

North York Moors National Park Authority

Delegated decision report

Application reference number: NYM/2021/0489/FL

Development description: erection of replacement agricultural storage building

Site address: Morra Head Farm, Harwood Dale

Parish: Harwood Dale

Case officer: Mrs Helen Stephenson

Applicant: J.R. Cussons & Son

fao: Mr John Cussons, Morra Head Farm, Harwood Dale, Scarborough, YO13 0LA

Agent:

Director of Planning's Recommendation

Approval subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

| Condition number | Condition code | Condition text |
|------------------|----------------|---|
| 1. | TIME01 | <p>Standard Three Year Commencement Date</p> <p>The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.</p> |
| 2. | PLAN02 | <p>Strict Accordance With the Plans/Specifications or Minor Variations</p> <p>The development hereby approved shall be only carried out in strict accordance with the detailed specifications and plans comprised in the application hereby approved or in accordance with any minor variation thereof that may be approved by the Local Planning Authority.</p> |
| 3. | MATS19 | <p>Roof Colouring (insert)</p> <p>The external surface of the roof of the building hereby permitted shall be coloured and thereafter maintained dark grey and shall be maintained in that condition in perpetuity unless otherwise be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.</p> |
| 4. | GACS00 | <p>No external or internal lighting shall be installed in the development hereby permitted until details of lighting and measures to minimise its impact on the quality of dark night skies has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting shall be installed in accordance with the details so approved and shall be maintained in that condition in perpetuity.</p> |
| 5. | MISC00 | <p>Before first being brought into use, the building hereby permitted shall be fitted with guttering to direct rainfall to a soakaway and not fed into the field drain which feeds into Lownorth Beck.</p> |
| 6. | MISC03 | <p>If the use of the building for the purposes of agriculture within the unit permanently ceases within five years from the date on which the development was substantially completed, the building shall be removed from the land shall, so far as is practicable, be restored to its condition before development took place unless the Local Planning Authority has otherwise agreed in writing or unless planning permission for change of use of the building to a purpose other than agriculture has been approved.</p> |
| 7. | LNDS00 | <p>The proposed hedge planting detailed in the submitted scheme of landscaping, received 08 October 2021 shall consist of at least six native species including those such as hawthorn, hazel, dog rose,</p> |

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| | | dogwood, field maple and guelder rose and shall be carried out no later than the first planting and seeding seasons following the completion of the development, or in accordance with a programme agreed by the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants planted in accordance with this condition which, within a period of five years from the completion of the development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the current or next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation. |
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Reasons for conditions

| Reason number | Reason code | Reason text |
|---------------|-------------|---|
| 1. | TIME01 | To ensure compliance with Sections 91 to 94 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended. |
| 2. | PLAN00 | For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the details of the development comply with the provisions of Strategic Policies A and C of the North York Moors Local Plan, which seek to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the National Park. |
| 3. | MATS00 | For the avoidance of doubt and in order to comply with the provisions of Strategic Policies A and C of the North York Moors Local Plan which seek to ensure that the appearance of the development is compatible with the character of the locality and that the special qualities of the National Park are safeguarded. |
| 4. | GACS00 | In order to comply with the provisions of NYM Strategic Policy A which seeks to ensure that new development does not detract from the quality of life of local residents and in accordance with Local Plan Policy ENV4 which seeks to protect dark night skies. |
| 5. | MISC00 | To avoid pollution and flooding of watercourses and to comply with the provisions of Policy ENV7 of the North York Moors Local Plan, which seeks to ensure that new development has satisfactory provision for the disposal of foul and surface water. |
| 6. | MISC00 | In order to comply with the provisions of Strategic Policy A and Policy BL5 of the North York Moors Local Plan which seeks to ensure that there is a functional requirement for the building in the long term to justify an exception being made to normal planning policies which seek to restrict new development in the countryside. |
| 7. | LNDS00 | In order to comply with the provisions of Strategic Policy C of the North York Moors Local Plan which seeks to ensure that new development incorporates a landscaping scheme which is appropriate to the character of the locality and retains important existing features. |

Consultation responses

Scarborough Borough Council

No comments received

Parish

No comments received

Environment Agency

No comments received

SUDs

No comments received

Highways

No objection.

Forestry Commission

No comments received

Natural England

No comments.

Environmental Health

Commercial Regulation Team – No comment.

