

# Design & Access Statement

## Dairy House, Steel



April 2021

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## Introduction

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Dairy House sits in the hamlet of Steel, located within Hexhamshire Parish in south west Northumberland, the hamlet is 4 miles south of Hexham located between the villages of Whitley Chapel to the west and Slaley to the east.

Steel itself is overwashed by the designation of the Tyne & Wear Green Belt. The application site is situated on the north east of the hamlets boundary. Dairy House was converted into a dwelling house from former farm buildings in the 1990s. It is a two storey 'L' shaped block with a lean-to extension on the west elevation. There is a separate double garage which sits to the west of the house.

The applicant recently acquired the paddock to the north of Dairy House. The applicant had been renting the paddock for their own horses. The acquisition has provided an opportunity to address a range of issues.

The applicant's brief to the architect was to:

- Create a safer entrance from the highway: the existing access is dangerous being on a blind corner with poor sight lines in either direction.
- Consolidate the disjointed arrangement of buildings through moving the location of the existing garage.
- Improve the entrance arrangements to the dwelling: Whilst vehicular access is from the south, the main entrance to the dwelling is on the north elevation. There is no draught lobby and consequently this entrance is rarely used.
- Improve the relationship of the house with the gardens;
- Create a comfortable family home.
- Provide a utility, shower room, boot room and plant room.
- Construct horse loose boxes in the paddock.

## Previous and Current Applications

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Description of Development	Reference Number	Status
Conversion of redundant farm buildings to form one dwelling	T/990662   Amendment to 980734	Application Permitted
Conversion of redundant farm buildings to form one dwelling (east side) (As amended by plans received 3.12.98 (septic tank) and 10.3.99 (access))	T/980734	Application Permitted

## This application

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This application has been developed with the following the feedback from Northumberland County Council in their pre-application enquiry response (ref: 20/00847/PREAPP), this proposal incorporates a traditional approach to consolidate the current disjointed arrangement of collection of buildings to provide a modern family home including:

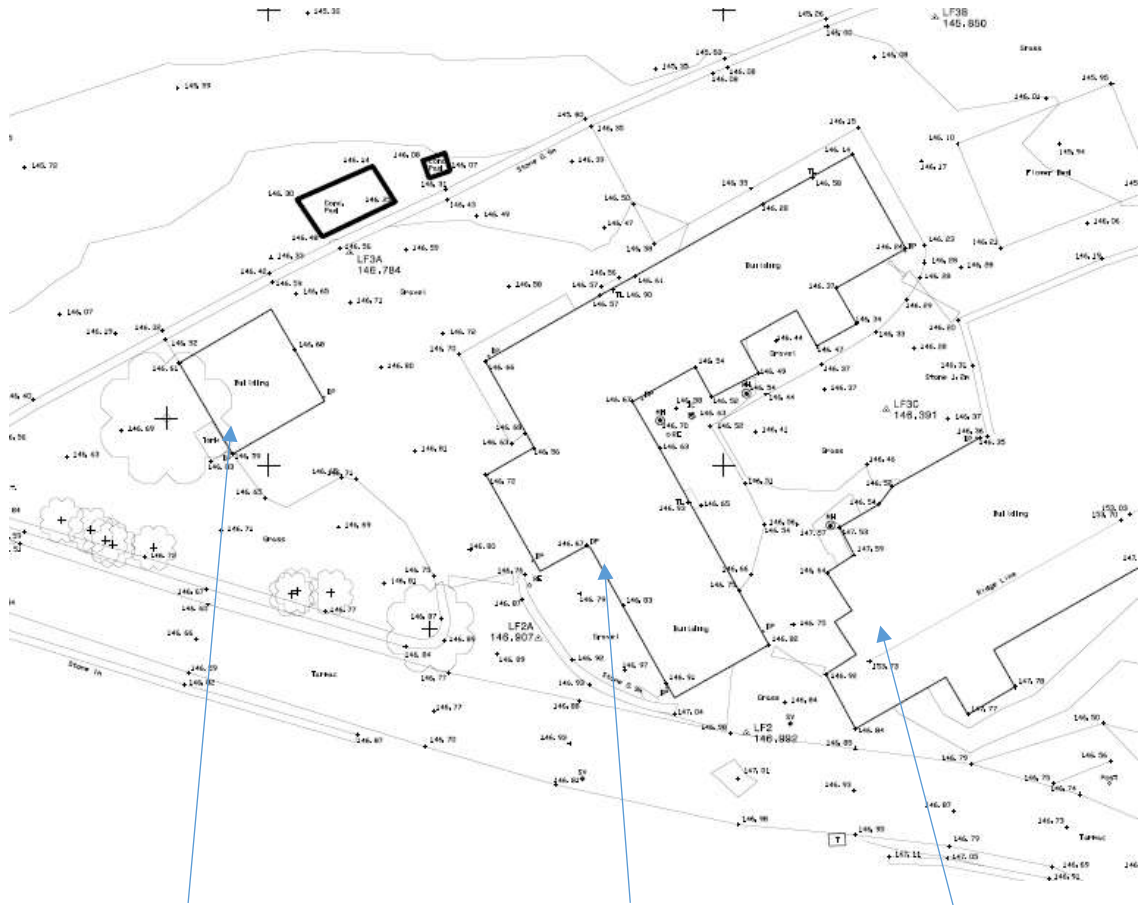
- Creating a safer entrance from the highway.
- Creating a formal main entrance and lobby space to the north west of the dwelling conveniently off the new drive access.
- Creating more space in the 'utility' area of the dwelling: with rear entrance, WC/shower room, utility, boot room and plantroom.

