
AGRICULTURAL ESSENTIAL NEED STATEMENT

For

the provision of an agricultural building

at

Foss Farm

Foss Lane

Sneaton

Whitby

YO22 5JD

NYMNPA

25/05/2023

On behalf of Mr and Mrs Forster

Moor House Farm

Lousy Hill Lane

Littlebeck

Whitby

YO22 5JH

Report prepared by Alan Falshaw PgD FAAV MBIAC

In connection with the support of a prior notification application.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been produced to support Mr Ian and Mrs Elisabeth Forster in a prior notification application for the provision of an agricultural building at Foss Farm to support the agricultural activities on the holding.
- 1.2 The need arises for the accommodation of livestock during winter months, for lambing and calving periods and all year round for welfare requirements. In addition, the need is demonstrated for storage of fodder, machinery and manure.
- 1.3 This appraisal has been produced by Vickers & Barrass Chartered Surveyors upon written instructions from Mr and Mrs Forster and looks at the functional need for the building and the requirement of the holding and is based upon evidence given by the applicant and our own professional judgement.
- 1.4 For the purpose of this report the agricultural essential need will refer to Foss Farm primarily, Newton House and Moorhouse which are further landholdings within the agricultural business.

2.0 SITE HISTORY

- 2.1 The Forster family have farmed at Foss Farm and Newton House Farm since 1955 when Mr Forster's father took the tenancy of Foss Farm, Old Maybecks and Newton House Farm. Ian Forster took over the tenancy from his father in 1989, further land was added and the opportunity to purchase all the tenanted land from the Forestry Commission arose in 1997.

3.0 OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Rural Payments Agency and Magic Maps
- 3.2 The Agricultural Budgeting & Costings Book (AB & C) (93rd Edition November 2021).
- 3.3 DEFRA Code of Recommendation Welfare of Sheep (2002). See **Appendix 1**.
- 3.4 DEFRA Code of Recommendations for Welfare (Cattle) (2003). See **Appendix 2**.
- 3.5 North Yorkshire Moors National Park Local Plan July 2020
- 3.6 NPPF- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

4.0 PREVIOUS PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 Removal of Dutch barn and conversion of remaining building to 1 no. principal residence dwelling (Barn A) with parking and removal of timber pole sheds and conversion of remaining building to 1 no. holiday cottage (Barn B) with parking. NYM/2021/0758/FL 24.09.2021

5.0 THE FARMING ENTERPRISE

- 5.1 The family farming enterprise operated by the Forster family is one of traditional beef and sheep enterprises typical of the local area. Mr and Mrs Forster are joined by their 2 children Robert and Laura and Robert's fiancée in the day-to-day management of the holdings.
- 5.2 Prior to 2016 a total of approx. 175 breeding ewes, 35 suckler cows, 200 store lambs and 80 store cattle were managed by the business. The need for additional livestock housing was necessary prior to 2016 and suckler cows were housed over winter at a neighbouring farm, Hill Top. At this point Mr Ian Forster suffered health problems and livestock numbers were reduced to a more manageable

amount, with the removal of the breeding livestock and replacement with store stock. Some grassland was let on a temporary basis to neighbours.

Recently the decision has been made by the family to initiate a 5-year business plan in order to secure the farm and business for the next generation. This will re-introduce breeding sheep and suckler cows into the business and allow a more sustainable business to develop and provide for the wider family. Ultimately this will allow Mr Ian and Mrs Elisabeth Forster to reduce their involvement in the day-to-day management of the business and to eventually retire. This would allow the business to pass to Robert and his fiancée in the future.

- 5.3 The total area farmed by the business is approx. 129 hectares (318 acres) of grassland.
- 5.4 A map showing the parcels of owned land is contained in **Appendix 3**.
- 5.5 In addition to the above farming enterprise Robert Forster has established a successful agricultural contracting business which is based at Moor House Farm and utilises the buildings at that holding.

6.0 THE LAND

- 6.1 Moor House Farm consists of approx. 31ha (76.2 acres) of grassland.

Newton House Farm consists of approx. 29ha (71.3 acres) of grassland.

Foss Farm consists of approx. 69ha (170.5 acres) of grassland.

All land farmed by the family business is within a medium priority water area, which is a designated catchment to help prevent water pollution from agriculture and to improve the quality of water within the catchment.

- 6.2 There are 3 separate blocks of land all farmed under the one business. To fully justify the need for the proposed agricultural building the calculations are based on the stocking density which each individual block of land can support.
- 6.3 The management of the business is challenging due to the 3 separate holdings which run along the Little Beck and May Beck Valley being spread over approx. 3.5km. The route between the holdings is part council owned and maintained, part Forestry Commission owned and maintained. To the north of Foss Farm is the Falling Foss Waterfall and Falling Foss Tea Rooms which is a prominent visitor attraction in the area. There are numerous public rights of ways and a substantial amount of CROW Common Land in the area, this attracts large quantities of walkers, cyclists, and horse riders to the area. The car park for the waterfall and tea room is approx. 300m to the north of Midge Hall and this section of council road becomes difficult to navigate with agricultural machinery and vehicles at certain times due to the number of people walking on the road.

