Design & Access Statement

Erection of a free-range poultry unit and associated silos, new vehicular access and associated works at Upper house, Felindre

Prepared for Bright

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Site address

Land at Upper House,
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Powys
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Planning Authority

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Design and Access Statement considers the planning issues associated with a planning application for the erection of a free-range poultry unit on land to the North of Upper House, Felindre. This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted forms and plans.

1.2 The Bright's have an established farming business, which is predominantly beef and sheep. The business has looked at ways to diversify, given the existing economic situation of the beef and sheep enterprises, and the subsidy reduction.

1.3 The poultry enterprise has been fully explored by the applicants, and they are keen to make it happen on their farmstead.

2. THE APPLICATION SITE

2.1 The siting of the proposed building has been carefully considered in terms of its practicality and also numerous planning and environment factors.

2.2 It is acknowledged that the site is slightly detached from the farmstead, however this is done because of the lack of flat land adjoining the existing farmstead, and its location within the village of Felindre and proximity to residential properties.

2.3 The site has been put forward in relation to its relative level nature, its direct access to the main highway, and its visibility is limited from public vantage points given the green backdrop of surrounding land, and the high roadside hedgerows.

2.4 The main objectives of planning policy in relation to agricultural buildings, is to ensure it does not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the landscape. Although the site is detached from buildings, this has been done to ensure biosecurity is maintained, no impact is made upon existing residential amenity and the land levels of the land adjoining the farm yard requiring significant excavation to accommodate the building.

2.5 The proposed site will be landscaped well, and the building given its low lying nature and juniper green colour, will ensure that the building will blend into its surroundings without any detrimental impact.

2.6 Aerial View

2.7 The location of the proposed building has been carefully considered, to minimise its landscape and visual impact. The proposed building will utilise the existing topography of the land, to ensure the landscape and visual impact is minimised from short and long-distance views.

2.8 The site is located within an existing field, which is in close proximity to the main road, its low-lying nature and juniper green finish will ensure that the building will integrate well within the immediate and surrounding area, the site is significantly inconspicuous, and limited views to the site are available from nearby footpaths and roads.

2.9 The poultry unit will be accessed from the relocated field access, in order to provide the maximum visibility achievable from the field. This will be done as sympathetically as possible, by replanting/translocating the hedgerow behind the requisite visibility splays and providing additional planting by the access.

3. PROPOSAL

3.1 The proposal is for a new free range poultry building to provide a 16,000-bird unit within one building. The new building will be accessed by a new field access, in order to provide the best visibility possible. The birds are brought in and remain in the unit for some 14 months.

3.2 This section seeks to explain and justify the design and access principle and concepts on which the development proposed is based and how these are reflected in the individual aspects of the scheme.

The Amount of Development

3.3 The scheme proposes a single building with feed hoppers and access track. The proposed building will be approximately 90m long by 20m wide, 3.3m to eaves. The building will have a floor area of approximately 1800m² which will house 16,000 hens.

Layout of Development

3.4 The development layout is shown in the submitted site plan. It is located in a way which minimises the landscape and visual impact, with no visibility of the building from most public vantage points.

3.5 The proposed building is sited in line with the roadside hedgerow, with the new access proposed at a point to ensure requisite visibility can be achieved when existing the site, and also sufficient turning area within the site for vehicles to exit in a forward gear.

Scale of Development

3.6 A single building is proposed, which will house 16,000 birds along with a control room to control the heating, ventilation and feeding systems. The building will be approximately 90m long by 20m wide and 3.3m to eaves. The building will have a floor area of approximately 1800m² which will house 16,000 hens.

Appearance of the Development

3.7 The building is of a low-lying nature which helps to minimise its visual impact. The proposed building would utilise ridge mounted low velocity mechanical fans which thermostatically control the building. The building roof and sides will be clad with box profile sheeting in a Juniper green colour (or a colour to be approved by the LPA) set above a low concrete base wall. Feed for the birds is stored in two external dark/blue grey coloured, or a similar dark colour to be agreed with the local planning authority, on steel hoppers and conveyed automatically to the building. The external steel hoppers will be located directly adjacent and to the rear of the building.

