

NYMNPA

04/12/2020

PLANNING STATEMENT



Change of Use of Land in Agricultural Use to the Siting of Storage Containers (Part Retrospective)

At

**Studford Farm
High Street
Ampleforth
Helmsley
YO62 5EL**

On Behalf of Mr Simon Dunn T/A BHE Agricultural Contractors

December 2020

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This planning application that this report accompanies has been submitted on behalf of Mr Simon Dunn T/A BHE Agricultural Contractors. BHE Self Storage forms part of BHE Agricultural Contractors. The application site is located at Studford Farm, High Street, Ampleforth, Helmsley YO62 5EL. The site boundary is identified below in Image 1.

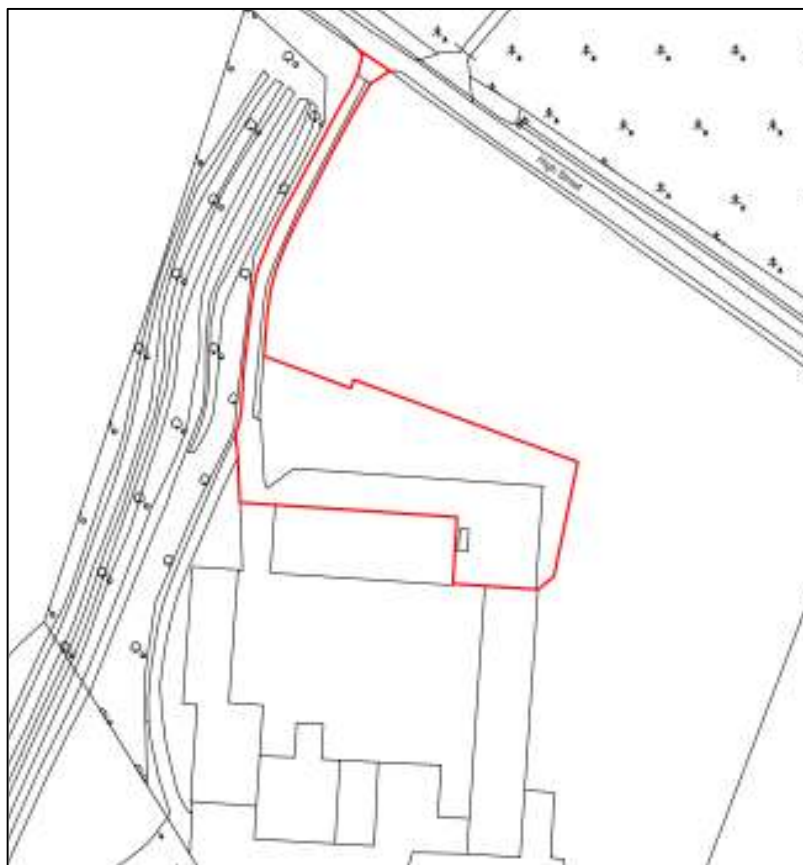


Image 1: Extract Site Location Plan

1.2 The proposal involves the retention of 31 storage containers and the siting of a further 7 storage containers. The storage containers are utilised for self-storage by local individuals and businesses. The proposed development is a farm diversification scheme. The application is accompanied by a full set of planning drawings prepared by Turton Associates.

2.0 Description of Site and Proposed Development

- 2.1 Studford Farm is a mixed arable and livestock farm located c. 1.4 km to the north of Ampleforth village and is located in open countryside. Mr Dunn, who owns Studford Farm, also runs an agricultural contracting business called BHE Agricultural Contractors Ltd. The business provides contracting services for other farming businesses across North Yorkshire such as lime fertiliser supply and spreading, arable operations (ploughing, drilling etc), baling and grassland operations, muck spreading and general services such as fencing, topping, hedge-cutting and flat rolling. In an effort to reduce reliance solely on agriculture, Mr Dunn established BHE Self Storage (which trades as a subsidiary of BHE Agricultural Contracting Ltd) several years ago.
- 2.2 This application is a part retrospective application for the retention of 31 secure self-storage containers and permission is also sought for the siting of a further 7 containers. Each container measures 6m x 2.4m x 2.6m and all are repurposed shipping containers. The containers are sited on an existing hard-core surface and are not permanently secured to the ground and are not plumbed or wired. The containers are sited in close proximity to a large agricultural shed to the north of the farmstead and sit behind a landscaped bund. The colour of the containers matches the colour of the shed exactly (juniper green).
- 2.3 Access is via the existing main driveway to the west of the farm's operational area, and customers park beside the containers to allow easy loading/unloading. The site is open for storage customers from 8 am to 6 pm daily. The applicant is happy to accept a planning condition to formalise these hours of operation (for the storage business only).
- 2.4 Image 2 below is an aerial photograph of the site and its immediate context.



