevation I



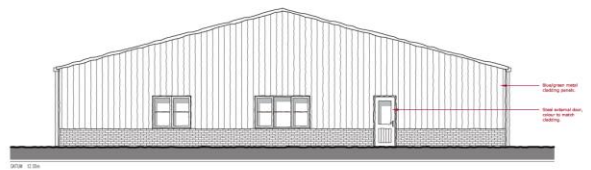
Elevation J

Elevation L

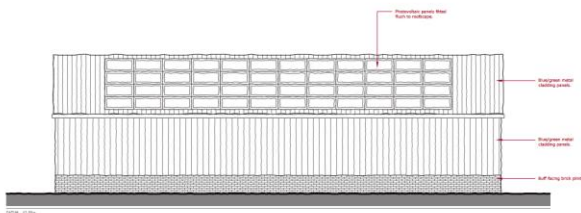
Barn D – Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations



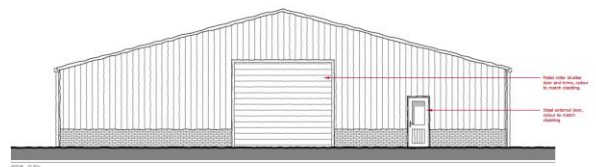
Elevation Q
Scale 1:100



Elevation R
Scale 1:100



Elevation S
Scale 1:100



Elevation T
Scale 1:100