
Supporting Planning Statement

Planning application for egg
laying enterprise at The
Oaklands to comply with
Council Directive 1999/74/EC

Prepared for J A & O Griffiths Sons

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Supporting Planning Statement

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1. INTRODUCTION

J.A. & O. Griffiths & Sons are required by European Council Directive 1999/74/EC to upgrade all cage accommodation systems at The Oaklands to colony modules. The effective date of this Directive is 1st January 2012. This report considers the detail of the EC Directive and its effect on bird numbers and stocking density at The Oaklands and provides a reasoned justification for an application for the erection of two poultry houses to replace older units and the relocation of an existing unit.

The scope of this report examines the onsite egg production and does not examine any details relating to the packing on site of any eggs produced by third parties.

2. COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 1999/74/EC

2.1 Colony Systems

In June 1999 the European Agricultural Council decided after a transition period to house laying hens in the EU exclusively in so-called colony or in alternative systems. The colony system gives each hen 750 cm² surface area, a perch, a nest box and litter. A comparison of the housing requirements are summarised in table 1. The following is a summary of the specific provisions that must be supplied by colony systems.









-  Space – provision of at least 750 cm² of living area per hen, 600 cm² of which shall be at least 45 cm high, and no colony shall have a total area that is less than 2000 cm²
-  A nest
-  Litter such that pecking and scratching are possible
-  Perches – appropriate perches allowing 15cm length per hen
-  Feed trough – supplying at least 12 cm length per hen
-  Drinkers – at least two nipple drinkers per colony
-  Aisle width – at least 90 cm between tiers of colonies
-  Claw shortening devices

Table 1: Comparison of housing systems for laying hens

	Conventional Cage (450 cm ²)	Colony
Animal density (hens per m ² pen)	30	17
Surface area per pen (gross m ²)	1,900	3,000

2.2 Conversion to Colony

The Directive requires a minimum height for colony accommodation of 45 cm. As a result, most, if not all, current conventional cages could not be converted to colony systems the installation of a perch, nest box and a scratching area and hence are rendered obsolete. The current legal minimum for cage heights is 35 cm.

2.3 Timescale

The Council opted for a phased approach to the transition from conventional to enriched accommodation. The Directive required that all systems from 1st January 2003 provide at least 550 cm² per hen of living space and that all systems built after 1st January 2002 be colony accommodation. All systems other than those described in 2.1 are outlawed from 1st January 2012.

3. CHANGES TO ALLOW THE OAKLANDS TO COMPLY WITH COUNCIL DIRECTIVE

3.1 Existing Accommodation Systems

The poultry housing at The Oaklands is a mix of conventional cages and colony systems. One newly erected poultry house complies with EC Directive 1999/74/EC. All laying hen accommodation other than that in OAK 10 requires upgrading to comply with the EC Directive.



There is also a rearing poultry house on site that complies with the all present legislation.

3.2 Proposed Upgrades

As part of ongoing improvements to the structure of the business in order to increase bio security OAK 5 will be converted to a rearing unit. This will ensure higher levels of welfare for J.A. & O. Griffiths & Sons' laying hens.

Some poultry houses are reaching the end of their productive cycle and if this planning application is approved will be demolished. These buildings are serviceable but rely on dated ventilation and muck removal systems and therefore are less efficient and have higher odour, dust and ammonia emission rates.

The following upgrades are proposed to bring the site and existing poultry houses up to Council Directive 1999/74/EC standards:

-  Replacement of all conventional cages in poultry houses with colony systems.
-  Replacement of three units with two modern efficient buildings.

3.3 Site Evolution

The site has an environmental permit to accommodate 1.769 million laying hens in 16 laying houses and 165,000 rearing pullets in one rearing house within a total area of 38,270 square metres of building. The site currently houses 1,654,000 birds in 13 laying houses and 165,000 rearing pullets in one rearing house the total floor area is 36,128. Following the upgrade of the site to comply with EC Directive 1999/74/EC the site will house 1,484,000 laying hens in 11 laying houses and 330,000 rearing pullets in 2 houses. Following the measures to comply with the EC Directive there will be a total of 37,575 square metres.