Foss Farm is the largest landholding of the 3 holdings farmed by the business and has the least resources for accommodating livestock. Currently due to the lack of livestock accommodation at Foss Farm animals are moved between holdings more often than is practical. At peak times of the year when moving stock and produce, there can be up to 20 return journeys a day between Foss Farm and the other holdings. This causes issues with the public who also use the same road to access the tea room from the car park and the numerous public rights of way which are present in the area. Experience has shown that pedestrians along with inappropriately parked cars occupying the few available passing places causes extreme disruption to the business. Farm vehicles have at times been left until the parked cars have dispersed, and then the journey could continue, however causing much inconvenience.

Lambing and calving are undertaken away from Foss Farm because of the lack of livestock accommodation, the stock is then moved to Foss Farm either by droving the animals along the road or movement within a livestock trailer. The droving option often results in conflict with walkers, cyclists, and dogs. Movement by livestock trailer of newly born lambs and calves is not recommended and can cause undue stress and subsequent health issues such as pneumonia and Pasteurella, these risks could be minimised if the livestock resided at Foss Farm.

Outside of the peak times of movement between holdings, the day-to-day management can involve multiple vehicle movements along the narrow single-track road which has limited passing places. The current inefficient management of the holding due to excessive vehicle movements and time-consuming operations are adding additional costs to the business, and these could and need to be mitigated. The business understands the impact that additional movements and operations are having on the environment and the overall carbon footprint of the business. A simple reduction in vehicle movements between holdings would bring measurable benefits to the business through a reduction in the use of fuel, saving of labour and benefits to the health of the farm livestock. For all the previously mentioned reasons Foss Farm has not been managed to its optimum potential, with low stock numbers, and inefficient utilisation of grassland and poor stock health.

- 6.4 In addition to the land already within the business, there is an opportunity to potentially secure an additional 130 acres adjoining Foss Farm. See **Appendix 4**.
- 6.5 The Business Plan is to re-introduce breeding sheep and suckler cow enterprises with anticipated numbers of 400 breeding sheep and 45 suckler cows and followers.
- 6.6 The total number of Livestock Units (LU) derived from the above number of livestock is as follows:
 - Breeding Sheep 400 @ 0.11 LU = 44.00 LU
 - Lambs 680 @ 0.04 LU = 27.2 LU
 - Suckler Cows 45 @ 1.0 LU = 45.0 LU
 - Breeding Bulls 2 @ 1.0 LU = 2.0 LU
 - Followers 45 @ 0.6 LU = 27.0 LU

The total LU would be 145.2 units across the 3 holdings, this equates to 1.125 LU/ha. Divided between the 3 holdings the LU capacity is displayed below.

Moorhouse Farm		Newton House		Foss Farm	
31ha	34.90LU	29ha	32.65LU	69ha	77.65LU

Industry recognised stocking densities for typical beef/sheep grazing land such as the above holdings demonstrate average stocking densities for suckler cows and breeding sheep of 1.5 Lu/ha for comparable holdings. This further demonstrates the capability of the holdings to increase stock numbers beyond the proposed plan by another 33% and therefore increase the requirement further for buildings. This potential room to increase output further above stated levels will help the business become more sustainable.

- 6.7 Newton House buildings are utilised by the apportioned livestock for Moor House and Newton House. The required space for the apportioned livestock is approx. 780m² with available space at approx.

1000m². The surplus area will allow for further expansion in numbers to follow the potential increase in stock numbers mentioned in the previous paragraph.

A workshop area and feed store are contained at Newton House.

- 6.8 For the purpose of this report the 77.65LU which are attributed to Foss Farm will consist of the apportioned number of breeding sheep, lambs, suckler cows, breeding bulls and followers only. The assumption of 15 hectare of forage at Foss Farm will leave 54 hectares for grazing. (The ABC Costings Book (93rd Edition November 2021).

Foss Farm	69ha 77.65LU
Breeding sheep	212 x 0.11LU = 23.32LU
Lambs	360 x 0.44LU = 14.4LU
Suckler cows	24 x 1.0LU = 24.0LU
Breeding bull	1 x 1.0LU = 1.0LU
Followers	24 x 0.60LU = 14.40LU

- 6.9 The number of livestock which Foss Farm is allocated above will require additional housing along with a requirement for storage of fodder and manure, this is demonstrated in the following **Table 1**. (Page 10). The current floor area of the existing buildings (D Page 8)) and the required floor area for the quantity of livestock currently on the holding (E Page 8). Approx 881m² of additional floor space is proposed.

