

**Agenda Item 7**  
**Report PC20/21-27**

Report to	<b>Planning Committee</b>
Date	<b>21 January 2021</b>
By	<b>Director of Planning</b>
Local Authority	<b>East Hampshire District Council</b>
Application Number	<b>SDNP/20/03965/FUL</b>
Applicant	<b>Mr H Janson</b>
Application	<b>Grain store and drier after demolition of existing agricultural buildings.</b>
Address	<b>Newton Valence Farm, Selborne Road, Newton Valence, GU34 3RN, Alton, Hampshire.</b>

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**Recommendation:**

**That planning permission be granted subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 10.1 of this report.**

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**Executive Summary**

The application site is Upper Yard, an active farmyard within Newton Valence Farm. The proposal consists of the replacement and relocation of the existing out of date and inefficient grain store and drier at the A32 site to Upper Yard together with other farm buildings. The replacement grain store and drier would be a modern facility powered with photovoltaic panels and would sit within a previously developed agricultural yard.

The principle of a new grain store and drier is justified on the need for a modern and larger facility with capacity for 3,000 tonnes of grain, increasing the farm's capacity from its current drier's capacity of 1,500 tonnes. The need for a new grain store and drier is covered in the endorsed WEP.

Whilst there are concerns in the local community regarding the impact that the development would cause to the local road network, it has been concluded, with the Highways Authority, that the increase in HGVs would not be significant as to result in an adverse highways safety impact or to lead to harm to the character of rural roads. This is partly due to Upper Yard not being currently used up to its full business capacity.

Another major concern raised by the community was the potential impact of the drier on nearby residents. A noise mitigation scheme has been agreed with the Environmental Health Officer, who raised no objection subject to conditions. Considering that the mitigation is found appropriate, no harm to neighbours' living conditions is found.

This application has been found in line with the relevant policies of the South Downs Local Plan 2014-2033 and in line with the endorsed WEP without any detriment to the landscape.

The application is placed before the Committee due to the significance of local interest.

**I. Site Description**

- I.1 Upper Yard is the main agricultural buildings cluster of Newton Valence Farm. The yard is approximately located in the centre of the 518-acre farm and it is accessed from Selborne Road.

- 1.2 The land falls to the west of Upper Yard, there is a tree backdrop to the east of the site and a series of agricultural buildings, structures and hardstanding areas within the yard. Some of the existing buildings at Upper Yard are underused or redundant as result of the changes of the farm business from dairy to mainly crop business. The site where the new building is proposed covers an area of hardstanding and underused large agricultural buildings, which would be demolished as part of the development. None of these are of any heritage value. They are in very poor state and, from a site inspection, do not appear structurally stable.
- 1.3 Upper Yard is accessed from three different vehicular access points from Selborne Road on the western boundary of the farmyard. Accesses and yards are surfaced with a mix of tarmac and concrete slabs.
- 1.4 There are several public rights of way in the locality, being public footpath no. 10a the closest to the site, 140 metres to the west of the site. Views of Upper Yard can be achieved from footpath 10a, especially from higher ground levels towards the north west. Notwithstanding this, the application site is set back from the road and sits behind a line of agricultural buildings that screen most immediate views from the open countryside to the west. No views of the site can be achieved from the conservation area, registered park and garden and church in Newton Valence.
- 1.5 The current grain store and drier to be replaced is well located to transport routes (A32) although detached from the other farm buildings and most of the arable land, as it is located on the western edge of the estate. The existing grain store and drier is an out of dated facility, which is claimed to be inefficient as it requires high levels of labour and energy for its operation that go beyond any modern facility of this type. It doesn't have capacity for the current grain production of the farm.
- 1.6 There are several residential properties nearby. Goldrige Cottages, owned and managed by Newton Valence Farm, sit approximately 120 metres to the west of the site. Woodside is located approximately 120 metres to the north of the site and Derwen and Reed Cottages sit over 140 metres to the south.
- 1.7 The application site is located on the edge of the Dark Sky Core E0. The area is also in an area of medium level of relative tranquillity as shown in the SDNP Tranquillity Study.

## **2. Relevant Planning History**

- 2.1 The most recent planning history relating to Upper Yard consists of the following pre-application enquiry:  
SDNP/20/01592/PRE Grain store and drier.
- 2.2 Advice stated that the proposed grain store and drier facility at Upper Yard would likely be supported in principle as it be in line with Policy SD39 of the SDLP concerning new agricultural buildings, subject to details and further information to be submitted. It would also follow from the farm strategy set out in the endorsed Whole Estate Plan.
- 2.3 Officers advised to address matters regarding sustainable construction, ecology, noise and views. It was also advised to provide information to understand the potential impact that the operation of the grain store at Upper Yard would cause to the local road network and to the character and appearance of the historic sunken lanes of Newton Valence.
- 2.4 Officers suggested to submit a planning application once the above issues had been addressed.

## **3. Proposal**

- 3.1 The proposal consists of the demolition of the existing underused agricultural buildings at Upper Yard and their replacement with a new grain store and drier. The new store and drier would be located within the existing footprint of the farmyard, not encroaching into the countryside. This facility will replace the existing old grain store and drier located on the A32 site.
- 3.2 The new building would measure 55.1 metres in length, 26 metres in depth, and 10.4 metres in height. It would have a capacity of 3,000 tons of grain.