Image 2: Aerial Photo (source: [Google Earth](#))

- 2.5 As mentioned above, the containers are sited in close proximity to a large agricultural shed. A heavily planted landscape belt wraps around the containers (landscape and visual impact is discussed in more detail later in this report).
- 2.6 The proposed development is an important farm diversification for the business. Following the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, British agriculture is in the midst of a period of significant uncertainty and fluctuating commodity prices. In order to survive and thrive in a challenging market, farm businesses have been actively encouraged by the Government to look at ways to diversify and to create income streams that are not tied solely to farming.
- 2.7 Some local farms have diversified into tourism, farm shops etc. In an effort to diversify, Mr Dunn has opted to pursue a different approach and has created a self-storage business with a unique selling point – customers like the security and familiarity of storing their goods and belongings on a farm. Passive and active security on a working farm is provided by an on-site residential presence at all times.

Customers regularly comment that this security is not provided by storage businesses in cities or towns on industrial estates. The customer base is quite local to Ampleforth and they also regularly comment on how pleasant it is to be greeted on site by a friendly face. There is high demand locally and the business has been a success.

- 2.8 Mr Dunn believes that on farm, self storage which meets the needs of a local demographic is a growth sector. It reduces the need for local people and businesses to travel to meet their storage needs, they store their goods locally with a farmer (who many of the customers already know) and rightly feel their valuables are safe and well looked after.
- 2.9 The storage business works in harmony with the farm's agricultural business activities. The location in which the containers are sited (and to be sited) is on the edge of the farmstead and customers do not have to cross the yard area to access their storage containers.
- 2.10 BHE Self Storage has created one full-time job and one part-time job since it commenced operations several years ago, thus making a contribution to the local economy.

3.0 Planning History

3.1 Based on information obtained from the North York Moors Public Access website, the following applications have been submitted at Studford Farm.

Application Number	Site Address	Development Description	Status	Decision
30060101	STUDFORD FARM, AMPLEFORTH	ERECTION OF A SINGLE STOREY DOUBLE GARAGE	FINAL DECISION	Approved with Conditions
NYM/2017/0752/FL	Studford Farm, High Street, Ampleforth	erection of agricultural livestock/storage building	FINAL DECISION	Approved with Conditions
NYM/2017/0489/CU	Studford Farm, High Street, Ampleforth	change of use of farmyard to self-storage compound for up to 50 self-storage containers	FINAL DECISION	Refused
NYM/2017/0180/FL	Studford Farm, High Street, Ampleforth	erection of general purpose agricultural building	FINAL DECISION	Approved with Conditions
NYM/2016/0480/AGRP	Studford Farm, High Street, Ampleforth	erection of extension to agricultural storage building	FINAL DECISION	AFSDO Approved with conditions
NYM/2015/0442/FL	Studford Farm, High Street, Ampleforth	construction of building for storage purposes and to house biomass boiler together with re-routing of access track	FINAL DECISION	Approved with Conditions
NYM/2014/0463/FL	Studford Farm, Ampleforth	construction of agricultural storage building and water storage harvester and creation of access following demolition of existing building	FINAL DECISION	Approved with Conditions
NYM/2012/0167/FL	Studford Farm High Street Sproxton	material minor amendment to planning approval NYM2007/0338/FL (allowed on appeal) to allow an increase in size of footprint and alterations to the design of the lodges together with the erection of timber plant room	FINAL DECISION	Approved with Conditions
NYM/2011/0471/CVC	Studford Farm High Street Sproxton	verification check of conditions 2, 4, 5 & 9 of planning approval (allowed on appeal) NYM/2007/0338/FL	FINAL DECISION	CVC Decided
NYM/2011/0288/CLE	Studford Farm Sproxton	certificate of lawfulness for construction of dwelling in excess of 4 years	FINAL DECISION	Certificate of Lawfulness Issued

Application Number	Site Address	Development Description	Status	Decision
NYM/2009/0535/FL	Studford Farm Sproxton	construction of a 12 kennel dog boarding facility	FINAL DECISION	Approved with Conditions
NYM/2007/0338/FL	Studford Farm Sproxton	construction of 6 no. holiday lodges (revised scheme)	APPEAL DECIDED	Refused
NYM/2006/0056/FL	Studford Farm High Street Sproxton	erection of 6 no. holiday lodges	FINAL DECISION	Refused

Image 3: Planning History (Source: North York Moors National Park Public Access)

3.2 The most relevant application to this submission is NYM/2017/0489/CU for change of use of farmyard to self-storage compound for up to 50 self-storage containers.

3.3 The application was refused for the following reason:

“The Local Planning Authority considers there to be no essential need for the proposed business to be located in the open countryside of the National Park where it fails to make use of an existing building, would not provide employment opportunities to support the local rural community and would generate additional traffic movements within the National Park. Furthermore, the proposal would enlarge the existing site giving it much more the appearance of an industrial estate rather than a working farmyard, which would be visually harmful in the landscape of this area of the National Park. The proposal is therefore contrary to Core Policies A, B and H and Development Policies 10 and 13 of the Core Strategy and Development Policies Document.”

3.4 The current application involves fewer containers which are sited/to be sited in a different location. We believe that this application and this planning statement address the reason for refusal set out above and in the decision notice dated 5th September 2017.