Table 2: Changes in floor area

	Floor Area
2008	38,270
2009	36,128
2012	37,757

There will be a net reduction of 170,000 laying hen places following the proposed upgrade and increase of 165,000 rearing places. The two proposed sheds, OAK 11 and 12 will help to maintain the total throughput close to the existing throughput after EC Directive 1999/74/EC comes into force on 1st January 2012.

4. TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS

The following sections detail how the changes to the site as a result of Council Directive 1999/74/EC will reduce vehicle movements as a result of (a) the reduction in consumption of feed (b) the reduction in tonnes of muck removed per bird and (c) the reduction in movements in pullets for repopulating the sheds following a reduction in stocking density,

the replacement of old inefficient sheds with modern sheds and the conversion of OAK 5 from a laying to a rearing unit.

4.1 Increase in rearing places and decrease in laying places

Converting OAK 5 to a rearing house, reducing the stocking density across the site and replacing three old units with two modern efficient units will reduce the number of laying hens on site by 170,000 and increase the number of pullets by 165,000. Laying hens consume a greater volume of feed than rearing pullets as the rearing units are stocked initially with day old chicks whereas the laying hens begin egg laying at 16 weeks approximately. The feed consumption across the site will reduce by approximately 86 tonnes per week.

The manure production will also reduce as pullets produce less manure than laying hens. It is anticipated that the weight of manure removed will reduce per laying hen place due to the stocking density decrease; this is discussed below. Without taking into account any reductions in weight due to a decrease stocking density the manure production per week will reduce by 136 tonnes.

The increase in pullets produced on site will decrease vehicle movements; there will be fewer movements of pullets on to the site. Pullets are delivered to the site in loads of 7,000 birds and repopulate the laying sheds every 74 weeks whereas the rearing units are stocked with day old chicks 2.6 times per year and each load contains 55,000 day old chicks. There be an increase of movements of chicks in by 8 loads per year and a reduction in movements of pullets in by 79 movements per year; a net reduction of 71 movements per year.

4.2 Replacement of Old buildings with modern buildings

The three buildings to be replaced have inefficient methods of ventilation and poor insulation; both of these factors create higher levels of moisture content in the manure. The modern buildings to replace these buildings have efficient tunnel ventilation with inlets in the roofs and sides and high specification insulation that eliminates condensation. Existing records for OAK 10, the newly erected building, indicate that dry matter will be approximately 10% higher in the modern buildings than in the older buildings. As this figure is difficult to quantify precisely it has not been used to calculate the movements and weight of manure produced so the figures represent a worst case scenario.

4.3 Reduction in Stocking Density

The reduction in stocking density in the sheds to be upgraded to meet Council Directive 1999/74/EC will increase the air flow in each shed, this in turn will reduce moisture content and therefore the weight of manure removed from the sheds per bird. Again, these figures are difficult to quantify and have therefore not been taken into account in the total weight of manure produced figures for the site; again, for this reason, the movement figures represent a worst case scenario.

4.4 Summary of movement reductions

The following two tables schedule, in the first instance, the existing vehicle movements, and in the second instance the worst case scenario schedule of movements following the upgrade of the site to meet Council Directive 1999/74/EC standards. The figures are based on weekly averages; there will be periods of higher intensity during depopulation but generally the figures remain fairly static during the 72 week laying periods.

Table 3: Existing Vehicle Movements Associated with Oaklands Laying Hen Enterprise

Commodity	Delivery / Collection	Vehicle Type	Frequency	Number of Movements per week	Movements by Type
Fuel	Delivery: tankers	HGV	Weekly	7	
Feed	Delivery: 28 T	HGV	Daily	51	
Eggs (shelled / liquid)	Collection: 28 T	HGV / 18T tanker	Daily	45	
Birds out	Collection: 28 T	HGV	Once every 72 weeks	3	HGV 108.25
Pullets in	Delivery: 28 T	HGV	Once every 72 weeks	2.1	
Chicks in	Delivery: 18T rigid	HGV	2.6 times per year to restock pullet rearing unit	0.15	
Water	Collection: Tanker		Weekly	10	
Manure	Collection: 14.5T trailers & Tractor		Weekly	73	Tractor 83
Services & Deliveries	Delivery: Vans / Cars		Daily	53	Vans/Cars 368
Staff	In and Out		Daily	315	