- 3.3 The replacement grain store and drier would be built of modern standards to support precision farming and for the overall current and future farming operations of Newton Valence Farm. The building is to be constructed of concrete panels, steel boards of an Olive green finish and fibre cement roof sheets finished in Anthracite grey paint. The proposal also includes the provision of photovoltaic panels on the roof, which would feed energy to the grain drier. Furthermore, the proposal includes new planting within the setting of the building to link the surrounding Green Infrastructure network, as well as some ecological enhancements.
- 3.4 Access, parking and turning space is already provided and the development proposal would not require any alteration to the existing arrangement.
- 3.5 This proposal has benefited from pre-application advice and extensive negotiations with SDNPA officers through the life of the application.

#### **4. Consultations**

##### **4.1 Newton Valence Parish Council: Objection.**

- Concern is raised with regards to the increase of HGV movements and its impact on the historic sunken lanes and road verges.
- The Village Plan makes clear the concern of residents about the state of the historic sunken lanes. The Village Plan also refers to development proposals from Newton Valence Farm to be consulted with residents, but the applicant has failed to do so.
- The application is not clear on the justification to consolidate all agricultural building in one single location and has not clarified what the future use of the A32 site once it becomes vacant. The WEP mentions the replacement of the grain store, not its relocation.
- The noise assessment initially submitted with the application does not comply with the Environmental Health Officer's requirements.
- The increase in HGV movements on Newton Lane will increase health and safety issues due to conflict with horse riders, cyclists, walkers and other vehicles. Potential impact of HGVs on the historic bridge over Newton Lane.
- Upper Yard is located within the Dark Skies Core, and no external lighting should be permitted.
- Regarding the risk of flooding at the existing A32 site, Hampshire County Council is due to provide mitigation for flooding along the road. Therefore, there will be no longer risk of flooding at the A32 site.

##### **4.2 Landscape Officer: Comments:**

- No concern about the introduction of a new agricultural building.
- The application does not yet achieve Policy SD2 (Ecosystem Services).
- Concerns regarding material choices: Juniper Green finish, plastic covered bargeboards. Support to more environmentally friendly materials.
- Surface water flooding: the site could affect neighbouring properties by virtue of the significant area of hardstanding. The site should aim to reduce flood risk and enhance water quality.
- Indirect effects upon the lane from large vehicles and noise affecting tranquillity.
- Changes are recommended to the landscaping scheme: slope to the east to be adequately planted, bird and bat boxes better positioned, trees within hedgerow, new hedgerow link to the woodland, etc.
- Support PV panels.
- External lighting should be kept to the absolute minimum needed and should be avoided on the south east elevation.

##### **4.3 Highways: No objection.**

- The proposed grain store and drier will not generate a substantial increase in the

number of trips on the local highway network over and above the existing situation.

- Proposals will not result in any material highway/transportation implications.
- No conditions recommended.

4.4 **Environmental Health:** No objection subject to conditions.

4.5 **Ecology:** No objection subject to condition.

4.6 **Natural England:** No objection.

4.7 **Tree Officer:** No objection.

4.8 **SDNPA Enterprise Development Lead:** Comments:

- This proposal delivers on outcome 10 of the SDNP Partnership Management Plan 2020-2025 in pursuit of our National Park Purposes and Duty. This proposal is also supported by evidence collected for the SDNPA Economic Profile (2018) Priority 5: Land based industry which highlights the dependence of our economy and natural capital on this sector and stresses the need to support our land based businesses.
- The Newton Valence WEP (2017) states the need for a new grain store and drier and “the need to consolidate all farm operations in one location” and therefore it can be stated that this proposal does not conflict with the WEP in any way but rather represents consistent implementation in line with the action plan.

## 5. Representations

5.1 53 third-party representations were received commenting on the proposal, of which 52 are objections and 1 is in support of the application. These representations are summarised below:

### Principle of development

- There is no need for a new grain store and drier.
- The WEP made reference to the replacement of the grain store, but not to its relocation.
- The A32 site is suitable for its replacement and has excellent transport links.
- The proposal constitutes major development.

### Landscape impact

- Concerns with the use of materials and design of the building.
- Impact on tranquillity due to facility and traffic movements.
- Light pollution and impact on dark skies.
- The proposal ignores purpose 1 of the National Park.

### Highways

- There are only three routes that could provide access to Upper Yard: via Newton Lane, Hullam Lane and Selborne Road. These are not suitable for HGVs.
- Increased lorry movements to and from Upper Yard, through Newton Lane and safety impact on users: cyclists, walkers, horse riders. There is no pavement on Newton Lane.
- The Village Plan makes reference to the degradation of verges and problem with increase of large vehicles. This would lead to erosion of the sunken lanes.
- Should the application go ahead, speed limits, signage and surface improvements should be introduced.

### Other

- The new facility and traffic will increase noise pollution in the area. Potential impact to nearby residents and wildlife. Date and time restrictions are suggested to avoid some harm.
- Potential impact on historic railway bridge over Newton Lane. Potential impact on overhanging trees.

- Newton Valence Farm did not carry out any consultation with the village community.
- Loss of biodiversity. Impact on pollinators that use lane verges.
- Dust and CO2 emissions caused by traffic.
- The grain store will attract vermin and any rat poison will impact other species.
- The proposal does not meet enough challenges of the climate emergency.
- The A32-Newton Lane junction suffers from flooding. Additional vehicular movements would not improve flood risk.

