

Planning and Design and Access Statement and AONB Major Development Test

**In Support of a Planning Application for 8
new buildings, three silos and a new track**

**Black Moss Farm, Elmridge, Chipping PR3
2NY**

Stanworth Agriculture

4th November 2024

Introduction

Blackmoss Farm is located off Gib Hey Lane, Chipping, at approximate National Grid Reference (NGR): 360152, 440399.

The project is Phase 2 of a multi-phase development at the farm. Phase 2 comprises the construction of a new calving shed which will have capacity for 70 cows and the extension of an existing calf shed with a maximum capacity of 138 calves under the age of 12-months. Additionally, it is proposed to construct a covered midden with a maximum capacity of 1,521 tonnes (t) of manure. In addition, an extension to an existing cattle housing shed is proposed to provide robotic milking equipment, to replace the manual milking process

A new 1.5 storey purpose built office facility is proposed along with a wash bay and fuel storage building, along with three silos for the storage of milk

Amount

Eight new buildings are applied for, in connection with the expansion of this existing business.

1. Extension to existing calf housing to house an additional 138 calves at 0-12 months. Footprint 960 sq m
2. Extension to existing dairy cattle housing building to provide robot milking machines footprint 1550 sqv m
3. New stand-alone calf building for 70 youngstock 12-18 months 960 sq m
4. 1.5 storey office/staff welfare building footprint 250 sq m
- 5 & 6 2 x plant buildings @ 36 sq m each
- 7 One new muck midden 739 sq m
- 8 New covered wash down bay with fuel storage 197.7 sq m,

Use Extension to existing calf building (Building 2) and new calf building (Building 3)

The proposals are additional buildings to provide housing for calves reared and bought in at the farm, destined to enter the dairy herd. The dairy herd, which was bought with the farm did not consist of any dairy calves, but the intended system is to breed and rear replacements for the herd, and the proposed buildings are to accommodate these animals.

The buildings will be purpose built, state of the art calf accommodation, complying with the Red Tractor, Farm assurance and DEFRA codes of conduct for the keeping of dairy cattle, addressing space allowance and feed areas,

Layout

The proposed buildings for the calves will provide individual pens for new born calves fed milk in buckets and open straw yard areas for loafing for the older calves

Use Extension to existing dairy cattle housing to provide robot milking area (Building 1)

An extension to the existing dairy cattle housing is proposed to provide robot milking facilities, which will replace the manual twice a day milking procedure, giving an uplift in milk production

Use Building 4 Staff rest room/farm office and meeting room

The new detached 1.5 storey farm office building will provide an office, rest room/ canteen/ toilet facilities and a meeting room area, which is all essential for a farm of this size and nature

Buildings 5 & 6 Plant rooms

These are essential for the operations of the Robot milking machines

Building 7 Covered Muck Midden

This is for the under-cover storage of midden produced on the farm

Building 8 Wash Bay

This is for washing down farm vehicles and storage of fuel
Scale

The buildings are in keeping with the existing buildings on site and are designed taking into account animal welfare codes of conduct for spacing allowances as advised by DEFRA.

Appearance

Roof: Anthracite coloured metal sheets to match existing buildings on site

Walls – Tanalized Timber Yorkshire Boards and Pre-Cast Concrete Panels, and juniper green curtains (temperature controlled)

The Process

The farm is a 400-acre dairy farm, with 250 dairy cows in milk. There are currently only a few calves bred for herd replacements, and it is the intention to rear all dairy calves from the herd to use as herd replacements in a purpose-built facility.

Access

Access to the buildings will be via a proposed new access track branching off the existing access track from Elmbridge Lane. There is adequate room on site for the turning and manoeuvring of emergency vehicles if they were ever needed on site.

AONB statement

The application amounts to major development in the Forest of Bowland AONB. The main issue of consideration is whether the proposal is justified by exceptional circumstances or the public interest, considering its effect on the landscape of the AONB and on amenity and other environmental interests; the level of need for the development and the availability and cost of alternatives to the proposal outside the AONB, and any economic benefit to the community.

Policy

The site comprises an existing and recently extended farmstead.

The principle of development is required to be secured against CS Policies DMG2 and DMB1, given the site is located within the AONB. Furthermore, Paragraph 177 of the NPPF is also relevant which relates directly to the provision of major development within the AONB.

DMG2 states that development outside the defined settlement areas must meet at least one of a number of considerations, the relevant one in this case outlined below:

- *The development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture*

DMG2 goes on to state that *in protecting the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty the council will have regard to the economic and social wellbeing of the area. However, the most important consideration in the assessment of any development proposals will be the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape and character of the area avoiding where possible habitat fragmentation. Where possible new development should be accommodated through the re-use of existing buildings, which in most cases is more appropriate than new build. Development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the AONB by virtue of its size, design, use of material, landscaping, and siting.*

In addition, DMB1 states that *proposals that are intended to support business growth and the local economy will be supported in principle. The expansion of established firms on land outside settlements will be allowed provided it is essential to maintain the existing source of employment and can be assimilated within the local landscape. There may be occasions where due to the scale of the proposal relocation to an alternative site is preferable.*

In this sense, it is necessary to establish that the proposal is needed for the purposes of agriculture. It is then necessary to establish whether the size and scale is necessary for those purposes identified, whether it can be sited in an alternative, preferable location and to ensure that the landscape and character of the AONB is protected, conserved, and enhanced.

