

PLANNING STATEMENT

**Demolition of Existing Agricultural Buildings and Erection of Replacement
Agricultural Storage Building
at
Fairview Farm, ST10 2HU**



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1.0 Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr Goodgrove in support of a full planning application for the demolition of existing agricultural buildings and the erection of a replacement agricultural storage building at Fairview Farm, ST10 2HU.

The proposal seeks to modernise the existing farmstead through the removal of a number of ageing agricultural structures that are no longer fit for purpose and have reached the end of their economic life. These buildings are to be replaced with a purpose-built agricultural storage building designed to meet the operational needs of the existing farming enterprise.

The proposal is not simply the replacement of one agricultural building with another. Instead, it represents the comprehensive rationalisation of an established farmstead, removing several deteriorating structures and replacing them with a single modern building that is capable of accommodating contemporary agricultural machinery together with the storage of home-produced fodder.

The development will improve the operational efficiency of the holding, enhance the appearance of the farmstead and provide long-term support for the continued growth of the agricultural business. The proposal also incorporates roof-mounted photovoltaic panels, enabling the building to generate renewable electricity for use within the farming enterprise and contributing towards the reduction of the farm's operational carbon footprint.

2.0 The Site and Existing Farmstead

Fairview Farm occupies an established farmstead situated within open countryside adjacent to the A52.

The applicants purchased the property approximately eighteen months ago with the intention of developing Fairview Farm into the permanent base for their agricultural enterprise.

Whilst the land immediately surrounding the farmstead extends to approximately two acres, the applicants also farm approximately 30 acres of rented agricultural land. The land has formed part of the farming business for many years under a long-standing private rental arrangement and is used primarily for the production of hay and fodder which is supplied to local farmers. Although the land is not owned by the applicants, the long-established nature of the arrangement provides the business with the continuity necessary to support ongoing agricultural investment. Fairview Farm

therefore operates as the headquarters of the wider agricultural enterprise rather than simply serving the land immediately surrounding the farmstead.

The farmstead therefore serves as the operational base for the wider agricultural enterprise, providing storage for machinery, implements and harvested crops together with the facilities necessary to support the day-to-day management of the holding. The site is accessed via the existing agricultural entrance, with no alterations proposed to the established access arrangements.

3.0 The Existing Buildings

The buildings proposed for demolition comprise a collection of ageing agricultural structures that have evolved over many years through numerous additions and alterations. Rather than forming a single coherent agricultural building, they consist of a mixture of concrete block walls, brickwork, profiled steel sheeting and fibre cement roof coverings of varying ages and construction methods.

The buildings have deteriorated significantly and no longer meet the functional requirements of modern agriculture. One of the principal buildings has suffered a partial roof collapse, resulting in the loss of its weatherproof integrity and rendering repair economically unjustifiable. The remaining structures are similarly outdated, with restricted internal dimensions and inadequate headroom that prevent the safe storage and operation of modern agricultural machinery.

The limited size of the existing buildings also prevents the simultaneous storage of tractors, implements and harvested fodder, requiring equipment and materials to be stored externally where they are exposed to the weather.

The applicants have carefully considered whether the existing buildings could be retained and adapted. However, owing to their age, mixed methods of construction, deteriorating structural condition and inadequate dimensions, continued repair would neither overcome their operational deficiencies nor represent a sound long-term investment. Their replacement therefore provides the most sustainable and economically viable solution for the future of the holding.

4.0 The Agricultural Enterprise

The applicants operate an established agricultural enterprise centred upon Fairview Farm together with approximately 30 acres of long-term rented agricultural land. The rented land has been managed by the family for many years under a long-standing private agreement and provides the principal area for hay and fodder production.

Fairview Farm functions as the operational base from which the wider farming enterprise is managed, providing storage for machinery, implements and harvested fodder.

It is commonplace within the agricultural industry for farming businesses to comprise a combination of owned and rented land, with long-standing private rental arrangements forming an integral part of many agricultural enterprises. The operational needs of a farm should therefore be assessed having regard to the farming business as a whole rather than solely the extent of land within the applicant's ownership. In this case, the proposed building is intended to serve the wider agricultural enterprise, including the long-established rented land, and not merely the two-acre farmstead itself.

The applicants have demonstrated a significant long-term commitment to the agricultural enterprise through the purchase of Fairview Farm and their relocation from a residential property to the holding approximately eighteen months ago. This investment reflects their intention to establish the farm as the permanent base for the business and provides confidence that the proposed development forms part of a genuine long-term agricultural enterprise rather than a short-term expansion.

