

Agricultural and Design Statement

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

Introduction

This full application proposes to create roof to cover part of an existing agricultural fodder storage structure, adjacent to the recently approved storage building, situate to the rear of the farm yard.

Agricultural Justification

The need for a new roof over the existing fodder store for the dairy enterprise has been identified by the applicant. This will be used to provide covered storage for the existing uses being mainly for fodder but also for other feeds including grains, straights, and supplements. In addition given the significant fluctuations in feed and straights prices as a result of supply, market and currency fluctuations it is necessary to carry more stocks on hand. The requirement for a roof covering over the existing store has been identified by the applicants and their advisors. The business can then weather the more difficult times forecast ahead following departure from the EU agri-support mechanisms.

The herd had relied, in the past, 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 older buildings for livestock accommodation. For clarification no livestock accommodation is proposed under this new roof. The provision of safe and stress free facilities for the applicants, staff, and deliveries is paramount as is minimal disturbance to livestock. As such the existing dairy and heifer rearing livestock buildings do not provide any spare space to provide for the requirement to dry store mainly home produced fodder also feed grains, and bought in straights. The proposed roof over existing general purpose storage seeks to remedy this deficit.

Design

The proposal is to be of the same construction and materials as the existing buildings on the site. The orientation of ridgeline is parallel to the existing store which fronts the rear yard. The proposed roof forms a suitable building that is designed so that modern equipment can be operated safely at all times without compromising the roof structure or employees over the full width of the store, even under the internal eaves bracing. The latest generation of equipment has higher reaches and tipping heights. The proposed materials to be used are an upward extension of the existing steel frame structure, retaining the existing reinforced concrete panelled walls with proposed profile steel external cladding above. A fibre cement roof of natural grey is proposed to match existing buildings with clear plastic rooflights. The suggested colour for the steel cladding is juniper green to match the existing building adjacent to the immediate yard area. The proposed roof will prevent water ingress to feed stocks so reducing losses. This reduces surface runoff. The clean roof water can be recycled via a sustainable drainage system for livestock use in the other existing farm buildings.

Transport & Access

Access to the site is from the public highway using 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 building is to be from the existing farm yard area to the north west side. The existing storage with new roof will continue to service the existing farm buildings.

Appearance

The materials are going to be similar to the completed modern buildings in the existing farmstead. The roofline being close to the existing manure store and other existing buildings, the new roof for the store will add little additional visual impact to views from the road to the west. The proposal will be mostly obscured on the approaches to the farm by other existing buildings and structures. The proposed new roof for the store will be set on an existing structure which is already mostly below the existing gradient of the land which rises to the rear. This higher land obscures the majority of the lower walls including all of the rear concrete panels and side panels. The surrounding hedgerows, mature woodland and mature treelines significantly reduce the apparent overall visual impact. There are some additional benefits including the proposal partially obscuring the stark outline of the existing large circular concrete above ground tank.

Conclusion

The proposed new roof for an existing store will improve the management of the holding and the business which includes the feeding, and maintaining the high welfare herd status of the dairy cows, dairy heifers, and young cattle. The proposed roof will reduce both economic and quality losses in feed. Also recycled rainwater from the roof via a sustainable collection system benefits the business and reduces surface water runoff. The proposed new roof over existing farm storage is both necessary and reasonably required for the existing agricultural business.