4.0 Planning Policy

Local Planning Policy

- 4.1 Applications are to be determined in accordance with the policies in the Development Plan. In this case, the Development Plan for the area comprises the North York Moors National Park Authority Local Plan 2020 ('the Local Plan'), the Whitby Business Park Area Action Plan (November 2014) and the Helmsley Plan Local Plan (July 2015).
- 4.2 The Local Plan seeks to balance the overriding need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park. It also acknowledges that there is a need for new homes, jobs and services.
- 4.3 The Local Plan sets out planning policies for the North York Moors National Park that is used to help decide planning applications.
- 4.4 The policies most relevant to this proposal are:
- Strategic Policy C – Quality and Design of Development – sets out the design standards to maintain and enhance the distinctive character of the National Park.
 - Strategic Policy E – The Natural Environment - reinforces consideration of how new development can contribute to the first National Park statutory purpose – to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the National Park.
 - Strategic Policy G – Landscape – ensure that the high quality, diverse and distinctive landscapes of the North York Moors are conserved and enhanced.
 - Strategic Policy H – Habitats, Biodiversity and Geodiversity – seeks to maintain and enhance habitats, wildlife and geological assets which are central to the National Park's first purpose.
 - Policy ENV1 – Trees, Woodlands, Traditional Orchards and Hedgerows – ensures there will be a presumption in favour of the retention and enhancement of existing trees, woodland, traditional orchards and hedgerows of value on all developments.

- Policy ENV2 – Tranquillity – maintaining and enhancing tranquillity in the National Park. Development proposals will only be permitted where there is no unacceptable impact on the tranquillity of the surrounding area.
- Policy ENV4 – Dark Night Skies - The darkness of the night skies above the National Park will be maintained and where possible enhanced. All development will be expected to minimise light spillage through good design and lighting management.
- Policy ENV5 – Flood Risk – New development will only be permitted where it meets the sequential approach to development in areas of flood risk, and it does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- Policy ENV7 – Environmental Protection – to protect the natural environment, development will only be permitted where it does not risk harm to water, soil, and air quality and does not generate unacceptable levels of noise, vibration or odour.
- Strategic Policy K – The Rural Economy - is intended to encourage the development of rural-based businesses which can benefit from the environmental, economic and social resources offered by the National Park in a way that contributes to the economic and social well-being of communities whilst not depleting or compromising those resources.
- Policy CO2 – Highways – permits new development where it is of a scale which the adjacent road network has the capacity to serve without detriment to highway safety.

4.5 Policy BL3 “Rural Diversification” is quoted in full:

“Development for the diversification of existing agricultural, forestry and land based businesses will only be permitted where:

- 1. The scheme is well designed and will make use of an existing building and complies with Policy CO12. New buildings will only be permitted if the diversified use cannot be suitably accommodated through the conversion or alteration of an existing building and where the site is not isolated from existing buildings associated with the business;*
- 2. The proposed use is compatible with and ancillary to the existing farming or forestry activity in terms of physical scale, activity and function;*

3. *The proposal is of a quality, scale and design that takes into account and reflects the sensitivity of the local landscape;*
4. *Existing access arrangements are appropriate for the proposed use and the site can be safely accessed by the existing road network; and*
5. *There are satisfactory arrangements for storage, parking and the manoeuvring of vehicles.”*

National Planning Policy

- 4.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration and is the Government's overarching framework for planning policy.
- 4.7 The NPPF identifies that applications should be considered in the context in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10).
- 4.8 Proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay and where it is silent or relevant policies are out of date, permission should be granted unless any adverse effects of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole, or specific policies within the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.
- 4.9 Paragraph 38 of the NPPF states that: *‘Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed developments in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available....and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible’*
- 4.10 Paragraph 83 of the NPPF states that:

*“Planning policies and decisions should enable:
the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings; the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural*

businesses; sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.”

- 4.11 Paragraph 84 of the NPPF acknowledges that in rural areas LPAs should recognise the that sites planned to meet local business may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not necessarily well served by public transport.
- 4.12 Paragraph 155 recognises inappropriate development in flood risk areas should be avoided by directing development away from high-risk areas.
- 4.13 Paragraph 172 of the NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited.
- 4.14 Paragraph 180 of the NPPF advises planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects.

5.0 Planning Considerations

Principle of Use

- 5.1 The proposed development lies outside the development limits of Ampleforth and is therefore in Countryside as shown on the extract from the Local Plan Policies Map (see below).

