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PC/GJP/PRB02

11th December 2024

DESIGN AND ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

AND

AGRICULTURAL JUSTIFICATION CONSIDERATIONS

FOR

PROPOSED ADDITIONAL BUILDING

TO

EXISTING AGRICULTURAL WORKSHOP AND EQUIPMENT STORE

AT

STABLE LANE

BUXTON

SK17 6UG

FOR

T & P RYDER

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REPORT TO ACCOMPANY THE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ABOVE

PROPOSAL SETTING OUT DETAILS OF THE PRESENT OPERATION

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Introduction

The Applicant is a well-established local family farm and the land and buildings, which are the subject of this application are located on the south-east side of Stable Lane, close to its junction with the A53 Leek Road, on the south-western edge of Buxton. The Holding, Defra number 37/073/0073, is primarily a beef operation, includes land either side of the Derbyshire/Staffordshire boundary, and extends to approximately 126 hectares/310 acres of which some 4 hectares/10 acres are located at Stable Lane, 67 hectares/165 acres is located at Peakstones Farm, SK17 0ES and 36 hectares/90 acres at SK17 0TD, all three locations are owned freehold. The balance of the land is long-term leasehold, extends to 19 hectares/45 acres and is located to the south of Buxton on the A515 at DE45 1JQ. Other land is farmed on an annual or seasonal tenancies brought in on an 'as and when' required basis. In common with other farmers, the Applicant also provides a limited mutual contracting service to other farmers.

Operations are centred on two parts of the holding: The Stable Lane site for vehicle and equipment storage and maintenance (the Applicant operates all vehicles and machinery and there is no hiring out to third parties), and; Peakstones Farm is the livestock centre.

Farm profile

The number of animals on the farm on a typical day is currently just under 460no, including 3no stock bulls and a stock boar. The beef cattle are a mixture of Limousin, Aberdeen Angus and Belgian Blue and the pigs are Large White. The numbers are divided as follows:

Calves	0 - 3 months	15no
	3 - 6 months	50no
	6 - 12 months	50no
	12 - 24 months	50no
	24 months +	100no
Pigs	Stock bulls	3no
	Breeding sows	20no
	Piglets	170no
	Stock boar	1no

		459no
		=====

In common with most farming operations, the Applicant assists neighbouring farms, and vice-versa, at peak times and other services like hedge cutting.

Most of the land is managed as permanent pasture.

By reference to *The Agricultural Budgeting & Costing Book – 99th edition, November 2024*, the existing operation requires approximately 350 Standard Man Days (SMD), excluding any contracting work undertaken in conjunction with other farmers. No allowance has been made for the planned future expansion. Based upon a typical day’s numbers, this is divided as follows:

Calves	0 - 3 months	15no	315.0 hours	39.45 SMD
	3 - 6 months	50no	650.0 hours	81.50 SMD
	6 - 12 months	50no	325.0 hours	40.50 SMD
	12 - 24 months	50no	700.0 hours	87.50 SMD
	24 months +	100 no	1,600.0 hours	200.00 SMD
Stock bull		3no	48.0 hours	6.00 SMD
Pigs	Farrowing sows	20no	300.0 hours	37.60 SMD
	Piglets	85no	17.0 hours	2.13 SMD
	Piglets finishing	85no	102.0 hours	12.75 SMD
	Stock boar	1no	16.0 hours	2.00 SMD
Permanent pasture	113 hectares		271.4 hours	33.90 SMD
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			4,344.4 hours	543.33 SMD
			=====	=====

NB The above figure includes some field work but excludes any contracting work undertaken jointly with local farming colleagues. It also does not include any allowance for the maintenance of grassland/eating bought in annually. The total hours regularly reach over 4,800 or 600 SMDs. There is no allowance for future expansion.

The Proposal

In the last 10 years or so agricultural vehicles and machinery have become larger and technology has advanced exponentially. The price of a new mid-range 130hp tractor with its (essential) GPS equipment is approximately £100,000 (May 2024) and a Loadall type

vehicle is similarly priced. Farm implements range from £20,000 for a small 4 farrow plough to £150,000 for a big square baler.

The Applicant has a number of tractors ranging from the basic 100hp model up to 200hp models and a wide range of towed equipment. Full details can be provided on a confidential basis, ie not to be included on the public access file. These are all serviced at Stable Lane and the most valuable items are securely stored in the existing buildings. Unfortunately, due to the increases in size and taking into account the values of machines and equipment across the board, it is no longer possible to store all of the most valuable items at Stable Lane, which, as will be confirmed by inspection, is at full capacity. Indeed, maintenance is only possible by putting some into the yard or onto the adjacent agricultural land. The Applicant has been forced to make short term arrangements to store some items in third party buildings close to the farm holding. Unfortunately, the Applicant is unable to make its own security arrangements at these locations.

