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<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	23/01924/FULLS
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL APPLICATION - SOUTH
<b>REGISTERED</b>	28.07.2023
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Mr John Haxforth
<b>SITE</b>	Field at Crookhill, Braishfield Road, Crookhill, SO51 0QB, <b>BRAISHFIELD</b>
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Erection of agricultural storage barn
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	Ecological Assessment – 04.10.2023 Agricultural Assessment – 11.01.2024 Amended plans – 11.01.2024
<b>CASE OFFICER</b>	Nathan Glasgow

Background paper (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)  
[Click here to view application](#)

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application is presented to the Southern Area Planning Committee at the request of a local Ward member.

## 2.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site is a large agricultural field located on the western side of Braishfield Road, in an area known as Crookhill. The site is south of the main village of Braishfield and 500m north of Braishfield Road's junction with Sandy Lane / Jermyns Lane, which act as the natural northern boundary to Romsey.

## 3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 Erection of agricultural storage barn. The storage barn would be of a standard agricultural design, clad in juniper-green coloured metal sheets of on three sides, measuring 10m x 15m with a ridge height of 3.6m. Access will be taken directly from Braishfield Road through an existing vehicular gate, with additional hardstanding laid to and around the proposed building.

## 4.0 HISTORY

4.1 None in relation to the agricultural land subject to this application.

## 5.0 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **Ecology** – No objection subject to condition

5.2 **Landscape** – No objection subject to condition

## 6.0 REPRESENTATIONS Expired 09.02.2024

6.1 Two rounds of public notification took place, with the second following the amended / additional information that was submitted. Each round of publicity attracted four letters of objection: one from the Parish Council and three from local residents.

## 6.2 Braishfield Parish Council

- The proposed barn will have a significant visual impact when entering the village
- The siting of the proposed barn contravenes the 2021 Village Design Statement on protected views, as evidenced on Page 14, view 16
- The deciduous hedging / trees along the edge of the site will make the barn very visible during the winter
- Assessment of Flood Risk – the Council has concerns that the site is closer than 20m to a water course.

## 6.3 Representations made by the local residents are summarised below:

- Application is incorrect as it states no trees or hedgerow present, or watercourse within 20m
- Contrary to the local development plan
- Barn is oversized
- Crops of hay never seen being harvested on site
- Significant visual impact on the village
- Deciduous hedging/trees will make the barn visible
- Assessment of flood risk
- Why is this needed? And in this location?
- Will this be a prelude to residential use?
- Additional of a vehicle entrance will cause highway harm
- Drawings not detailed enough
- Building in wrong location – why not move it to the south and west closer to the other storage facilities?
- Footprint of the barn is equivalent to two 3-bedroom houses
- Pure speculation on large quantity of winter feed/bedding

## 6.4 Braishfield Parish Council's second comment

- Not sure why the amendments have not resulted in a new application
- Parish's previous objection stands as the building is substantial and contravenes view 16 of the VDS
- Storage better suited amongst existing collection of buildings behind Jacobs Folly

## 6.5 Additional representations made by the local residents are summarised below:

- Applicant has not adequately demonstrated a genuine need for this large barn
- Noise and light pollution
- Overdevelopment for a rural landscape

## 7.0 POLICY

### 7.1 Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

### 7.2 Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016)

COM2: Settlement Hierarchy

E1: High Quality Development in the Borough

E2: Protect, Conserve and Enhance the Landscape Character of the Borough  
E5: Biodiversity  
E8: Pollution  
LHW4: Amenity  
T1: Managing Movement

7.3 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)  
Braishfield Village Design Statement

8.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 The main planning considerations are:

- Principle of development
- Impact on character and appearance of the area
- Impact on biodiversity
- Impact on residential amenities
- Impact on highway safety
- Braishfield Village Design Statement (VDS)

8.2 **Principle of development**

The application site is located within the countryside, as defined by the Inset Maps of the Revised Local Plan. Policy COM2 seeks to restrict development to areas of settlement unless the proposed development is considered to be either a) appropriately located in the countryside or b) essential to be located in the countryside.

8.3 The application seeks the construction of an agricultural building within an agricultural holding for purposes associated with agricultural activity undertaken on the land. This type of development does not fall within the policies listed under COM2(a) i.e. policies COM8-COM14, LE10 or LE16-LE18 and therefore an assessment is made against criterion b) of Policy COM2.

8.4 Agricultural development is not defined within the local plan, but it is considered to be a type of development that a countryside location is essential. This is due to the large expanses of land required for standard farming and agricultural processes to take place. The local plan (para. 2.33) does recognise that agriculture is a significant part of the Borough's environment and economy. That said, the success of any application for development that requires the express grant of planning permission for the purposes of agricultural will depend on the merits of the particular case. This is assessed below.