A functional need is present, and the size and scale of the buildings are appropriate. The structures are in-line with modern farm buildings and are therefore reasonable for their intended purpose.

The proposed buildings are necessary for the planned expansion at the farm. The need to expand and become financially viable is essential given the current state of agriculture

In addition, the siting of the buildings is appropriate given that they are sited adjacent to the existing milking parlour and the existing farm complex. There is no alternative site that is considered more preferable. As such the proposal is considered compliant with DMB1 and DMG2, with further consideration to be given to the impact on the AONB.

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With regards to the assessment outlined within the NPPF, this is considered below.

- a) The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy*

A functional need is present, with the design of the buildings reasonable for their intended purpose. This is compliant with the relevant local considerations specifically related to DMG2 and DMB1. Looking at the national considerations, there is a clear priority within the NPPF toward supporting a prosperous rural economy. Notably, paragraph 84 states that *planning policies and decision should enable:*

- a) The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural area, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- b) The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.*

The proposal to erect new cattle-sheds and milking facilities (robotic machines) is borne primarily to allow the business situated at Black Moss Farm to grow and expand and is compliant with local and national considerations as outlined above. Approving this development is considered to have a positive impact upon the local economy, as it would enable a local business to expand their agricultural operation.

b) The cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and

The agricultural complex is situated at Black Moss Farm which is well within the AONB. is situated within the existing farm complex and comprises 457 acres of agricultural land in a ring fence at the farm, It would not be reasonable for the LPA to request the building is erected outside the AONB as it would likely make the required operations unviable and logistically unworkable. With regard to meeting the need for the buildings in some other way, again given the purpose of the buildings – the need for the buildings is self-evident as the cattle require safe and comfortable shelter from which they can be milked, and take refuge from inclement weather. This could not be provided for using alternative methods or buildings.

b) Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

There will be no detrimental effect on the environment by way of this proposal. With regard to the impact on the landscape, this is assessed within the 'Impact on the Landscape and AONB' section below in detail but for clarity, is considered acceptable. With regard to the impact on recreational opportunities – it is noted that all the land on which the application relates to is private agricultural land and does not presently afford any recreational opportunities – as such there is not likely to be any detrimental effect on any recreational opportunities. Whilst there is a public right of way located up the access track (and subsequently through the farm, continuing north-east) it is not considered that the proposal would have any impact on the use of the public right of way, given the disparity in siting, nor would it detract significantly from the enjoyment of users of the PROW.

As such, given the above the proposal is considered to pass the relevant tests outlined within Paragraph 177 of the NPPF.

Impact Upon Residential Amenity:

The proposal relates to the provision of a robotic milking building amidst a number of existing sizeable agricultural buildings, on an agricultural holding, along with an extension to an existing calf housing building and a new calf housing building. Other buildings in this proposal are subordinate to these main elements, and are in any case well related to the general cluster The nearest dwelling is that of Black Moss Farm Cottage which sits within and is associated with the agricultural complex. Aside from this, there is a small pocket of residences roughly 610m to the north-east – these dwellings are a substantial distance away from the proposal and as such it is not considered that there will be undue impact on amenity or quality of life by way of this proposal.

Visual Amenity:

As per CS Policy DMG1, all development must be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials.

In addition, CS Policy DMG2 states that development will be required to be in keeping with the character of the landscape and acknowledge the special qualities of the AONB by virtue of its size, design, use of material, landscaping and siting.

In this sense the proposal is broadly compliant with the above in that the materials used are reflective of the buildings siting, that being part of an agricultural complex. The building's roof form and elevational treatments are all very typical of those used in agriculture.

The buildings, in terms of scale, are substantial would incorporate an additional 7000sqm, approximately. As such it is going to have a significant additional impact on the landscape of the AONB by virtue of the provision of additional, substantial built form where there was previously none.

However, there are several mitigating factors that go some way to ensure this impact is moderated, and significant weight is given to the fact that there is a proven and evidenced functional need for the buildings applied for, of such size and scale in order to support a local farming business. The height of the buildings are modest and largely comparable to the height of the existing agricultural buildings with the elevational treatments and built form also clearly agricultural, ensuring the buildings fit in and complements with the agricultural nature of the complex and does not seem out of place or incongruous. The existing landscape which is characterised as 'Undulating Lowland Farmland'—largely consisting of undulating grassed peaks and troughs, vast rural and agricultural fields and some gatherings of woodland, all varying shades of green. The submitted LVIA (landscape visual impact assessment) concludes that effects of users of public footpaths, residents at home and road users ranges from moderate to slight, with the effect on the AONB to range from slight to neutral

An indicative landscaping strategy has been provided within the LVIA, proposing new woodland, a new hedgerow, hedgerow trees and gapping hedges to further mitigate against any impact upon the landscape and AONB.

Given the above, and with reference given to the significant weight of supporting a local agricultural operation including employment of several local people as well as various additional mitigating factors such as sourcing all services and goods wherever possible from local merchants, contractors it is considered that the proposal does not significantly impact upon the setting and character of the AONB and landscape.