HARVEYHUGHES

INDEPENDENT RURAL CONSULTANTS

B & A Daniels & Sons

Hill View Farm,

Tower Hill Road,

Mow Cop,

Stoke-on- Trent

ST7 3PS

Justification Report / Design and Access Statement

In support of

A Planning Application for the erection of Agricultural Livestock Building and Muck Storage Area at Hill View Farm, Tower hill Road, Mow Cop, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 3PS

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1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared at the request of Mr and Mrs Daniels of Hill View Farm, Mow Cop in connection with their request to erect an agricultural livestock building and muck storage area.

Mr & Mrs Daniels purchased Hill View Farm, Towerhill Road, Mow Cop on the 22nd November 2022, totalling 19 hectares, with intention to begin livestock farming. The land is currently cropped to permanent pasture, all the land is located within an existing Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) and is registered under the County Parish Holding number of 37/064/0727. The business is also renting in a further 30 acres of additional grassland.

Mr & Mrs Daniels are first generation farmers and they now wish to obtain planning permission for the erection of a purpose-built livestock building and muck midden. The building is deemed essential in order to maintain a viable and efficient beef unit.

The site already has a number of existing sheds with most deemed 'unsuitable' for the housing of cattle due to poor design and ventilation, also the site lacks a compliant muck storage area, making it difficult to stay compliant with the NVZ regulations.

2.0 Purpose of New Building

The new building will be used for livestock housing, where required the building will also be used for livestock handling and isolation of sick or injured animals. Should the business be unable to provide an isolation pen, farm assurance status will not be obtained, as such reducing the sales value of any livestock.

The proposed agricultural building will measure as follows:

Length:	30.48m
Width:	12.19m
Height to Eaves:	5.40m
Height to Ridge:	7.33m

The total surface area of the building will be **371.55m^2.**

In addition to the proposed livestock building a concrete muck midden will be constructed from concrete panels for the storage of Farm Yard Manure (FYM)

3.0 Building Design

The proposed agricultural building has been designed to be within keeping of other agricultural buildings in the surrounding areas of Staffordshire Moorlands.

The height of the proposed building will allow for modern agricultural machinery and equipment to enter the building with ease for mucking out, feeding, and bedding etc as well as adequate airflow and ventilation for housed livestock.

4.0 Visual Impact / Access

The proposed new building is rectangular and is to be located to the West of the site, the location has been selected to reduce the impact on the surrounding landscape and will be positioned to utilise an existing hard standing yard area. Access to the building will be via the existing yard area located off the private drive for Hill View Farm.

The materials used in the design of the building are typical of those used in the construction of other agricultural buildings in the area and the colours have been selected to reduce the potential impact on the surrounding landscape. The addition of natural screening will be considered should it be required for planning approval.

The walls will be constructed with 2m high concrete panelling, and cladded with vertical natural coloured timber allowing for adequate ventilation. Anthracite grey fibre cement roof sheets have been selected for the roof incorporating two translucent roof sheets per bay to allow for natural light.

5.0 Livestock Requirement

The proposed agricultural building will be utilised all year round, in the winter all cattle will be housed and for the remainder of the year the building will be used for finishing cattle. The building may also be used for livestock handling i.e., TB testing and isolation pen when required. The area requirements of each are detailed below:

Description	**Area Requirement (m^2)**
Beef cattle ranging from 101- 699kg	457
Total requirement for winter housing only	**457 m2**

Mr and Mrs Daniels plan to locally source and accommodate weaned native bred cattle at approximately 3-4 months of age taking them through to finishing at 24+ months of age. The business intends to produce top quality, high welfare beef, to be sold in the local area direct to the consumer.

The most efficient beef herds are stocked at a rate of 1.5 to 2 livestock units (LU) per hectare, meaning that the site will be able to accommodate a minimum herd size of 75 cattle aging from 6 months to 2 years, each animal in this age bracket accounts for 0.6 livestock units (LU).

Cattle will be turned out in the spring when the grass is fast growing and of optimum quality.

All cattle will be housed throughout the winter to protect the soil from potential damage and erosion. The cattle will be bedded on straw and the shed will need to provide enough space to allow for both lying and loafing, in order to minimise the risk of being trodden or kicked.

The below table demonstrates that space requirement of beef according to the RSPCA Welfare Standards for beef:

The floor space allowances in straw yard accommodation must be as follows:

Weight of animal (kg)	Minimum bedded lying area (m^2)	Minimum non-bedded/ loafing area (m^2)	Minimum total area per animal (m^2)
< 100	1.5	1.8	3.3
101 to 199	2.5	2.5	5.0
200 to 299	3.5	2.5	6.0
300 to 399	4.5	2.5	7.0
400 to 499	5.5	2.5	8.0
500 to 599	6.0	2.5	8.5
600 to 699	6.5	2.5	9.0
700 to 799	7.0	3.0	10.0
> 800	8.0	3.0	11.0

(Space allowances for weights in the range of 200kg to 800kg comply with British Standard BS 5502:2005)

Image source: beef-standards-rspca-2020.pdf (rspcaassured.org.uk)

Drawing from the table above it is essential that the business has sufficient accommodation for circa 75 cattle ranging from weights of 101kg to 699kg at finishing weight, on average the space allowance for this weight range is 7.25m^2. Therefore, the buildings suitable for livestock housing must provide a minimum of 544m^2 accommodation for winter housing, in addition to this the building will need to have enough space to create an isolation pen for sick or injured animals should it be required.