8.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (para. 88) also states that planning policies and decisions should enable the development and diversification of agricultural and land-based rural businesses.

8.6 Public comments have been received querying whether the agricultural barn is sufficient for the amount of agricultural farming that is taking place on site. There is no minimum threshold for what constitutes a justified agricultural use, and applications are considered on their individual merits.

- 8.7 A chartered valuation surveyor, on behalf of the applicant, has reviewed the planning statement and the applicants' agricultural holding details and has confirmed that the land is registered with DEFRA as an agricultural unit and benefits from a Single Business Identifier (a unique number given to a farmer or business that is involved in agricultural activity). The surveyor has accessed stock movement records confirming livestock has been present on the field; the applicant has also provided photographic evidence of this.
- 8.8 The proposed barn would be 10m x 15m and used for dry storage of winter feed and bedding; machinery will also be stored. The barn would be clad on three of its elevations, with its front elevation left open. An existing, smaller barn, located to the north-west is to be demolished.
- 8.9 Following the above factors, the proposed development is considered to be an essential form of development in this countryside location and is therefore in accordance with Policy COM2 b) of the Revised Local Plan.
- 8.10 **Impact on the character and appearance of the area**  
Due to the countryside location of the application site, the surrounding area is characterised by the rural fields that separate Crookhill from the main village of Braishfield to the north. To the east of Braishfield Road is land linked to Hilliers Garden Centre and Arboretum; the west is characterised by the agricultural fields spreading from Sandy Lane north to Braishfield.
- 8.11 The various buildings that are found in this wider setting include the small cluster of dwellings / buildings to the south of the application site, Crookhill Farm and Crookhill Farmhouse to the south-east across Braishfield Road, and the Dog and Crook public house to the north. However, these buildings are all detached and do not dominate in combination, or individually, along any viewpoint.
- 8.12 A public footpath (Braishfield: 712) is located 130m to the south of the application site, on the eastern side of Braishfield Road dissecting Crookhill Farm. The proposed building would not be entirely visible from this location, but views here of a new agricultural building would not be alien feature and such buildings are commonplace in a rural setting/area.
- 8.13 Public comments have suggested that the proposed building would impede upon public viewpoints from John Bevan Path, which is designated as an important open view (view 16) in the VDS. A map on page 10 of the VDS places View 16 located between (or close to) the western boundary of the Hilliers arboretum site and the Braishfield Road. Looking at the photo within the VDS this viewpoint may, subject to seasonal variations in tree cover, afford more longer distant views towards the application site.
- 8.14 Notwithstanding this, it is not considered that the building would be a dominant form of development in this countryside setting. Braishfield Road sits on higher land than the application site, and the site is bounded by a large hedgerow. Views of any building are likely to consist of the roof form. It must also be noted that the siting of the building has been relocated further south,

closer to Jacobs Folly and away from the suggested viewpoint 16 from the path. Taking into consideration the size, scale, design and functional appearance of this rural building it is considered that the impact on the John Bevan Path and other public vantage points would be minimal and limited. The dominant feature in the locality is likely to be the large, and existing, tree belt surrounding the application site, and this proposed building would not dominate such a view.

- 8.15 The proposed building is of a size, scale and design that is commensurate with an agricultural use and not an uncommon feature within a rural setting. Similar barns are found throughout the local area, with one shown in the VDS (p.16), located slightly south of the application site towards the Sandy Lane / Braishfield Road roundabout.
- 8.16 The Council's Landscape Officer has also assessed the proposal concurring with the view that there are no landscape designations around the site, with the public right of way not likely to provide any viewpoints of the proposal. The use of metal cladding coloured juniper-green (with materials to be confirmed via condition) as well as the agricultural appearance of the building are considered to respect the character of the wider site. It is however recommended that further planting to ensure that the building is fully integrated into the immediate landscape and to offer ecology enhancements, and a condition has been recommended to this effect.
- 8.17 The proposal is for an agricultural building set within an agricultural field within the countryside. It is considered to be of a size, scale and design that would integrate, respect and complement this countryside setting. It is considered that the proposal would assimilate well into the rural landscape and be acceptable in relation to public viewpoints. Therefore, it is considered that the scheme is in accordance with policies E1 & E2 of the Revised Local Plan.
- 8.18 **Impact on biodiversity**  
The application is supported by an ecological assessment (4Woods Ecology, September 2023), which outlines recommendations and mitigation for habitats and species including a precautionary approach for protected species, as required by the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines within the site boundary. These proposals are considered to be suitable and proportionate to the scale of the development and the Council's Ecologist has raised no concerns. Subject appropriately worded conditions to control this and a condition to restrict outdoor lighting the scheme is considered to accord with Policy E5 of the Revised Local Plan.
- 8.19 **Impact on residential amenities**  
Due to the location and type of development proposed relative to nearby residential property it is unlikely that residents would be adversely impacted by the proposal. The nearest dwellings are Jacobs Folly, Bramleys and Drovers Cottage, which are all to the south / south-west of the application site (approximately 70m minimum from the building). However, the use of the building is largely for storage of hay and fodder and a tractor; these uses are not considered to result in noise pollution to the local residents. A condition

has been recommended to ensure that no external lighting is installed unless details are submitted to the LPA for assessment. The scheme is considered to accord with policies E8 and LHW4 of the Revised Local Plan.

