

**Design and Access Statement & Planning Statement
for**

**Hawkshaw Farm Visitor Centre stable accommodation for
ponies**

at
**Hawkshaw Farm
Longsight Road
Clayton Le Dale
Blackburn
BB2 7JA**

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This statement has been structured with reference to CABE best practice guidance; Design & Access Statements – how to write read and use them. CABE 2006.

Design & Access Statement and Planning Statement

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1.0 Introduction

Hawkshaw Farm is a 135 acre dairy farm owned and occupied by Mr & Mrs Dowson and their family. In addition to the farm at home there is an additional 250 acres of rented land which is farmed as part of the business. The business comprises 200 dairy cattle with all replacements being reared on farm so that at any one time there are 350 head of cattle present on the holding.

A proportion of the milk produced is used to make Mrs Dowsons award winning ice creams with currently over 50 different flavours available. Ice cream making began on the farm in 2001 and has continued to grow on an annual basis. Currently the farm and ice cream making enterprise employ 7 FTE staff.

The farm visitor centre and café were developed in 2008 to enable people to look around the farm and then to enjoy Mrs Dowsons ice cream and homemade cakes. The centre enables people to come into contact with a range of farm animals and small animals including pigs, alpacas, sheep, cattle, goats, hens and ducks.

To enable visitors to have close contact with these different species of animals a number of small pens have been created in the field adjacent to the café. Several of these enclosures have small buildings included to offer shelter and protection for the livestock in inclement weather.

The visitor centre is open at weekends, bank holidays and school holidays from mid-March to September. During the times of opening there are two full time staff and up to 15 part time staff throughout the school summer holidays. Daily opening times are 9.00am to 6.00pm.

2.0 Site details

Hawkshaw Farm is located on Longsight Rd and is to the east of the A59. The majority of the 135 acres farm is grassland which is a mixture of permanent pasture and silage meadows, with a small area of maize being grown each year.

There is a large range of traditional and modern farm buildings providing cattle housing, silage clamps, general storage and manure storage.

The visitor centre was granted planning consent in 2007 as a bird of prey centre with office, classroom and associated storage. Amendments were made to the original scheme in 2008 (3/2007/0313P and 3/2008/0413). The original plans included the widening and improvement of the farm entrance onto the A59, the development of single storey building 12.5m x 12.5m for the café and classroom, with a separate toilet block alongside and the associated car parking. (See site plan)

Planning was granted for the small livestock buildings around the visitor centre in 2015, application reference 3/2014/1094.

3.0 The development

The proposed development is to remove the existing storage shed to the east of the visitor centre site and to replace it with a row of stables. A number of additional Shetland ponies have been purchased as the new attraction for the visitor centre and the stables will provide accommodation for wet days and through the winter. The stables will provide housing but will also allow visitor's access to individual animals for feeding and grooming.

On the previous application one of the structures was identified as the pony/donkey shed. The pens in here were not wide enough to allow ponies and donkeys to move around freely and they are currently housed in the cattle building. The original shed is used for lambing sheep in the spring and for pet lambs through the summer months.

The stable block will provide individual stables with the end stable being used for feed and tack storage. The building will be clad in Juniper green coated sheets with roof lights to match the adjacent buildings within the visitor centre. The south elevation will be timber clad and the stable doors will be timber.

4.0 Design and Access

Context of Site

Assessment

The proposed building is a small scale addition to the existing buildings within the visitor centre at Hawkshaw Farm which will offer six individual stables, a feed storage area and a tack room.

The building will offer stabling for the existing ponies and the new Shetland ponies which are part of the visitor experience.

Involvement

None

Evaluation

The site gained planning for a café and classroom in 2007/2008 and has evolved in to the attraction it is today in gradual stages to meet visitor expectations. The range of animal shelters was granted planning consent in 2015. The new ponies are the latest addition at Hawkshaw farm and are available for petting, grooming and feeding by visitors.

Design

The proposed building has been designed to match the adjacent rabbit and guinea pig house as well as the lambing and sheep house, both of which are located along the eastern perimeter of the visitor centre.

The walls and roof of the building will be clad with Juniper Green powder coated sheets to match the neighbouring buildings. There will be a number of roof lights to allow natural light into the building.

Design Principles and Concepts:

Use

The proposed building will be used to house the ponies, donkeys and Shetland ponies which are part of the attraction at Hawkshaw Farm. There will be a small feed storage area and a tack room within the building.

Amount

The stable block will measure 27.5 metres by 5.45 metres and will contain 6 stables and a storage area for feed and tack.

Layout

The building will be located parallel to the rabbit and guinea pig building with an enclosed grazing area at the front of the stables, to the south.

Scale

The block of stables will measure 27.5 metres by 5.45 metres and will be 3.05 metres to the eaves and 4 metres to the highest point.

Landscaping

There is no additional landscaping proposed around this building.

Appearance

The building will be clad in juniper green powder coated sheets to match the neighbouring sheds.

Access:

An Accessible Environment

The site is easily accessible from Longsight Road and via a number of internal farm tracks. All buildings which are open to the visitors are fully accessible.

Vehicular and Transport Links

The site has good vehicular access and public transport can be accessed from Longsight Road

Access and Movement Patterns

There is good access and adequate turning space for vehicles within the site. The original planning consent contained access improvements onto the A59, Longsight Road and these have been carried out to a higher specification than required.

There is adequate space for car parking and turning space for coaches visiting the site.

Emergency Services Access

There is good access for the emergency services and this will not be altered by the proposal.

5.0 Planning Policy Framework

Central Government provides policy advice in the National Policy Planning Framework.

