

# North York Moors National Park Authority

## Plans list item 1, Planning Committee report 22 July 2021

**Application reference number:** NYM/2020/0962/FL

**Development description:** change of use of land, retention of 31 no. containers and siting of additional 7 no. containers for storage purposes (part retrospective)

**Site address:** Studford Farm, High Street, Ampleforth

**Parish:** Ampleforth

**Case officer:** Mr M Hill

## Director of Planning's Recommendation

Refusal for the following reason(s):

Refusal reason code	Refusal reason text
1	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, would be likely to lead to : addition sporadic development at the farm steading and be likely to lead additional external paraphernalia at the site and would generate additional traffic movements within the National Park. As such the proposal would enlarge the existing site giving it much more the appearance of an industrial estate rather than a working farm yard, which would be visually harmful in the landscape of this area of the National Park and result in additional car and van journeys across this part of the National Park. The proposal is therefore contrary to Strategic Policies A, B and K and Development Policy BL3 and would conflict with NYM Management Plan policies B8 & B20 which seeks to encourage diversification economic development which are related to the NYM National Park's special qualities.

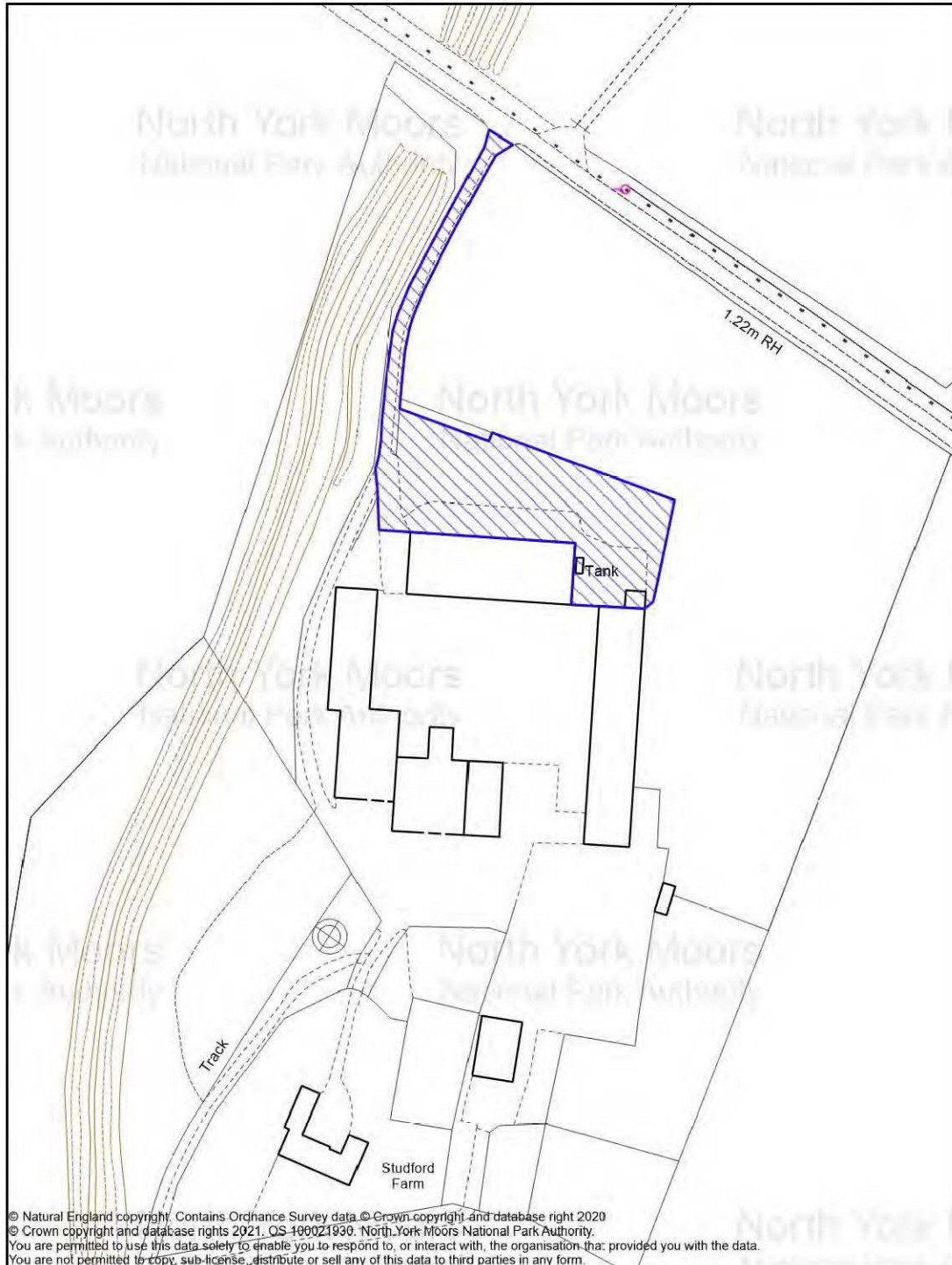
# Map showing application site



North York Moors  
National Park  
Authority

Application Number: NYM/2020/0962/FL

Scale: 1:1500



**Photo looking at the application site from the road**



## **Consultation responses**

### **Parish**

#### **Highways**

No objections, recommend conditions be placed on any approval to physically improve the vehicle access to the farm to deal with additional traffic.

#### **Natural England**

Object - consider a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) should be provided to assist determining whether the development will have a significant impact on the National Park landscape.

#### **Forestry Commission**

### **Third party responses**

**Tony Fawcett, Studford Lodges, Ampleforth**

**Tina Sails, Harome**

**Rob Caines, Ryedale Garage Doors, Hovingham**

**Alan Waterhouse, Harome**

The above all support the proposal for one or more of the following reasons:

- The dark green units are well screened by the landscape planting from the road.
- There is a shortage of such units, the nearest similar facilities are a long way away in York, Leeds or Teesside.
- Have not noticed any real increase in traffic since they started operating.
- Represents good farm diversification to improve local economy.
- Creates local employment.
- Provides useful short term storage for the local area if house moving delays happen.
- This facility meets my commercial business needs without having to travel further afield, I can add or decrease storage as required.
- This has saved me having to drive 80 miles to South Yorkshire every week.

### **Consultation expiry**

3 March 2021

