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PLANNING STATEMENT AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**IN RESPECT OF FOUR PLANNING
APPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF
FOUR AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS WHICH
WILL TOGETHER ACCOMMODATE A 200 COW
DAIRY UNIT**

AT

**PENDLETON HALL FARM,
CLITHEROE ROAD, PENDLETON,
CLITHEROE, BB7 1PT**

Applicants: T. Whitwell & Sons Ltd.
Prepared by: R. C. Black
Date: August 2017
Our Ref: Whi/772/2171/GH



Chartered Surveyors ■■■ Planning & Development ■■■ Land Agents
Valuers ■■■ Property Agency ■■■ Property Management



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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.1 Gary Hoerty Associates has been instructed by T. Whitwell & Sons Ltd of Pendleton Hall Farm and Mearley Hall Farm, Clitheroe Road, Pendleton, Clitheroe, BB7 1PT to submit four planning applications on their behalf for the proposed creation of a 200 cow dairy unit at Pendleton Hall Farm, Pendleton, Clitheroe, BB7 1PT.
- 1.2 Our clients lease both Pendleton Hall Farm and Mearley Hall Farm from the Huntroyde Estate, which extends to approximately 1,489 acres (603 ha) of which 708 acres (286 ha) is common land, all is let on a long term Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 tenancy. Robert Whitwell resides at Pendleton Hall Farm and James Whitwell resides at Mearley Hall Farm. Plans showing the extent of the two agricultural holdings are submitted with this application. The applicants ceased milking in the summer of 2013 when their elder brother Mark ceased farming in partnership with Robert and James, and took the dairy cattle with him to another farm.
- 1.3 Robert and James currently operate a cattle and sheep enterprise from Pendleton Hall Farm and Mearley Hall Farm. The cattle enterprise currently comprises circa 60 beef youngstock and 40 dairy youngstock. The sheep enterprise comprises of 720 breeding ewes with 900 lambs and 250 stores are bought in to fatten. There is an existing range of mainly traditional farm buildings across both farms to accommodate and house the current levels of cattle, sheep, silage, feed and general storage. The existing agricultural buildings are not of modern construction and as such are not fit for the purpose of housing the proposed 200 head dairy herd. Some of the existing buildings will be utilised for the storage of equipment associated with the dairy unit and also provide calving pens therefore all of the existing buildings at both farms will be fully utilised.
- 1.4 The applicants want to establish a dairy farming enterprise to enable them to accommodate 200 dairy cows and propose to further expand in future years once established and the business is successful. The applicants are in partnership and realise that in order for them both to make a living out of the farm, they need to remain up to date with modern farming practices and to gradually increase the numbers of livestock kept on the holding to make it remain a profitable enterprise. They have successfully secured a contract with 'Arla UK' to sell their produced milk to. AHDB states that dairy prospects in the global marketplace present a strong opportunity for UK agriculture.
- 1.5 Separate planning permissions have been sought for a covered silage clamp in the form of a prior notification application and an earth banked slurry lagoon by means of a full planning application to accommodate the proposed 200 head of dairy cattle. The proposed lagoon is large enough to cope with the additional quantities of slurry that will be produced as a consequence of the proposed herd size. The proposed silage clamp will store the increased fodder demanded.

- 1.6 We set out within this supporting statement the proposed dairy unit cattle housing development in more detail, the planning history of the site where relevant; review the application site, set out why we believe the application conforms to the relevant national and local planning policies and why the application should therefore be looked upon favourably.

2. PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 The only application found on the Ribble Valley Borough Council website is as follows:

3/1999/013N – Agricultural determination for the erection of a round slurry store and milking parlour. The application was approved on 10th June 1999.

3. THE APPLICATION SITE

- 3.1 The application site is situated to the North East of the existing farmstead at Pendleton Hall Farm on a relatively level parcel of agricultural land. It is located adjacent to an existing group of farm buildings and will therefore not be seen in isolation. It will be well screened from Clitheroe Road as there is a high hedgerow on the road side which will naturally screen any potential visual impact. The farm is directly situated off Clitheroe Road and is approximately 2 miles from Clitheroe.

4. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The proposed development will comprise of a number of individual and distinct elements all of which are capable of independent construction which will be built in phases to create the 200 cow dairy unit as follows:

4.2 Robotic Milking Building

This will be the first phase of the development measuring 34.451m (113') x 15.240m (50ft). It will be constructed with a steel portal frame (clear span) and comprise of four robot milking machines, the dairy, office and toilet, cattle crush, AI and cattle handling facilities. Robotic milkers offer the following benefits:

- Free up Labour
- Less management required
- Improve operators quality of life
- Collect data and information
- Lower somatic cell count than using a parlour
- Better dairy health
- Increased milking frequency
- Less stress and increased comfort for the cows

Please see drawing number Whi/661/2358/01&02 for the plans, elevations and design.

4.3 Left Wing Cow Kennels

This will be the second phase of the development measuring 8.6m (28ft) x 62.32m (205ft) constructed of 'Farmplus' timber building. It will provide housing for circa 96 cows in cubicles including slats. Please see drawing number Whi/661/2357/01&02 for the plans, elevations and design.

4.4 Right Wing Cow Kennels

This will be the third phase of the development measuring 8.6m (28ft) x 62.32m (205ft) constructed of 'Farmplus' timber building. It will provide housing for circa 96 cows in cubicles including slats. Please see drawing number Whi/661/2356/01&02 for the plans, elevations and design.

4.5 Central Tractor/Feed Passage

This will be the fourth phase of the development measuring 13.9m (45ft) x 62.32m (205ft) constructed of 'Farmplus' timber building. It will provide a covered standing area for the cattle to feed and keep the weather off the silage that will be fed to the cattle. Please see drawing number Whi/661/2355/01&02 for the plans, elevations and design.

4.6 Construction of the Agricultural Buildings

The four proposed buildings can all be built separately and we have received confirmation from Jim Rogerson at Farmplus that each building will be built separately. One buildings structure does not rely on any others and they are four separate buildings that do not need to be built together (see appendix 1). The level of investment involved in constructing the proposed development is extremely high and therefore the applicants are proposing to phase the development which will spread the costs. Their aim is to construct the two cow kennels initially and then the central feed passage at a later date. Although drawing number Whi/772/2171/01 (submitted with the applications) shows the development as a whole, it is not the applicant's intention to carry out all of the works at the same time and will construct each part in stages.

5. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 General

- 5.1.1 Local planning authorities are required to determine planning applications in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In assessing this proposal, consideration has been given to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 and the Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) Core Strategy 2008-2028 - A Local Plan for Ribble Valley Adopted Version
- 5.1.2 The application site is located within an area designated as Open Countryside in the approved Local Plan.
- 5.1.3 The Council's Core Strategy contains a number of key statements and development policies of which the following are relevant to this application; DS2 Sustainable development, EN2 Landscape, EC1 Business and employment development, DMG1 General considerations, DMG2 Strategic Considerations, DME2 Landscape and townscape protection and DMB1 Supporting business growth and the local economy.
- 5.1.4 The national policy guidance is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework, which was adopted in March 2012.
- 5.1.5 We set out below extracts from the relevant documents and an assessment of the application against all of the appropriate policies and guidance.

5.2 Local Planning Guidance

5.2.1 Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008-2028

The Council's Core Strategy document does not contain any policy specific to agricultural development, however there are a number of policies which are relevant in terms of development impact on landscape and economic development and we will comment on these below.

5.2.2 Key Statement DS2 – Presumption In Favour of Sustainable Development

Key Statement DS2 "presumption in favour of sustainable development" identifies that the Council when considering development proposals should take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. The policy clearly states that where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether: any adverse impact of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or specific policies in that framework indicate that development should be restricted. There are no such adverse impacts and no policies that indicate that the development should be restricted.

5.2.3 Key Statement EN2 – Landscape

Key statement EN2 identifies that *"as a principle the Council expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials."* We consider that the proposed development adequately addresses all of these principles, providing a dairy unit which will be in keeping with the local area as the building is of a design similar to other modern agricultural buildings in the local area.

5.2.4 Key Statement EC1 - Business and Employment Development

Key Statement EC1 states that *the expansion of existing business will where appropriate be considered favourably.* This development will support the applicant's farming business and therefore should be supported.

