



Maria Ferguson

PLANNING CONSULTANCY

Application for full planning permission for the erection of livestock shed at Low
Pasture Villa Farm, Lockton, YO18 7NU

Mr W Natrass

PLANNING AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT



May 2017

Reference: MF/17/14

Maria Ferguson Planning
Hunter Hill
Little Crakehall
Bedale
North Yorkshire
DL8 1LA

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared on the instructions of Mr W Natrass of Low Pasture Villa Farm to accompany and provide additional information in relation to a planning application for the erection of a livestock shed with associated hardstanding at the farm steading.
- 1.2 The building would provide 1213 sq m floorspace to enable the improved efficiency of the dairy unit, improve welfare and housing standards, and health and safety of employees.
- 1.3 The additional space would be used to house 80+ milking cows, together with necessary feed troughs and circulation space. The building would also enable the use of machinery internal to it, providing safe tractor passage throughout, and allow the increased automation of the business.
- 1.4 There are a range of buildings on the farm stead currently providing such housing, all are now of some age and not designed to modern standards. The building would enable the business to move away from the labour intensive straw based system currently operated, and provide the space required for mechanisation of feeding and waste removal. The current buildings are overcrowded and would therefore continue in use for housing livestock, but instead for calf rearing, cattle fattening, housing dry cows, heifers and other livestock housing requirements of the dairy business.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site comprises a farm of around 191 acres of land, 175 of which is eligible for single farm payment and the remainder woodland or bankside. The business is farmed in partnership between the applicant, Mr W Natrass and his wife and son. The farm is predominately dairy, with cattle and sheep and arable contributing to its income. There is one dwelling on the farm and a range of agricultural buildings of varying age and appearance.
- 2.2 The site lies some 1.3 kilometres east of Lockton (as the crow flies) and is situated entirely within the North York Moors National Park.
- 2.3 The site is currently part of a field and therefore grassed, and slopes north / south. It is situated to the north west of the existing steading. A public right of way is located some 80 metres to the north. Access is via a private road (shared with the footpath) leading from the north into the farm steading.

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Full planning permission is sought to erect a new livestock shed at the farm, measuring 22.14m by 54.86m. The building would measure 7.36m to its ridge and highest point. It would be constructed of concrete lower walls and Yorkshire boarding to its upper walls. The roof would be profile sheets (colour to be agreed) containing roof lights and ventilation panels. A small section of hardstanding would connect the building to the remaining farm yard. The building would be cut into the roofslope, reducing overall height and floor levels. A subterranean slurry store is

planned which can be emptied at regular intervals and either removed off site or spread on the land within relevant environmental tolerances.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 Planning applications have been made in respect of the farm house, and which are not relevant to the determination of the current application to which this statement relates. In addition, an application for prior approval was made for a slurry store in 2009 and approved (reference NYM/2009/0097/AGRP applies).

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012, and the accompanying Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was published in 2014. These documents contain the Government's planning policies and guidance.
- 5.2 NPPF imposes a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14). This means that where development proposals accord with an up to date development plan, approving planning permission without delay. Where development plan policies are silent or out of date, planning permission should be approved unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the Framework as a whole.
- 5.3 There are three dimensions to sustainable development – it has an economic, social and environmental role, seeking to ensure a strong economy, healthy vibrant communities, and the enhancement of natural and built environments.
- 5.4 NPPF seeks to support a prosperous rural economy by supporting the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, including promoting the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses (paragraph 28). Paragraph 19 more generally refers to economic growth, setting out the Government's commitment to this. It states that planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to business therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth in the planning system. Paragraph 21 states that policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the plan and to allow rapid response to changes in economic circumstances.
- 5.5 The site is within the North York Moors National Park. Paragraph 115 of NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks.

Development Plan

- 5.6 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that:

“where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise”.



5.7 The adopted Development Plan for the area comprises the North York Moors National Park Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Policies Document (CSDPD) which was adopted in November 2008. The replacement plan preparation is still in its infancy and so in accordance with the implementation section of NPPF should carry minimal weight.

5.8 Paragraph 3.25 of the CSDPD recognises the rural economy as being one of the key challenges of the National Park stating:

“Although farming and forestry continue to play a significant role in the economy and landscape of the Park, the decline in agricultural employment means that there is a need to supplement farm incomes through rural diversification”... “At the same time more traditional forms of farm development such as new agricultural buildings will still be needed”

5.9 Core Policy H states that the rural economy will be strengthened by, inter alia, supporting the agricultural economy.