## **Background**

Studford Farm lies to the northwest of Ampleforth in an isolated position on the hillside plateau above the village and on the southern edge of the National Park. It is a mixed

arable and livestock farm with some permanent grassland areas although the applicant primarily uses the site and buildings for his agricultural contracting business. The applicant is expanding and developing the site and there have been a number of recent planning applications:

May 2015 planning permission granted for a portal frame hay/straw storage building and water harvester along with new access arrangements to northern boundary of farmyard – this has been built;

- September 2015 planning permission granted for a general storage and biomass building to the south-east corner of the farmyard - this has been built;
- August 2016 prior approval granted for a steel portal frame building as an extension to the existing hay/straw storage building –built;
- May 2017 planning permission granted for the erection of a steel portal frame, monopitch general purpose building along the eastern boundary of the farm yard measuring 36 metres by 12 metres with a mono-pitch roof – built. As a conditional requirement of the original planning permission granted in May 2015 a shelter belt of trees has been planted to the north of the existing shelter belt along with hedgerow planting to the field boundaries to the north and east of the site to improve the long term screening of the site.

This application seeks planning permission for the creation of an 'L' shaped secure self-storage compound around two sides of an existing large agricultural building to retain 31 and to site a further seven (total 38) metal storage containers, each measuring 6m x 2.4m x 2.4m. There is an existing hard-core surface between the agricultural building and a landscaped bund on which to place the containers so no ground works are proposed.

Access will be via the main driveway to the west of the main farm operational area with parking within the compound itself to allow loading/unloading. It is proposed that the site will continue to be open 8am to 6pm daily. The public highway which serves the farm is a well-used link road between Malton and Thirsk, narrow in places.

The Authority's Woodland Officer considers that the area for the units compromises/strays into the woodland planting bund/area for the previous large agricultural buildings and as such would ask that compensatory planting be secured as part of any retrospective approval. The Authority's Archaeology Officer confirmed that a previous archaeological written scheme of investigation for the large agricultural buildings demonstrated that there was no negative impact on archaeology in the immediate locality so no further comments to add.

Following an officer presentation and long discussion at the 6 May Planning Committee (virtual), a decision was deferred to allow a Committee site meeting to take place to assess the impact of the development on the wider locality, traffic implications and how it interacts with the farming operation. That Covid adapted procedure visit took place on the 2 July 2021.