Residential Regulation Team – No objection on housing or environmental health grounds.

North Yorkshire Moors Association

No comments received

Council for the Protection of Rural England

No objection.

Campaign for National Parks

No comments received

Third party responses

Name

None received.

Publicity expiry

Advertisement expiry date - 15 September 2021.



Long distance view of Morra Head site taken from the public road at Reasty Bank. The farmhouse and existing buildings are visible just above the treeline in the foreground and occupy open arable/pasture land which rises to a plantation woodland behind. The farmstead does not break the skyline.



View of development site from approach to the farm. The house sits to the right of the road with a range of modern agricultural buildings to the left. The steel framework of the building to be replaced can be seen in the foreground.



View of development site from within the yard. The steel framework of the former building is seen in the context of the existing large modern sheds.

Background

Morra Head Farm is a relatively isolated farm holding located on high ground to the west of Harwood Dale. The land extends to some 239 hectares. The applicant has completed the supporting agricultural information proforma and stated that the livestock numbers for the holding are:

- 150 Suckler Cows and 150 calves
- 32 Heifers (in calf)
- 55 Followers (35 heifers, 20 bullocks)
- 8 Stock Bulls
- 50 Finishing cattle
- 200 Hoggs (August to April)

These figures show an increase in cattle and a significant increase in sheep at the holding since the last application.

The farm is accessed via the road to Low North Bridge before the route reduces to a single width access track. The holding comprises a detached and fairly new stone under pantile farmhouse to the immediate east of the farm track and a large farm yard opposite. There are a number of typical agricultural buildings, mainly of steel portal frame design with corrugated sheet cladding, some used for housing livestock and some for the storage of straw etc. A public bridleway runs through the site and extends to the north and there is an unclassified road running through the site, immediately north and parallel with the main farmyard.

A notification for an open sided building/roofed area to cover an existing livestock handling area in order to prevent dirty water run-off and prevent any possible pollution from the existing sheep dip was considered in 2015 under the agricultural prior notification procedure. The building has been constructed but has also been fully enclosed with Yorkshire boarding, contrary to the submitted details.

Full planning permission for a replacement building running parallel with the unclassified track which runs through the farm yard west to east was granted in July 2016 and has since been completed. In 2017 a further full planning application was approved for the construction of a substantial agricultural building in the centre of the yard of typical agricultural design and materials comprising concrete panels with Yorkshire boarding above and dark grey fibre cement roofing. This building has also been completed but the external walls are a mixture of powder coated zinc sheeting and timber Yorkshire boarding.

A further prior notification proposal was submitted in 2020 for a significant extension to the covered livestock handling area to the westernmost edge of the farmyard. The applicant advised that the building was required for the storage of large agricultural machinery and animal feedstuffs which are bought in bulk. The floor area is required for the manoeuvrability of tractors/wagons and the height is to accommodate the tipping of trailers. Although there is a natural and gentle fall to the land, the site upon which the extension is proposed is already levelled and stoned as it is used for the storage of baled silage.

The current application is for a replacement general purpose agricultural building on the southern boundary of the site. The existing building is of steel portal frame construction with

corrugated sheet sides. However, it is in an advanced state of disrepair and has ceased to be of use. The proposed replacement building would occupy the footprint of the redundant building but is shown to be slightly wider and longer by about two thirds of its size. The proposed building measures 54.55m by 21.336m, 4.87m to eaves and 8.83m to ridge. It is proposed to construct the building from concrete panels with green zinc sheets above and dark grey fibre cement roof sheeting, incorporating rooflights. Due to its size, the application is a major development. The scale and appearance of the building is proposed to match the existing building, approved in 2017.

In support of the application, the applicant has advised that the building is required for the secure storage of large farm machinery (tractors, livestock trailers, 10m long flatbed straw trailers etc.) and the clean storage of animal feed, reducing contamination by vermin in accordance with the Farm Assurance Scheme.

Policy Context

The relevant policies of the NYM Local Plan to this application are Strategic Policy A (Achieving National Park Purposes and Sustainable Development) and Policy BL5 (Agricultural Development), together with the advice contained within Part 5 of the Authority's adopted Design Guide.

