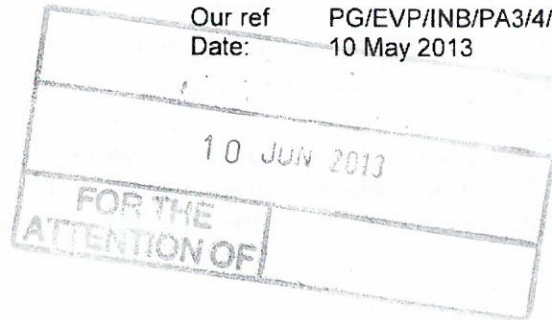


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Miss Claire Booth
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Clitheroe
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BB7 2RA

Your ref
Our ref PG/EVP/INB/PA3/4/8630
Date: 10 May 2013



Dear Miss Booth

APPLICATION NUMBER 3/2013/0329
HOLE HOUSE FARM, BILLINGTON, CLITHEROE, BB7 9NY

I refer to your consultation letter concerning the above application and have the following comments to make:

Introduction

A planning application has been submitted by Melanie Lawrenson of ML Planning Ltd on behalf of Mr R Vickery for the erection of an agricultural building to provide dairy cow housing and feed yard. A site visit was made on 4th June 2013 whilst the applicant was present and the information provided at this meeting, together with the written submissions, forms the basis of this appraisal.

Background Information

Hole House Farm has been farmed by the applicant and his father before him as a dairy farm. The cattle housing and dairy facilities are dated and the applicant recognises the requirement to replace these in order to maintain the agricultural operations on this unit in the future. A Greenfield site is proposed as the current site would not provide sufficient space to build a modern design system of housing with undercover feed area. In addition the applicant is intending to expand the dairy cow numbers and the proposed site will enable the building to be extended to accommodate these. Also the existing parlour and dairy are dated and the applicant is also intending to replace these. The proposed site of the cattle building is intended to provide sufficient space for a new building to be erected adjoining the west facing gable end.

I N Bower
Estates Surveyor
Corporate Property Group • PO Box 26 •
County Hall • Preston • PR1 8RE

Agricultural Land and Enterprise

The total area of land farmed extends to approximately 380 acres (153.78 hectares) of which 120 acres (48.56 hectares) is owned at the application site and 70 acres (28.33 hectares) is owned at Chew Mill Farm, Elker Lane, Billington. The remaining land is rented, 50 acres (20.23 hectares) on a 5 year Farm Business tenancy and 140 acres (56.66 hectares) on 12 month licences.

The principal enterprise undertaken by the applicants is a commercial dairy herd. At present both Mr Vickery and his son Robert work full time on the farm.

At the time of inspection there were 100 dairy cows and followers and a flock of 450 breeding ewes. Calves are sold at 10 weeks of age usually at Gisburn Auction Mart, Gisburn. It is the applicant's intention to improve their accommodation facilities for their cows and increase their herd number to 150 cows, hence the application.

Longer term plans include erecting similar buildings to accommodate a new milking parlour with dairy and additional calving box facilities.

Existing Buildings

The buildings on site comprise as follows:

- 1) Farmhouse (Bungalow)
- 2) Cubicle building (wooden kennels) for 34 dairy cows
- 3) Cubicle building (wooden kennels) for 42 dairy cows which would be demolished as part of the development.
- 4) Milking parlour attached to dairy.
- 5) Small collecting yard.
- 6) Machinery Shed which is used for general storage/ as a workshop.
- 7) Dutch Barn which is used for straw storage and lambing sheep.
- 8) Stone Barn/ Shippon which is used for housing young stock.
- 9) Loose Boxes which are used for calving/ calf rearing.
- 10) Part underground concrete breeze block slurry store.

Proposed Development

It is proposed to erect a 7 bay steel portal framed building measuring approximately 42.6m x 24m with an eaves height of 4.2m and ridge height of 7.4m.

The building would provide for 85 cubicles and a feed trough covered yard area.

The site of the building is to the north east of the existing farm buildings as shown on the plans submitted.

Access to the proposed building is from the existing yard area, which is accessed from a private track off Whalley Road.

Assessment

The proposed development is within an area shown on the Ribble Valley Local Plan as being outside the main settlement/village boundaries in addition to being classified as open countryside. Policy G5 provides guidance for development in land outside the main settlement/village boundaries and states:

'outside the main settlement boundaries and the village boundaries, planning permission will only be granted for small scale developments, which are:

- ii) needed for the purposes of agriculture or forestry**

In considering the above, I consider the following matters should be assessed:

1. Whether the proposed development is necessary for the purposes of agriculture.

I inspected the existing buildings of the farm, particularly those in relation to livestock housing. The existing dairy cattle housing consisting of 2 timber cow kennel buildings I feel have reached the end of their design life. In addition the cubicle beds have inherent design limitations in particular restricted lying area owing to the size of each cubicle and also restricted lunging space required when cows lie and rise from the cubicle bed. I expect if permission is approved for this application these two buildings will remain at least for the foreseeable future but will not be utilised as intensive as they are currently. It was apparent there is a lack of cattle housing for young stock and feel the existing buildings will be utilised for these.

I note the housing capacity for the proposed building is 85 cattle compared with 76 beds provided by the two kennel buildings. Although there are 100 dairy cattle the remainder will be non lactating cows which will be managed separate to the herd.

2. The design, scale and materials used for the building are appropriate.

The design of the building is in accordance with the intended agricultural use, whilst the building is a conventional portal frame design its internal layout is designed for its proposed use. The inclusion of a raised capped ridge, Yorkshire Boarding and open westerly, easterly and southerly elevations, above the 1.5m high concrete walling, is intended to provide good ventilation through the building. I would comment that the eaves height of 4.2m is at the higher end of the range of eaves height typical for this use but feel is appropriate. The cubicle type accommodation proposed is typical for this type of farming enterprise and is, in my opinion, suitable.

The size of the proposed building is in proportion to the current dairy herd size and allows for expansion within the applicant's herd, providing an appropriate area for cows to rest and feed.

3. Siting

The proposed site is a Greenfield site situated to the north east of the existing cubicle buildings and farmstead area.

I was informed by the applicant that the proposed siting was selected bearing in mind that in the future an application may be submitted for an extension to the proposed building for both a new milking parlour with dairy and for the provision of additional cubicles/ loose housing as cow numbers increase.

It is my opinion that owing to the limitations of the farmstead for erecting new buildings, that the proposed building is situated in the most appropriate position relative to the existing accommodation and dairy/parlour.

I would be grateful to receive a copy of your Decision Notice in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'I N Bower', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

I N Bower
Estates Surveyor
On behalf of the Director of Property