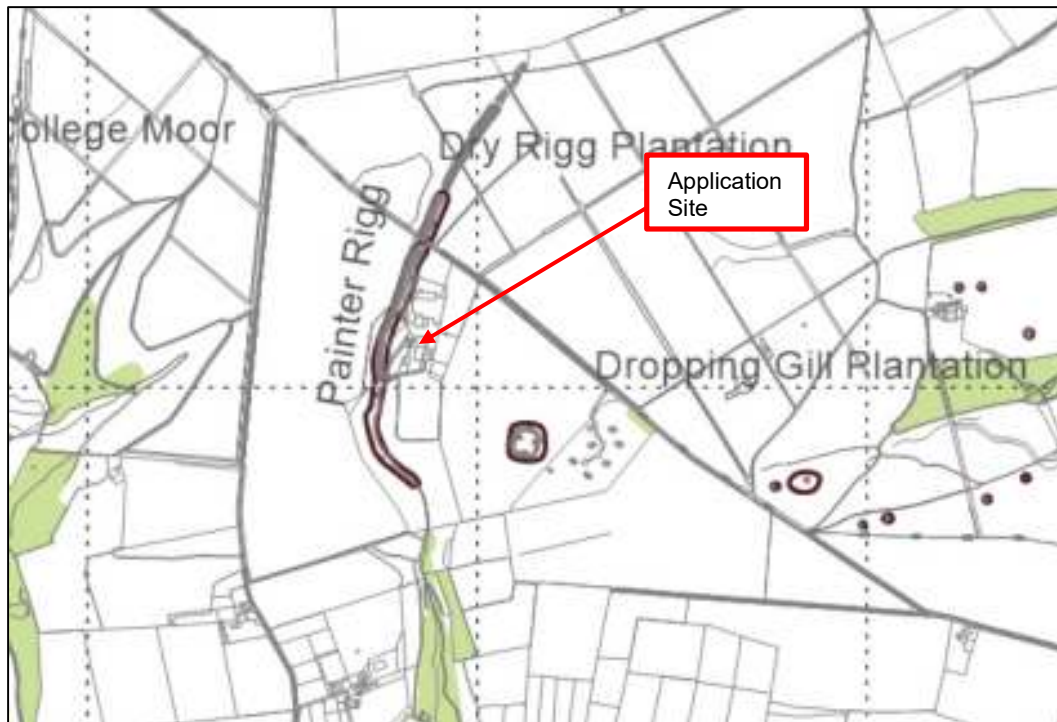


Image 4: Extract from Local Plan Policies Map

- 5.2 The site forms part of a large, well established agricultural farmstead. The wider site comprises a farmhouse and a number of large and medium sized agricultural buildings as shown on the site layout plan. As discussed above, the application development is a farm diversification scheme.
- 5.3 The starting point of an assessment of the principle of the use for this application is to acknowledge the high level of support that rural business and farm diversification projects receive from national and local planning policy.

- 5.4 The Spatial Strategy in Strategic Policy B sets out a settlement hierarchy by which development will be guided. As the site is located in ‘Open Countryside’ in policy terms, development will only be permitted in certain cases. Criterion 2 states “*Where there is an essential need for the development to meet the needs of farming, forestry and other rural enterprise or land management activities.*”
- 5.5 Paragraph 3.14 of the supporting justification states that in ‘Open Countryside’...*development will not be allowed, save in a very few circumstances (for example as set out in Policies UE1, UE2, BL1, BL3 and CO10). Open Countryside is defined as areas with no development, sporadic development and isolated buildings. Some smaller villages and hamlets are also included within the Open Countryside designation.*
- 5.6 Table 1 below provides a consideration of the proposals against the various criteria of policy BL3. We believe that BL3 relates to farm diversification projects that require new buildings or reuse of existing buildings.

Policy BL3 Criteria	Assessment
Is the proposed development a diversification of an existing agricultural business?	Yes, BHE Self Storage is a subsidiary of BHE Agricultural Contractors Ltd
Does the scheme involve the use of an existing building?	No. No buildings are required. The development is a change of use of land
Does the scheme involve the use of a new building?	No. As above.
Is the site isolated from existing buildings?	No. The containers are sited close to the existing farmstead
Is the scheme compatible with and ancillary to the existing farming or forestry activity in terms of physical scale, activity and function	Yes.
Is the scheme of a quality, scale and design that takes into account and reflects the sensitivity of the local landscape?	Yes.
Are existing access arrangements appropriate for the proposed use and the site can be safely accessed by the existing road network?	Yes.
Are there satisfactory arrangements for storage, parking and the manoeuvring of vehicles?	Yes

Table 1

- 5.7 Policy BL3 therefore in our view specifically relates to farm diversification schemes which require the use of existing and new buildings. This farm diversification scheme

does not require either a new or existing building. It is simply a change in the use of the land. The relevance of this policy to this application is therefore questionable.

- 5.8 Paragraph 6.12 of the supporting justification and Strategic Policy K make it clear that the diversification of existing agricultural, forestry and land-based businesses are supported.
- 5.9 The self-storage use represents a farm diversification scheme which helps to support the rural economy and works in harmony with the activities associated with the agricultural contractors, arable and livestock farming business.
- 5.10 As such, this proposal complies with paragraph 6.12 of the Local Plan and Strategic Policy K which supports the diversification and the expansion of existing businesses in the National Park.
- 5.11 It is also worth noting that if Mr Dunn chose to store agricultural produce, machinery or house livestock in the containers, planning permission would not be required for the containers.