SPA states that a positive approach to new development within the Park will be taken in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and where decisions are consistent with National Park Statutory Purposes (applying the Sandford Principle if necessary). Development will be supported where it: is a high quality of design which respects the local landscape and built heritage; supports the function and vitality of communities; protects or enhances natural capital and ecosystem services; maintains and enhances geodiversity and biodiversity through conservation; builds resilience to climate change; makes sustainable use of resources and; does not reduce the quality of soil, air and water in and around the National Park.

BL5 is supportive of new agricultural buildings and structures or extensions to existing buildings where: the form, height and bulk is appropriate to its setting; there is a functional need for the development; it can be demonstrated that there are no suitable existing buildings; the building is designed for agricultural purposes; the site is related physically and functionally to existing buildings unless there is an exceptional agricultural need for a more isolated location; the proposal will not significantly harm local amenity and; in the absence of existing screening, a landscaping scheme is provided.

The Design Guide relating to new agricultural buildings advises that the position of new farm buildings is usually dependent on its function and the space available but as a general rule, buildings should be sited within of adjacent to existing groups of agricultural buildings. Poorly sited buildings can have a significant impact on the landscape regardless of its design. It is recommended to avoid locating very large buildings close to smaller ones and where possible roof pitches should be matched to those on the existing buildings and using a multi-span building rather than a single span building can reduce the overall height and therefore landscape impact. The range of materials should be limited since too many can result in a cluttered appearance and materials should be selected to match other at the site and be

suitable for the climate. Dark colours are generally more appropriate and consideration should be given to the general colour of the backdrop against which they will be seen.

Main Issues

The main issues to consider with this application are considered to be whether there is a functional need for the building and whether its siting and design are appropriate for this location and the purposes for which the building is required.

The proposed building is clearly designed for agricultural purposes and its position on the site of an existing (dilapidated) building ensures it relates physically and functionally to the farm. It is accepted that the building would provide a good standard of secure storage of valuable commodities; a function that the existing building cannot meet. The existing building has been deteriorating and is no longer suitable for agricultural purposes and its dilapidated condition and poor quality materials resulted in an unsightly building at one of the most prominent positions on the site. Officers are therefore satisfied that there is a functional requirement for a replacement building and although larger, the proposed building is likely to result in a modest visual enhancement to the site. The holding comprises a number of agricultural buildings of varying sizes, ages and uses. The buildings generally follow the same design and are of similar construction materials (i.e. steel portal frame with blockwork, Yorkshire boarding or steel profile elevations). The design of the proposed building is consistent with modern agricultural buildings on the holding.

In terms of landscape impact, Officers are satisfied that in spite of the fact the farm occupies a relatively isolated, yet visible location on high ground, the existing farm yard would provide an acceptable setting for the proposed building. The proposed building would be closely associated with other buildings at the holding and within the operational farm yard and as such it is not considered that the proposal would unduly harm the character of the area. However, in accordance with the requirements of Policy BL5, a landscaping scheme has been requested in order to screen the building and offer improved landscaping for the whole site. There are a number of young individual trees already planted and stock fenced to the south of the development site and in addition to this, the applicant has provided a scheme comprising of a new hedge along the western edge of the access track, continuing along the southern edge of the yard and continuing north to meet the other track. It is proposed to be a hedge of mixed native species, planted in the traditional manner with trees incorporated at intervals. The applicant intends to seek further advice from the Authority's Conservation Department.

The size of the building is such that the application is considered to be major and consequently, a wider consultation process is required. There have been no objections raised to the proposal with a number of consultees choosing not to make comment. The Authority's Conservation Department has advised no objection in principle but has made reference to the proposed rooflights (20) and need for guttering. There are no objections to the rooflights provided that there is no internal lighting and it is recommended that guttering is fitted directing rainfall to a soakaway so that the additional surface water does not go directly down the field drain which feeds into Lownorth Beck. This is to avoid causing flooding issues during heavy rainfall events. The application documents clearly state there will be no internal lighting however, due to the isolated nature of the site, it is recommended

that a condition restricting internal and external lighting is added to safeguard dark night skies.

It is clear that significant investment has been made at this farm in recent years resulting in significant visual and operational improvements. Officers are satisfied that the proposed replacement building can be justified to ensure appropriate secure storage for machinery and goods and that its design is consistent with the site and other modern agricultural buildings. The proposed landscaping scheme is considered to be acceptable and likely to result in an enhancement to the whole farm. In view of the above, approval is recommended.

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

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.