3.8 Adjoining the building they will be a concrete apron at the Western end of the building that will be for access for delivery and removal of the birds and for cleaning out the manure, egg pick-up, feed and bird delivery.

Vehicular Access

3.9 The access to the new building will be via a new field access. The access will have ample visibility in both directions, and sufficient room for HGV's to enter and exit the site in a safe manner.

3.10 Vehicle movements associated with a free-range unit, is comparatively low in comparison with other farming enterprises such as milking. The movements consist of approximately 2 feed movements a month, egg collection every 3 days and the initial chick delivery and collection 14 months apart and other associated movements, but with light vehicles.

Landscaping

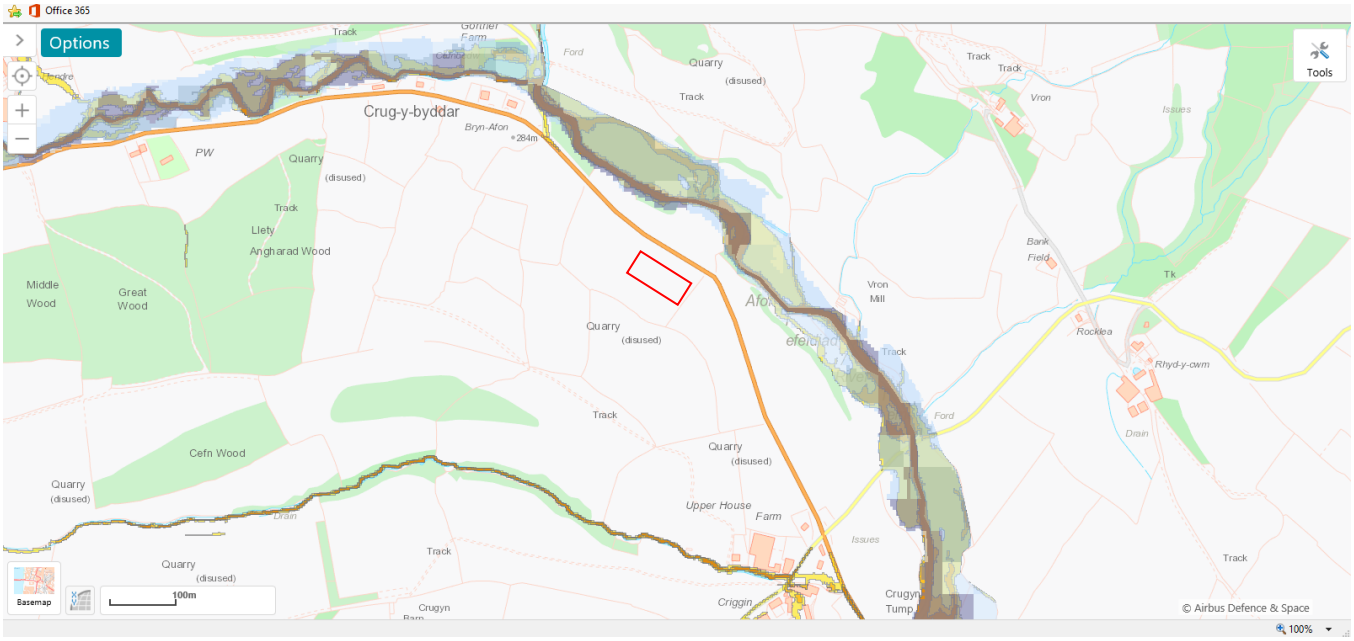
3.11 The location of the building has been carefully considered. The existing and proposed landscaping and natural topography ensures the building will sit in the landscape well. This is further outlined in the proposed block plan, which is part of the submission.

3.12 It's acknowledged that the proposal is 2 fields away from the existing farm buildings, however this location ensures there will be no conflict with other uses on the existing farm and within the village, the site is relatively flat, and inconspicuous in nature given the high hedgerows, and sloping backdrop of the fields.

Drainage

3.13 Construction of the floor will incorporate a damp proof membrane preventing any dirty water percolating into the ground below the building. A stump in the floor will drain further below ground into a sealed tank, which will allow collection of any dirty water primarily arising from the washing down process at the end of the production cycle. This dirty water will then be spread by a vacuum tanker over the applicant's grassland as per the farm manure management plan.

