PLANNING STATEMENT

Including Design and Access Issues

Client: Mr & Mrs Robinson

Location: Gypsy Hollow (aka. land to the south of Thorncross Farm), Thorncliffe, ST13 7LS

Proposal:

ERECTION OF AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT AND MACHINE STORAGE BUILDING.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This application has been submitted following the approval of stables and a manège on the holding because a building is needed to store the equipment and machinery necessary to maintain the land.

2. APPLICATION SITE AND ITS SETTING

2.1 The application holding extends to some 5 acres of agricultural land, owned by the applicants, which lies to the south of Thorncross Farm, approximately 0.25 miles from Leek. The land has recently been subdivided with post and rail fencing by the owner to allow effective stock management. The land is laid to grass. The site of the proposed building is within the field nearest the road where there is an existing hedge along the roadside boundary and is accessed by an existing track off the road. The land holding generally slopes gradually down in a north to south direction.

3. THE PROPOSAL

3.1 The proposed building would be used for the storage of implements and machines and fodder ancillary to the equestrian and agricultural use of the site. The applicants' currently own and keep three horses on the site for their family and personal use. There is 5 acres (2ha) of land and some of the grazing could be used for agricultural use which does not require planning permission. Two of the bays in the proposed building would have solid fronts and doors (north elevation) and these would be used to store the machinery and the third bay would have a gate on the northern elevation allowing this part of the building to be used for storing machinery and for livestock on occasions.

3.2 The implements and machines are, and would be, used to maintain the land. Exactly the same equipment would be used to maintain the land if it were only used for agriculture. Currently the machines, which include tractors and agricultural equipment, are stored in the open leading to problems of deterioration and potential security issues, and they look unsightly. It is the applicant's intention, if permission is granted, to store the machines which are currently in the open, inside the proposed building. This would make the site and the local landscape generally look more attractive, prevent the machines deteriorating outside and make them more secure.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 There have been 5 previous planning applications for on the holding. The applications were:

- SMD/2012/0136 (old ref: 12/00348/FUL) – retrospective application for stables, hay store and hardstanding and the change of use of the adjoining land from agriculture to agriculture and equestrian use. Refused.
- SMD/2013/0191 (old ref: 13/00062/FUL) - Erection of a mixed use portal framed building for agricultural/equestrian purposes, the construction of a hardstanding to provide access and associated working area and the change of use of the adjacent land from agriculture to a mixed agricultural/equestrian use. Refused.
- SMD/2013/0762 (old ref: 13/00568/FUL) - Erection of an agricultural portal framed building and stable block, access track and associated yard area and the change of use of the adjacent land from agriculture to a mixed agricultural/equestrian use. Refused.
- SMD/2014/0063 - Change of Use of land to equestrian uses and erection of stables and shed. Refused but permitted on appeal in January 2015. Stables subsequently erected and the land in equestrian use.
- SMD/2015/0434 - Construction of an outdoor all weather riding area and a midden. Approved in September 2015 and now built.

4.2 The first four applications were refused by the Council; the fourth - for the equestrian use of the land and the erection of stables and a shed - was allowed on appeal. Subsequently permission for a manège has been granted by the Council.

5. DESIGN ISSUES

1. Access - via existing access on to the road which is owned by a neighbouring farmer.
2. Appearance – Please see submitted Drawing No. 3552-08. The proposed construction is typical of agricultural and rural buildings.
3. Scale – external measurements 13.75 m x 6.10m = about 84 square metres.
4. Layout – as shown on drawing no. 3552-01F.
5. Landscaping – No planting is shown but the applicant would be willing to carry out some planting to the west of the proposed building. To avoid a pre-commencement condition the applicants are willing to submit a scheme, if required, during the consideration of the application.

5. PLANNINGPOLICY

5.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004 requires proposals to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan taking into consideration any material considerations relevant to the determination of the application. This guidance is r e-iterated in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which is a material consideration in addition to the Development Plan which in the Moorlands consists of the Core Strategy (2014).

5.2 At the heart of the guidance in the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 14) and that for decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Core Strategy (2014) for the Moorlands contains the following presumption in favour of sustainable development.