#### Support

- This will make the farm efficient and successful.
- Reducing the sites used by the farm from 3 to 1 will improve efficiency and security, reducing frequency of farm machinery on roads, as well as carbon footprint.
- All this year's grain harvest was stored at Upper Yard with no noticeable impact.

## **6. Planning Policy Context**

- 6.1 Applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant statutory Development Plan comprises of the South Downs Local Plan 2014-2033. The relevant policies are set out in section 7 below.

#### National Park Purposes

- 6.2 The two statutory purposes of the SDNP designation are:
- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of their areas;
  - To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of their areas.

If there is a conflict between these two purposes, conservation takes precedence. There is also a duty to foster the economic and social well-being of the local community in pursuit of these purposes.

#### National Planning Policy Framework and Circular 2010

- 6.3 Government policy relating to National Parks is set out in English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was issued and came into effect in February 2019. The Circular and NPPF confirm that National Parks have the highest status of protection and the NPPF states at paragraph 172 that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in the national parks and that the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations and should also be given great weight in National Parks.

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019

- 6.4 The National Planning Policy Framework has been considered as a whole. The following NPPF sections have been considered in the assessment of this application:
- Achieving sustainable development
  - Building a strong, competitive economy
  - Promoting healthy and safe communities
  - Promoting sustainable transport
  - Making effective use of land
  - Achieving well-designed places
  - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
  - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

#### Relationship of the Development Plan to the NPPF and Circular 2010

- 6.5 The development plan policies listed below have been assessed for their compliance with the NPPF and are considered to be compliant with it.

## The South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan 2020-2025

- 6.6 The Environment Act 1995 requires National Parks to produce a Management Plan setting out strategic management objectives to deliver the National Park Purposes and Duty. National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) states that Management Plans “contribute to setting the strategic context for development” and “are material considerations in making decisions on individual planning applications.” The South Downs Partnership Management Plan as amended for 2020-2025 on 19 December 2019, sets out a Vision, Outcomes, Policies and a Delivery Framework for the National Park over the next five years. The relevant outcomes include:

- Outcome 1: Landscape and Natural Beauty
- Outcome 2: Increasing Resilience
- Outcome 3: Habitats and Species
- Outcome 7: Health and Wellbeing
- Outcome 10: Great Places to Work

### Whole Estate Plans

- 6.7 A Whole Estate Plan (WEP) aims to enable collaboration between individual estates/large farms and the National Park Authority to achieve the ambitions of the Farm/Estate and the purposes of the National Park, and deliver the Partnership Management Plan. A WEP is a non-statutory plan not focused on or to be limited to planning matters but rather the whole husbandry of the Estate – farming, woodland management, conservation, access provision etc. An endorsed Whole Estate Plan is a material consideration in determining planning applications within the farm/estate and provides a contextual background to any development proposals.

### Other relevant evidence document

- Newton Valence Village Plan (2015)
- Roads in the South Downs (2015)
- South Downs Landscape Character Assessment (2020)
- National Design Guide (2019)
- Sustainable Construction SPD (2020)

## **7. Planning Policy**

- 7.1 The following policies of the South Downs Local Plan 2014-2033 are most relevant:

- SD1 – Sustainable Development
- SD2 – Ecosystems Services
- SD4 – Landscape Character
- SD5 – Design
- SD6 – Safeguarding Views
- SD7 – Relative Tranquillity
- SD8 – Dark Night Skies
- SD9 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- SD10 – International Sites
- SD11 – Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- SD12 – Historic Environment
- SD17 – Protection of the Water Environment
- SD19 – Transport and Accessibility
- SD21 – Public Realm, Highway Design and Public Art
- SD22 – Parking Provision
- SD25 – Development Strategy

- SD34 – Sustaining the Local Economy
- SD39 – Agriculture and Forestry
- SD45 – Green Infrastructure
- SD48 – Climate Change and Sustainable Use of Resources
- SD49 – Flood Risk Management
- SD50 – Sustainable Drainage Systems

## 8. Planning Assessment

### Background

- 8.1 Pre-application advice was given in May 2020 on the replacement of the grain store and drier and relocation to Upper Yard (see planning history – Section 3). Advice provided identified the principle of the relocated grain store and drier acceptable, subject to a series of issues being resolved. These include: noise, sustainability criteria, traffic generation, ecology and views.
- 8.2 Negotiations have taken place during the life of this planning application between officers and the agent of Newton Valence Farm to ensure that development proposals successfully address the above issues raised at pre-application stage and are policy compliant.
- 8.3 The new grain store and drier facility is part of a plan of modernisation and diversification of Newton Valence Farm, which started with the Whole Estate Plan (WEP). The Newton Valence Farm WEP was endorsed by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) in 2017. The Newton Valence Village Plan was also endorsed by the SDNPA in 2018.

