

Agricultural and Planning Statement

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

This full planning application is submitted for a proposal to erect an extension to an existing agricultural building to provide livestock housing for cattle. The site, set well away 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 an extension to an existing building to form housing for cattle. The need for additional cattle housing has been identified by the applicant and his advisors. This modern housing will be used to provide the necessary accommodation for the larger heifers prior to joining the dairy herd. The main aim is to reduce the stocking levels and any stress which may occur in the older buildings during daily operation.

As with all livestock businesses there is increasing welfare regulation, detailed dairy contracts and regular veterinary inspections for record keeping. The provision of well ventilated, dry, safe and stress free livestock housing for both cattle and stockpersons is paramount. The building will include maximum size cubicle beds, wide passages/ feed standing, wide crossing passages with water storage tanks/troughs, and access via the yard 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 in periods of intense rainfall.

There will be provision for the larger heifer replacements joining the herd from the rearing enterprise. Given the home breeding policy, as a result of significant fluctuations in heifer replacement prices due to 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 current UK version of EU agri support mechanisms.

The quality home bred heifer calves are being reared along with a number of beef calves which has increased the demands on all the existing buildings. As such the existing dairy cow livestock buildings do not provide any spare space for the overall increased requirement. The proposed modern livestock housing for dairy heifers will solve this problem.

Design

The new building is to be of the same construction and materials as the more modern dairy cow housing buildings already on the site. The proposed cattle housing will be located adjoining to and is orientated parallel to the existing livestock buildings. This proposal will form an extension to the older buildings adjacent. The new building extension being of the same dimensions to the adjoining will not create any apparent additional visual impact. The roofline is the same as the adjacent buildings so there will be some additional screening of some existing buildings. The materials to be used are a steel frame with fibre cement roof, and reinforced concrete panelled walls with tanalised timber space boarding above. The suggested colour of the sheeted gates is juniper green to match some of the existing modern buildings. The fibre cement roof is suggested as "Eternit – Big Six Profile - Natural Grey" to match the existing farm buildings immediately adjacent and approved recently. Access and yard are to be surfaced with concrete.

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 farm yard area and adjacent farm buildings. The proposed livestock housing for cattle will be serviced by the existing farm buildings.

Appearance

The proposed dimensions and materials are similar to the completed modern buildings and those approved in the existing farmstead. With the roofline no higher than the existing adjacent range of buildings, the new building will add negligible visual impact to views from the road to the west.

Conclusion

The proposed livestock building extension is necessary and will improve the management of the holding and the welfare of dairy cows, dry cows, dairy heifers and stockpersons. The building is reasonably required for the existing agricultural business.