Impact on landscape Character

- 5.12 Strategic Policy G relates to landscape and states that:

“The high quality, diverse and distinctive landscapes of the North York Moors will be conserved and enhanced. Great weight will be given to landscape considerations in planning decisions and development will be supported where the location, scale and detailed design of the scheme respects and enhances the local landscape character type as defined in the North York Moors Landscape Assessment. Development which would have an unacceptable impact on the natural beauty, character and special qualities of the areas of moorland, woodland, coast and foreshore as defined by the Section 3 Conservation Map or on the setting of the Howardian Hills AONB or local seascape will not be permitted.”

5.13 The North York Moors Character Assessment¹ (2004) (NYMLCA) identifies nine landscape character types which together make up the landscape of the National Park.

5.14 The NYMLCA shows the application site lies within the Limestone Hills (5) Landscape Character Type. Each of the LCTs is divided into areas, giving a total of 31 Landscape Character Areas (LCA) within the National Park. The site lies within the Southern Hambleton/Tabular Hills LCA as shown in the image below.

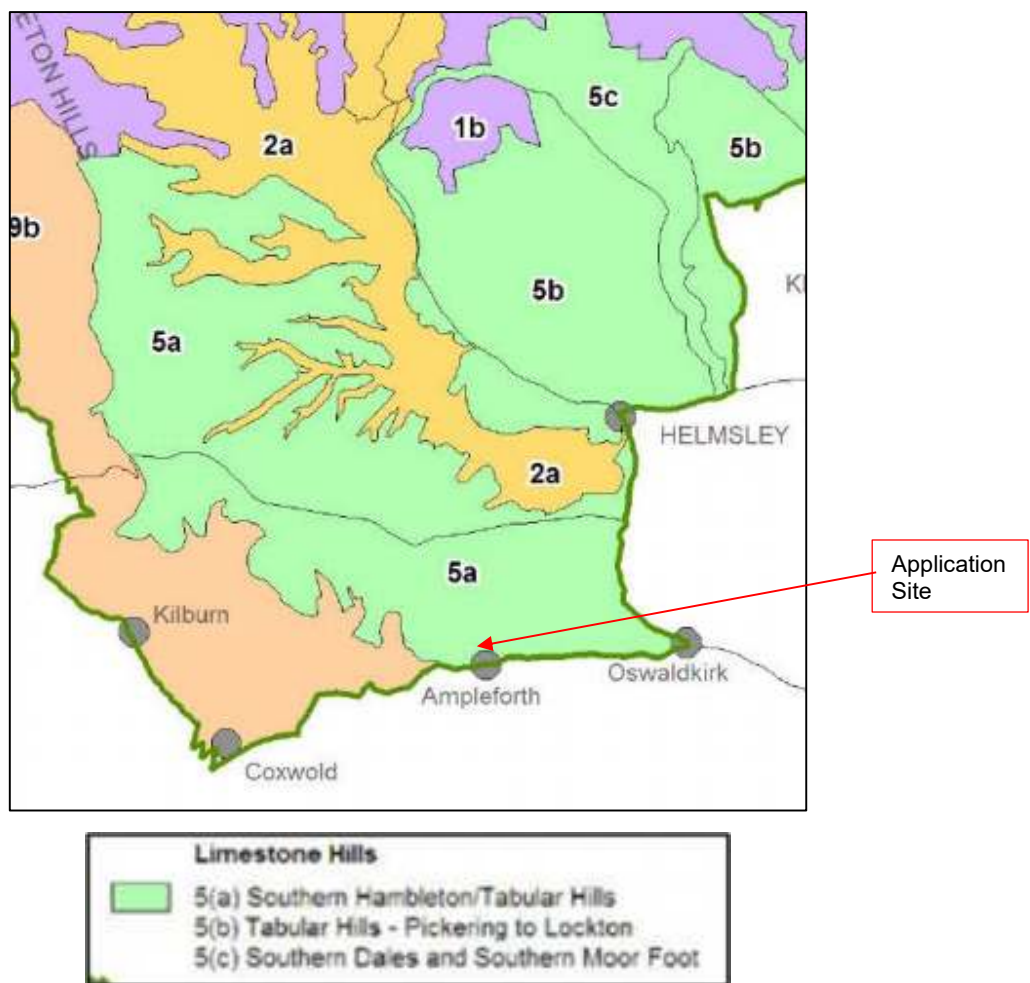


Image 5: Extract from North York Moors Landscape Character Assessment

5.15 The NYMLCA describes the Southern Hambleton /Tabular Hills LCT as follows:

¹ <https://www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/planning/framework/evidence-base/NYM-Landscape-Character-Assessment-reduced.pdf>

“The Southern Hambleton Hills rise at a very shallow angle from Ryedale to form a western facing escarpment 300m in height in the west of the National Park. Smoothly contoured with a conspicuous flat top, a key feature of the plateau is the extensive elevated long-distance views across the moors and the densely wooded dales to the north and north-west, and intermittent views between gaps in forestry plantations from the escarpment top to the west and south across the Vale of York and to the south across the Vale of Pickering.

The hills are underlain by Corallian Limestones and sandstones; surface drainage is almost entirely absent.

