



AGRICULTURAL STATEMENT

On behalf of RH & MJ Hurford

In relation to:
Covered Dung Stores

At
Lower Westwater Farm
Westwater
Axminster
Devon
EX13 7JD

Ref: JWW/177/21/C/AS

January 2021

BACKGROUND

Greenslade Taylor Hunt have been instructed by Messrs RH & MJ Hurford to provide an Agricultural Statement to appraise the factors relevant to the erection of agricultural buildings over an existing dung store at Lower Westwater Farm.

The applicant and partner, Mr Andrew Hurford of RH & MJ Hurford, operate a commercial livestock business from Lower Westwater Farm. The Hurford family have been operating from Lower Westwater Farm for many decades and have sustainably expanded the business over these years. The farm now comprises a comprehensive range of modern agricultural buildings designed for livestock housing, loafing yards, and ancillary slurry and fodder storage.

The business operates with approximately 415 head of cattle comprising the milking herd of 235 plus 180 followers and youngstock. Livestock waste is either in the form of slurry or solid farmyard manure. Slurry is stored within a bespoke lagoon store and manure is store in outdoor area areas adjacent to the livestock buildings to reduce vehicle movements.

In recent years there has been an increased focus from Natural England's Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers into managing agricultural water. As a result, the applicant has successfully been awarded grant aid support to erect a roof over the site of the outdoor dung stores which adjoin the livestock buildings.

The existing storage sites are basic level concrete foundation pads, therefore no existing elevation drawings have been provided as there are no structures present.

The new roof structures will enable clean rainwater to be collected and redirected to a cleanwater outlet, opposed to being contaminated by manure which increases the overall volume, as well as liquefying the product which creates a greater run-off risk. The current arrangements create a significant water burden upon the business as the wetter manure must then be stored securely and spread over the land at a suitable time of year when conditions allow.

Overall, the proposed works shall result in increased business efficiency and a significant improvement in water quality to the wider catchment.

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

The proposal is to erect steel portal framed agricultural roofs over the existing dung stores in order to enable clean rainwater to be collected and directed towards a clean water outlet.

The building shall be covered with natural grey Profile 6R fibre cement roof sheets, typical of the surrounding modern agricultural buildings on the subject holding and the local area.

The structure will be clad at selected elevations with box profile sheet cladding with a slate blue finish. Due to the use of the buildings, there will also be large openings that remain uncovered for access purposes.

Standard black uPVC rainwater goods shall be installed and water shall be collected within storage tanks to provide livestock water, with any surplus being directed to existing drainage infrastructure.

LANDSCAPING

The proposed buildings are located over existing dung stores and within the cluster of existing farm buildings. The materials proposed are in keeping with the existing buildings and the structures are set at a lower level than the surrounding landscape. Based on these factors additional landscaping is not considered appropriate; however, the applicant is prepared to discuss any specific and material landscaping concerns that are raised.

ACCESS

The existing access provisions shall be retained with no alterations or modifications.

SUMMARY

With the above factors and detail of the proposal borne in mind, we are of the considered opinion that the application is supported by planning policy. We summarise the key considerations below as follows:

1. The application is for agricultural buildings that have been designed for solely agricultural use. The business is established and has proven itself to be sustainable over a significant length of time.
2. The buildings proposed are of a similar design to those within the existing farmyard and suitable for clean water separation. The dimensions of the structures are reasonably necessary for the purpose proposed.
3. The works will result in wider environmental improvements that are an important factor to obtain support from Natural England and other government agencies. There will be a reduction in diffuse water pollution and vehicle movements that are associated with the spreading of fouled rainwater.

Tuesday, 02 February 2021

James Wotton MRICS FAAV

Greenslade Taylor Hunt – Agricultural Department

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