### Principle of development

- 8.4 The proposal does not constitute major development for the purposes of the NPPF and policy SD3 of the Local Plan.
- 8.5 Policy SD34 of the South Downs Local Plan 2014-2033 (SDLP) is relevant in the assessment of this application as it relates to sustaining the local economy and supports proposals that foster the economic and social well-being of local communities. In particular, it supports proposals that promote and protect business linked to farming, a key sector in the National Park.
- 8.6 Policy SD25 of the Local Plan sets out the development strategy of the National Park, resisting development outside the defined Settlement Policy Boundaries. Exceptionally, Policy SD25 permits development outside settlement boundaries where it complies with relevant policies of the SDLP, responds to the context of the relevant area and there is an essential need for a countryside location. The proposed grain store and drier are essential facilities associated to a large farm enterprise in the National Park, which necessitates a countryside location given its rural location and nature of the business.
- 8.7 Policy SD39 of the Local Plan is most relevant in the assessment of this application as it concerns to new agricultural buildings. These will be permitted where:
- a) There is an agricultural or forestry need for the development within the National Park and its scale is commensurate with that need;
  - b) The development occupies the site best suited to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park. Wherever possible, development should re-use or be on the footprint of an existing agricultural building, otherwise it should be related physically and functionally to existing buildings associated with the enterprise, unless there are exceptional circumstances relating to agricultural or forestry necessity for a more isolated location;
  - c) The buildings are in keeping with local character and of a design that reflects the proposed agricultural or forestry use;
  - d) The proposals include structure planting to integrate the development into the existing local landscape framework;

- e) A building has not been disposed of or converted to an alternative use at the holding in the past three years, which could have met the need of the development proposed; and
  - f) Existing redundant buildings within the application site which have a negative impact on landscape character are removed where appropriate.
- 8.8 It is considered that there is a justified need for the new grain store and drier. This is identified in the endorsed WEP and it is explained specifically by the farm manager in the application documents. Newton Valence Farm works more than 370 hectares of arable land and produces an average of 2,600t of grain per season, with the target to increase it up to 10% in 3-5 years. This would require a new, larger and modern facility to remain competitive in the business. The existing facility is detached from the farm yard, requires high levels of labour and energy for running and has a limited capacity of 1,500 tons, significantly below the NVF's seasonal production. A modern facility is justified.
- 8.9 Concern has been raised by the local community with the principle of relocating the facility from the existing A32 site to the Upper Yard site. Policy SD39 requires new agricultural buildings to occupy the site best suited to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and heritage of the National Park. It also requires to re-use existing buildings, or previously developed sites. The relocation to Upper Yard will meet the above-mentioned policy requirement as it would be located within the footprint of an existing underused and unstable building and an area of existing hardstanding. This would make an efficient use of previously developed land with no encroachment into the countryside.
- 8.10 The relocation of the grain store and drier to Upper Yard will also consolidate all farm buildings in a single site, which is another aspiration for Newton Valence Farm (NVF). The proposal would also be well-related to other enterprise buildings and will help in the efficient running of the farm.
- 8.11 Policy SD39 also requires proposals to remove, where appropriate, existing redundant buildings within the application site which have a negative impact on landscape character. This proposal would entail the demolition of two existing cow barns within Upper Yard that show signs of poor structural integrity. This is positive and in line with policy.
- 8.12 No other building within Newton Valence Farm could have met the needs of a modern 3,000 tones grain store. The existing buildings to be demolished can store up to 500t of grain, their structure is failing and do not have a drier. Their modernisation to a larger store and drier facility is unfeasible. There are no other buildings within the farm that are suitable to use or adapt to a modern grain store and drier facility.
- 8.13 With regards to the existing grain store at the A32 site, it is an out of date, diesel fired facility, with capacity for 1,500t of grain, less than the total average production of NVF (2,600t). This facility was built in the 1950s when NVF was a mixed arable and dairy farm, however, the dairy business ceased in 2012. The existing A32 site does not seem capable of conversion and extension into a larger store and drier with capacity for 3,000 tons given the size of the site. Any alternative modern and larger facility within the existing A32 site would likely lead to encroachment of development into the countryside, which is resisted in Policy SD39.
- 8.14 Third party representations have raised concerns with the principle of relocating the building and wondered what would be the future for the to be vacant site at the A32. Notwithstanding this, the future of the A32 site is not directly relevant to this application and other than use for agricultural purposes within the existing building, further changes would require a planning application or prior approval.
- 8.15 In this instance, the acceptability of the principle of development outside settlement boundaries has been assessed using core and strategic policies SD1, SD25, SD34 and SD39 of the SDLP and the endorsed WEP, and it is considered that the proposal is compliant with the development strategy of the National Park.
- 8.16 Other policy requirements related to landscape and design are discussed below.

### Landscape and visual impact

- 8.17 Policy SD4 relates to landscape character and states that development proposals will only be permitted when they conserve and enhance landscape character. Policy SD39 particularly refers to new agricultural buildings, which are required to be sited where they better conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage. It also requires them to be in keeping with the local character and of a design that reflects agricultural use. Policy SD6 is also relevant as it refers to conserving and enhancing key views.
- 8.18 The building is of a scale that is similar to the existing building to be replaced and its size is appropriate given its siting and the capacity requirements to store and dry 3,000 tonnes of grain. The proposed building would be constructed of concrete panels and steel cladding (Olive Green finished), with a fibre cement sheet roof of a dark grey colour. This colour palette is considered appropriate and it is consistent with other modern agricultural buildings in Upper Yard. They will blend in well in the landscape given their landscape-based colours.
- 8.19 Planting proposed is sympathetic to the character of the area and consists of native species that contribute to better joined up habitats within the surrounding area of the building.
- 8.20 The land falls to the west of Upper Yard, there is a tree backdrop to the east of the site and a series of agricultural buildings, structures and hardstanding areas within the yard. Agricultural buildings within Upper Yard would partially block views of the new grain store when viewed from public vantage points to the west. This new structure, although partially visible, would complement the existing group of buildings. The building would not be an obtrusive addition to the site and would be read as a structure part of the working landscape.
- 8.21 A Landscape and visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was submitted with the application. The LVIA identified potential glimpses of the proposed building from footpaths to the south and west, which effects are mitigated with a green cladding finish. Visual impacts are not significant. Given its proposed appearance and its location and tree backdrop, the building would not block any locally significant view or vista, preserving the visual integrity, agricultural identity and overall scenic quality of the National Park. Officers agree with the LVIA's conclusion and consider the proposal to be in line with Policy SD6 of the Local Plan.