A large-scale landscape, very large regularly shaped fields of predominantly arable farmland are bounded by wire fences or closely trimmed or overgrown hedges with very occasional hedgerow trees or are unbounded. Limestone walls are often present. Small strip fields of pasture occur close to settlements.

In the southern part of the area, views are broken by large coniferous plantations, plus occasional smaller mixed plantations, often with fringing birch and occasional areas of bracken. Areas of upland heath/grass mosaic are present to the west and areas of scrub on the plateau edge to the south.

Deciduous woodland is almost absent from the plateau top; very small areas occur at the edges of the character area, including an area of ancient, replanted woodland at Mason Gill.

Traditional settlements include Cold Kirby, with houses set back from a wide grassy tree-lined road verge, Old Byland, set about a small green, and the clustered settlement of Scawton.

Ampleforth, situated on the spring line on the southern edge of the character and of the National park, is the only linear settlement.

Large farmsteads constructed in stone with pantile roofs and numerous outbuildings including modern farm sheds, marked by groups of trees.

The area is crossed by the busy A170 between Thirsk and Scarborough. Minor roads are generally straight and often bounded by wide grass verges.

Recreational features include the gliding club at the top of Sutton Bank, the Cleveland Way, which runs along the edge of the character area and crosses it to the south, the National Park Visitors Centre and associated car park and picnic site at the top of Sutton Bank and a campsite near Ampleforth.

The Cleave Dyke and associated features including round barrows and a hill fort sited at the top of the scarp slope are features of national archaeological importance.

Detractors include overhead electric lines, the mast to the west of Cold Kirby, the blocky form of the coniferous plantations, the A170 and modern farm buildings. The mast at the head of Bilsdale also exerts an influence over the northern part of the area.”

- 5.16 The NYMLCA indicates how sensitive the landscapes are to change from development pressures. In the Southern Hambleton /Tabular Hills LCT, land use pressures for change which have been identified, include agricultural change, including the economic pressures on farming. Predicted consequences of change to landscape feature include decline of woodland; decline of boundary trees/hedgerow/groups of trees; damage to geological /geomorphological features (from agricultural operations, tree planting, recreation etc; decline in historic agricultural/ settlement features; damage to archaeological features; introduction of modern farm buildings; continued intensification; decline in rough pasture/species-rich grasslands; loss of dry stone walls; replacements of walls and hedges with fencing, erosion of strip field patterns and decline in wildlife and plant species.
- 5.17 Strategic Policy G seeks to ensure that the high quality diverse and distinctive landscapes of the North York Moors are conserved and enhanced. The proposal

would not result in any of the consequences (set out in the above paragraph) to landscape features in this part of the National Park.

- 5.18 It is quite clear from a review of local and national policy that it is essential that development projects do not harm the important landscape of the National Park. We believe that the storage containers at Studford Farm comply with policy in this regard. The storage containers are 6m x 2.4m x 2.6m in size and painted juniper green to match exactly the colour of the adjacent farm building. They are modest in scale in relation to the existing farm building as shown in images 6 and 7 below. There is an existing hard-core surface on which the containers are placed, so no groundworks were necessary or will be required in the future.



Image 6: Scale and context of containers in relation to existing farm buildings



Image 7: Scale and context of containers in relation to existing farm buildings

- 5.19 The scheme does not include any lighting, therefore there is no light spillage associated with the proposal in accordance with Policy ENV4 which protects the darkness of the night skies.
- 5.20 As a conditional requirement of the 18 May 2015 planning permission, (Ref: NYM/2014/0463/FL), a shelter belt of trees has been planted to the north of the existing, together with hedgerow planting to the field boundaries to the north and east of the site to improve the long term screening of the site.
- 5.21 The storage containers are obviously far smaller in scale than the existing farm buildings and consistent with their appearance. The proposal, when viewed from external vantage points is not readily visible. Any snatched glimpses of the containers that may be seen from external vantage points are seen in the context of the much larger farm buildings and the wider farm complex.

- 5.22 The existing landscaping and farm buildings provide significant screening to the application site as is shown in the photographs below. The containers are effectively hidden behind a landscaped earth bund (approximately 1m high) and planting and provide little, if any, additional visual impact.
- 5.23 Care has been taken to ensure that the containers have been positioned alongside existing structures and farm buildings associated with the existing farm business. The colour of the containers has been chosen to ensure they match the neighbouring farm building. There is no intention to expand the proposal beyond the tree belt or bund or double stack the containers. The applicant is happy to accept a planning condition restricting the siting of storage containers on site to prevent double stacking.
- 5.24 The accompanying layout plan which is also reproduced in image 8 below shows the relationship of the storage containers (existing and proposed) to the existing farm buildings and the earth bund.