7.0 GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY

- 7.1 Basic Payment Scheme is claimed.
- 7.2 The business has recently entered into a capital grant scheme with North Yorkshire Moors National Park Authority (Farming in Protected Landscapes) which is aimed at restoring traditional hedgerows, establishment of new trees and associated fencing.
- 7.3 There is further opportunity for the business to enter additional Countryside Stewardship (administered by the Rural Payments Agency) schemes which will further benefit the unique landscape, encourage biodiversity and build further resilience into the business. Within Countryside Stewardship there are specific grants available for certain capital items to help farmers and land managers to improve water quality, reduce pollution and make better use of organic manures. The improvement of farm infrastructure with drains, concrete and the covering of manure storage areas are all items which could be supported under the above programme of capital grants.

8.0 FARM BUILDINGS

8.1 The current and proposed buildings at Foss Farm which are outlined on the plans below and described as follows:

- A. Storage
- B. Livestock
- C. Livestock handling
- D. Current Buildings
- E. Proposed Buildings

A. Storage - 198m²



B. Livestock – 130m2



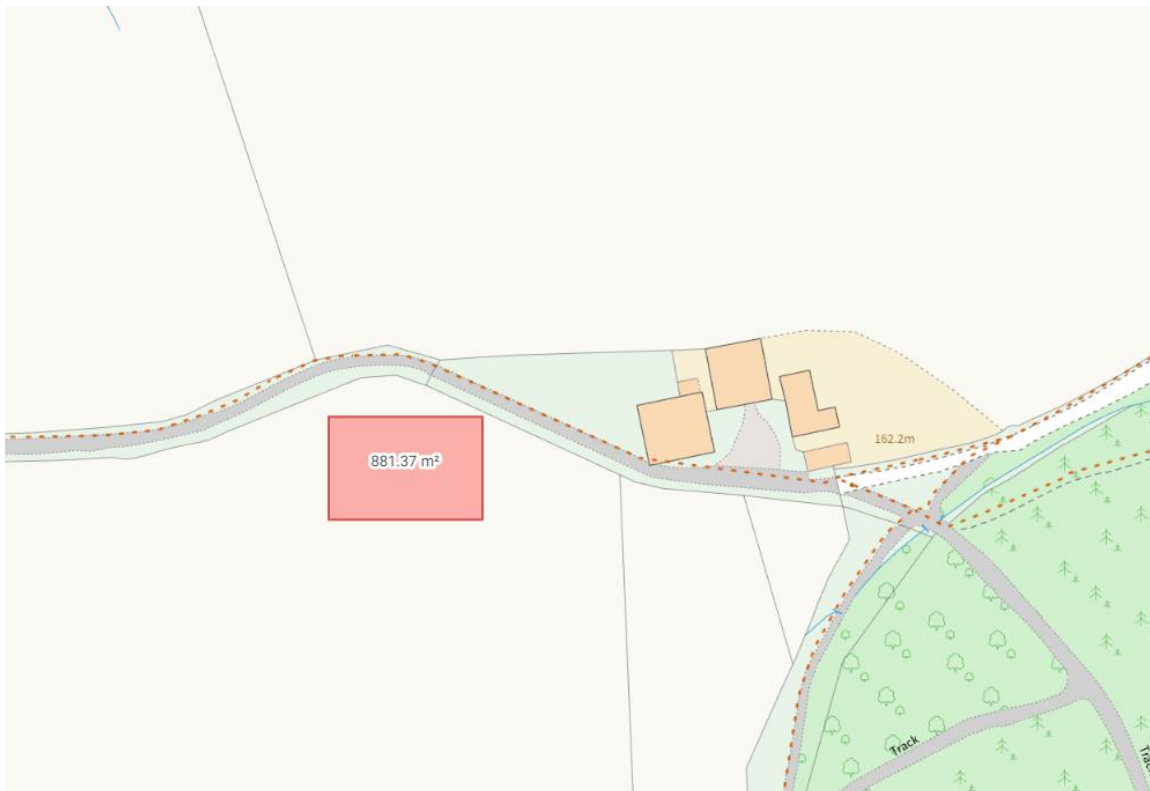
C. Livestock Handling- 121m2



D. Current Building Position- 450m²



E. Proposed Livestock Building -881m²



- 8.3 The current buildings are a mixture of traditional stone built with tile or asbestos roof, more modern portal frame and pole barn lean-to. Generally, these buildings have a limited use for modern agriculture however, the use as identified above has been factored into the calculations for the total requirement for Foss Farm based on the level of stocking proposed within the business plan. Some are identified as redundant.
- 8.4 The proposed new building is to be sited at the west of the farm steading approx. 40 metres from the nearest existing farm building. The constraints of the site are such that there is an electricity pole to the north of the proposed site which prevents any encroachment of the building into the adjacent field and PROW passing through the farmyard. The proposed new building is to incorporate livestock accommodation, fodder, machinery and manure storage.
- 8.5 Farm Animals are protected by the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007. The proposed buildings allow for these requirements to be met.