### Traffic, highways safety and rural roads

- 8.22 Policy SD21 of the Local Plan states that development proposals will be permitted where they protect and enhance highway safety. It also requires to give consideration to historic rural roads and the impact of development proposals on biodiversity, landscape and the amenity vale and character of these roads.
- 8.23 The new grain store and drier will be located within Upper Yard, which is the main work-activity hub in Newton Valence Farm and where the majority of buildings are redundant or underused. Therefore, the site is not being used up to its full potential capacity and subsequently, traffic generated by business in Upper Yard is, at the moment, significantly lower than what it would be if the site was in full use. It is also worth to note that the site's Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) movements reduced significantly once the dairy operations ceased in 2012. Notwithstanding this, in the last years, NVF has used some buildings within Upper Yard to store grain as there was not enough capacity and wasn't convenient to use the A32 site. A number of HGVs and tractors already move in and out of Upper Yard transporting grain.
- 8.24 The proposed development would represent, as indicated in the submitted Traffic Considerations Statement, an increase of up to 35 two-way HGV trips per annum from Upper Yard, from the current average of 69 trips to a total of 104 trips. Concentrating all business in a single site, will also lead to a reduction of tractor traffic on the A32 and its junction with Newton Lane, and a significant reduction of trips on Newton Lane.
- 8.25 The Highways Authority has been consulted and concluded that a centralised operation at Upper Yard Farm would not greatly increase the number of vehicular movements associated with the existing operation. It also considers that that the development will not result in a severe intensification of trips on the local network.

- 8.26 Newton Lane and Selborne Road are the main route to and from Upper Yard. These are roads that are also used by cyclists, horse riders and walkers in the area. Concern was raised by the Parish Council on potential conflicts with these users as HGV traffic increases. Notwithstanding this, the Highways Authority do not identify any adverse highways safety impact resulting from the proposal. These lanes are commonly shared by all road users and large vehicles as this is a working landscape, where shared lanes are expected. Furthermore, a decrease in the number of tractors using Newton Lane would be beneficial to other users.
- 8.27 Following from comments made by the local community, the Highways Authority has also confirmed that whilst there is a 7.5 tonne weight Traffic Regulation Order for the area, this restriction does not apply to HGVs used in connection with the transportation of goods to and from premises within the area and for those being use for agriculture. Therefore, Newton Valence Farm lawfully uses and can use the Newton Lane and Selborne Road for HGVs in association to the farm business.
- 8.28 An increase in traffic is considered by the local community to cause harm to the character of sunken lanes in the area due to any erosion of banks and verges. The Newton Valence Village Plan also acknowledges the village's concerns at the erosion, the damage being done at Hullam Lane and the number of HGVs finding a way in and out of the village and damaging the verges. It is considered that the proposed development should not affect Hullam Lane and the centre of the village as the route used by HGVs is via Selborne Road and Newton Lane to the A32. No other routes are affected and vehicles do not need to access the centre of the village and go through Hullam Lane to reach Upper Yard.
- 8.29 Notwithstanding the above, the amount of traffic generated by this development would not be substantial and HGVs already lawfully use Newton Lanes and Selborne Road to access Upper Yard. Given that the current site is not being used in an intensity as to reach its full capacity and associated traffic, and that the number of tractors using these lanes would reduce, it is considered that any increase of HGVs resulting from this development would not lead to a material change of the traffic patterns as to adversely impact the character of sunken lanes.
- 8.30 On the above premise, it is concluded that the proposed development would not lead to a significant increase in traffic in the area as to lead to harm to highways safety, neither to reduce the landscape vale of rural lanes in the area. The proposal is consistent with Policy SD21 of the SDLP and paragraph 109 of the NPPF.

#### Impact on amenity of local residents

- 8.31 The site is located within a working farm yard, where agricultural-related activities take place every day of the week. Notwithstanding this, there are some residential properties in proximity to Upper Yard that are considered as the grain drier would lead to some degree of noise generation. Goldrige Cottages, sit approximately 120 metres to the west of the site. Woodside is located approximately 120 metres to the north of the site and Derwen and Reed Cottages sit over 140 metres to the south. The impact of noise pollution on the abovementioned residents is assessed below.
- 8.32 Following advice given at pre-application stage, a noise report prepared by a professional in the field has been submitted with the application. This has been assessed by the District's Environmental Health Officer who have raised no objection to the proposed development as no harm has been identified to nearby residents in terms of noise.
- 8.33 The District's Environmental Health Officer has also recommended two conditions with regards to noise mitigation measures. These require noise mitigation measures to be installed as per specifications within the Noise Report as well as a further assessment to be carried out once the grain dryer has been installed to demonstrate that the predicted noise levels have been achieved and ensure residential amenity is sufficiently protected. These conditions are considered to be necessary and therefore are included in the set of conditions of this report.
- 8.34 It is not considered that proposed grain store and drier within the site will detriment the amenities of the occupiers of the nearby dwellings to such an extent as to cause harm to their living conditions and to warrant a refusal. It is concluded that, subject to conditions,

that the proposed scheme will accord with the requirements of policy SD5 in terms of the impact on the surrounding residential amenities and that the scheme is acceptable in planning terms to this regard.