3.14 The Environment Agency Flood Map is shown below and indicates that the building is not within an area that is at risk of fluvial flooding.



Manure Disposal

3.15 The building proposed operates a multi-tier system. The two-tier system allows the laying hens to perch on two tier perches which are slated to allow manure to drop the floor onto the manure conveyor belt. The manure conveyor belt is operated every three/four days and removes manure from the building to a covered trailer parked outside to be taken off the farmstead.

3.16 Manure produced will be a relatively dry product of a friable nature which can be readily dumped for storage where weather conditions do not allow for spreading immediately. Dependant on the time of year the manure is removed from the building; it would be spread directly on the grassland in accordance with good agricultural practice for soil, water and air in accordance with the control of pollution, slurry and agricultural fuel regulations in line with the farm's manure management plan.

3.17 Please see manure management plan.

Dead birds

3.18 Dead birds will be carefully disposed with and collected by an approved contractor under the National Fallen Stock Disposal Scheme. Whilst awaiting collection they will be stored in a secure container.

Emissions

3.19 The building design incorporates the use of mechanical ventilator extractor fans; the mechanical extractor fans will thermostatically control building. Efficient design of ventilation fans has minimised the number needed for this building. Fans will be maintained and inspected in accordance with the manufacturers or supplier's instructions. This will minimise mechanical noise from the unit and also dust escape. Automated feeding by internal conveyor with augers direct from the sealed external feed hoppers will minimise dust creation. The insulated construction of the walls and roof also reduce sound transmission. Detailed ammonia and nitrogen modelling has been undertaken, which is attached to this submission.

Noise and Odour Management

3.20 The proposed building design incorporates the use of mechanical ventilator extractor fans, the mechanical extractor fans will thermostatically control the building temperature. Therefore, they tend to operate more frequently during hot weather.

3.21 The nearest residential property to the fans and feed bins (The Hawthorns) is approximately 335m away. Given the distance and topography, no unacceptable amenity issues will be raised from this proposal on the occupants of The Hawthorns.

3.22 The proposed fan has done numerous manufacturing trials, which we can use as an example, which is the HER710/6/1, and the results are shown on the table below:

	Number of Fans				
Distance from fan to receptor – metres	**1**	**3**	**10**	**16**	**20**
3	61	66	70	72	74
6	57	61	65	68	70
10	51	55	59	62	64
20	45	49	53	56	58
100	31	35	39	40	43
200	21	27	31	33	35
400	18	23	27	29	31

3.23 The above data has been compiled in line with BS848 Part Two (1985) and using the Technical Specification of the Mechanical Fan which confirms the fan selected will operate at a level of 61 d B (A) at 3 metres. When all 10 fans are operational the cumulative sound level should be in the range of 27 d B (A) at 400 metres.

3.24 This is considered to be sufficient evidence that the noise emanating from any activity at worst case scenario would not give rise to any noise pollution to any sensitive receptor.

3.25 The manure will be removed from the shed every 3-4 days via conveyor belt. Therefore, there will be no long-standing manure in the shed which would produce odour. This will also reduce pest activity.

3.26 The design of the building and the incorporation of slatted floors and conveyor belt has a proven history of creating no odour. A poultry unit removes manure less frequently than other agricultural enterprises. Any odour within the poultry unit will not be apparent outside the surroundings of the associated fields, so shall not detrimentally affect those residential receptor points that are closest to the proposed scheme.

3.27 The multi-tier system is a far better system that the historic single tier system in terms of the odour dispersion. The single tier system meant that all the manure created was contained within the building for the full 13-month cycle thus increasing the odour and dust.

3.28 Odour will be kept to a minimum within the Poultry unit itself, with natural ventilation filtering through the incorporated pop holes. Water from the nipple drinkers is also controlled and is prevented from being spilt onto the manure, which would increase any associated odour issues.

3.29 It must be noted that odour is very rarely an issue in a modern poultry scheme, given that the buildings are now purpose built and the technology for natural ventilation mitigation and mechanical ventilation has improved unreservedly.