5.2.5 Policy DMG1 - General Considerations

Policy DMG1 relates to all development and we consider that the proposed development conforms to the criteria of this policy that are relevant to it. The development is 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.

5.2.6 There are no adverse traffic and car parking implications and there is a safe access. A milk tanker accessed and egressed the site every day to collect milk before milk production was ceased at the farm in 2013. The amount of traffic to and from the site will not increase significantly as a result of the proposed development because there will be similar traffic to what there was in 2013 when the farm operated as a dairy then. There are no adverse environmental implications or adverse effect on public rights of way and the siting of the proposed development in relation to the existing buildings means that there will be limited adverse impact on the visual appearance of the surrounding area and on the landscape character.

5.2.7 We consider that the proposed development fully complies with the criteria of policy DMG1.

5.2.8 Policy DMG2 – Strategic Considerations

Tier 2 Village (Pendleton) – “2. The development is needed for the purposes of forestry or agriculture.”

The proposed development complies as the proposed new buildings are solely required for agricultural purposes. The proposed agricultural buildings are of a design that other farmers in the local area have and will not look out of place.

5.2.9 Policy DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection

This policy states that development proposals will be refused which significantly harm important landscape or landscape features. The proposed development will not harm any important landscape features or landscape and therefore is in keeping with the requirements of Policy DME2.

5.2.10 Policy DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy

This policy states that *proposals that are intended to support business growth and local economy will be supported in principle. Development proposals will be determined in accord with the Core Strategy and detailed policies of the LDF as appropriate.* This policy gives general support to the proposed development and we consider that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of this policy. T. Whitwell & Sons Ltd. need to expand their business to keep up to date with modern day farming practises and make the farm viable and remain viable and profitable in the future. The applicants have been successful in securing a milk contract and therefore want to pursue this enterprise. The applicants have spent a lot of time and money researching into the different types of dairy enterprises and structures involved and now would like to be given the opportunity to take this forward.

5.3 National Planning Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012

- 5.3.1 The adoption of the National Planning Policy Framework in March 2012 means that it is now the main national planning policy guidance influencing planning decision making and replaces a substantial number of documents previously in place. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, it sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so.
- 5.3.2 Paragraphs 11 – 16 of the NPPF highlight the presumption in favour of sustainable development confirming that planning law requires that applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise and that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. It makes clear that proposed development that accords with an up to date local plan should be approved and that proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. It also highlights the desirability of local planning authorities having an up to date local plan in place. We have demonstrated that the proposed development does accord with the relevant policies of the local plan.
- 5.3.3 Paragraph 28 of the NPPF states that all types of business and enterprise in rural areas should be supported and that development of rural business should be promoted. The proposed development would allow for the applicants to have a dairy enterprise of 200 dairy cattle and the NPPF supports the development and growth of agricultural businesses.

6 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposed development will enable the applicants to establish a dairy enterprise by getting up to 200 milking cows, providing them with a sustainable enterprise and enabling them to exploit efficiencies of scale. It will also enable them to have the housing facilities which provide the highest level of welfare standards for the dairy cows.
- 6.2 We have demonstrated that the development of the dairy unit will conform to the relevant policies of the local plan and the national guidance. The proposed buildings will clearly be part of an existing group of agricultural buildings in the farm yard and will not be seen in isolation. The visual impact on the landscape and to passing traffic along Clitheroe Road will be minimal due to the existing hedgerow in place naturally screening the development.
- 6.3 The proposed development will require a very significant level of investment by the applicants to get to their target herd size and implement the proposed agricultural buildings with robotic milking machines. The significant level of investment has resulted in a proposal to phase the expansion to spread the costs.
- 6.4 As you will most probably be aware a large proportion of dairy farmers in the past 10 years or so have made the decision to cease milk production but our clients have decided to invest in their farm and establish a business in the dairy sector at a time when so many dairy farmers are leaving this sector; we therefore believe that our clients should be fully supported by the Council regarding this proposed development to enable hard working farmers to remain in the agricultural industry and invest in equipment to make this possible.

Signed.......... Date..........

Robert C. Black BSc (Hons)

For and on behalf of Gary Hoerty Associates

APPENDIX 1

Correspondence from Jim Rogerson of Farmplus