The replacement building will principally serve the storage requirements of the farming operation, providing secure accommodation for tractors, agricultural implements, trailers and home-produced fodder.

The proposal also supports the continued involvement of the applicants' son within the agricultural business. As the next generation becomes increasingly involved in the day-to-day management of the holding, the availability of appropriate agricultural infrastructure becomes essential to ensuring the long-term sustainability and succession of the enterprise.

5.0 The Proposed Development

Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing obsolete agricultural buildings together with the erection of a modern steel portal framed agricultural building measuring approximately 16 metres by 12 metres with an eaves height of approximately 4 metres.

The replacement building has also been designed to incorporate roof-mounted photovoltaic solar panels on the south-west facing roof slope. The panels have been integrated into the design from the outset and will generate renewable electricity to

assist with the day-to-day operation of the farm. Incorporating renewable energy generation as part of the proposal demonstrates the applicants' commitment to investing in a modern, efficient and environmentally responsible agricultural enterprise whilst reducing reliance upon electricity supplied by the national grid

The building has been specifically designed for agricultural purposes and will provide covered storage for tractors, machinery, trailers, implements and fodder. Constructed using modern agricultural materials and detailing, the building will provide a durable, secure and weatherproof facility capable of serving the agricultural enterprise for many years whilst requiring considerably less maintenance than the existing buildings.

6.0 Rationalisation of the Existing Farmstead

The proposal should not be viewed simply as the replacement of an existing agricultural building.

Over many decades the farmstead has developed through the construction of a number of individual structures erected using differing materials and construction methods. Whilst each building may originally have served a useful agricultural purpose, collectively they now present a fragmented appearance and no longer provide accommodation capable of supporting modern farming practices.

The proposal provides the opportunity to remove several obsolete buildings, including one which has already suffered partial roof collapse, and replace them with a single purpose-designed agricultural building.

The benefits extend well beyond the provision of new storage accommodation. The proposal will simplify the layout of the farmstead, improve vehicle circulation, reduce ongoing maintenance liabilities, remove visually poor structures and create a more coherent agricultural complex capable of meeting modern operational requirements.

Rather than increasing the intensity of development, the proposal represents a significant improvement in the overall organisation, efficiency and appearance of the existing farmstead.

7.0 Site Selection and Design Approach

Careful consideration has been given to the siting of the replacement building.

Whilst the buildings proposed for demolition occupy an existing developed area, their footprint is fragmented and constrained by retained brick outbuildings which are to remain. This arrangement provides insufficient space for a modern portal framed agricultural building capable of accommodating contemporary agricultural machinery whilst also providing adequate storage for harvested fodder.

Attempting to construct the replacement building over the existing footprint would inevitably require the building to project into adjoining agricultural land, resulting in unnecessary encroachment into open countryside.

The location also ensures that the new building remains physically associated with the existing farmstead, thereby reinforcing its agricultural function and limiting any visual encroachment into the wider countryside.

Instead, the proposed building has been located upon the site of a former ménage which is no longer required and has already been engineered and levelled. This location makes effective use of previously disturbed land within the farmstead whilst avoiding the unnecessary loss of productive agricultural land.

The position also allows direct access from the existing farmyard, providing improved manoeuvring space for agricultural vehicles and creating a safer and more efficient working environment.

Although larger than the individual buildings being demolished, the replacement building remains closely related to the existing farmstead and will be viewed in the context of the surrounding agricultural buildings. The retained buildings continue to provide an important degree of screening from the public highway, ensuring that the proposal integrates naturally with the existing farm complex.

8.0 Landscape and Visual Impact

The proposal represents an overall visual improvement to the farmstead.

The existing buildings comprise an assortment of ageing agricultural structures displaying numerous materials, differing roof heights and varying construction techniques which collectively detract from the appearance of the site.

Their replacement with a single modern agricultural building will create a more cohesive and orderly farmstead whilst remaining entirely characteristic of agricultural development commonly found throughout Staffordshire Moorlands.

Additional hedgerow planting proposed around the development will further soften the appearance of the building and assist its integration into the surrounding landscape over time.

The proposed photovoltaic panels are mounted flush with the roof plane and form an integral part of the building's design rather than appearing as a separate addition. Their visual impact is limited by their low-profile installation and their location within the wider farmstead. The environmental benefits associated with renewable energy generation considerably outweigh any limited visual presence.

The proposal therefore enhances rather than detracts from the character of the existing agricultural holding.