9.0 THE ESSENTIAL NEED

- 9.1 The essential need for additional livestock accommodation/fodder storage and manure storage is demonstrated in this report to support the overall business objectives.

The main essential need will relate to the number of breeding sheep, suckler cows, followers, the storage of fodder, concentrate feed and extra space at lambing time. The breeding sheep are housed mainly for lambing from December to April and will require 24-hour supervision over the lambing period. Calving is either in the autumn or spring and again 24-hour supervision is required at this time.

In addition, the storage of manure within a weather proof building helps to achieve an objective of reducing the potential of run-off from field heaps of manure which could contribute to pollution if that run-off was sufficient to reach a watercourse. Heavy rainfall would contribute to the risk of pollution. In addition, run-off would facilitate the loss of valuable nutrients from the manure, therefore if rainwater is kept out of the manure more nutrients would be available once the manure is spread on the land at the optimum time for the growing crop to utilise them. Having the ability to store manure under cover will benefit the business as well as the environment in reducing input costs and having less reliance on manufactured fertilisers.

The need to store fodder and concentrate feed undercover is essential to prevent loss and deterioration. Farming businesses are becoming more aware of the effect of different activities on the environment and small improvements in management techniques can bring large rewards in the reduction of single use plastic as one example. It is proposed to increase the area of hay and decrease the area of silage, bales of hay cannot be stored outside, therefore the extra storage space for hay is required.

The agricultural supply chain is becoming increasingly demanding of farmers and large retailers who are encouraging farms to embrace the knowledge which is available and adopt best practice which will enhance a business's environmental credentials. There is an essential need within this business to reduce costs and increase efficiencies in machinery, labour, and resources. Animal health and welfare is also an essential need to any farming business and well cared for livestock which are kept in buildings which meet current legislation will be to the long-term benefit of the business.

The essential need for additional livestock housing/fodder storage and manure storage is demonstrated in the following **Tables 1 & 2** below. The existing buildings provide some

accommodation, but in order to manage the holding effectively additional livestock accommodation, fodder and manure storage is required.

TABLE 1. SPACE REQUIREMENTS- Foss Farm-Proposed

Industry recognised requirements for housing of livestock and the storage of farm produce and manure.

Livestock	Head	M²/head	Total M² Requirement
Cattle Enterprise			
<i>Bulls</i>	1	16.00	16.00
<i>Suckler Cows (includes calf to weaning)</i>	24	8	192.00
<i>Followers (6-20 months)</i>	24	3.00	72.00
<i>Lowland ewes (with lambs)</i>	212	1.90	402.80
<i>Rams</i>	6	1.40	8.40
<i>Lambs</i>			0.00
Fodder/Straw (2023 Cropping)			
	Tonne	M³/tonne	Total M² Requirement
<i>Hay</i>	75	8.00	200.00
<i>Straw</i>	50	8.00	133.33
<i>Manure Storage</i>		M³ 621.00	225.00
<i>Machinery/tractor</i>	1	M² 20.00	20.00
<i>Machinery/trailor</i>	1	15.00	15.00
<i>Total area requirement for livestock, machinery and crop</i>	M²		1284.53 M²
<i>Total area available at Foss Farm for livestock</i>	M²		449.00 M²
Total additional area requirement			835.53 M²

(Source: The Agricultural Budgeting & Costings Book 93rd Edition). AHDB Better Cattle Housing Design(2018) **Appendix 5**. DEFRA Code of Recommendation Welfare of Sheep (2002).

TABLE 2. LABOUR REQUIREMENTS - Foss Farm-Proposed

The man hours required per year to run the holding efficiently and to maintain a high standard of husbandry at today's stocking levels and in the future are as follows:

	livestock/hd	Hours/hd/ year	Total SMD requirement
Livestock			
Cattle Enterprise			
Bulls	1	26.00	3.25
Suckler Cows (includes calf to weaning)	24	26.00	78.00
Followers (6-20 months)	24	12.00	36.00
Sheep Enterprise			
Lowland ewes	212	5.20	137.80
Rams	6	5.20	3.90
	Ha	Hours/Ha/ year	
Winter Wheat	0	7.30	0.00
Winter Barley	0	7.30	0.00
Hay	19	1.80	4.28
Grazing	50	0.40	2.50
Sub Total Standard Man Days			265.73
15% general maintainance and repairs			39.86
Total Standard Man Days			305.58
With the statutory holiday entitlement of 21 days plus Bank holidays, the number of hours worked for a full time person is expected to be about 2,200 hours (just over 45 hours per week) = 1 labour unit = 275 notional "Standard Man Days"			
Labour Unit requirements - 2200 hours/unit			1.11

On this basis the report has therefore calculated a labour requirement at Foss Farm equating to 1.11 labour units. (Source: ABC Costing BOOK 93rd Edition)

10.0 JUSTIFICATION

The information above demonstrates the need for the new agricultural building. The apportioned number of livestock units for Foss Farm cannot be accommodated in the current buildings which amount to approx. 449m² of floor space as demonstrated at (D Page 8). The total area for livestock accommodation based on the apportioned number of livestock units for Foss Farm along with the necessary fodder storage and manure storage is approx. 1284m² as demonstrated again in **Table 1**. Therefore, the need for a minimum of 835m² of additional building with a 5% buffer.

10.1 1.11 labour units are required for the holding as demonstrated in **Table 2**, based on the proposed number of livestock which clearly demonstrates the viability of the proposal.

10.2 This is an essential part of the process for the business moving forward and will help in consolidating activities on Foss Farm. The number of farm vehicle movements will be reduced considerably by having all the livestock housed at Foss Farm.

10.3 The NPPF gives further support to agricultural buildings in the countryside where there is a genuine need and are of a commensurate scale for the intended purpose. (Para 83/page 23)

The NPPF gives further support to encouraging vitality and viability of the rural economy including through agriculture.

11.0 PLANNING POLICY

11.1 North Yorkshire Moors National Park Authority LOCAL PLAN 2020, Policy BL-5 Agricultural Development. Development of new agricultural buildings and structures or extensions will only be permitted where:

1. The form, height and bulk of the development is appropriate to its setting and will not have an adverse impact on the landscape and special qualities of the National Park;
2. There is a functional need for the development to sustain the existing primary agricultural or forestry activity and the scale of the development is commensurate with the need;
3. It can be demonstrated that there are no suitable existing buildings to support the existing business;
4. The business is designed for the purpose of agricultural and uses appropriate materials with subdued colours and non-reflective surfaces;
5. The site is related physically and functionally to existing buildings associated with the business unless there is an exceptional agricultural need for a more isolated location;
6. The proposal will not significantly harm local amenity in terms of noise, odours or level of activity either individually or in combination with the existing agricultural activity;

Strategic Policy K- The Rural Economy:

1. It promotes and protects existing businesses by providing flexibility for established rural businesses to diversify and expand;
2. It helps maintain or increase job opportunities in the agricultural, forestry or tourism sectors which help maintain the land-based economy and cultural heritage of the National Park;

12.0 WIDER BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

12.1 This farming business is typical of the area, relatively small family orientated and efficient. Over the last 25 years British agriculture has received payments from the European Union as part of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). These payments have evolved from payments based on production

to payments for setting land aside from production to payments for creating wildlife habitats and enhancing the landscape. With the transition period surrounding Brexit now in progress, the landscape for British Agriculture is about to change yet again. The new Agriculture Bill will put the environment front and centre in the post CAP world. It is with this background that farming businesses such as Forster family will need to become more resilient and adapt to change. The transition from one generation to another is a natural progression and supported through planning and agricultural legislation.

13.0 **CONCLUSIONS**

13.1 It is considered there is a justified need for the provision of a new agricultural building in order to manage the holding efficiently. The proposed livestock accommodation will help to improve animal health and welfare. The holding is capable of carrying the level of stock contained within this report. The level of stock which the holding can support requires buildings in excess of the current buildings and these requirements are also demonstrated in this report. The proposal to include additional area within the new building for the storage of manure will help to improve the water quality of the catchment area and build resilience into the business through better utilisation of resources.

13.2 The changing economic climate for agricultural businesses in the post Brexit era will require all businesses to be sustainable. Being efficient and adapting to change will become more important as the transition period continues. Businesses which are maximising their assets and carrying the optimum numbers of livestock will be more able to survive. While providing high health and welfare farmed livestock for the British consumer which will contribute to reaching future climate change objectives. Along with encouraging a younger workforce into agriculture.

13.3 In addition efficiencies in business operations should be encouraged when benefits are clearly demonstrated.

13.4 North Yorkshire Moors National Park Authority planning policy supports the type of agricultural building needed for this business.

13.5 Vickers & Barrass have formulated the opinion that there is justified need for the provision of additional livestock, fodder, machinery and manure housing at Foss Farm to support the agricultural activities, based on the evidence presented in this report.