3.30 The manure will be spread on the applicant's farm holding as shown on the manure management plan.

3.31 It is imperative that there are no rodents on the site as this can impact egg sales so the applicants will carefully monitor the situation and act upon it immediately should any appear. A local Pest Control agent will be employed should a problem occur. The birds are kept indoors at night and predators such as foxes should not be a problem. During the day electric fences around the outside perimeter will deter predators.

Dust

3.32 It is paramount that dust is kept to a minimum in the unit to protect the welfare of the birds and workers. All feed is stored within the silos outside the main building, to reduce dust particles. The open design of a poultry unit and associated ventilation systems limit

significant dust build up. The automated feeding system, internal conveyor and the external feed bins will minimise any dust creation.

Fly control

3.33 Flies are not an issue on a well-managed and hygienically run poultry unit; due to the feeding habits of poultry any maggots that hatch in the bedding are soon eaten.

3.34 Fly problems at poorly managed poultry farms can occur in the following areas:

Feed Storage

3.35 Animal feed is attractive to flies as a breeding area. Problems mainly occur when feed is stored in unsuitable buildings or storage bins that do not function effectively. These breeding areas are designed out of the majority of poultry farms by installing modern feed storage systems to meet the requirement of the Food Hygiene Regulations and the assured chicken production scheme standards.

Field Manure Storage

3.36 Managing poultry manure in such a way that it becomes unattractive as a breeding site is an effective way to keep the fly population under control. All flies go through four life stages; egg, larva, pupa, and adult. Eggs are deposited on the breeding media (frequently poultry manure) and larva (or maggots) hatch out in the moist or wet material where they remain until ready to pupate. Pupation may occur in a drier location than where the eggs hatch. Fresh poultry manure is approximately 60 to 80% moisture. If the moisture level can be reduced to approximately 30% flies will no longer find it an ideal site for laying eggs.

3.37 The storage of manure is one of the most important factors in preventing fly infestations. Manure that is produced, transported and delivered in a dry, fly free-state can in some cases become infested and cause problems. As good management practice, the applicant inspects existing poultry manure stores when delivered on a frequent basis to ensure that there is no fly activity. The following management principles for poultry manure storage to avoid fly nuisance will be followed:

3.38 Manure stores will be inspected frequently for signs of fly infestation and a record of the checks made will be kept for examination by the Local Authority.

3.39 At the first sign of fly activity on in field stores manure will be covered with suitable sheeting material; the sheeting raises the temperature inside the pile to a level which kills any flies or larvae.

3.40 Any manure covered in this way will remain covered for a minimum of ten days before it is used.

3.41 During the summer months from the beginning of May to the end of September manure will not be stored near to residential areas.

Private water supplies

3.42 No private water supply is within 250m of the site, as the properties within 250m are within the applicant's control and are on mains. As due diligence, on the exceptional circumstance that manure has to be spread on the applicant's land, no manure will be spread within 50m of any borehole, spring or water supply, and 10m of any watercourse, and in accordance with COGAP and SSAFO Regs (Wales).

Lighting

3.43 The poultry unit will not include any external or perimeter lighting, as the hens are situated inside all the time.

Quality Standards

3.44 The chickens are managed to comply with the stringent conditions that are imposed by the RSPCA Freedom Food specification, which sets out the standards of welfare at all stages of the chicken's life. Spot inspections from the associations are frequent.

3.45 The unit will produce eggs in line with Defra 'Code of Good Agricultural Practice'. Manure will be spread onto the farm land in accordance with the Control of Pollution of Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Regulations and the farms manure management plan. If the time of year is not appropriate for the spreading of the manure, the farm business has hard standing areas and existing buildings to store the manure until required. The Codes of Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) and Cross Compliance will be adhered to.

4. PLANNING POLICY

4.1 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7) confirms that the planning system manages the development and use of land in the public interest, contributing towards achievement of sustainable development. Local Authorities are required to ensure that the economic benefits associated with a proposed development are understood and that these given equal consideration with social and environmental issues in the decision-making process.