"When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Core Strategy ... ... be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- *Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or*

- *Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted."*

5.3 The Core Strategy does not have specific policies on equestrian buildings or agricultural buildings but it doeshave policies on design and landscape. Core Strategy policy DC1 requires that development should be of a high quality; be designed to respect the site and its surroundings; and promote the maintenance of biodiversity. Core Strategy policy DC3 requires that development which would harm the character of the local and wider landscape should be resisted and important views as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment should be protected. Core Strategy Policy R1 (Rural Diversification) also applies.

6. THE CASE IN SUPPORT OF THE APPLICATION

6.1 The key issues for consideration are considered to be theneed for the building and the principle of development; the building's design; and the effect on the visual amenity and the landscape of thesurrounding area.

The need for the building and the Principle of Development.

6.2 As stated in paragraph 3.1 the machines are currently stored outside. Storing them inside would reduce deterioration, improve security and make the site look more attractive.

6.3 The machines needed to manage the site and maintain the quality of the pasture are listed below on the next page. Next to each machine, if it is not self-explanatory, is the machine's role on site and its dimensions.

6.4 The machines are:

	Item	Size(m)	Area(m^2)
•	Tractor – Leyland 262.	4 x 2	8
	6 foot field roller.	2 x 2	4
•	Roll-up chain harrows - 2	-	-
•	Fertiliser box -box which fits on the back of the tractor	2 x 2	4
•	Muck spreader.	4 x 2	8
•	Tipping trailer	4 x 2	8
•	Bale Spike	1	
•	Manège grader. Dimensions not known.	-	-
•	Mower	4 x 2	8
•	Hay tedder. Hay making equipment.	3 x 2	6

•	Digger. Used for moving cylindrical silage, haylage and hay bales. Useful in times of heavy snow. In 2014/15 winter it was the only way to bring water to the site (no piped water).	4 x 2	8
		TOTAL:	**54**

6.5 The total area needed for the machines stored side by side is about 54 square metres plus space for the manège grader and the roll-up harrows. The size of the proposed building - at 84 square metres external footprint – would provide space for implements and for people to access, and space for carrying out repairs to the machinery when necessary and space for livestock when needed. It is contended that there is a need for the building and that the size of the building is appropriate for the proposed use.

6.6 All the proposed machines are necessary for the maintenance and running of the equestrian operation on the site. Although the site has permission for equestrian use agricultural use can take place without the need for planning permission. The machines needed to maintain the land are the exactly same as would be used to maintain agricultural grazing land.

The design of the building

6.7 The design of the building is that of a modern agricultural building and as such would not be out of character with this rural area. Similar buildings can be found on the surrounding land. The building would allow the machines to be stored inside protecting them from the weather and be more secure.

Impact on the landscape and on visual amenity.

6.8 The application site lies in the "Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands" character area which is described as a strong undulating or sloping landscape cut by small steep-sided stream valleys and small-scale fields bounded by trees and hedgerows. Isolated properties are a feature of the area.

6.9 The character assessment lists features which are considered incongruous in thislandscape; modern rural buildings are not mentioned. The Character Area is not identified as an area particularly sensitive to change. Whilst the assessment states that care should be taken not introduce urban features into the landscape the proposed building is not an urban feature; there are many buildings of a similar design in the area and across the District's

countryside.

6.10 It is accepted that the building will be visible from the roads to the south and to the west. However, being able to see the building does not mean that it will have an adverse visual impact on visual amenity or on landscape character. The building is not large compared to many buildings of similar design found in the locality and the District. It would look like a modern agriculture barn. Finally, from the south and west the barn would be only visible from a distance and would appear as a modern rural building compatible with the landscape. The applicants are willing to provide landscaping as required.

6.11 The area in which the site is located whilst attractive has no special landscape designation and is not identified as a key open space or view. The "Ancient Slope and Valley Farmlands" character area in which the site is located is not identified as an area as particularly sensitive to change and a manège would not harm its rural character or attractiveness.

Other material concerns

6.12 An Ecology Scoping report is submitted with this application. The survey was carried out in summer 2015 and it is highly unlikely that there has been a significant change in the field's flora since then.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development is relatively small scale; appropriate to a rural location; would not harm thecountryside; is necessary to maintain the land, and although visible would not haveany harmful effect on the landscape or views. It is contended that the proposed developmentis in accord with the Core Strategy and NPPF and istherefore sustainable development which should be approved.