In this instance the local planning policy which is relevant to the site comes in the form of the Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan – Saved Policies 2007

5.1 National Policy

National planning Policy Framework

3. Supporting a prosperous rural economy

28 planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create new jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans:

- *support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- *promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- *support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres;*

This project supports the diversification of a family run agricultural business. The tourism attraction is a well renowned feature in the Ribble Valley having won many awards.

Hawkshaw Farm offers the opportunity for people to come into close contact with farm and other animals. At certain times of year it is also possible to see the dairy cows giving birth and with new born calves as well as sheep and lambs at lambing time.

The Shetland ponies are the latest addition and are proving to be a popular attraction.

5.2 Local Policies

Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008 - 2028

KEY STATEMENT DS2: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or*
- specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted*

The visitor centre is in a sustainable location and is easily accessible on foot, bicycle and by public transport.

KEY STATEMENT EC1: BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT

Developments that contribute to farm diversification, strengthening of the wider rural and village economies or that promote town centre vitality and viability will be supported in principle.

The proposal increases the number of activities offered by the visitor and strengthens this farm diversification project.

KEY STATEMENT EC3: VISITOR ECONOMY

Proposals that contribute to and strengthen the visitor economy of Ribble Valley will be encouraged, including the creation of new accommodation and tourism facilities through the conversion of existing buildings or associated with existing attractions. Significant new attractions will be supported, in circumstances where they would deliver overall improvements to the environment and benefits to local communities and employment opportunities.

The visitor centre at Hawkshaw Farm offers employment for many local people from students through to full time regular employees.

POLICY DMG1: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

In determining planning applications, all development must:

Design

- 1. Be of a high standard of building design which considers the 8 building in context principles (from the CABI/English Heritage building in context toolkit).*

- 2. Be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials.*
- 3. Consider the density, layout and relationship between buildings, which is of major importance. Particular emphasis will be placed on visual appearance and the relationship to surroundings, including impact on landscape character, as well as the effects of development on existing amenities.*
- 4. Use sustainable construction techniques where possible and provide evidence that energy efficiency, as described within policy DME5, has been incorporated into schemes where possible.*
- 5. The code for sustainable homes and lifetime homes, or any subsequent nationally recognised equivalent standards, should be incorporated into schemes.*

Access

- 1. Consider the potential traffic and car parking implications.*
- 2. Ensure safe access can be provided which is suitable to accommodate the scale and type of traffic likely to be generated.*
- 3. Consider the protection and enhancement of public rights of way and access.*

Amenity

- 1. Not adversely affect the amenities of the surrounding area.*
- 2. Provide adequate day lighting and privacy distances.*
- 3. Have regard to public safety and secured by design principles.*
- 4. Consider air quality and mitigate adverse impacts where possible.*

Environment

- 1. Consider the environmental implications such as SSSIs, County Heritage Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats and species, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protected Areas, protected species, green corridors and other sites of nature conservation.*
- 2. With regards to possible effects upon the natural environment, the council propose That the principles of the mitigation hierarchy be followed. This gives sequential Preference to the following:
 - 1) enhance the environment*
 - 2) avoid the impact*
 - 3) minimise the impact*
 - 4) restore the damage*
 - 5) compensate for the damage*
 - 6) offset the damage.**
- 3. All development must protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings.*
- 4. All new development proposals will be required to take into account the risks arising from former coal mining and, where necessary, incorporate suitable mitigation measures to address them.*
- 5. Achieve efficient land use and the reuse and remediation of previously developed sites where possible. Previously developed sites should always be used instead of greenfield sites where possible*

The proposed stables have been designed to ensure they are in keeping with the neighbouring buildings to reduce visual impact.

The site is readily accessible by road and public transport. The visitor attraction is fully accessible to users with disabilities.

POLICY DMG2: STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

Within the open countryside development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the area by virtue of its size, design, use of materials, landscaping and siting. Where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build.

There is not a suitable building within the visitor site which could be converted to make stables. The stable block is of an appropriate size and scale in this location.

POLICY DMB3: RECREATION AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that extend the range of tourism and visitor facilities in the borough. This is subject to the following criteria being met:

- 1. The proposal must not conflict with other policies of this plan;*
- 2. The proposal must be physically well related to an existing main settlement or village or to an existing group of buildings, except where the proposed facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction and there are no suitable existing buildings or developed sites available;*
- 3. The development should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, siting, materials or design;*
- 4. The proposals should be well related to the existing highway network. It should not generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance. Where possible the proposals should be well related to the public transport network;*
- 5. The site should be large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and appropriate landscaped areas; and*
- 6. The proposal must take into account any nature conservation impacts using suitable survey information and where possible seek to incorporate any important existing associations within the development. Failing this then adequate mitigation will be sought.*

The development is an addition to an existing tourism facility and the building is well related to other structures.

6.0 Determining issues

It is considered that the determining issues in the case of this application are:-

- a) The principle of allowing the development of an additional small building associated with the farm visitor centre
- b) The visual impact of the proposal on the open countryside
- c) The impact of the development on the amenity of the local landscape
- d) The impact of this tourism development on the local highways network

7.0 Assessment of the determining issues

7.1 The principle of granting permission for building fits with both local and national policy. The building is ancillary to the visitor centre which is supported by planning policy as a small scale rural tourism facility.

7.2 The proposed building has a minimal visual impact on the open countryside.

7.3 The farm visitor centre is an appropriate facility in the open countryside and is in itself a valuable amenity.

7.4 Improvements to the site entrance have already been carried out to minimise the impact of the development on the local road network.

8.0 Conclusion

After carefully assessing this proposal with regard to all the relevant planning policies and issues it is considered that there will be no obstacles to the granting of planning permission for this proposal.

The farm visitor centre is a valued tourism facility to help to connect the general public with food production and the countryside.