

AGRICULTURAL JUSTIFICATION – Holding No. 21/042/0409

Site: Land at Carr Hall, Longsight Road, Langho, Blackburn, BB6 8AD

Applicant: Messrs H&F Barker (Cunliffe House Farm)

1. Background & Business Context

Messrs H&F Barker operate a long-standing agricultural business from Cunliffe House Farm. For the past six years, they have farmed 91 acres (36.8 hectares) of agricultural land at Carr Hall under a Farm Business Tenancy (FBT). Following a period where the land was split between two tenants, the Applicants have held the tenancy for the entirety of the land for the last two years and now seek to consolidate and formalise their operations on this site.

The holding is used for grazing and intensive forage production (mowing for hay and silage). The current stocking density on this land consists of 80 cattle and 200 sheep annually. In winter, these animals are fed on a proven mix and silage, distributed via a feed mixer machine.

2. Addressing "Reasonable Necessity" (Ref: 3/2024/0124)

A previous application was refused on the grounds that the "reasonably necessary" test had not been met. This revised submission provides the specific data required to demonstrate that a building of this scale is essential for the 36.8ha holding:

- **Crop Storage Requirements:** The holding produces high volumes of winter fodder. The proposed **392sqm** building is sized specifically to house up to 260 big bales (hay and silage) plus bulk proven mix. Indoor storage is vital to maintain the nutritional value of the feed and prevent spoilage from the elements.
- **Essential Machinery Storage:** To manage a holding of this size, a significant fleet of machinery is required on-site. Currently, these items are exposed to the weather or must be transported back and forth from the main farm. The building will provide secure, weather-protected storage for:
 - **Tractors and Trailers**
 - **Mower, Tedder, and Baler**
 - **Feed Mixer Trailer**
 - **Telehandler** and various other implements.
- **Highways Safety & Reduced Movements:** The Applicants' main farm is 4.2km away by road. Currently, the lack of on-site storage requires frequent "shuttling" of heavy machinery and winter feed through the Langho roundabout on the A59.

- The provision of on-site storage for up to 260 bales and the machinery fleet will drastically reduce tractor and trailer movements on the A59.
- This removes slow-moving agricultural traffic from a major trunk road, particularly during the winter months, offering a clear public benefit in terms of road safety and reduced local congestion.

3. Site & Design

- **Siting:** The building is tucked behind existing large-scale buildings, utilising the natural topography to minimise its impact on the Green Belt and open views.
- **Infrastructure:** It is accessed via an existing track (serving the wind turbines), meaning no new tracks are required over virgin land. The building occupies a parcel of land of "very little use" for grazing or mowing.
- **Environment:** The building is sited 15m away from trees to protect Carr Hall Wood and will drain surface water into the existing watercourse to the south. The front apron will be finished in porous crushed stone.

4. Permitted Development Criteria (Class A, Part 6)

The proposal strictly adheres to the requirements of the GPDO 2015:

1. **Holding Size:** The development is carried out on an agricultural holding of more than 5ha (36.8ha).
2. **Necessity:** The building is 'reasonably necessary' for agriculture; the Applicants are a VAT-registered agricultural business.
3. **Parcel Integrity:** The development is on a part of the whole 36.8ha holding which is not a separate plot.
4. **Prior Development:** No development under Class Q or S (Part 3) has been carried out on the site within the last ten years.
5. **Residential Use:** The development does not include any works in relation to a dwelling.
6. **Purpose:** The proposal is strictly for an Agricultural Storage Building.
7. **Floor Area:** The ground area is 392sqm. No other building has been erected or extended under Class A within the past 2 years.
8. **Aviation:** The building is not within 3km of an Aerodrome.
9. **Height:** The building does not exceed 12m (6.45m actual).

10. **Highways:** The proposal is not within 25m of a metalled part of a trunk road or classified road.
11. **Protected Buildings:** The proposal is not within 400m of the curtilage of a protected building (non-agricultural dwelling) and will not be used for slurry or sewage sludge.
12. **Fish Farming:** Does not involve excavations/engineering for fish farming on Article 2(4) land.
13. **Waste/Fuel:** The building will not be used for storing fuel or waste from a biomass boiler or anaerobic digestion system.

5. Conclusion

This building is reasonably necessary for the storage of up to 260 bales and the itemised machinery list required to farm 36.8ha. By consolidating operations on-site and reducing heavy traffic on the A59, the proposal supports the viability of a local farm business while meeting all statutory Permitted Development criteria.

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