14.0 **AUTHOR**

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Signed: Alan Falshaw PgD FAAV ABIAC

Date: 16/05/2023. For and on behalf of Vickers and Barrass

NYMNP

25/05/2023

Prior Approval Submission

**Notification of Prior Approval
Application for a new agricultural
building at
Foss Farm, Foss Lane, Sneaton,
YO22 5JD**

Stovell & Millwater Planning
Consultants

May 2023

1.0 PRELIMINARY MATTERS

- 1.1 This statement seeks Prior Approval for the erection of a new barn at Foss Farm, Foss Lane, Sneaton, North Yorkshire. The barn would be some 881m² and about 6m high at the ridge and it would add to the 450m² of existing, and mainly traditional, barns at Foss Farm. The barn is required to facilitate the efficient operation of the Forsters' sheep and cattle farming enterprise and to ensure a viable farming enterprise to support future generations.
- 1.2 A few years ago Mr Forster had a medical scare which caused the family to cut back on the farming operations. With the son now involved in the business, it is able to plan ahead to re-introduce the level of breeding stock, that occurred before Mr Forsters health problem and in response to different markets increase this number. Mr and Mrs Forster have instructed Agricultural Consultants, Vickers & Barrass (V & B) to provide advice on a 5 year business plan, required to ensure a future sustainable business to transfer the farm to their son who wishes to continue with the farm. As part of this future business planning process V & B have provided an Agricultural Essential Need Statement (AENS) to support the Prior Notification Submission for an agricultural building at Foss Farm which is essential for the sustainable future of the business. The AENS is a separate Statement and accompanies the Submission.
- 1.3 For completeness, where this Statement makes reference to and relies on information provided by the AENS if any confusion occurs the AENS naturally takes precedent.

2.0 THE FAMILY AND THE FARM

2.1 Foss Farm is part of an established agricultural enterprise within the North York Moors National Park run by the Forster family. The family have been farming here since 1955 and, through careful husbandry, astute additions and modest purchases extended the holdings throughout the 1970s until almost all the land and buildings were purchased by 1997. The enterprise currently consists of 3 farms amounting in total to about 129ha of mainly grassland fields along the Little Beck and May Beck Valley (see map below).

- Foss Farm is the largest landholding (about 69ha [170 acres]). It extends almost from the Falling Foss Waterfall and the Falling Foss Tea Rooms to the southwest beyond the farmstead¹. This now consists of 2 traditional stone barns, an agricultural steel frame building faced in corrugated cement sheets and a practically derelict Nissan Hut (see the pictures on page 4). It offers about 450m² of usable storage and livestock housing. The business is also in an advanced stage to add about 53ha (130 acres) of land further to the west of the current holding² making a total of about 122ha (300 acres)
- Newton House Farm is more central and extends to some 29ha (71 acres). This was a nineteenth century planned farm and permission was granted in 1998 to convert it into 4 holiday cottages. There is a relatively modern agricultural building here providing about 900m² of covered space used for the storage of agricultural equipment and machinery, livestock, crops and fodder. A workshop area and feed store are also contained at Newton House.
- Moor House Farm is the northernmost farmstead extending to 31ha. The farmhouse houses the whole Forster family. There are some fairly modern agricultural buildings here also providing about 1,000m² of covered space largely used to accommodate livestock and Robert Forster's successful agricultural contracting business.

¹See the maps in appendices 3 and 4 of the Agricultural Essential Need Statement, Vickers and Barrass, 29/11/2022

²Op cit appendix 4



Extract from OS map of the 3 farmsteads that form the Forster farming enterprise. The land extends further than shown on the map to the south and west beyond Foss Farm and further north and west beyond Moor House Farm.

Foss Lane (shown as a track and bridleway running mainly north-south on the map) is the main connection between the farmsteads and accommodates the movement of animals, agricultural equipment and machinery as well as the passage of family members undertaking their various tasks.

2.2 As is explained in more detail in the AENS, the distribution of, and distance between, the holdings creates difficulties for the farming enterprise as does the disparity between the extent of the farm buildings and the extent of each land holding. The 3 separate holdings are spread over some 3.5km of the Little Beck and May Beck Valley. Foss Lane, which connects them, is a narrow single-track lane-cum-bridleway with limited passing places. It also provides access to the

popular visitor attractions of the Falling Foss Waterfall and Tea Rooms (including the car park just 300m to the north of Foss Farm), as well as to footpaths and extensive areas of CROW Common Land, all attracting many visitors, walkers, cyclists, and horse riders. Moreover, although Foss Farm is the largest landholding, it offers the least accommodation for livestock, so that animals must be moved between holdings for grazing, or housing or the need for attention. Lambing and calving must be undertaken elsewhere due to the unsuitability of the buildings and the stock returned to Foss Farm by 'droving' them along the lane or transporting them in a livestock trailer. There can be up to 20 return journeys a day resulting in conflict between the farm traffic and the public (including their dogs). Moving newly born lambs and calves by trailer can cause undue stress, occasionally leading to pneumonia and pasteurella. Such risks could be reduced or even avoided if adequate livestock buildings were to be provided at Foss Farm. In addition, the inefficiencies due to excessive vehicle movements and time-consuming operations could be minimised with concomitant benefits to the business, the environment and the experience of visitors to the area.



The buildings at Foss Farm showing the open, metal framed barn and the edge of the Nissan Hut. The traditional barns are also evident.