Additional traffic generation information and a copy of the container booking form handed to the Planning Officer at the Committee site visit are available to view on the Authority's website under application documentation.

## **Main issues**

### **Local Plan**

The relevant policies of the July 2020 adopted Local Plan are considered to be:

Strategic Policies A & B & K together with development management Policy BL3.

Strategic Policy A seeks to further the National Park purposes and duty by encouraging a more sustainable future for the National Park and its communities whilst conserving and enhancing its special qualities. Amongst other things it states new development should be of a high standard of design and support the function and vitality of communities.

Strategic Policy B, seeks to guide developments to an appropriate location, it envisages that the focus for new business development will be in Helmsley. Within open countryside, new business development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there are no suitable locations in Helmsley or larger villages.

Strategic Policy K deals with the Rural Economy and ensuring development is appropriate to a National Park setting. Amongst other things, the policy supports the diversification of existing rural businesses which help maintain the agricultural, forestry or tourism based economy of the National Park.

Detailed Policy BL3 supports rural diversification where the scheme is well designed to reflect the sensitivity of the local landscape; gives priority to conversion of existing buildings rather than new buildings, is compatible with the existing farm use and access can be gained safely by the existing road network.

An important material consideration is Policy B20 of the existing Management Plan which is part of the Authority's vision for the National Park and means of achieving it. This sets out that economic development will be supported where it is related to the special qualities of the National Park and this approach is to be taken forward in the new Management Plan which will encourage new ventures that specifically add to or are related to National Park purposes and the increasing transition to a low carbon economy creating "greener" jobs as set out in the Devolution Asks for the region.

The key issues are considered to be the appropriateness of locating a facility that does not require a countryside location on a farm, the increased sporadic development and its visual impact together with the increase in car and van journeys on a minor back road, all within a nationally protected landscape.

In recent years there appears to have been a national increase in the use of shipping containers to provide short or medium term storage of both household furniture items associated with moving houses and small scale commercial storage associated with small retail or service businesses. There are similar storage facilities at Pickering and

Thirsk just outside the National Park, which Officers consider to be an appropriate spatial location as they can serve both the urban and rural communities along the southern edge of the National Park without encouraging additional car and van journeys on smaller roads within the National Park. Officers consider the use does not require a location within a National Park and it would be more appropriately located outside a protected landscape. The steel functional designs of the units are not considered to be examples of good quality design envisaged by the policy for the establishment of new business uses in the countryside. Whilst they are viewed against the backdrop of existing large agricultural buildings and benefit from existing foreground bunded landscaping screening, the rows of containers are visible from public vantage points and add to the visual clutter and represent sporadic development that detracts from rather than improves the appearance of the farm steading. It should be noted that the government's statutory adviser on landscape, Natural England have objected to the application on these grounds.

At the time of the case officer visits to the site there were a number of garage doors and garage door trailers sited around the compound and this additional clutter reinforces the inappropriate nature of the use which is used partly for running businesses from.

Notwithstanding the Highway Officers 'no objection' on highway safety, the public road leading to the site serves as a short cut for local traffic heading for Thirsk and is relatively narrow and considered unsuitable for an intensification of traffic which is harmful to the character and appearance on this part of the Park from a highway amenity perspective. It should be noted that improvements to highway signing at the main road junction between the road which accesses the farm and the A170 have recently been carried out to help reduce the risk of accidents with fast travelling traffic queuing here to turn right to Wass and Ampleforth.

In summary, whilst the development offers a local facility with some economic rural benefit, officers consider this type of 'anywhere' use is not appropriate for a farm location in the open countryside in a Protected Landscape by reason of 'industrialising' the locality, its landscape impact and encouraging additional unsustainable vehicle use. Refusal in line with the development plan and Management Plan is recommended.

### **Contribution to Management Plan objectives**

Refusal is considered likely to help meet Policy B8 which seeks to resist diversification which harms the Park's special qualities and support Policy B20 which does not support economic development where it is not related to special qualities.

### **Explanation of how the Authority has worked positively with the applicant/agent**

The Authority's Officers have appraised the scheme against the Development Plan and other material considerations and concluded that the scheme represents an unacceptable form of development so far removed from the vision of the sustainable development supported in the Development Plan that no changes could be negotiated to render the scheme acceptable and thus no changes were requested.