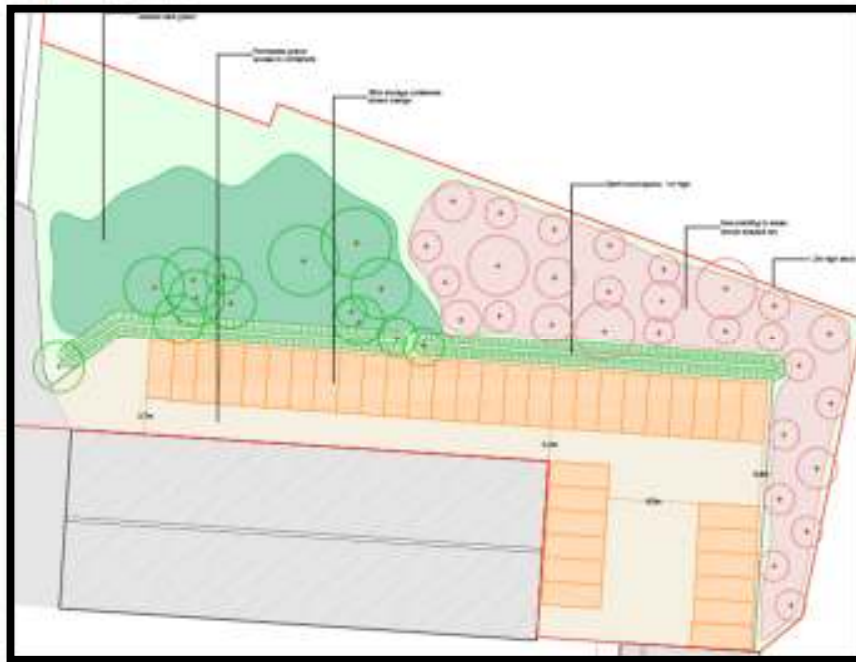


Image 8: Extract Site Layout Plan

- 5.25 Image 9 below shows the containers in relation to the earth bund and the existing landscaping.



Image 9: Containers in relation to bund and landscaping

5.26 Image 10 below is taken from High Street, close to the farm access, facing towards the storage containers, showing the farm buildings and associated landscaping. Image 11 below is taken from High Street looking towards Studford Farm.



Image 10: View from site access showing farm buildings and associated screening



Image 11: View North West from High Street towards Studford Farm

- 5.27 It is considered that the overall design, size and scale of the proposal is in keeping with the existing site and does not harm the landscape. As seen in the images above, the storage compound cannot be seen from public views and therefore are not visually intrusive on either the immediate or wider landscape given the landscape screening and buildings which obstruct any direct views.
- 5.28 The proposal is compatible with the existing group of buildings and activities on the farm and is of a scale and nature that does not detract from the overall character of the area or harm the character and appearance of the locality.

Access and Highway Safety

- 5.29 Policy CO2 permits new development where it is of a scale to which the adjacent road network has the capacity to serve without detriment to highway safety.
- 5.30 The submitted plans show that the existing access off will be used to access the proposed storage facility. Sufficient room is available at the existing site entrance to ensure that a car can pass an agricultural vehicle simultaneously clear of the public highway and that adequate visibility can be achieved along the public highway in both directions for car drivers.
- 5.31 Access to the storage containers comprises permeable gravel access. The site offers space for access, off-road parking in the compound with turning for visitors to allow loading/unloading.
- 5.32 A typical week in October (20.10.2020 – 27.10.2020) showed the following number of vehicular movements:

	20/10/20	21/10/20	22/10/20	23/10/20	24/10/20	25/10/20	26/10/20	27/10/20
Vehicle Movements	0	1	2	1	2	0	3	0

- 5.33 The data was taken from CCTV cameras which monitors access to all containers. The motion detector was used to extract the vehicle movements. As demonstrated, the proposal is not considered to significantly intensify the number of vehicle movements to and from the site. Furthermore, customers utilising the site are unlikely to all visit at the same time.
- 5.34 The site can be accessed and egressed safely with minimum additional movements to the activities on the farm. The plans show that the proposed development will not pose a threat to highway safety or capacity.
- 5.35 The proposal would, therefore, comply with the requirements for the proposed development to be safe and accessible to accord with policy CO2 of the Local Plan and advice contained within the NPPF.

Impact on Residential Amenity

- 5.36 Relevant policies in respect of the impact of the proposal on residential amenity include Strategic Policy C of the Local Plan. Criterion 4. relates to the scale, height, massing and form of the proposal which should be compatible with surrounding buildings and will not harm the amenities of adjoining occupiers.
- 5.37 The NPPF sets out that development should create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users (paragraph 127). Good design requires that development proposals should ensure no undue adverse impact from overlooking, overshadowing or from over-dominant structures.
- 5.38 The storage facility lies approximately 200m north of the existing farmhouse beyond the farm buildings. The proposal will result in occasional vehicle movements which have been described above. However, the site is within an existing farm complex comprising a range of large and functional buildings, large open storage areas and associated infrastructure, plant and machinery. In terms of local amenity, the existing

use of the site and business would create some noise, disturbance from vehicle movements and light from external lighting and vehicles.

5.39 The proposed development for storage facilities is unlikely to increase the noise, disturbance or emissions to any significant degree.