Taken from the Planning Officer's report into application NYM/2021/0758/FL



- 2.3 The Foss Farm steading is illustrated in the photographs above and below. It is positioned on the southern slopes of the Parsley Beck Valley close to the becks confluence with May Beck to the east. The land falls generally to the north (and Parsley Beck) but since the steading which fronts Foss Lane lies across the contour lines there is also a fall across it of about 3 metres east to west.



Photo showing approach to Foss Farm from the east

- 2.4 This is an operational steading that is clearly short of storage capacity with various agricultural items and operations having to be stored outside. Moving forward with a sustainable business model for the farm within the context of meeting emerging agricultural requirements and one that is capable of a generational transfer of the farm business to the son and his partner, requires it to be modernised to improve efficiency. This involves increasing the farm building capacity at Foss Farm.



Photo of land to west of barns

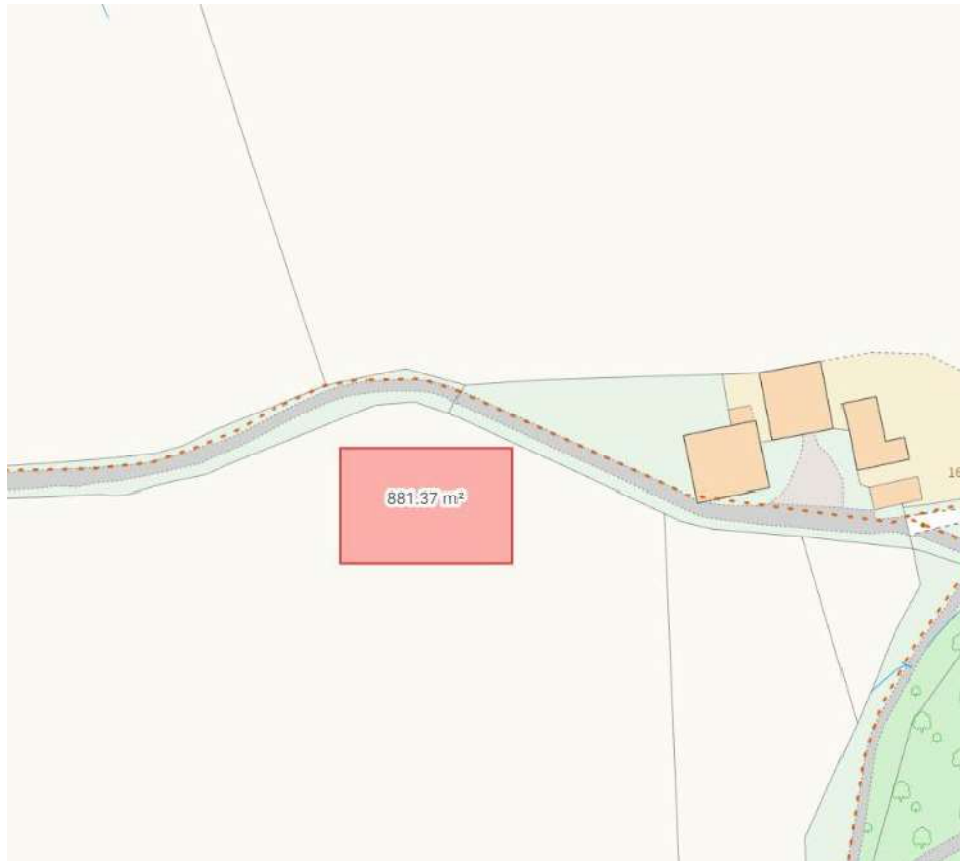
- 2.5 There are at present five barns within the steading which is generally bounded by Foss Lane to the south and a field boundary to the north in an oval configuration. To the west of the buildings the northern boundary is defined by a stone wall and fence with a field gate into the adjoining field located at the most western point. This boundary also has an electrical supply running along it. Two barns one a former Nissen Hut (about 45 sq m) and the other a wooden barn (about 100 sq m) presently used for storage are not fit for purpose and it is proposed to demolish and replace these buildings as part of the improvement works.

