

Agricultural and Design Statement

Applicant : R Seed & Son, Higher Parsonage Farm, Parsonage Lane, Chipping, Longridge PR3 2NS

This full planning application is to provide a new roof over the existing storage facility. The completed building will have a pitched roof, portal frames, timber space boarding to two sides and be sited over the existing concrete walls which have a natural stone outer cladding which is to be retained.

Agricultural Statement

The existing family farming business comprises a herd of cattle including in-calf heifers, bulling heifers, and young-stock of various ages. In addition the holding supports an expanding flock of sheep. This family business owns the farm and rents some more land locally. There is an existing business plan to retain more of the pedigree bred calves and sheep.

The agricultural information supplied with the application sets out the cattle numbers which in each year approximate 40 in calf adult cattle and 80 cattle of varying ages. Mainly the older and some larger cattle are housed adjacent to the proposal in existing livestock buildings with feeding areas under cover. The existing storage facility has provided the required storage over many years and this system is not being altered. This storage now has new government guidance and grant schemes to encourage the roofing over of existing stores. This serves a number of purposes. Firstly to exclude direct rainwater so that the capacity is maintained over more months of the year so enabling strategic spreading during the spring and summer months when grass growth requires the nutrients the most. The Chipping area is noted for the very high rainfall average particularly through the winter months. Secondly the avoidance of winter spreading reduces compaction of grassland by farm machinery so protecting soil structure. Thirdly that the timely spreading outline above reduces the risk of diffuse pollution from farmland in winter. Additional benefits include the potential to reduce the impact of machinery operation and farm vehicle movements so enhancing local amenity and highway safety. The investment is also encouraged by various government and local bodies including the River Ribble Catchments Trust and their field officers who visit farms and advise of the wide ranging local and national benefits. The River Ribble Catchment Trust provided the planning department with prior notice of the encouragement schemes and advance notice of the likely high numbers of associated planning applications and seeking support on the basis of overall benefits to the Ribble Valley and other valleys in the local authority's area. Quite number of farms in the Ribble Valley have taken up this advice with the roofing over of both existing storage and yard areas which has been generally well supported by the local authority. The roofing over investment benefits the local and wider environment so can be clearly demonstrated as being sustainable development.

Design

The proposed roof over the existing storage facility is to be of the same construction and materials as the existing adjacent modern buildings on the site. The completed structure will provide cover to the existing storage facility to exclude rain water and reduce excess which is already stored in the existing tank. The proposed building will maintain a similar appearance on the south east side and reduce the impact of the existing cattle feeding building. The chosen materials to be used are an internal steel frame and fibre cement roof sheeting and timber space boarding above the existing concrete walls on the south east side and north east gable. The building is to be open fronted to the existing yard and open to the adjacent buildings. The design of the proposed building has been sought so as to have regard for the policies of landscape, visual impact and the Area of Natural Beauty. Additional details - see form and plans.

Transport & Access

Access to the site is from the public highway using the existing farm access and yard area. For the avoidance of doubt all of the structure will be set within the existing storage facility and no part of the roof will overhang the highway. This application does not seek to alter the use of the facility or the entrance. There is an existing farm yard area adjoining the existing storage facility for access and turning.

Access around the Building

Access to and around the existing storage facility is to be from the existing farm yard area. The existing livestock buildings will be retained and will continue to service the holding. The existing yard access route will be retained for access to all buildings. The level of activity will remain the same or be reduced.

Appearance

The materials are going to be similar to the completed buildings in the existing farmstead. As described above, with the stone retained, there is minimal net visual impact from the existing situation.

Appraising the Context

The completion of the building will improve the provision of suitable storage facilities for the farm livestock including heifers and young cattle. The improved roofing over of the existing storage facilities will protect from the many months of high rainfall. The level of activity will remain the same or be reduced. The improved storage will dramatically reduce the risk of a shortage of capacity which is currently the case when open to the elements. The proposed roofing over of the existing storage facilities is justified above as reasonably required for agriculture and for the existing business on this agricultural unit. There are clear additional benefits to the local and wider environment which further justify this sustainable development.