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Planning Statement

Proposal: Agricultural building to house & feed livestock with underground slurry store

Site Reference: Bradda Farm, Biddulph Moor, ST8 7NU

Introduction

This statement has been produced in support of a planning application for an agricultural building to house dairy cattle, with underfloor slurry storage.

This holding is located south of the village of Biddulph Moor in a rural area. The land and buildings are being used for fundamental agricultural processes. This holding extends to approximately 250 acres of which 200 acres are owned, this holding is a recent purchase and the applicant need to improve the housing and increase the slurry storage capacity to be able to adhere to regulations for livestock housing and slurry storage. This farmland is to be used to rear cattle and to produce milk and fodder.

Agricultural Holding No.

37/079/0029

Animals on the Holding

The applicant currently farms approximately 290 head of dairy cattle including followers and replacement heifers.

Amount of development

The applicant wishes to erect a steel framed agricultural building to house and feed livestock. The floor area created by this development will be approximately 438m², with an underground slurry pit/store that will store that will create the additional storage capacity to allow for 6 months storage of slurry for the holding (see attached Slurry Wizard report for current storage capacity).

The floor area of this building will be split into cubicles and slatted passageways as shown on Drawing No. 1128-003.

This proposal will assist the farm to be economically viable and more environmentally friendly, whilst improving the welfare standards of the livestock.

Use of proposed building

This holding is a recent purchase and as such improvements are required to continue to farm the land and make the business viable. This building will allow

the applicant to expand the herd to enable the business to continue and meet the quotas required as part of his milking contract.

This proposed building will ensure that the applicants have adequate housing for the livestock on the holding and the for the proposed increased numbers of livestock and enable the dairy parlour to be increased in size in the existing building to further increase milk production and making the business more successful.

There is not sufficient enough room in the existing buildings to house the stock levels and to store the fodder and implements required to manage the holding. The applicant is 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.

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 work-force 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.

Space-sharing cubicle design prevents damage to the cow and allows her to lie clean and undisturbed in comfort. Forward and side-lunging space must be provided to assist the cow to rise naturally. The existing standards set by BS5502 do not reflect the current advice for 1.15m x 2.7m cubicles.

The feed barrier will be constructed to allow free and easy access to the food and prevent cow aggression and injury. Individual feeding space of 700mm per cow will be provided to aid grouping and management. 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 his business.

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

Underground Slurry Store

An underground slurry store will be sited under the building as shown on Drawing No. 1128-003.

To calculate the capacity required for approximately 6 months storage of slurry, a slurry calculation tool was used to calculate the size of store that would be suitable. This was sourced through AHDB website and called Slurry Wizard. The results of the report have been attached with this application. The data entry is based on the holdings current stock numbers and acreage before increasing the livestock numbers.

According to the Clean Air Strategy 2019; the agriculture sector accounts for 88% of UK emissions of ammonia, which is emitted during storage and spreading of manures and slurries and from the application of inorganic fertilisers. Ammonia damages sensitive natural habitats and contributes to particulate pollution in urban areas.

It is a requirement following this study that all open slurry stores or digesters are covered by 2027.

Covering slurry stores or having underground slurry stores can keep the rain out and odours and gasses like ammonia in. Ammonia and odorous gases are produced by microbial activity. These gases rise to the surface and are released at varying rates depending on the air speed over the surface.

By covering a slurry store, you can significantly reduce emissions. Underground slurry stores or covers on conventional slurry stores are not airtight like those on anaerobic digesters. Therefore, gas can escape, but at a much-reduced rate compared to an open store.

By having the ability to store approximately 6 months of slurry this will enable the farmer to spread this back onto the land at the appropriate times and significantly reduce the use of inorganic fertilisers, further helping to reduce emissions and the harmful effects of ammonia on the natural habitat.

The proposed slurry store will be constructed of 250mm thick sealed shuttered concrete walls.

Siting

As indicated on drawing No. 1128-001 this building will be sited west of the existing buildings. This is for ease of the farming process.

The site has a fall from north to west.

We feel this building has been positioned in the most practical location, that requires minimal excavation in comparison to other areas of the holding.

Scale

The applicant wishes to erect a steel framed agricultural building 32.00m long x 13.716m wide with a 2.40m wide weather canopy along the east side elevation x 4.572m high to eaves level (from internal floor level).

The underground slurry store will be approximately 32.00m long x 13.716m wide with a depth of 3.00m (only 2.70m is a usable depth so as to allow for the freeboard requirement of 300mm).

We feel the scale and appearance of this building is appropriate for the site.

Climate Change Mitigation

This building will incorporate sustainably sourced timber that is compliant with CE Standards set out by Government. Rainwater will be harvested for use as drinking water by livestock and any excess will be stored for washing down machinery and cleaning out the building when required. Lighting within the building it will be of low wattage LED's.

Landscaping

To allow for this development a number of established trees will need to be removed. The applicant will make every effort to remove and replant the trees in the proposed area, however, if any of the existing trees then do not take and die off they will be replaced with new heavy standard trees to assist in shielding the building when viewed in the wider landscape to the west. However, the applicant is happy to carry out any further landscaping scheme specified by yourselves in order to 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.

Spoil

During the construction of the underground slurry store an approximate 250m³ of spoil will be excavated.

Any rock excavated will be crushed to make hardcore for around the site, for the upkeep of the tracks and for the base layers required for the proposed building.

The remaining spoil excavated will be reused around the around the proposed building to build up the ground in front of the building to allow for the feed to be placed in front of the feed fence and to back fill any excavations of the trees and between the slurry walls and existing embankment on the east elevation.

No spoil will be transported off site. By not transporting the spoil away from site and re-using, this assists the site in being environmentally friendly by reducing its carbon footprint during the construction of the proposed building.

Appearance

As indicated on drawing No. 1128-003 this building will incorporate a factory coated coloured fibre cement sheeted roof, coloured Slate Blue (18B29), incorporating GRP roof lights.

Vertical cladding down 4.5m below eaves level to the west side elevation to be box profile steel sheeting, coloured Slate Blue (18B29). Treated Yorkshire boarding set in a traditional space system will be used on both gables. All roof joints will be made good with matching barge board.

The underfloor slurry store will be constructed of shuttered concrete walls and sealed to avoid any leakage of slurry into the ground.

The north gable elevation will incorporate a sheeted gate as shown on drawing No. 1128-003.

The east side elevation will incorporate a feed fence.

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 internal rainwater harvesting tanks.

We feel these materials will blend into the existing landscape without having an adverse effect.

This building has been designed in accordance with B.S. 5502.

The design of this building is specific for the wellbeing of the animals kept therein.

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 Barrage Road, Biddulph Moor.

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