#### Relative tranquillity and dark night skies

- 8.35 The application site is located on the edge of the Dark Sky Core. The area is also in an area of medium level of relative tranquillity as shown in the SDNP Tranquillity Study.
- 8.36 Policy SD8 relates to the conservation and enhancement of the intrinsic quality of the dark night skies, and the integrity of the Dark Sky Core. The Design & Access Statement submitted with the application identifies the need of some external lighting when loading grain outside the building especially during the darker months. Some degree of carefully designed external lighting is considered to be acceptable in this instance, given the nature of the business. Any external lighting is expected to be located on the main elevation (north-west), which does not face open countryside neither any Green Infrastructure assists, avoiding direct visual and wildlife impacts.
- 8.37 The applicant has accepted a condition to control the lighting details, which should be in line with the SDNPA Dark Night Skies Technical Advice Note. A condition has been incorporated to the report.
- 8.38 Policy SD7 of the SDLP states that development proposals will only be permitted where they conserve and enhance the relative tranquillity of the National Park. Whilst the site is within a medium tranquil area of the National Park, the replacement building would not be visually more intrusive in the landscape. The new drier at Upper Yard would lead to a higher degree of noise when the fans are in use, however, as stated by the Environmental Health Officer, they would not lead to noise that would harm people's wellbeing. Given that the site currently functions as an active working farmyard, the addition of further farm activity as proposed would not necessarily detract from the tranquillity of the area.
- 8.39 Given the above, the proposal would retain existing levels of tranquillity and dark night skies will be conserved on site, in compliance with Policies SD7 and SD8.

#### Ecosystem Services and Green Infrastructure

- 8.40 Policy SD2 of the SDLP relates to ecosystem services and states that development proposals will be permitted where they have an overall positive impact on the ability of the natural environment to contribute goods and services. This is to be achieved through high quality design and delivering all opportunities to manage natural resources sustainably. Policy SD45 of the SDLP requires for development proposals to demonstrate that they maintain or enhance existing green infrastructure assets and provide new joined up habitats.
- 8.41 The proposal has demonstrated to have an overall positive impact on ecosystem services as it makes an efficient use of previously developed land, does not require changes on ground levels or disruption to soils, it would retain existing embankments and use planting to prevent further erosion from surface water. Furthermore, the grain store and drier would contribute to the efficient management of grain, which is essential in the sustainable production of food. The building, although constructed from non-renewable materials due to food security, would be fed by electricity from a photovoltaic panel on the roof, increasing its sustainability performance.
- 8.42 The site does not significantly contribute to the green infrastructure network, at the moment, only some of the planting beyond the embankments have some value from a Green Infrastructure's perspective. The proposal includes to strengthen the planting within the banks on a north to south direction with new hedgerows and trees to link these with the woodland to the east.
- 8.43 The landscaping plan was considered by the Landscape Officer to miss some key opportunities to link existing habitats and provide ecosystem services. Following negotiations, the landscaping plan has been revised and it currently includes native tree, scrub and hedge planting connecting existing habitats, suitable ecological enhancements and areas of wildflower seeding. This is considered appropriate, proportionate to this

development and a significant enhancement of existing Green Infrastructure. The landscaping proposals are in line with Policies SD2 and SD45 of the Local Plan.

- 8.44 Appropriate maintenance of the planting is controlled by condition.

#### Ecology

- 8.45 Policy SD9 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to conserve and enhance biodiversity as well as to incorporate opportunities for biodiversity net gain.

- 8.46 The application was accompanied with a Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy (July 2020) which include bat, bird and reptile mitigation and enhancement measures within the site and its setting. The County's Ecologist was consulted on this application and raised no objection, subject to the ecological mitigation and enhancement measures being conditioned.

- 8.47 A condition has been incorporated to the report requesting that the ecological mitigation and enhancement strategy should be implemented in full. Furthermore, lighting details are also conditioned to ensure that lighting does not negatively affect wildlife corridors. Given the above, it is considered that the proposal meets the requirements of Policy SD9, subject to conditions.

#### Surface water drainage and flooding

- 8.48 The application site is located within the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Zone I (low risk), where no surface water flooding has been recorded. The site currently comprises a large building and hardstanding with no surface water infrastructure or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

- 8.49 Whilst the Landscape Officer advised that the site could benefit from SuDS, Policy SD50 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to ensure that there is no net increase in surface water run-off. Given that the amount of hardstanding areas within the site would not materially change, it is not expected that this development will lead to an increase in surface water run-off. Moreover, the planting proposed along the banks and surrounding areas will help to reduce water run-off in the area. This is considered to be a proportionate approach in line with the purposes of Policy SD50.