- Replacing the existing garden room to the north east gable including wide glazing to enjoy the views and improved access to the garden.
- Replacing the existing double garage with a new double garage and implement shed to improve relationship with the dwelling.
- Improve the natural daylight into the house through window alterations, along with improving the architectural language, using more agricultural forms eg. hemmel arches.
- Internal alterations include improving the status of the entrance and the staircase.
- Horse loose boxes in the paddock for own leisure use.

## Existing site

Dairy House is a converted farm building, it is L shaped in form and has been extended as part of the conversion. It is a two storey dwelling house.

The property is bounded by The Old Post Office and Oaklea bungalow to the south east, with the road forming a boundary from the south east to the north. From the north to the south east are gardens with field beyond.



*Extract from site plan*

Garage – note the garage sits separately to the cluster of buildings creating an isolated building and obscuring open views

Dairy House – note close proximity to The Old Post Office

The Old Post Office





*Dairy House from south west: note the garage sits back from the house*



*The entrance to Dairy House from west with The Old Post Office gable to the right.*



*Dairy House from east*



*Dairy House from north east with The Old Post Office beyond*

Dairy House is accessed from the road on the south west of the dwelling. This is on a bend in the road at Steel Farm which creates poor visibility. There are three entrances into the house, with the utility being the obvious one on arrival. The main entrance on the north and an access to the kitchen on the east are hidden from view.

## **Design and Access Statement**

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### Design Approach

The approach to the design in this application has been driven by the following key factors:

1. The applicant's requirements to improve arrangements for the safe access for vehicles to the property.
2. Consolidation of the garage, which is disjointed from the main cluster of buildings at Steel.
3. The features of the building and its wider setting.
4. The environmental factors of the site such as orientation and natural light.
5. Improved access for equine use of the paddock along with loose boxes.

In recognition of the character of the prominence of the buildings from the west elevation which is seen from the approach to the house and the road, the design responds by consolidating the grouping of the buildings. The existing detached garage appears 'domestic' and incongruous. Current convention in designing with agricultural buildings is to maintain the agricultural character both in massing and detail, whilst incorporating modern family requirements.

### Use

The proposed and existing use of the site is purely for domestic purposes.

### Amount

#### **Floor areas – existing**

The existing floor area of Dairy House including the garage is 355 m<sup>2</sup>. This equates to 16% of the total site area (excluding the paddock).

#### **Floor areas - proposed**

The additional floor area of the garden room extension is 7 m<sup>2</sup>.

The additional floor area of the garage is 20 m<sup>2</sup>.

The additional floor area of the utility extension is 13.5m<sup>2</sup>.