5.10 Policy 12 then goes on to say that proposals for new agricultural buildings will be permitted where:

- There is a functional need for the building and its scale is commensurate with that need
- The building is designed for the purposes of agriculture
- The site is related physically and functionally to existing buildings associated with the business unless there are exceptional circumstances relating to agricultural necessity for a more isolated location
- A landscaping scheme which reduces the visual impact of the proposal on the wider landscape and is appropriate to the character of the locality is submitted as part of the proposal.

Supplementary Planning Document – New Agricultural Buildings (February 2013)

5.11 The National Park Authority adopted a supplementary planning document in 2013 relating to the design and provision of new agricultural buildings. This is a material planning consideration in the determination of the application proposal.

5.12 The purpose of the Design Guide is to:

- ensure that new agricultural buildings are designed within the context of statutory National Park purposes;
- encourage high quality design that conserves and enhances the character and special qualities of the area and respects the local distinctiveness and the built and natural heritage of the National Park;
- protect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties;
- encourage sustainable building practices which minimise waste and the use of resources;
- promote design that reduces the causes and mitigates the effects of climate change; and
- ensure that conditions for wildlife and natural habitats are maintained or enhanced.

5.13 Paragraph 1.5 states that the guidance is not intended to be prescriptive, but should be taken into account and applied flexibly, taking into account the features and circumstances of individual sites and proposals. The guidance goes on to recognise that whilst it is important that new buildings are located and designed in a way that respects their natural and man-made surroundings, they should not necessarily perpetuate past traditions in building styles and materials, when in many cases these are no longer appropriate to contemporary farming practice

or building technology. Nevertheless, new buildings should respect traditional influences and be developed in sympathy with their surroundings and in a form appropriate to their function.

- 5.14 In terms of the siting of new buildings the design guide states that the impact of a new structure can be reduced by locating it in close proximity to existing buildings within an existing group. New buildings should respond to contours and the natural form and avoiding platforms or exposed skylines or ridges. On sloping sites it is generally best to align a building parallel with the contours by setting the building into the slope in preference to raising floor levels.
- 5.15 The guidance does not suggest that larger buildings are unacceptable, recognising the need of farms to grow and respond to changing markets and to make efficiencies. It does suggest however avoiding locating very large buildings close to smaller ones and giving consideration to the possibility of providing new accommodation in two or more smaller units. Using a multi-span building rather than a single span structure can reduce the overall height and create a more varied and interesting roof line. It states that where possible roof pitches should be matched with those on existing buildings.
- 5.16 Paragraphs 3.15 and 3.16 of the guidance refer to materials and colour. It is stated that using different materials and more organic materials such as timber boarding can help assimilate development into the landscape. Roof lights and ventilation can help breaks up large expansive roofscapes.
- 5.17 The guidance encourages the use of soft landscaping to help mitigate the visual impact of new buildings on the landscape. Planting around modern farm buildings with appropriate native species, reflecting the existing pattern of woodlands, copses and hedgerows can create new landscape features and wildlife habitats. This helps to integrate new buildings in the wider landscape.

6.0 KEY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Principle of Development and Business Case

- 6.1.1 The farm to which the application relates is a well-established, successful and viable family dairy farm. The business milks 70 cows and rears its own replacements. There are also fattening cattle, sheep and arable land. The cows are kept currently on a traditional straw based system and milked in a parlour, which is labour intensive. The proposed development would be a departure, to an extent, from the traditional straw based system reducing the need to muck out and dispose of the resultant waste.
- 6.1.2 Key to the success of the business has been the hard work and commitment of its partners, but also its responsiveness to change. The existing buildings on the farm are by and large a mix of traditional and more modern sheds, and have evolved over time. The result is an arrangement which can be difficult to manage in terms of layout and livestock movement and segregation, but also a degree of overcrowding.
- 6.1.3 The matter of overcrowding has implications for welfare. The aim of the proposed development is to create space to address this, and at the same time provide a modern, purpose built space where cows can be kept and fed reducing labour requirements and improving health and safety at the same time. The existing sheds will remain and will continue to be used for dry cows, cattle, rearing calves and heifers, and calving.
- 6.1.4 The globalisation of the milk and cattle markets has placed increasing pressure on prices and farms such as Low Pasture Villa are no longer simply competing with others in the UK and

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Europe, but with farms all over the world. The technologies available to farms worldwide mean that dairy farms are forever evolving and improving practices, reducing inefficiency and improving welfare. Low Pasture Villa Farm must move with these times and increase output while continuing to maintain the high standards of which they are so proud. The new building will enable the enterprise to increase in size and grow in accordance with the expansion plans for the business, creating economies of scale which currently do not exist. This enables the business to command higher prices per litre of milk, and improve the livestock / labour ratio. Environmental improvements can be made, and the disposal of waste will comply with necessary legislation in relation to this, including the location of the farm in a NVZ.