- 8.50 Concern was raised by the Parish Council on the justification provided by NVF for the relocation of the existing grain store and drier from the A32 site, which, amongst others, include the flooding of the existing facility and its impact on the operation of the business. The existing A32 site is located within an area with records of high level surface water flooding. Irrespective of this, it is considered that the development proposal is compliant with Policy SD39 on new agricultural buildings, and the justification provided for its relocation, as per the section above, is sufficient.

#### Sustainable construction

- 8.51 The SDNPA encourage all new development to incorporate sustainable design features, as appropriate to the scale and type of development. No specific requirements are outlined in the Sustainable Construction SPD for agricultural developments, however, these should meet minimum sustainability credentials as per policies SD2 (Ecosystem Services) and SD48 (Climate Change and Sustainable Use of Resources).

- 8.52 The proposed building will feature a great amount of photovoltaic panels on the roof which will feed electricity to the drain drier within. This is a significant design feature in accordance with the objectives of policies SD2 and SD48 of the Local Plan. The Landscape Officer has also supported the use of photovoltaic panels on the roof from a visual impact's perspective.

- 8.53 Overall, the proposal has proportionately contributed with a zero-carbon technology, in line with Policy SD48 requirements.

## **9. Conclusion**

- 9.1 The proposed grain store and drier is a needed facility that would support the modernisation of Newton Valence Farm and its consolidation in a single site, as explained in the endorsed WEP. The new building would make an efficient use of a previously developed

agricultural site within Upper Yard, the main cluster of farm. It would entail the demolition of an existing underused and structurally unstable buildings. No other building within the farm is fit to store and dry 3,000 tonnes grain.

- 9.2 In terms of design and landscape impact, the building would be read as an agricultural building, fit for purpose and which would integrate in its local context. No visual harm is identified. Furthermore, the proposed photovoltaic panels, ecological and Green Infrastructure improvements would make a material contribution towards ecosystem services and sustainable development.
- 9.3 Potential noise pollution to neighbours will be adequately mitigated as it is controlled by conditions. Moreover, although there would be an increase in HGVs travelling across the local road network, a reduction in tractor movements is also identified. Overall, the changes in traffic intensity in the area will not be significant as to result in an adverse highways safety impact.
- 9.4 For the reasons above, the proposed development is considered to be compliant with the Local Plan and the NPPF. Consequently, this application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

## **10. Reason for Recommendation and Conditions**

- 10.1 It is recommended to grant outline planning permission subject to the conditions below:

### Timescale

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)/ To comply with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

### Approved plans

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the plans listed below under the heading "Plans Referred to in Consideration of this Application".

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

### External lighting details

3. No development above slab level shall commence unless and until details of any external lighting of the site, are submitted to and approved in writing by the SDNPA. The lighting installation shall comply with the recommendations of the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) "Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light" (2011) for the Dark Skies Core zone, the approved Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy (Enims, July 2020) and the SDNPA "Dark Skies Technical Advice Note (2018)". The approved installation shall be operated and retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the amenity of future residents, create an appropriate amenity space, protect wildlife, and conserve the landscape and dark night skies of the South Downs National Park, in accordance with National Park Purposes and the NPPF.

### Construction works time

4. No construction activities shall take place, other than between 08:00 to 18:00 hours (Monday to Friday) and 08:00 to 13:00 hours (Saturday) with no construction or demolition on Sunday or Bank Holidays.

Reason: To protect the amenity of local residents.

### Materials

5. The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the materials and finishes as per the approved application documents and the sample materials approved by the SDNPA. Once implemented they should be retained.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development and in the interests of amenity and landscape character.

#### Landscaping

6. The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved landscaping and planting scheme as per the approved Landscape General Arrangement Plan (drawing number 2197-TF-00-00-DR-L-1001 – revision P04 – 10.12.2020). Once implemented they should be retained. All such work shall then be fully implemented in the first planting season, following commencement of the development hereby permitted and completed strictly in accordance with the approved details. Any plants or species which within a period of 5 years from the time of planting die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development and in the interests of amenity and landscape character.

#### Ecology

7. Development shall proceed in accordance with the ecological mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures detailed within the Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy (Enims, July 2020) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the SDNPA. Ecological mitigation, compensation and enhancement features shall be implemented and installed as per the ecologists' instructions and mitigation and enhancement features retained in perpetuity in a condition and location suited to their intended function.

Reason: to protect biodiversity in accordance with the Conservation Regulations 2017, Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, the NERC Act (2006), NPPF and with Strategic Policy SD9 of the South Downs Local Plan.

#### Noise mitigation

8. The development shall be carried out and operate in complete accordance with the noise mitigation measures detailed within the Ian Sharland Ltd Noise Impact Assessment v4 ref M4873 dated 18 December 2020 and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents living in vicinity of the grain dryer and relative tranquillity.

9. Prior to the first use of the grain dryer the applicant shall carry out a noise assessment to demonstrate the noise levels meet the noise criteria given the Ian Sharland Ltd Noise Impact Assessment v4 ref M4873 dated 18 December 2020. The scope of the assessment shall be agreed in advance with the Planning Authority and the results of the assessment submitted for written approval. The grain dryer shall not be used until it has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that the noise criteria have been achieved.

Reason: To protect the amenities of local residents living in vicinity of the grain dryer and relative tranquillity.

