

ML Planning Consultancy Ltd.

For Client Mrs A. Sutcliffe

Ray Head Farm, Anna Lane, Bolton by Bowland BB7 4NZ

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT & SUPPORTING INFORMATION



Ariel image of Ray Head Farm

Description of the Application

The development is for the erection of 1No new agricultural livestock and storage building, at Ray Head Farm in Bolton by Bowland

The farm is 130 acres. There is a flock of 450 breeding ewes and lambs on the farm. The building will provide undercover lambing and handling facilities for the sheep, and under cover storage for machinery hay and straw

There are currently no suitable buildings available on the farm, for the proposed use put forward in this application. There is one main old stone barn, which is not conducive to use for modern agriculture, and does not provide suitable conditions for the welfare of the livestock, nor does it provide adequate access for modern farm machinery and equipment. There are also a number of other small stone barns/buildings which are either too small, or do not have big enough openings for modern machinery.

There are 450 breeding ewes on the unit. These ewes lamb over a 6-10-week period, in batches, starting in March. Their lambs are kept and fattened to be sold to the food chain in the autumn of each year. So, between March and October there can be up to 1000 head of sheep on the farm. There are no suitable buildings to serve the business anywhere else on the farm.

The sheep are lambed in batches, up to press in several small unsuitable buildings, making management and animal husbandry difficult and high in labour requirements. They need to be brought to an undercover facility, and to be protected from the elements, which is essential in this elevated position to avoid mortalities.

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In addition to the sheep housing building will be used for the storage of hay and straw and tractors and machinery, which are currently outside bearing the elements.

Amount & Scale

One new agricultural livestock / storage building is applied for. It measures 27.4 m x 18.2m x 4.2m to eaves and 6.6 to ridge, and will be clad in tanalized timber boarding, with a cement fibre roof and concrete panels lower walls

Site Area

The size of the building results in a total floor space of 498.6 sq m

Access

Access will be gained via the existing entrance to the farm. There is adequate room in the existing yard area for turning and manovering vehicles, plus access for emergency services if they were ever needed.

No impacts are predicted on the network of public roads or rights of way during the construction or operation periods; therefore, no additional measures are thought to be necessary.

Policy

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

- 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;

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- 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; and
- promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

Conclusion

The proposed development will provide an essential livestock housing and storage facility. The surrounding landscape is that of established farmland, there will be no resulting visual impacts on the neighbouring properties, as there are none. Therefore, it is deemed that there are no contentious planning issues in question, given the established agricultural activity and the fact that welfare issues dictate that there is a need for a building to provide the five freedoms of animal welfare.

The under-cover storage of essential machinery and equipment on the farm is an obvious requirement given the bulky nature and high value of such items.

The five freedoms of animal welfare

The Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) - a government advisory body has identified five freedoms that - if maintained - can help ensure the welfare of your livestock. These state that, at all times, animals should have freedom:

- from hunger and thirst - animals must have access to fresh water and a diet which will maintain health and vigour
- from discomfort - an appropriate environment should be provided, including shelter and a comfortable resting area
- from pain, injury or disease - you must ensure the prevention of illnesses, or rapid diagnosis and treatment

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- to express normal behavior - sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind should all be provided
- from fear and distress - you must provide conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering