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Design & Access Statement

Proposal:

Replacement agricultural building to house and feed livestock

Site Reference:

Deacons Farm, Buxton Road, Chinley

Introduction

This statement has been produced in support of a full planning application for a replacement agricultural building to house and feed dairy cattle.

This holding is located east of Chinley in a rural area. The land and buildings are being used for fundamental agricultural processes. This holding extends to approximately 1000 acres of which 550 acres are owned. This farmland is used to rear cattle and sheep and to produce milk, beef and fodder crops.

The applicants have recently lost all of their dairy herd and calves to TB, which was exacerbated by the lack of housing and having to house 100 dairy cattle in an area with room for 45-50 livestock when following FABBL recommendations. Over the winter months the dairy livestock were housed in the general purpose and livestock buildings, with calves being housed in the leanto section of the livestock building.

From a herd of 100 dairy cattle plus followers, they now have no cows or calves left on the dairy farm. All the animals on the dairy farm have had to be slaughtered because of TB. The applicants also have 300 beef cattle and 2300 sheep plus followers. It was only the dairy herd that was kept at this farmyard, as they were close to the milking parlour.

The applicants are seeking to improve the conditions on the holding and surrounding land to enable them to rebuild their dairy herd which is their primary business. To enable this to happen and to be able to conform to DEFRA and FABBL guidelines and recommendations new suitable housing is required on the holding. The applicants would like to rebuild their livestock levels to approximately 120-150 dairy cattle.

The existing milking parlour and dairy is situated within the main farmyard as shown on Drawing No. 1108-002.

The applicants also want to future proof their business and holding for the next generation to farm. The applicant's sons are almost in their 20's and wish to continue farming the existing holding and as such animal welfare standards need to be improved.

TB in Livestock

TB testing and the loss of herds from TB outbreaks costs UK holdings thousands of pounds every year, not to mention the impact on the dairy and beef industry. This does not account for the emotional distress it causes the farmers and their families.

In the area of this holding, it would be impossible to protect a herd from coming into contact with animals (mainly badgers and deer) that carry the virus as they frequent the grounds of the holding regularly. To help reduce the risk of contraction of the virus, sufficient clean housing and regularly cleaned yard areas and facilities is required. The applicant is taking significant steps to improve the conditions on his holding to create the best possible environment for his new herd.

Agricultural Holding Number

09/141/0103

Amount of development

The applicant wishes to erect a replacement steel framed agricultural building to house and feed livestock. The total floor area created by this development will be 613.16m².

The floor area of the 2 buildings to be replaced is 151.25m². 74.2m² of this area was previously used for implement storage, however the roof of this building has collapsed and is unsafe to use.

The overall increase in floor space is 461.91m²

This proposal will assist the holding in recovering following the loss of its dairy herd and loss of income as a result.

Use of proposed building

Due to the loss of the applicant's dairy herd and being unable to produce milk to meet their quota, the applicants require the proposed replacement building to be able provide adequate housing to ensure there is enough space for the livestock numbers they require to start producing milk again and resume their primary source of income for the business.

The existing buildings are not large enough to house the stock levels and to store the fodder and implements required to manage the holding. The applicants are fully aware of the inadequate housing and storage facilities available.

The Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2000 (S.I. 2000 No. 1870) Schedule 1, paragraph 13, states that:

- air circulation, dust levels, temperature, relative humidity and gas concentrations shall be kept within limits which are not harmful to the animal

All new buildings should be designed with the animals' comfort in mind, and with the aim of preventing respiratory diseases. The buildings should provide enough ventilation throughout the year for the type, size and number of stock to be housed in them.

FABBL requirements state that the space allowance for loose-housed cattle on a solid floor is a minimum of 3.0m² for 200kg cattle, 3.95m² for 300kg cattle, 4.9m² for 400kg cattle, 5.85m² for 500kg cattle, 6.8m² for 600kg cattle and 9.5m² for 700kg cattle.

This building will accommodate the required stocking densities and ventilation and also allow for a well-drained, dry lying area. All animals will have access to an adequate supply of clean drinking water at all times.

The design of a dairy unit is a complex equation, bringing together the needs of cow and workforce to attain efficiency and output. The dairy unit should provide an environment easy to manage and give facilities to aid the management.

Stress and discomfort will lead to a reduction in the productivity of the cow and adversely affect the potential return. Advances in breeding are all too often over-ridden by poor housing and therefore full potential is rarely achieved.

Research has indicated that simulating natural cow behaviour in the building as close to that outside in the field will maximise production. Cows often ruminate while lying down and lie for 12-13 hours per day. Thus, it is essential to encourage the cow to lie down and this can only be achieved if the cow is comfortable.

The feed barrier will be constructed to allow free and easy access to the food and prevent cow aggression and injury. The cow will be capable of demonstrating a natural grazing stance. This building will allow the cattle to gain 24-hour access to food.

This building will ensure good farm/stock management with easily maintained clean and hygienic conditions. This building will ensure a good strong future for their business.