**8.20 Impact on highway safety**

An existing, gated access currently provides access to the agricultural field, directly from Braishfield Road. This same access will be retained and utilised for access to the proposed building, with a second gate set internally beyond the main gate enabling further access into the field. This current layout is considered to be appropriate and acceptable for the proposed use, which would not lead to any material change in the use of the highway. The scheme would therefore not harm the public highway or its users and is in accordance with Policy T1 of the Revised Local Plan.

**8.21 Braishfield Village Design Statement**

The local VDS sets out the distinctive characteristics of the area and outlines design guidance for development within the relevant area(s). The Braishfield VDS has a number of guidelines that it seeks for development proposals to consider. Many of which refer to housing development. Those relevant to this scheme are assessed below.

**8.22 Guidance 1: Proposals should be informed by the TVBC Landscape Character Assessment**

The 'land management guidelines' for agricultural buildings in Landscape Character Type 4 requires the "careful siting of new agricultural buildings". The local landscape character area is 4B (Michelmersh to Ampfield Wooded Farmland) and is characterised as Mixed Farmland and Woodland – Small Scale.

**8.23** The key valued characteristics of area 4B include references to small fields providing a rural quality and hedgerows providing screening. It also lists several key detractors that could reduce the visual amenity of the area. No reference is made to the provision of new agricultural buildings in these key detractors, and it has been assessed above that the scheme would not negatively impact the landscape and countryside setting of the wider area. As discussed in the paragraphs above, Officers recognise that the building would be set against an existing hedgerow providing visual amenity and is at a lower land level than the adjacent Braishfield Road and it is considered that the siting of the building is therefore careful and considers its potential impact upon the character of the area. The proposal respects and responds to Guideline 1 of the VDS.

**8.24 Guidance 2: All open spaces are important and need to be protected to preserve its historic character.**

The site is not historic in terms of any special historic character. The land on which the building will be located is important in terms of open views as it is located adjacent to the main through-road from Romsey to the surrounding villages to the north, including Braishfield. However, the land is agricultural,

and the provision of an agricultural barn is not considered to be an alien feature. The barn would be set below the adjacent road level and behind existing and proposed landscaping. The wider view of the agricultural field and backdrop of a mature tree belt would be retained.

8.25 Guidance 3: New development should be proportionate to its plot and sit comfortably in the street scene.

As above, the development would not be dominant within the wider street scene. In terms of its size and scale, the submitted location plan confirms that the building is proportionate to its plot / parcel of land.

8.26 Guidance 7: Development should be supported by an appropriate landscaping scheme.

Due to the use, design, and siting of the proposed building, it is not considered necessary for a landscaping scheme to be provided in support of the scheme. It has been assessed that there would be no adverse visual impact / harm. A condition is recommended to ensure that appropriate landscaping is provided to provide enhancements, which is common for countryside development.

8.27 The proposed development is considered to accord with the relevant provisions as set out within the Braishfield Village Design Statement.

8.28 **Other matters**

As noted above in Section 6, a number of objections were received. Some of those have been assessed throughout the body of Section 8 of this report, but those which have not, are assessed below. The following comments are not material planning considerations:

- Crops of hay never seen being harvested on site
- Will this be a prelude to residential use?
- Building in wrong location – why not move it to the south and west closer to the other storage facilities?
- Footprint of the barn is equivalent to two 3-bedroom houses
- Pure speculation on large quantity of winter feed/bedding
- Not sure why the amendments have not resulted in a new application

8.29 Application is incorrect as it states no trees or hedgerow present, or watercourse within 20m.

The application has been correctly made, as it has been registered and is a valid application. It is believed that this reference relates to the submitted Biodiversity Checklist. Notwithstanding this, the application has been assessed by both the Planning and Ecology Officers and no objection has been raised.

8.30 Deciduous hedging/trees will make the barn visible.

Being visible does not mean that a development is harmful or unacceptable. In many cases buildings will be visible from various viewpoints; in this instance it has been assessed that the proposed building would not be harmful to the wider setting of the area. Furthermore, a landscaping condition is proposed which would include additional planting along the eastern boundary of the site.