4.2 Technical Advice Note 6 (TAN 6) – planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (July 2010) confirms that the planning system has a key role to play in supporting the delivery of sustainable rural communities. TAN6 also states in section 6 that "The Welsh Assembly Government's objective is a sustainable and profitable future for farming families and businesses through the production and processing of farm products while safeguarding the environment, animal health and welfare, adapting to climate change and mitigating its impacts, while contributing to the vitality and prosperity of our rural communities. The planning system can play an important part in supporting the future sustainability of agriculture."

4.3 The site is within Powys County Council and therefore the relevant local planning policies will be within the adopted Local Development Plan (LDP).

4.4 The relevant policies of the LDP are:

- DM2 – The Natural Environment
- DM4 – Landscape
- DM13 – Design & Resources
- DM14 – Air Quality Management
- DM15 – Waste within Developments
- E6 – Farm Diversification

Policy Analysis – DM2

4.5 <u>Policy DM2 – The Natural Environment</u>

Development proposals will be permitted where they do not unacceptably adversely affect important site designations, species and habitats.

4.6 Documentation and assessments are provided within the submission to address NRW's guidance on poultry units, and they are the statutory body to request any compensatory measures which might be required to ensure their proposal does not raise unacceptable adverse effects on the Environment.

4.7 The proposal meets the requirements of this policy as the development designed to fit in with the surrounding landscape and will have minimal impact on views into the site. Although detached from any buildings, the proposal is in an inconspicuous location, with high hedgerows and the backdrop of the landscape, ensuring the proposal integrates within the agricultural setting. The building has been designed to be sustainable as possible as discussed earlier in this report. Materials will be sourced locally where possible and material already onsite will be recycled. The application will have no impact on any environmental features and there are no trees or hedges on the site.

Policy Analysis – DM4

4.8 Policy DM4 – Landscape

Proposals for development outside settlements must not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the characteristics of Powys' landscape.

4.9 The proposed site is relatively inconspicuous at the moment, with high roadside hedgerows, and a natural backdrop of the valley. Although the improved vehicular access to the site will open some views into the site, the applicants are ready to provide further landscaping on site, in discussion with the Local Planning Authority.

Policy Analysis – DM13

4.10 POLICY DM13 – Design and Resources

Proposals for development must demonstrate good quality design and have regards to the qualities and amenity of the area and resources and follow a set of general objectives.

4.11 The proposed poultry unit is situated away from the existing farmyard, given its location within the heart of the village. The site is however integrated within the landscape and will not be readily visible from any public vantage points, apart from the new opening onto the road. The existing roadside hedgerows are high and limits any views into the site.

4.12 The proposal will include some landscaping to further minimise its appearance in the overall landscape, which will be suitably conditioned.

4.13 In terms of noise, dust, air pollution and odour, these have been addressed in section 3, of which no unacceptable impact should arise to any neighbouring property.

Policy Analysis – DM14

4.14 Natural Resources Wales has published guidance on how developers should consider the air quality impacts of livestock installations on sites of international or local designated sites. This has been thoroughly investigated and discussed with NRW through the pre-consultation process. We have undertaken detailed modelling, and it confirms that no exceedance of more than 1% will occur on sensitive national sites, and no exceedance on local wildlife sites and ancient woodlands.

4.15 In light of this assessment, no significant detrimental impact will occur in terms of air pollution due to this development.

Policy Analysis – DM15

4.16 Waste within this development has been fully explained in the previous sections of this statement. The manure management plan, maps and processes involved with manure belts from sheds, means no detrimental impact will occur in terms of waste.

Policy Analysis – E6

4.17 Farm diversification is a vital factor in the coming years, as traditional farming activities such as beef and sheep are getting less and less viable every year. Proposals for diversifying will be permitted whereby the use is appropriate in terms of location and setting. Although the policy recommends that new schemes should lie within or immediately adjacent to existing farm building complexes, this is not always the best location, in terms of amenity, biosecurity, landscape and other issues. This has been seen traditionally, where new tourism schemes and poultry units have found better locations within the farm holding, to ensure compliance with other policies within the plan.

4.18 In light of the above the diversification scheme is considered fully compliant with Policy E6.

5. ACCESS

5.1 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) seeks to avoid discrimination against people with impairments and disabilities and for instance ensures that work premises do not disadvantage someone with a disability.