Defra regulations state that animals are not meant to poach the ground therefore housing for animals is essential.

The existing buildings are not fit for purpose and the original building is too small for the number of livestock the holding usually has to meet their quotas.

Siting

As indicated on drawing No. 1108-002 this building will be sited south west of the existing buildings over the area of the 2 buildings to be replaced. The proposed building has been moved further south so as to reduce the effects on the neighbouring property. It will also allow sufficient space for handling the livestock between the buildings.

We feel this building has been positioned in the most practical location for its intended use and size.

The neighbours at Deacons Cottage were consulted regarding the location of the proposed buildings as the applicants do not want to impede on their property.

Scale

The applicant wishes to erect a steel framed agricultural building 45.72m long x 13.411m wide plus a 1.525m wide weather canopy x 4.572m high to eaves level.

We feel the scale and appearance of these buildings is appropriate for the site, will be seen in context with the existing buildings and yard areas and will provide the much-needed housing requirements of the holding to enable the business to continue.

Climate Change Mitigation

This building will incorporate sustainably sourced timber that is compliant with CE Standards set out by Government. Rainwater will be harvested and used as drinking water for the livestock within the building and for any yard washing required. Should lighting be required within the building it will be of low wattage LED's run off the proposed Solar Panels.

It is proposed that solar panels are placed between the roof lights. This will enable the holding to produce a significant amount of its own electricity needs, reducing the running costs of the holding and also the dependency on the national grid.

Landscaping

The site already benefits from mature landscaping, however the applicant is happy to carry out any additional landscaping scheme specified by yourselves in order to further protect the amenities of the site and the area.

Any trees planted will be fenced from livestock and will be protected by either spiral-type rabbit guards with canes or Netlon mesh-type guards including canes.

A circle of 1 metre around the base of each tree shall be kept weed free for a period of at least 2 years.

Any trees that die, become seriously damaged or diseased will be replaced by trees of similar size, unless there is reason to believe that the original species

chosen was unsuitable for the site, in which case an alternative appropriate species will be used.

All planting would be carried out in the first planting season following the construction of the building.

Trees will be provided in accordance with BS 3936 and planting to be in accordance with BS 4428.

Appearance

As indicated on drawing No. 1108-003 this building will incorporate a factory coated coloured fibre cement sheeted roof, coloured Juniper Green (12B29), incorporating GRP roof lights and solar panels.

Vertical cladding down 2.770m below eaves level to be treated Yorkshire boarding set in a traditional spaced system to the north west side elevation and both gables.

The south east side elevation will incorporate a feed fence for the length of the building.

Each gable will incorporate a sheeted gate opening for ease of access into the building.

Below cladding to be pre-stressed concrete panels.

Along both sides of the building will be 160mm half round black PVC gutters complete with 110mm diameter black PVC rainwater piping to terminate into rainwater harvesting tanks.

Internally there will be a partial division every 9.1m (two bays) this will allow for easier handling and also give the applicants the option to isolate any injured livestock or dry cows from the herd.

Access

Access to the building will be from existing vehicular roadways to and around the holding. The applicant does not seek to increase the number of roadways.

Access can be gained to this holding from Buxton Road, Chinley.

There will be no impact on the access to the site and vehicle impact to the surrounding area will be unaltered.

Liverpool, Manchester and West Yorkshire Greenbelt

This holding lies within the boundaries of the Liverpool, Manchester and West Yorkshire Greenbelt. Reasonable agricultural development within the greenbelt is seen as 'very special circumstances' and one of the few reasons development within a green belt area is acceptable.

NPPF Paragraph 149 A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry.

This proposal is to support an existing agricultural business and improve the welfare standards of the livestock on the holding so would conform to this policy.

This proposal also seeks approval of Solar Panels on the roof of the building, this can also be seen as inappropriate in a Green Belt setting unless it increases the production of energy from renewable sources as stated in paragraph 151. The panels will be used in conjunction with the existing business and house and therefore reduce the impact the holding has on the national grid, by producing a significant amount of its own energy from renewable sources.

Heritage

Deacons Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building and is situated approximately 40m northeast of the proposed development site. With the proposed building being sited approximately 10m further away when complete.

Deacons Farmhouse is a mid C18 building with coursed gritstone rubble walls with quoins and a stone slate roof. Each gable has two stone stacks, each rising from midway up the gable. The farmhouse is two storey, double fronted and three bays. The central doorway has a moulded lintel, jambs, and imposts. Over the doorway is a single-light window, the other windows are mullioned with three lights and casements, and at the rear is a staircase window.

The proposed development will not be seen from the farmhouse as it is mainly shielded by existing buildings when viewed from Buxton Road, therefore impact on the heritage asset will be minimal.

Overall, the proposed building will improve the cleanliness of the site and provide better welfare facilities for the holding enabling the business to recover from the loss of its herd from TB and provide a good future for the applicants and the next generation to continue farming. This proposal will not impact on the listed building.