These prices have made farm vehicles, attachments and GPS systems a major target for theft. There have been increased instances of rural crime, which has been the subject of the highly publicised document produced by the National Farmers' Union: ***Fighting The Rise In Countryside Crime*** (2019), which has been updated each subsequent year. This was further highlighted in the episode of BBC 1's ***Frontline Fightback*** broadcast on the morning of 23rd May 2023, when vehicle, implement and GPS equipment theft were particularly highlighted. This was further reported in a recent episode of the BBC's flagship farming programme, ***Countryfile*** and an episode a week or so ago of ***SAS – Catching the Criminals***. Officers and Members will be aware of the various reports in the last three years of thefts, vandalism and the slaughtering of lambs and other livestock in the Derbyshire and Staffordshire areas. Both Derbyshire and Staffordshire Constabularies advise that they (like most police forces) do not have sufficient officer numbers to police the rural areas as effectively as they would like.

The Applicant is anxious to keep the operations as secure as possible and is therefore seeking to extend his existing facilities which are at the operating base. This will provide more protection and reduce the need to find off-site temporary facilities and the associated security concerns. It will also reduce the number of journeys made solely for the purpose of bringing in equipment for service and maintenance

Planning considerations

Various planning permissions for the existing general-purpose buildings were obtained between 2006 and 2012. Planning permission was sought for an extension in 2017 under reference number HPK/2017/0531. The application was refused on the basis that it was contrary to Policy EQ3 of the High Peak Local Plan, development in the countryside. At that time Policy allowed development that supported “rural employment” and “and “development which help sustain existing agricultural enterprises”. It is not understood how Officers reached their conclusion in determining the 2017 application.

A new application was submitted under reference HPK/2024/0404 but was withdrawn following requests for additional information on the family farming operations and the Applicant’s vehicle movements on Stable Lane.

The Local Plan is currently subject to review but the Council’s website gives no indication as to this Policy materially changing.

The application, which is the subject of this Statement, is for the necessary extension of facilities required for sustaining an agricultural enterprise and therefore complies with Policy. Full details of the farming operations are set out above. The proposed extension will mirror the existing structures in terms of external appearance: These buildings have already been approved by HPBC and therefore meet the Policy criterion of “high quality design”.

It is accepted that the 2017 refusal also included Derbyshire County Highways (DCH) opposition to an intensification of the use of Stable Lane. Part of the reasoning was that vehicles and equipment were being offered for hire which was not, and remains, the case. The application that is the subject of this Statement is for a structure which will actually reduce the number of vehicle movements as some vehicles will be already on site and therefore there will not be the need to make specific journeys for service and maintenance.

As requested by DCH in December 2024, the following are day-to-day movements on Stable Lane involving the Applicant’s vehicles, comparing the position in 2017 and 2024:

Winter 2017 :	10no tractor with equipment, trailers and muck spreader movements
Summer 2017 :	20no tractor with equipment, trailers, rakes and balers movements
Winter 2024 :	8no tractor with equipment, trailers and muck spreader movements
Summer 2024 :	15no tractor with equipment, trailers, rakes and balers movements

The increased size and efficiency of tractors and machinery has reduced the numbers of journeys by about 20 per cent as greater areas of the farm can be dealt with at each visit: However, these larger tractors and machines are (as indicated above) extremely valuable and need both larger secure storage and physically bigger areas for servicing and maintenance, hence the reason for the application.

When considering vehicle movements, it should be noted that Stable Lane also serves industrial units and a gymnasium open to members of the public.

Present and future staffing levels

The Applicant and family members are employed full- and part-time in the existing operations.

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DESIGN & ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

Assessment of the suitability of the application site

The application site is adjoining the fully utilized existing buildings which service the farming operations. The positioning does not interfere with the existing easy access to and from the farmyard and does not involve the loss of any valuable farm land.

There are no overlooking residential or other properties and there will be minimal disturbance to the immediate area.

Evaluation of the existing buildings on the application site

All buildings at Stable Lane are fully-utilized and the proposal will be a necessary integral part of the farming operations.

Design considerations for the existing buildings

The proposed structure will be of similar construction to the existing buildings.

Services

The additional development does not impact on any existing arrangements.

Landscaping and the Environment Agency

The proposed development benefits from existing mature landscaping and only involves the loss of a small scrubland area.

The Environment Agency (EA) advises that the property is not within designated Flood Zones 2 and 3 and therefore there are no requirements in this respect. The Applicant is not aware of any other EA requirements in respect of this application.

Access and highways arrangements

The proposal sits adjacent to the existing farmyard and all vehicles will continue to use the main access and will all be able to enter and leave the site in forward gear in compliance with the requirements of Derbyshire County Highways. No parking spaces are either required or affected by the proposal.

There has already been a reduction in vehicle movements due to the ever-increasing size of vehicles and equipment (see above) since the last application. There will be a further net reduction in vehicular movements due to the proposed use of the accommodation.

Other matters

The Applicant is not aware of any further requirements in respect of this application.

Conclusion

The proposal will, if permitted, provide further necessary accommodation and maintain the high level of farming operations. This accords with National and HPBC Policies covering the sustainability of the rural economy and the maintenance of the countryside.

Informative

The foregoing is designed to provide Members and Officers with the background to the planning application together with a profile of the existing business without divulging commercially sensitive information. In the event that any further information or explanation is required, the Applicant will be only too happy to provide it through the Agent.

G J Perry

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