3.0 THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL BUILDINGS AT FOSS FARM

- 3.1 The AENS provides a comprehensive assessment of the need for additional barn capacity at Foss Farm. In particular, with regard to the livestock business the AENS identifies *“The current inefficient management of the holding due to excessive vehicle movements and time consuming operations are adding additional costs to the business and these could and need to be mitigated”* (AENS para 6.3) and *“There is an essential need within this business to reduce costs and increase efficiencies in machinery, labour and resources”* (AENS para 9.1). The Business Plan entails the re-introduction of the breeding sheep and cattle enterprises currently anticipated to consist of a flock of 400 breeding sheep with a herd of cattle containing 45 suckler cows and followers. This is a well established family farm that needs to improve efficiency and capacity to become a sustainable livestock farming business for the future generation. The AENS explains that additional barn capacity at Foss Farm is an essential part of that process.
- 3.2 The AENS derives the size of the buildings required to accommodate the livestock from recognised industry standards³.
- 3.3 On that basis there is a requirement for a need for 881m² at Foss Farm. The AENS explains that it is essential for the efficient operation of the business that this is at Foss Farm. The barns at the other steadings; Newton House and Moorhouse are some distance from and poorly related to the main land holding at Foss Farm; do not provide the extent of the buildings needed to accommodate the farming operations required and in particular the use of any new barns elsewhere would perpetuate the problems presently attached to the farm traffic that currently impinges on the efficiency of the business, the use and environment of Foss Lane. Some of the risks and inefficiencies outlined by the AENS would thus remain, impairing the business, the environment and the experience of visitors to the area.
- 3.4 The position of the new barn at Foss Farm is shown in the Agricultural Essential Need Assessment and reproduced below. It is assumed that the dilapidated

³ See the Agricultural Essential Need Assessment which references The Agricultural Budgeting & Costings Book (93rd Edition), AHDB Better Cattle Housing Design(2018) Appendix 5 and DEFRA Code of Recommendations Welfare of Sheep (2002).

Nissan Hut and the lean-to structure attached to the western traditional barn would be removed. However, the steel frame building faced in corrugated cement sheets is currently intended to remain, although it is not a robust structure.



The potential position of the new barn at Foss Farm here shown as 415.91m² reproduced from the Agricultural Essential Need Assessment.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The proposal for Foss Farm provides for the removal of two existing barns in poor condition and their replacement with a multi – span barn in two bays. The existing stone barns would remain and be refurbished. The new barn would be added, reflecting a natural extension to the existing complex. The total area demolished would be about 140 sq metres and the new barn, about 881 sq metres, a net increase of about 741 sq metres.
- 4.2 The new barn is proposed to be located to the west of the steading. This area is preferred because of the local topography where land levels are lower the west with the new barns being able to be set down lower to reduce impact. To that extent we consider that this is the preferred location for the new barns.
- 4.3 The appearance of the proposed barn is based on advice provided by the Authorities Design Guide Part 5: New Agricultural Buildings Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The scale, massing and form are reflective of the existing barns. The roof pitch is similar to the existing southern stone barn close to which the new barn is located. The bays run along the contour lines of the land. The materials would be agreed with the Authority but reflective of the materials used in the existing barns. The plinth wall is proposed to be concrete blocks with facing stone slips to match the existing stone with vertical tanalised timber boarding for the remaining part of the wall. Charcoal grey profile sheeting is proposed for the roof. We consider this design approach to be completely in accordance with the SPD. The attached plans illustrate the proposed barn.
- 4.4 Improvements to Foss Farm are central to the future sustainability of the business. Foss Farm is the largest land holding of the business. It is also the holding on which the family are increasing the size by about a further 53ha (130 acres). The present system of having to move livestock along Foss Lane on a regular basis is unsatisfactory not only in terms of man hours and inconvenience but there are health environmental and safety issues that would be difficult to address in anticipated emerging future agricultural guidance. There are economic and environmental reasons to significantly reduce future movements.
- 4.5 In our view the present appearance of the steading in no way reflects the importance of the farm or its contribution towards the North York Moors landscape. The proposal would include the refurbishment of the existing stone

buildings on the steading and the removal of two barns, one wooden open side building and the other a former Nissan hut. We believe the improvements would enhance the appearance of this part of the Moors. It seems to us that it is important for the well-being of the Park that its agricultural industry is economically viable and investment into its infrastructure is supported. The proposal is brought forward by a local farming family who have been farming this area since the 1950's and are now in the process of securing the future of the farm as a viable business into the foreseeable future.

5.0 THE CONDITIONS FOR PRIOR APPROVAL

- 5.1 The erection of the proposed barn would meet all the requirements and conditions for prior approval.
- 3.5 In accordance with Class A, the proposed building would be on a farm extending to more than 5ha and on land used for agriculture as a trade or business established for a generation, in accordance with paragraph D. The new barn is to be used for the storage of agricultural produce, equipment and as housing for livestock.
- 3.6 The new barn would not stand on a separate parcel of land and no changes of use have been applied for, or granted, on that land within the last 10 years. The scheme would entail no works to a dwelling and the barn would be designed for agricultural purposes. It is intended to house livestock, but at about 881m² it would extend below 1,000m² and it would be well over 3km beyond the perimeter of any aerodrome. No trunk road or classified road would be within 25m of the proposed barn, which would not stand within 400m of the curtilage of a protected building or dwelling. It would not be connected with fish farming or the storage of waste from a biomass boiler or an anaerobic digestion system.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 In applying for a determination as to whether prior approval would be required as to the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed barn, our clients have provided a supporting statement from an Agricultural Consultant on the size of barns needed and we have added a written description of the proposed development, the materials to be used and a plan indicating the site. We trust this to be sufficient.