## **11. Crime and Disorder Implication**

- 11.1 It is considered that the proposal does not raise any crime and disorder implications.

## **12. Human Rights Implications**

- 12.1 This planning application has been considered in light of statute and case law and any interference with an individual's human rights is considered to be proportionate to the aims sought to be realised.

## **13. Equality Act 2010**

- 13.1 Due regard has been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010.

## **14. Proactive Working**

- 14.1 In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way, in line with the NPPF. This has included the provision of extensive advice from the SDNPA Landscape and Development Management Officers and the opportunity to provide additional information to overcome critical issues and the opportunity to amend the proposal to add additional value as identified by SDNPA Officers and consultees.

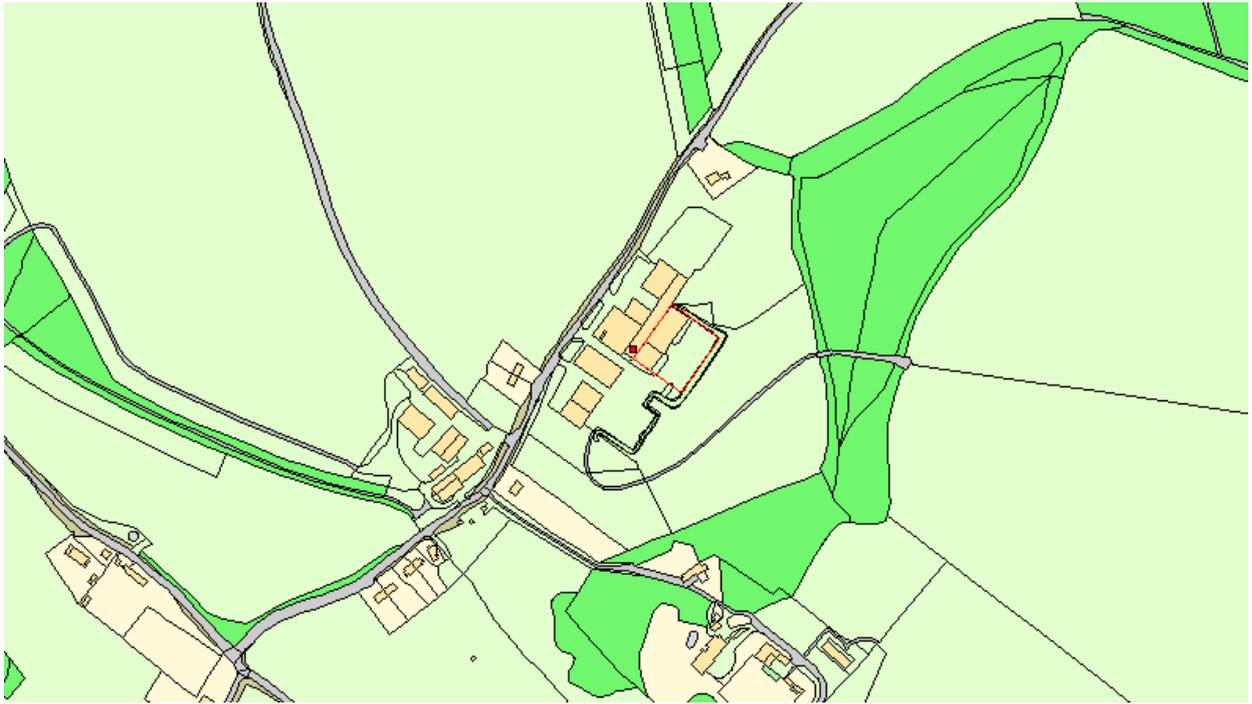
### **TIM SLANEY**

#### **Director of Planning**

#### **South Downs National Park Authority**

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Appendices	I. Site Location Map
SDNPA Consultees	Legal Services
Background Documents	Planning application (documents, representations and consultation responses) <a href="https://planningpublicaccess.southdowns.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage">https://planningpublicaccess.southdowns.gov.uk/online-applications/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage</a> South Downs Local Plan 2014-2033 <a href="https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/south-downs-local-plan_2019/">https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/south-downs-local-plan_2019/</a> National Planning Policy Framework (2019) <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2</a> The South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan (2020-2025) <a href="https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/partnership-management-plan/">https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/partnership-management-plan/</a> English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular (2010): <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-national-parks-and-the-broads-uk-government-vision-and-circular-2010">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-national-parks-and-the-broads-uk-government-vision-and-circular-2010</a> South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (2020) <a href="https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/landscape-design-conservation/south-downs-landscape-character-assessment/south-downs-landscape-character-assessment-2020/">https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/landscape-design-conservation/south-downs-landscape-character-assessment/south-downs-landscape-character-assessment-2020/</a> Newton Valence Village Plan 2015 <a href="https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Newton-Valence-Village-Plan.pdf">https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Newton-Valence-Village-Plan.pdf</a> Newton Valence Farm WEP <a href="https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning-policy/whole-estate-plans/endorsed-whole-estate-plans/">https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning-policy/whole-estate-plans/endorsed-whole-estate-plans/</a> Roads in the South Downs 2015 <a href="https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Roads-in-the-South-Downs.pdf">https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Roads-in-the-South-Downs.pdf</a>

**Agenda Item 7 Report PC20/21-27 Appendix I  
Site Location Map**



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