Winter forage for the housing period will either be made on side or be purchased externally and stored as round bales.

6.0 Existing Buildings at Hill View

Appendix 1.0 shows photographs of the existing buildings at Hill View Farm. As can be seen from these photographs the buildings are in poor condition that would not fulfil current red tractor standards. The buildings are constructed of materials unsuitable for modern farming practices namely tin roofs leading to condensation and potential respiratory and health problems in livestock.

The only building suitably designed for the housing of cattle which is 227m^2 in size including a feed passage area, reducing the area available for housing to 173m^2 in size, therefore leaving a minimum requirement for a further 371m^2 of cattle housing.

7.0 Other uses

The building will when space allows, also be used for other uses relating to livestock and machinery including the following;

- Lairage pens before taking to processing or market
- Gathering area
- Isolation pen
- Pregnancy diagnosing (PD)
- Veterinary routine visits
- Vaccinating

- General Handling
- Machinery maintenance and repairs

Although some of the above operations can be undertaken in field, it is best to perform the tasks under cover where possible to reduce the impacts of soil poaching and soil erosion.

8.0 Manure Management

Livestock will be bedded on straw which will be replenished regularly to ensure clean dry lying areas. Farm yard manure (FYM) will be produced from the proposed straw bedded yard housing system. FYM will be stored in the proposed muck midden located next to the shed.

The FYM will be utilised as organic fertiliser on the land which is farmed at Hill View Farm, as well as a natural fertiliser this will improve soil health, adding organic matter to the soil. Any spreading of FYM will be undertaken in accordance to NVZ spreading dates, spreading will also be undertaken subject to the appropriate ground and weather conditions.

Without the proposed muck midden, the farming business would have to create in field heaps which pose a pollution risk to the nearby water courses.

9.0 Countryside Stewardship

Mr & Mrs Daniels intend to enter the land into a countryside stewardship agreement this year. The countryside stewardship is designed to maintain and enhance the environment and protect the land for future generations, it aims to achieve this through conserving and restoring wildlife habitats, reducing pollution from agriculture, and protecting the soils from erosion.

Options which Mr & Mrs Daniels intend to include within the stewardship agreement include;

Code	Option	Benefits
BE3	Management of Hedgerows	- Improves the structure and longevity of the hedge. - Will provides a vital winter food source to overwintering birds - Provides blossom to invertebrates.
GS4	Legume and Herb Rich Swards	- Improves soil structure and water filtration. - Naturally fixes nitrogen, meaning no requirement for artificial fertiliser. - Provides a good habitat and food source for invertebrates and crop pollinators.
SW9	Seasonal Livestock Removal	- Will help improve soil structure and reduce soil erosion and diffuse pollution.
BN7	Hedgerow gapping up	- Create continuous lengths of hedge, improving habitat for local species.
BN11	Planting new hedges	- Create new wildlife corridors using typical local species.
TE1	Planting standard hedgerow trees	- Improve existing hedgerows with the addition of trees. - Creating shelter, food, nesting sites and song post for birds.

10.0 Site Justification

The building has been positioned to the west of the site at Hill View Farm, which is already an area of existing rolled stone yard. Access to the building will be made via the existing farm yard leading from the private driveway located off Tower Hill Road.

11.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed livestock building is a progressive step for Mr & Mrs Daniels, allowing them to start livestock farming as well as producing good quality, high welfare, sustainable beef with minimum food miles for local consumers.

The proposed positioning of the building is the most suitable location due to the area already being an existing yard area, minimising the impact on the surrounding environment.

The design of the building is designed to be in keeping with similar buildings in the local area, also Mr and Mrs Daniels are happy to add additional natural screening should that be required to successfully gain planning permission.

12.0 References

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. February 2020. RSPCA Welfare standards for beef cattle. Available from: https://business.rspcaassured.org.uk/media/ocxnaa5f/beef-standards-rspca-2020.pdf

Agriculture and Horticultural Development Board. 2016. Beef: cost of production benchmarks- suckler herds. Available from: https://ahdb.org.uk/beef-cost-of-production-benchmarks/suckler-herds

Rural Payments Agency and Natural England. Undated. Countryside Stewardship grants. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants

Appendix 1.0- Photographs of existing buildings







