

## **Agricultural and Design Statement**

### **Applicant : A Moffat, Land near Osbaldeston Lane, Blackburn BB2 7LZ**

Proposal, by prior notification, to construct an agricultural general purpose storage building (“the building”) to provide for storage of baled hay, produce, feed, machinery and livestock equipment including handling pens. Access will be from existing/approved field track access to existing bale storage area, livestock pens and grassland. The proposal is justified as reasonably required for agricultural use in connection with the existing agricultural business to store baled fodder, store farm machinery to protect from elements, attending to livestock, loading from covered handling pens and enable autumn/winter feeding of cattle/sheep. The land is owned and farmed by the applicant.

### **Agricultural Statement**

The existing farming business comprises a flock of sheep and cattle young stock of various ages. In addition, the business makes bales for feeding the youngstock in the autumn and the growing flock of sheep during the winter grazing period and spring lambing time. Particular importance is drawn to the requirement for hay rather than silage for sheep, lambs and younger cattle because silage can harbour unsuitable moulds, even within wrapped bales. Whilst every effort taken to make the best quality of fodder in summer, some unseasonal weather can cause problems. During the autumn/winter older cattle and sheep can tolerate some low levels but there is a significant risk to young animals. Access to quality hay (well made and barn stored) is always recommended by vets particularly for young ages and at certain times of year.

This proposal for the building to service the grassland which provides grazing for cattle and sheep. The building is required to work with the natural outdoor grazing of cattle throughout the summer and with careful management using buffer feeding, on the higher and drier south eastern part of the land, with two ring feeders and troughs during autumn months before they are old enough to be sold. The sheep are fed with two racks and a number of troughs throughout the winter. During all these times the ground is easily poached and safe vehicular access from the building, including access with a tractor which is necessary for additional in field feeding and retrieving fodder. Large round or square bales can only be lifted and moved from the building/stack with a tractor/loader due to their weight usually over 0.5 tonne.

The building is also required to cover the handling pen so cattle/sheep may receive veterinary checks on site and/or collection for emergency treatment if required (for clarity it is confirmed that livestock will not be housed in the handling pens).

Access to the stored fodder and livestock pen will be required at all times. Dry feed, hay and machinery storage are particular requirements to service the grassland. Machinery deteriorates outside in adverse elements, so high rates of depreciation become uneconomic.

The building is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture by the existing business.

## Design

The steel portal framed building will have three sections each designed for the particular uses with suitable access points, cladding protection, ventilation and security. The regular use of the handling pens for vaccinations, veterinary inspections and treatments will also help prevent lameness which is more prevalent during wet winters and hot summers. This is particularly important close to the feeders where there is the highest level of use and cattle/sheep tend to congregate.

Materials reflect conventional construction methods whilst favouring a predominantly natural timber finish on the upper parts of each elevation and some timber or green sheet cladding to a number of the gates. The two eaves height doorways also have gale breaker roller blinds which will be used to stop ingress driving rain damaging feed, produce and machinery.

The building is designed for the purposes of agriculture.

## Siting

The siting and finish of the building has also been carefully planned to provide a modest sized building but still provide enough storage space for dry hay, protect machinery and cover handling pens for the high standard of welfare required for the cattle and sheep. Having assessed a number of sites within the land block, the proposed site was chosen for least visual impact, best use of existing natural screening and best use of dry ground. Proximity to the existing best site for feeding cattle and sheep forms part of the agricultural justification.

The extension of the existing/approved access track traverses the edge of the land adjacent to the existing wrapped bale stack and field boundary is continued beside the building and to access the south east elevation. The positioning is set away so as not to affect the existing hedgerow and so the extended access/hardstanding is provided beside the building. The positioning of the building and hardstanding is situated where visual impact will be minimal.

## Transport & Access

The proposed building is 50 meters distant (so more than 25m) from the adopted public highway being Osbaldeston Lane. Access to the field is from the north via private surfaced lane using the existing agricultural field gate access. This application does not seek to alter the agricultural use of the entrance. The south east end of the approved track accesses the existing bale stack and livestock handling pen. There is a public footpath FP0330022 at the gateway to the private lane. The site plan shows that the approved agricultural track continues away from an existing section and therefore does not conflict with or alter the public footpath.

## Access around the field

Access to the cattle and sheep grazing/feeding areas is proposed from the proposed building and approved access track to the higher and drier land. This is an additional agricultural justification to reduce poaching of the grassland from agricultural vehicles, the existing number of cattle and sheep. Clean dry fodder and feed is required for the winter period and supplementary feeding. This DEFRA recommended good agricultural practice is part the standard management of all farm holdings and is an additional reasonably justified agricultural requirement in this case.

## Appearance

The materials are going to be of mainly timber boarding and some green (Juniper) profile cladding at low levels for one bay. There are several accesses to the building, some of which may be clad in either timber or Juniper Green sheeting

Limestone will be used for the surrounding access/hardstanding with improved compacted fine surface to match and complete the suitable agricultural access.

The priority to make either first or second cut hay for the younger cattle/sheep if this can be stored in the building can in turn help to reduce the number of wrapped bales stored outside. The building has been well designed with the majority clad in natural timber boarding and some green profile cladding where required for preventing rain ingress.

As described above there is minimal net visual impact from the existing situation where screening provided by existing roadside hedges and neighbouring hedges forms adequate screening from the public highway and more the more distant neighbouring properties.

## Conclusion

The completion of the proposed agricultural general purpose building will improve the provision of suitable facilities to store livestock feed, machinery and covered handling areas for the cattle youngstock and sheep. The building will assist the business in preparing to weather the future pressures of the predicted market changes and reform of the current agri-support mechanisms. The addition of the agricultural general purpose building is justified above as a requirement for the existing agricultural enterprises, reasonably required for agriculture and is designed for agriculture on this existing agricultural unit.

The proposal improves the existing business and is in line with the management strategy.

Additional details - see application form and plans