5.40 Within the wider area, the nearest residential properties are located over 800m away from the application site off High Bank to the south-west where the topography of the land gently dips towards Ampleforth. The properties would not be affected by any activities in connection with this use and cannot be viewed from this distance due to the separation distances involved.

5.41 The proposed development would, therefore, comply with Strategic Policy C of the Local Plan and guidance set out in the NPPF.

Ecology

5.42 Strategic Policy H relates to the importance of conserving and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity and that any development which would have an adverse impact on an important habitat or species should be avoided as far as possible.

5.43 The application site is not subject to any nature conservation designations and therefore no special protection is given. As the site is not ecologically sensitive, it is not considered that the development would have any impact on any known ecological habitats or locally and nationally designated conservation sites.

Flood Risk

5.44 Policy ENV5 of the Local Plan relates to flood risk and will only permit new development where it meets the sequential approach to development in areas of flood risk and does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

5.45 The National Planning Policy Framework advises that development should be located in areas where there is the lowest probability of flooding. The site is situated in Flood

Risk Zone 1 (see Image 12 below) where flooding from rivers and the sea is very unlikely. There is less than a 0.1% chance of flooding each year.

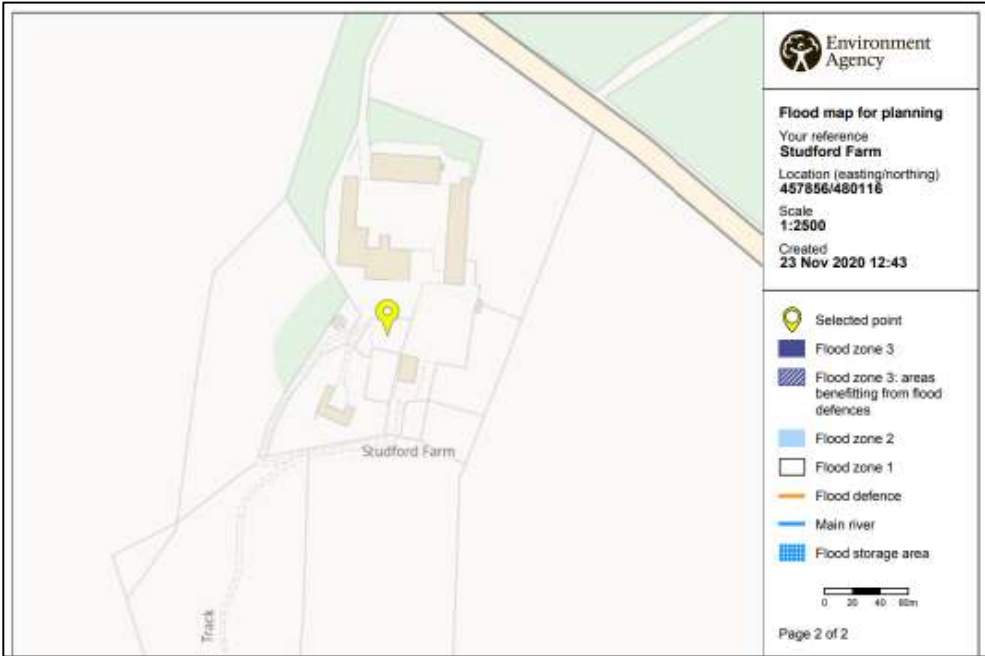


Image 12: Flood Risk Map (Source - Environment Agency)

5.46 The proposal, therefore, complies with the provisions of Local Plan Policy ENV5 and guidance set out in the NPPF which states that development should be directed away from areas at highest risk from flooding.

Sustainability

5.47 The storage containers on site are all second hand and repurposed shipping containers. Mr Dunn purchases his containers from a local North Yorkshire supplier thus minimising transport distances and fuel use. The use of second hand containers for storage purposes is a sustainable reuse of the containers themselves and far more sustainable than erecting a building for storage purposes.

5.48 As referred to above, the business's customers mainly come from the local area. If this facility was not available to these customers, they would need to travel much grater distances for their storage needs. The business therefore reduces the need to

travel for these customers. We are therefore of the view that this development is a sustainable form of development.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The proposal would represent a sustainable form of development by providing a storage facility through an important farm diversification scheme which works in harmony with the existing agricultural contracting, arable and livestock farming business.
- 6.2 The business serves a local customer base, meets a local need of which there is high demand, and thus reduces travel for people who need storage solutions. The location of the storage containers within an existing farm complex provides additional security for the users.
- 6.3 The principle of this form of land use is considered acceptable for the location and will not detract from the character or appearance of the surrounding area as set out in the paragraphs above.
- 6.4 The scheme will not pose a risk to highway safety and other matters of acknowledged importance, including residential amenity and flood risk.
- 6.5 The NPPF introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development and this is currently a key material consideration in planning decisions.
- 6.6 There are no significant adverse planning impacts in this case that would outweigh the benefits of this proposal to justify the refusal of planning permission. The policies in the Local Plan are consistent with the planning merits of this proposal. In summary, it has been demonstrated that there are no policies or other material considerations which would suggest that planning permission should not be granted.