9.0 Highway Safety and Access

The proposal utilises the existing agricultural access onto the A52 and requires no alterations to the public highway.

The replacement building will improve internal circulation within the farmyard by allowing tractors and trailers to manoeuvre more efficiently within the site. The improved layout reduces vehicle conflict between buildings and creates a more practical working environment for everyday agricultural operations.

The proposal is not expected to generate significant additional traffic beyond that associated with the existing agricultural business.

10.0 Sustainability and Climate Change

The proposal has been designed having regard to sustainable construction and the long-term resilience of the agricultural enterprise.

The demolition of the existing deteriorating buildings and their replacement with a modern steel portal framed structure will provide a more durable, efficient and lower-maintenance agricultural building capable of serving the holding for many years.

The proposed building incorporates roof-mounted photovoltaic solar panels which will generate renewable electricity for use within the agricultural enterprise. This will reduce dependence upon electricity supplied from the national grid, lower operational energy costs and contribute towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with the day-to-day operation of the farm.

The proposed building also provides improved weather protection for agricultural machinery and harvested fodder, reducing deterioration, extending the service life of equipment and minimising agricultural waste.

The proposal also makes efficient use of an abandoned former ménage rather than extending development into productive agricultural land. This represents an effective reuse of previously engineered land within the existing farmstead.

Collectively these measures demonstrate that the proposal not only supports the continued viability of the agricultural business but also contributes towards the wider objectives of sustainable rural development and climate resilience.

11.0 Planning Policy

Paragraph 88 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires planning decisions to support a prosperous rural economy by enabling the sustainable growth and expansion of agricultural businesses.

The proposal also contributes to the environmental objective of sustainable development contained within paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework through the incorporation of renewable energy generation, the efficient reuse of previously engineered land and the rationalisation of existing farm buildings.

The proposal directly accords with these objectives through the provision of modern agricultural infrastructure necessary for the efficient operation of an established farming enterprise.

The development also accords with the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan by supporting the ongoing needs of agriculture whilst ensuring that the proposal remains closely associated with the existing farmstead, utilises an existing engineered area of land and respects the character of the surrounding countryside.

12.0 Planning Balance

The proposal delivers a wide range of planning benefits.

The proposal secures the long-term future of an established agricultural enterprise operating from Fairview Farm and approximately thirty acres of long-term rented agricultural land.

It replaces an inefficient collection of ageing structures with a single purpose-designed agricultural building capable of meeting modern farming requirements.

It supports an active agricultural enterprise operating from Fairview Farm together with approximately thirty acres of rented agricultural land.

It provides secure storage for modern agricultural machinery, implements and home-produced fodder, improving the efficiency of the farming business and reducing the deterioration of valuable equipment and harvested crops.

The proposal incorporates renewable energy generation through the installation of roof-mounted photovoltaic panels, reducing the operational carbon footprint of the agricultural enterprise and improving the long-term sustainability of the holding.

The proposal makes effective use of an abandoned former ménage that has already been engineered, thereby avoiding unnecessary development within productive agricultural fields.

The scheme also improves the appearance, organisation and long-term functionality of the existing farmstead whilst supporting the future succession of the agricultural business through the continued involvement of the next generation.

Taken as a whole, the proposal represents a clear and positive investment in the long-term future of the holding.

13.0 Conclusion

The proposal represents a carefully considered investment in the future of Fairview Farm.

The buildings proposed for demolition are no longer capable of meeting the operational requirements of a modern agricultural enterprise and have reached the point where continued repair cannot be economically justified. Their replacement with a purpose-designed agricultural building will provide the storage capacity necessary for modern farming practices whilst significantly improving the organisation and appearance of the existing farmstead.

The chosen location makes effective use of an abandoned engineered ménage area, avoiding unnecessary encroachment into productive agricultural land whilst creating a safer and more efficient operational layout.

Importantly, the proposal is not one of expansion into the countryside but of modernisation and rationalisation within an established agricultural holding. It secures the long-term future of an active farming enterprise, supports rural economic activity, modernises an ageing farmstead, incorporates renewable energy generation, improves the quality of the built environment and contributes positively towards the long-term environmental and economic sustainability of the holding.

The proposal represents an appropriate, proportionate and sustainable form of agricultural development which will modernise an existing farmstead, improve operational efficiency, replace buildings that have reached the end of their useful lives, incorporate renewable energy generation and support the long-term viability of an established farming enterprise. The development accords with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework together with the policies of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and planning permission is therefore respectfully requested.