Design and Access Statement

Mr and Mrs K Lyons - Beech Tree Farm, Cloudside, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 3QQ

Proposal – Erection of agricultural building for storage of implements and fodder.

Introduction
Beech Tree Farm is a small holding of 6.35 acres located on Cloudside, a rural lane running along the east side of Bosley Cloud. The farmland has boundaries of stone wall, hedges and sheep fencing and is used to graze sheep. We rent another 65 acres of land locally which are used to graze sheep and produce hay and for winter feed. At present we farm 76 sheep, but numbers are steadily increasing. The flock presently comprises of 45 breeding ewes, 26 lambs and 5 rams. Realistically, further expansion of the flock, which is mostly pedigree Suffolk sheep, will be extremely difficult without access to a suitable storage building.

Proposed development
We are applying to erect a conventional steel-framed agricultural building with a floor area of 251 square metres.

Use of proposed building
The building will be open plan inside and be used to store farm equipment and fodder.

At present we house trailers at neighbouring farms where they can be locked away. We have previously had a trailer stolen from our drive, despite it having both hitch and wheel locks in place. Smaller pieces of equipment are stored in the field where they are at risk of theft, are exposed to the elements and look unsightly. We are in need of a tractor and quad bike to allow us to make our own hay, maintain the land and look after the sheep when it snows. We cannot purchase either of these until we have somewhere safe and dry to store them.

Last summer we made over 500 small bales and 40 round bales of hay for our own use. These, as well as 300 straw bales, are stored in small sheds around the holding and again at a neighbouring farm. By having the bales stored centrally and with easy access we would be able to farm more efficiently and move closer towards our aim of establishing an economically viable farming business for our children.

Site assessment
We have tried to situate the building close enough to the house for it to be seen as part of the farm rather than an isolated building. This is also important for security. In addition we wish to minimise its visual impact in this beautiful area.

Beech Tree Farm lies at the top of a significant slope with the fields dropping away steeply from Cloudside. We propose to dig the building into the hill, thus reducing its visual impact, especially from the lane. The west side of the proposed site, which runs along Coudside itself, is already bordered by mature shrubs which we anticipate will completely hide all but the very top of the roof. We propose to plant native species along the north side of the building, again to reduce the visual impact. Between the bank of shrubs and the existing stone access track we propose to build a new dry stone wall to mirror the wall that borders the property.

Appearance

The steel, portal framed building will be clad with weather boarding where it appears above ground level. Any walls below ground level will be constructed of concrete panels, as per the drawings. Roof lights will allow natural light into the building and any additional lighting required will be low energy in nature. There are no doors facing the lane, so again the visual impact will be kept to a minimum. We plan to install solar panels on the east-facing roof and harvest the rainwater to fill water troughs where possible.

Access

Access to the building will be via the existing entrance to Beech Tree Farm off Cloudside. There already exists a stone track which runs from this entrance along the west side of the proposed building and into the top field. We propose to extend this stone track along the north side of the building and down the east side, finally joining the existing house drive between the existing garage and the proposed building. This will allow access to both doorways without the need for a large concrete yard in front of the building.