5.2 The access arrangements have adopted an inclusive approach and aims to ensure that all users will have equal and convenient access to the site and buildings. The design of the application will have full consideration for ease of access for disabled pedestrian use.

5.3 All of the measures detailed above will be maintained in such a way that will allow all people access to / from and around the building. Also, the facilities within the building will also be constructed and maintained in such a way to ensure people's access within the development.

6. COMMUNITY SAFETY

6.1 Site security is critical throughout day and night to prevent the theft of equipment and livestock, which may injure or adversely affect the welfare of animals. The proposed scheme will be no different to any farm business and will run efficiently and not raise any adverse community safety issues.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

7.1 Wherever practicable, developments shall be designed to reduce energy consumption and maximise energy conservation and maximise energy conservation through the use of appropriate materials, design, layout and orientation.

7.2 The strategic aims supporting sustainable development in National and local planning policy are as follows: -

- promote energy conservation and efficiency
- encourage appropriate energy generation from renewable energy sources
- Strengthen design standards and promote good design.

7.3 Our planning application has taken into consideration the following energy efficiency measures and technologies that can be incorporated alongside wider energy efficient design principles to ensure high energy performance.

7.4 The proposed use is a purpose-built poultry unit which is specifically designed for the welfare of birds. The building will be insulated (roof, walls and floors) according to the most recent building regulation standards in order to reduce heat loss in winter and excess solar gains in summer.

7.5 Wherever possible materials will be sourced and produced locally and will come from a source that can be renewed without harm to the environment. High quality reclaimed materials can save resources and may also provide a better match with the surrounding

development. The scheme will avoid the use of tropical hardwood and look for timber which is certified as coming from sustainable sources. The materials used in this development including the steel, box profile sheeting and fibre cement roof sheets, will be sourced locally. These locally sourced materials can be renewed without harm to the environment.

7.6 The small amount of track and hard-core required for the concrete slab proposed will be wherever possible constructed by using the stone available on the existing farm unit.

7.7 Rainwater harvesting will be considered in the construction.

7.8 The use of the poultry manure on the applicant's land will reduce the amount of fertiliser required to be imported by the farm.

7.9 The development of this land will contribute to the aim of sustainability through the productive use of the above-mentioned features.

7.10 The above points will ensure that the scheme is sustainable in terms of its building design and the supply and use of energy in accordance with National and local planning policy guidance.

8. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Economic Context

8.1 Welsh Government are always looking to diversify and improve rural economy. The applicant is preparing to diversify his farm enterprise to include free range poultry, which will inevitably create employment and produce local produce.

8.2 The farm business is proposing to diversify into egg production, this enterprise has been researched fully and they are confident that the business can be a success and supplement the current marginal farm profits.

8.3 Farm businesses need to change and grow in response to market forces and legislation if they are to survive. Poultry egg laying is becoming an important element in Wales' agricultural economy. The current market dictates that agriculture must adapt to meet consumer demands, the applicant has therefore chosen this enterprise.

8.4 Planning policy Wales is supportive of diversification of agricultural enterprises.

Social context

8.5 The new building will be a new enterprise in the immediate locality. The applicant foresees him allowing school children and clubs to visit the site to learn more about the poultry enterprise.

Physical context

8.6 The new building will be located so it minimises the landscape and visual impact.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The proposal is an economic development that is supported by both local and national policy; it amounts to sustainable development that will improve the agricultural business located on site.

9.2 The building is sited on an incline of the landscape the visual impacts will be reduced because of the background of grassland. The building proposed is juniper green but the applicant is willing to discuss this further should the Local Planning Authority have another opinion.

9.3 The building is intelligently and sympathetically designed and strikes a balance between practical and economic efficiency and minimal landscape impact.

9.4 Adequate provision is made for the disposal of foul and surface water drainage and animal wastes without risk to watercourses through a sustainable drainage technique.

9.5 Adequate provision is made for access and movement of machinery to avert the perpetuation, intensification or creation of traffic hazard.

9.6 The proposal is of an appropriate location, scale and type so as not to be detrimental to the amenities of any nearby existing residential properties.

9.7 This proposal has significant merit, fits within the policies of the development plan and national planning guidance, and it is respectfully requested that the submitted planning application be approved.