

Rotary Milking Parlour Proposal: Grange Farm, Staintondale

Planning Statement

1. This statement explains the need for a new rotary milking parlour and why its location has been chosen.
2. It is a resubmission of a very similar proposal on the same site. The planning application (NYM/2011/0099/FL) was submitted on 11 February 2011 and refused on 27 February 2012. A consequent appeal was dismissed on 12 March 2013.
3. Circumstances have now changed. The existing cubicle building adjacent to the west should be taken into account. This (application NM/2012/0818/FL) was also subject of an appeal, which was allowed on 23 December 2013 when retrospective planning permission was given. Another change is that the ridge height is now slightly lower, 7m compared to 8m previously.
3. Need. The Applicant, Mathew Else, has a large dairy herd with, currently, 721 head of cattle (361 dairy cows, 8 bulls and 352 young stock). The number of young stock will rise substantially in the next few weeks with spring calving.
4. Current milking arrangements are unsatisfactory. Mr Else has explained that at present it takes 4 to 5 hours twice a day to milk the cows. This is a high cost in manpower. It is also very tiring for milking staff and can lead to low levels of productivity and hygiene. Furthermore it can cause welfare problems: long waiting times for cows affect cell counts and mastitis levels. Standing on concrete for long periods has a detrimental impact on the cows' feet, thereby increasing instances of lameness.
5. He needs a new, efficient and modern parlour for milking. He says that it is widely recognised by DEFRA and Dairy Company that milking should not take more than two hours, which gives dairy farmers time to do all the other work required for a productive dairy farm. The proposed parlour will let his herd be milked in less than two hours, twice a day.
6. As part of the processing of the planning application for the cubicle building the NPA commissioned a report from Acorus, dated 20 November 2012. The question of need for modern milking facilities at Grange Farm is addressed in it at 3.3.

"Based on the stated intentions of the farmer to continue to operate a large scale, sustainable, organic farming system based on 380-390 dairy cows, it is clear that further modern milking facilities are required."

"Although a full financial assessment has not been completed, it is considered that a business of this size and character should be viable and sustainable in the long term".
7. Although the earlier milking parlour appeal was dismissed in March 2013, the Inspector at paragraph 24 acknowledges



"the undoubted merits of the proposed milking parlour in terms of animal welfare and the efficient running of the farm, as well as the economic benefits it could bring to the farming enterprise and by extension, to the local area".

8. Therefore the need has been supported in principle from two independent sources.

9. Location. An important locational requirement for the milking parlour is that tanker lorries need to have good road access to it. In addition, biosecurity requirements under Farm Assurance means that lorries are not allowed to drive through any area where cattle move around because of the risk of contamination from and on to the vehicle. All these reasons, plus topography and the layout of buildings at Grange Farm preclude a location elsewhere, especially on the north side of the farm buildings which might otherwise be preferable visually.

10. Mr Else intends shortly to discuss with the NPA other, wider aspects of future development at Grange Farm in an overall plan, as suggested in the March 2013 appeal decision (paragraph 18).

11. Visual considerations. Mr Else notes of course the dismissal of the first appeal, where it was considered that the proposed milking parlour would cause harm to the character and appearance of the landscape. However two matters have changed.

- The height is lower, at 7.0m.
- The Inspector noted at paragraph 18 that the status of the adjacent cubicle building was unresolved and therefore gave it little weight. However the cubicle building has now been approved by the second appeal. It is higher, at 8.5m. The Inspector commented that although it is "readily apparent" from the important viewpoint of the railway path, he was

"not satisfied that the presence of the building materially diminishes the special quality of the landscape" (paragraphs 18,19).

Both these are material considerations.

12. In addition Mr Else has planted a substantial number of trees as shown on the drawings. They both provide screening and a valuable habitat for wildlife. He is prepared to increase this if it would help.

13. Conclusions. The replacement milking parlour is needed at this substantial dairy farm, as has been acknowledged in the Acorus report. It meets the requirements of DP12 in the NPA's LDF concerning functionality. The NPPF at paragraph 28 supports *"the development of agricultural ... business"*. This needs to be set against impact on the landscape. In visual terms the parlour would be 1.5 metres lower and generally smaller than the adjacent cubicle building, and the additional impact would be less. I consider that the Inspector's conclusion in the recent appeal decision on the cubicle building, that it did not materially diminish landscape quality, applies here. In addition, the generous planting will assist in absorbing it into the landscape.

NYMNEA
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