- 6.1.5 NPPF seeks to support a prosperous rural economy by supporting the sustainable growth and expansion of business and enterprise in rural areas, including promoting the development of agricultural businesses (paragraph 28).
- 6.1.6 The Local Plan is also supportive of agricultural development. Paragraph 3.25 of the CSDPD recognises the rural economy as being one of the key challenges of the National Park stating that development such as new agricultural buildings will still be needed from time to time.
- 6.1.7 Putting design aside, as this is dealt with in paragraph 6.2 of this report below, policy 12 of the CSDPD deals with the principle of new buildings for agriculture in the landscape of the National Park. It states that such buildings will be permitted provided that there is a functional need for the building, which in this case there clearly is, and that its scale is commensurate with that need. The building must be designed for the purposes of agriculture. The development proposed is necessary for the business to continue to function in a viable way, and compete in the aforementioned global market, and has been designed to reflect its purpose and position.
- 6.1.8 The new building proposed is fully compliant with national and local planning policy in terms of the principle of the development and need. Matters relating to design and landscape impact are dealt with in the following section of this report.

6.2 Landscape and visual impact / design & access statement

- 6.2.1 Policy 12 contained within the CSDPD sets out the policy requirements of the development plan in relation to new agricultural buildings in the National Park. This policy states that development will be permitted where, inter alia,
- The site is related physically and functionally to existing buildings associated with the business unless there are exceptional circumstances relating to agricultural necessity for a more isolated location
 - A landscaping scheme which reduces the visual impact of the proposal on the wider landscape and is appropriate to the character of the locality is submitted as part of the proposal.
- 6.2.2 The application site has been chosen having regard to its proximity to the existing buildings in the farm stead, the site levels, ease of vehicular and pedestrian access, proximity to dwellings and therefore supervision, and weather protection. The site is functionally ideal for the development proposed.
- 6.2.3 The site is also compliant with policy 12 in that it is 'related physically and functionally to existing buildings associated with the business'. The site is located within a parcel of land close to and to an extent contained by an existing machine store and cattle shed, north-west of the steading. It would be served by its existing access, limiting the need for new hardstanding. The site slopes quite steeply north-south, meaning the new shed can be cut into the slope, reducing its eaves

- height and visual impact, particularly from the north where public viewpoints (namely public paths) are located.
- 6.2.4 There is scope to provide a sensitive planting scheme on land to the north and west, which can be subject to an appropriately worded planning condition if felt appropriate. However, in view of the proximity of the building to the remainder of the farm buildings, the screening offered by the local topography, and its design, this may not be considered necessary.
- 6.2.5 The development can comply fully with the requirements of policy 12 of the Development Plan and NPPF as a material planning consideration. The applicant has also had regard to the design guide (SPD), which is also a material consideration.
- 6.2.6 The design guide (SPD) recognises that large buildings will be required from time to time. It may be desirable to seek to provide relief from the expanse of walls and roof slope by breaking up the elements of the building, for example into two smaller sections. In this instance that is not considered practical owing to the position of the building, cost, design, and the desire to accommodate a modest slurry store below it.
- 6.2.7 In addition, because of the position of the new proposal so close to existing buildings, and the topography of the site, it is not considered that the building will be overly prominent such that design features like this would be necessary. The applicant has selected materials which are in keeping with others on the steading with an organic appearance (timber boarding) and the roof slope is consistent with others on the farm. New rooflights will also break up the roofslope. The site is not elevated or visible on a skyline, and in fact sits below any public vantage points, the nearest being located around 80 metres north of the site (public footpath reference 25.126/034).
- 6.2.8 If considered necessary, the applicant is prepared to advance a landscaping scheme involving planting land to the north and west of the site with native trees and shrubs. However, with the mitigation offered by the siting and materials, and screening offered by topography and existing buildings, this was not considered necessary.

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7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposed development is necessary ~~for the continued growth and sustainability~~ of the farming enterprise of which it will form part. The building is designed for agriculture, and the design has regard to its siting and function. The impact of the development is mitigated by its siting, particularly its hillside location, proximity to existing buildings and relationship to the steading, design features, materials and location away from public viewpoints. Further mitigation could be achieved if considered necessary.
- 7.2 The development for the above reasons complies with policy 12 of the CSDPD and NPPF, and has regard to design guidance which is a material consideration. It is hoped therefore that a favourable decision will be forthcoming.