

320171013P

Agricultural and Planning Statement

*For Lyme House Farm, Thornley with Wheatley
Applicants E Roper and Sons*

This full planning application is submitted for a proposal to erect an agricultural building to provide a covered collecting yard for cattle. The site, set well back from the road, is adjacent to existing farm buildings and with access from the existing cattle buildings, milking parlour, farm land and farm access. The building is reasonably required for the existing agricultural business.

Agricultural Justification

Proposed is a building to form a covered cattle collecting yard. The need for a covered collecting yard has been identified by the applicant and his advisors. This will be used to provide the necessary facilities for the dairy herd during milking, feeding and bedding operations in the dairy cow housing. The additional pens in the covered yard will also be used for dry cows and in-calf heifers. The main aim is to reduce the length of time cattle spend on the open yard during day to day operations. This will dramatically reduce the amount of slurry to be collected and reduce the risk of pollution from runoff. In particular, free access to the cattle housing with tractors and machinery will speed up the required operations and increase the safety of both stockmen and cattle. Feed deliveries must also have clear passage through the farm yard.

As with all livestock businesses there is increasing welfare regulation, detailed dairy contracts and regular veterinary inspections for record keeping. The provision of a dry, safe and stress free collecting yard for both cattle and stockman is paramount. The building will include covered yard, cattle pens, water storage tanks/troughs, storage and access to the facilities already approved. The building will be run, together with a sustainable integral rainwater harvesting system, to make best use of clean roof water and minimize the use of the soakaway for rainwater in periods of intense rainfall.

There will also be provision for the heifer and beef rearing enterprises. Given the significant fluctuations in heifer replacement prices as a result of supply, market and currency fluctuations it is necessary to carry more replacements on hand. The business can then weather the more difficult times forecast ahead following departure from the EU agri support mechanisms.

The herd had relied on a number of bought in heifers each year but now the herd is more established. The quality home bred heifer calves are being reared along with a number of beef calves which has increased the demands on existing buildings and yard areas to access the livestock handling facilities. As such the existing dairy and heifer rearing livestock buildings do not provide any spare space for the requirement. The proposed covered collecting yard for dairy cows and other cattle will solve this problem.

Design

The new building is to be of the same construction and materials as the more modern buildings on the site. The covered collecting yard will adjoin the approved cattle facilities and is orientated parallel to the existing adjacent buildings. The proposed new building will reduce the apparent visual impact of existing buildings as the roofline is lower than that of the adjacent building. The materials to be used are a steel frame with fibre cement roof, and reinforced concrete panelled walls with vented profile steel cladding/timber space boarding above. The suggested colour of the profile sheets is juniper green to match some of the existing modern buildings.

Transport & Access

Access to the site from the public highway uses the existing entrance and drive. The existing entrance is onto a straight section of road with good sightlines. This application does not seek to alter the existing entrance or usage of it.

Access around the Building

Access to and around the proposed building is to be from the existing farm yard area and adjacent farm buildings. The proposed covered collecting yard for cattle will service the farm buildings.

Appearance

The proposed materials are similar to the completed modern buildings in the existing farmstead. With the roofline lower than the existing range of buildings, the new building will add negligible visual impact to views from the road to the west as it will be set below the roofline of the more dated modern farm buildings. These older buildings appear to be in a tired condition on the approaches to the farm so there is some overall screening benefit.

Conclusion

The proposed building is necessary and will improve the management of the holding and the welfare of dairy cows, dry cows, dairy heifers, beef cattle and stockmen.