Note: one movement is defined as one inward and one outward journey




The following table is a summary of the vehicle movements following the alterations to the site to bring the poultry accommodation to compliance with EC Directive 1999/74/EC:

Table 4: Vehicle movements following site changes

Commodity	Delivery / Collection	Vehicle Type	Frequency	Number of Movements per week	Movements by Type
Fuel	Delivery: tankers	HGV	Weekly	7	
Feed	Delivery: 28 T	HGV	Daily	47.5	
Eggs (shelled / liquid)	Collection: 28 T	HGV / 18T tanker	Daily	41	
Birds out	Collection: 28 T	HGV	Once every 72 weeks	2.7	HGV 99.1
Pullets in	Delivery: 28 T	HGV	Once every 72 weeks	0.6	
Chicks in	Delivery: 18T rigid	HGV	2.6 times per year to restock pullet rearing unit	0.3	
Water	Collection: Tanker		Weekly	10	Tractors 77
Manure	Collection: 14.5T trailers & Tractor		Weekly	67	
Services & Deliveries	Delivery: Vans / Cars		Daily	53	Vans/Cars 368
Staff	In and Out		Daily	315	

Note: one movement is defined as one inward and one outward journey

The following is a breakdown of the reduction in annual /monthly / daily averages:

-  The average number of HGV movements will reduce by 476 per year / 9.15 per week / 1.3 per day.
-  The average number of tractor movements will reduce by 312 per year / 6 per week / 0.86 per day.
-  The average number of van/ car movements will remain the same.

5. HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENTS

As a part of the ongoing overall upgrade and redevelopment of the poultry units, the traffic attracted to the site will continue to reduce, thereby having a positive effect on the immediate and wider highway network.

As a part of the current proposals the Applicant's Engineer has been in discussion with the County Highways Officers regarding the initial stretch of highway carriageway immediately outside the entrance access to The Oaklands in an easterly direction. Under previous planning applications the Applicant has provided additional signage for drivers exiting the site to ensure that all vehicles to turn left from the site, where the roads are better served for the traffic. In addition the gatehouse has been resited to allow for all traffic to stand off the highway when attending the site.

The short section of narrowed highway carriageway adjacent to the site access is approximately 100m long in an easterly direction. The carriageway width is insufficient to allow two vehicles to pass, being an average of 3.25m – 3.6m. At the eastern end of this narrowed section, the road widens to approximately 5.35m – 6.45m to provide a passing area. Having spoken to the Highways Officers – Mr Wootton and Mr Walshaw, it has been agreed that the existing passing area should be extended and widened. Copy of correspondence attached in Appendix 1 In addition a passing area should be provided in close proximity to the access of The Oaklands. These proposals will better serve the traffic generated by the site and significantly benefit the wider public to negotiate this narrowed section. The proposed widening and passing area has been the subject of a site meeting and correspondence with the Highways Officers and their agreement in principle to the details has been given. The agreed details are indicated on Drawing OF-PP-001 – Proposed Widening to Unclassified Road, Estaston.

These proposals will allow vehicles to pull in to allow the satisfactory passing and passage of all vehicles through this section of the highway carriageway.

6. SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Cost of production

The costs of egg production will rise as a result of the EC Directive standards as the costs of the labour and housing increase per bird. The proposed development of two 198,000 bird houses will assist with maintaining current levels of labour on the site and will ensure the sustainability of The Oaklands.

Without the change in Agricultural Welfare Legislation none of the on-site changes would be required. At a time when food security and global shortages are becoming ever more important this application is essential for the continuation of J.A. & O. Griffiths & Sons. It will ensure all existing jobs are secure and maintain business with numerous regional and local suppliers. Many UK cereal growers depend on J.A. & O. Griffiths & Son's livestock enterprise to utilise their produce. Without strong livestock sector UK arable farming especially cereal production would rapidly become unsustainable.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This planning application is essential for the business to make changes to comply with European Agricultural Welfare Legislation, Planning Policy Statement 7 – *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas* states that local authorities should ‘support development proposals that will enable farming and farmers to comply with changing legislation and associated guidance’. As shown the proposal will significantly reduce vehicle movements associated with the enterprise which will have a positive effect on the immediate and wider highway network, this should receive local support and it is therefore respectfully requested that the application be approved.

APPENDIX 1 – HIGHWAYS CORRESPONDENCE