- 8.31 Assessment of flood risk.  
Taking into consideration the site area and the application located being outside of flood zones 2 or 3, an assessment of flood risk is not required.
- 8.32 Drawings not detailed enough.  
This comment was received in the first round of publicity and prior to the submission of the amended plans. The initial plans were sufficient for the application to be registered, and the amended plans are detailed enough for an assessment to be made. A condition is recommended requiring formal details in relation to external materials.
- 8.33 Applicant has not adequately demonstrated a genuine need for this large barn.  
The application seeks an agricultural barn in the countryside, which is generally a justified location for agricultural purposes. The applicant has provided a statement of justification (submitted January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024) which has set out the agricultural processes that take place on site and is supported by photographs of livestock in the field. It is considered that the applicant has demonstrated a need, furthermore a condition has been proposed to control the use of the building.
- 8.34 Overdevelopment for a rural landscape.  
The term overdevelopment has not been quantified. However, overdevelopment would generally consider a multitude of factors. It has been considered that the scheme is not too large and is appropriately sited within its plot. The proposed use is agricultural, and no significant adverse harm has been attributed to highway safety, local biodiversity or residential amenities.
- 8.35 Why is this needed? And in this location?  
The application has considered the essential need in the sections above (paras. 8.2 – 8.9) and it has been assessed that the justification provided is sufficient to consider the development as an essential need to be located in the countryside. In relation to the proposed location, the application is considered on its individual merits, and it has been assessed that its location is not harmful to the character of the area, to highway safety or to local biodiversity.
- 8.36 Storage better suited amongst existing collection of buildings behind Jacobs Folly.  
Each application is assessed on its individual merits. The siting, as proposed, is considered acceptable. The fact that an alternative location may be available is not a reason for refusing the current application. Officers have not assessed the suitability of the alternatively suggested location, which would, of course offer other constraints compared to the current site. Indeed, the area to the rear of Jacobs Folly currently contains two existing residential dwellings (Bramleys and Drovers Cottage, in addition to Jacobs Folly itself).



## 9.0 **CONCLUSION**

9.1 The proposed agricultural building is considered to be an essential form of development located in the countryside, which would not result in harm to the landscape setting of the area, to protected species, residential amenities and to highway safety. The scheme therefore accords with the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016). In addition to this, it has been assessed that the proposed development would not be contrary to the provisions of the Braishfield Village Design Statement.

## 10.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

### **PERMISSION subject to:**

1. **The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years from the date of this permission.**  
**Reason: To comply with the provision of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.**
2. **The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans/numbers:**  
**Site Location Plan rev 1**  
**Proposed Plans/Elevations**  
**Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.**
3. **No development shall take place above DPC level of the development hereby permitted until samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of all external surfaces hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**  
**Reason: To ensure the development has a satisfactory external appearance in the interest of visual amenities in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy E1.**
4. **No development shall take place above DPC level of the development hereby permitted until full details of hard and soft landscape works have been submitted and approved. Details shall include:**
  - i) **Any car parking layouts;**
  - ii) **Hard surfacing materials;**
  - iii) **Planting plans;**
  - iv) **Written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment);**
  - v) **Schedules of plants, noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities;**
  - vi) **Programme of implementation, maintenance and management****The landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and the implementation programme.**  
**Reason: To enable the development to respect, complement and positively integrate into the character of the area in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policies E1 and E2.**

5. **Development shall proceed in accordance with the measures set out in Sections 4.4 and 4.5 of the Field off Briashfield Road, Crookhill, Hampshire Ecological Assessment (4Woods Ecology, September 2023). Thereafter, mitigation and enhancement features shall be permanently maintained and retained in accordance with the approved details.**

**Reason: To ensure the favourable conservation status of bats in accordance with Policy E5 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016).**

6. **No external lighting shall be installed unless in accordance with details that have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include plans and details sufficient to show the location, type, specification, luminance and angle of illumination of all lights/luminaires and a light spread diagram.**

**Reason: To safeguard the visual amenities of the area, in the interests of road safety, in the interest of protected species and to safeguard the residential amenities of neighbouring properties in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policies E1, E5, LHW4 and T1.**

7. **The building hereby approved shall be used solely for agricultural purposes, and for no other purposes whatsoever.**

**Reason: The site is in the countryside where it has only been demonstrated that buildings related to agriculture or forestry are essential to be located, in accordance with Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016) Policy COM2.**

**Note to applicant:**

1. **In reaching this decision Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) has had regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. TVBC work with applicants and their agents in a positive and proactive manner offering a pre-application advice service and updating applicants/agents of issues that may arise in dealing with the application and where possible suggesting solutions.**
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