PLANNING STATEMENT

Retrospective Roof Over Existing Open Silage Clamps

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

1.0 Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a retrospective planning application for the erection of a roof over existing open silage clamps at Black Moss Farm, Elmridge Lane, Chipping.

The development comprises a steel-framed agricultural roof structure over existing silage clamps within the established farmyard. The proposal does not introduce a new land use, nor does it extend the farm complex into open countryside. It is an environmental and operational improvement to an existing agricultural facility.

The structure measures approximately 40 metres by 34 metres, with a maximum ridge height of approximately 11.8 metres. The roof is finished in natural grey profile fibre cement sheets, with juniper green box profile sheeting and concrete panels.

2.0 Site Context

Black Moss Farm is an established working agricultural holding within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape.

The application site lies within the existing modern farmyard, among agricultural buildings, silage infrastructure, slurry infrastructure, tanks and hardstanding. The existing drawings show the site as open silage clamps measuring approximately 40 metres by 34 metres, already forming part of the working farmyard.

The development is therefore not a new isolated building in the countryside. It is a roof over an existing agricultural storage facility.

3.0 Need for the Development

The roof is required to improve the environmental performance and operational efficiency of the farm.

Open silage clamps are exposed to rainfall. When rainwater falls onto silage or dirty yard areas, it becomes contaminated and has to be managed as dirty water or effluent. Roofing the

silage clamps reduces the amount of rainfall entering the clamps and therefore reduces the volume of contaminated run-off.

This has important benefits:

- reduced dirty water generation;
- reduced pressure on slurry and dirty water storage;
- reduced risk of contaminated run-off entering land drains or watercourses;
- improved silage quality;
- improved livestock feed management;
- improved compliance with modern pollution prevention expectations.

The development therefore supports sustainable agricultural management and water quality protection.

4.0 Catchment Sensitive Farming and Natural England Grant Context

The purpose of the development is consistent with the aims of Catchment Sensitive Farming, which provides advice to farmers and land managers to improve water and air quality and reduce flood risk on agricultural land.

Government-backed capital grant schemes also recognise the environmental value of roofing agricultural storage areas. The Rural Payments Agency and Natural England guidance for item RP28 specifically relates to roofing over areas including manure storage, slurry stores and silage stores.

This is directly relevant to the proposal at Black Moss Farm. The roof over the existing silage clamps is precisely the type of intervention encouraged through environmental farming support because it helps separate clean rainwater from dirty agricultural areas.

The proposal should therefore be given positive weight as an environmental improvement to an existing agricultural enterprise.

5.0 Why the Roof and Clamps Must Be in This Location

The silage clamps are already located within the operational heart of the farmyard. This is the correct and necessary location for them.

Silage storage must be close to:

- livestock housing;
- feed passages;
- machinery access;

- slurry and dirty water handling systems;
- existing hardstanding;
- existing farmyard circulation routes.

Moving the clamps elsewhere would be impractical and environmentally worse. It would require new hardstanding, new drainage, new access routes and additional tractor movements across the holding.

The current location allows silage to be stored, accessed and fed efficiently as part of the daily livestock operation. The roof does not create a new facility in a new location; it improves an existing facility in the most logical place.

6.0 Design, Scale and Appearance

The design is agricultural, functional and appropriate to its purpose.

The structure uses conventional agricultural materials and colours, including natural grey fibre cement roofing and juniper green profile sheeting. These materials are commonly used on modern farm buildings and are suitable for a rural agricultural setting.

The proposal sits within the established modern agricultural complex and is read in that context. It does not appear as an isolated or unrelated building in the landscape.

7.0 Forest of Bowland National Landscape / AONB Considerations

The site lies within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, formerly known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes, and that the scale and extent of development within these areas should be limited.

The NPPF also requires exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated for major development in National Landscapes, with consideration given to the need for the development, alternatives, and effects on the landscape.

In this case, even if the proposal is treated as major development due to its floor area, it should not be considered major in substance or impact. It is not a new independent development or a speculative expansion of the farm. It is a roof over existing silage clamps within an established agricultural yard.

The proposal satisfies the relevant considerations because:

- there is a clear agricultural and environmental need;
- the development is located on existing farm infrastructure;
- there is no realistic alternative location that would be less harmful;
- the proposal avoids development in open fields;
- the materials are appropriate and muted;
- the development delivers environmental benefits by reducing dirty water run-off;
- the proposal supports the long-term viability of an existing rural business.

The proposal therefore conserves the wider character of the National Landscape while enabling necessary and sustainable agricultural management.

8.0 Heritage Considerations

The farm includes traditional buildings previously identified as non-designated heritage assets. A previous heritage appraisal confirmed that their significance is modest and derives mainly from their surviving historic fabric and evidential value as traditional agricultural buildings. It also noted that the wider farm setting has already been altered by modern agricultural development.

The current structure is approximately 52 metres south-east of the historic buildings and is located within the modern agricultural part of the farmyard. It is farther away from the heritage assets than the previously assessed barn and is seen in the context of existing modern agricultural infrastructure.

The development therefore does not harm the significance or setting of the non-designated heritage assets.

9.0 Access and Highway Matters

No new access is proposed.

The development uses the existing farm access and internal yard arrangements. It does not generate a new use or materially increase vehicle movements.

The proposal may improve operational efficiency by allowing silage to be managed more effectively within the existing farmyard.

10.0 Planning Balance

The proposal should be supported because it delivers clear agricultural and environmental benefits.

The key planning benefits are:

- improved water quality protection;
- reduced dirty water run-off;
- reduced pressure on slurry and dirty water storage;
- better silage storage and feed quality;
- improved farm efficiency;
- use of an existing developed farmyard area;
- no expansion into open countryside;
- appropriate agricultural design and materials.

Any landscape impact is limited by the siting of the structure within the existing farm complex and by its functional agricultural appearance.

When weighed in the planning balance, the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh any limited visual impact arising from the roof structure.

11.0 Conclusion

The retrospective roof over the existing silage clamps is necessary, functional and environmentally beneficial.

It is located in the correct place within the existing farmyard because the silage clamps need to remain close to livestock buildings, feeding areas, machinery access and dirty water management infrastructure.

The development supports the aims of Catchment Sensitive Farming by reducing dirty water run-off and helping to protect water quality.

Although the site lies within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, the proposal is not an intrusive or isolated development. It is an agricultural roof over existing silage infrastructure within an established working farm.

The development is therefore acceptable in planning, landscape, environmental and heritage terms, and planning permission should be granted.