The total proposed floor area will be 389 m<sup>2</sup>, which equates to an increase of 8.5%.

The total site area of Dairy House (excluding the paddock) is 2218m<sup>2</sup>. The area of the proposed footprint of the building is 389m<sup>2</sup> (17.5% of the site area).

#### **Volume**

The existing volume of the dwelling including the garage is 1316m<sup>3</sup>.

Overall, the proposed volume will be 1475m<sup>3</sup>, which equates to an increase of 12%

## **Access and layout**

### **Highways Access**

Access to the site will be improved. Currently the site is accessed on a bend in the highway with very poor visibility lines. The access falls well short of normal minimum standards. The recent acquisition of the paddock to the north of Dairy House provides an opportunity to provide a new access to the north. Along with re-aligning fences, hedges and boundary walls this greatly improves sight lines and highway safety not only for the applicant but also for other highway users and their immediate neighbours. The new access drive will sweep south towards the new garage and new main entrance to the house. Turning space will be provided to ensure vehicles exit the site in a forward direction.

A Highways Engineer carried out a speed survey. The consultant's report is attached with this application. The consultant also provided 'swept path manoeuvre' diagrams. These are set out in drawing no. TSC 565/01: Swept Path Analysis. The proposals enable all vehicles to enter and exit the highway in a forwards facing direction.

### **Access to the house**

The existing layout of Dairy House is poor. Approaching the house, access appears to be the door on the west elevation, which is the door to the utility. Main doors is hidden from view, being located on the north and east elevations. This layout does not provide a clear point for entry into the building. The proposal responds to this by creating a clear main entrance as the house is approached from the north via the new drive. The new entrance hall lobby will provide improved circulation space and leads into the main kitchen dining area and staircase. The stairwell will be improved with a tall arched opening on the north elevation, providing views to the north from the first floor landing.

### **Garage**

Currently the house has a detached double garage which sits separately approximately 9 metres to the north west of Dairy House, The Old Post Office, and Oaklea Bungalow. The garage is a simple double garage with no architectural merit and contributes nothing to the character of the site. If anything, its 'domestic' setting is incongruous. Its internal dimensions are 5.14 x 5.15 mets. This is less than current recommended sizes advised by the County Highway Engineer.

The house sits within a cluster of houses in the open countryside within the Tyne & Wear Green Belt. One of the purposes of the Green Belt is to restrict the unrestricted sprawl of development upon the open countryside. It could be argued that the existing double garage contributes to the sprawl of development within this area. The proposed design responds to this in two ways:

- The proposed new access drive has a sweeping curve leading to Dairy House and the proposed new garage/utility. This will be detached to the main house but more conveniently located, consolidating the buildings group. This is design approach is typical of traditional agricultural buildings: buildings organically developing on a site.
- This consolidation of the buildings group will retain the open character of the area as denoted by the designation of Green Belt.

The proposed garage will be constructed of materials to match the existing dwelling house: random rubble walling and slated roof. Hemmel arches provide access to the garaging and implement shed, reminiscent of a traditional byre.



## **Utility**

The existing utility extension is incongruous as it appears to be the main entrance to the house. The new extension to the Utility will provide much needed additional space, a 'rear/utility' entrance to the dwelling along with a boot room, plant room, utility, storage and shower room.

The utility extension will be finished in random rubble stone to match the existing building, with a pitched roof finished in matching natural slate.

## **Garden room**

There is currently a living room on the east gable of the house which has a poor relationship with the garden. It is accessed through the existing living room. The design responds to the poor relationship by opening up the north and east elevations to the garden with large glazing panels. Internally access will be retained through the living room.

## **Scale and appearance**

The proposed works amount to an increase of 12% to the volume of the building.

## **Highways**

The proposed access provides improved visibility to access the highway to and from Dairy House, the scale is proportionate to the proposal and contributes to road safety for all users.

## **Doors and windows**

The doors and windows will be of painted timber to match the existing. Enlarged openings have been designed with the original agricultural use of the buildings in mind, ie. hemmel arches.

Large glazing panels will be used in the garden room on the north and east elevations framed in stonework with dressed ashlar quoins and random rubble. The roof will consist of a slate pitched roof with glazed panel roof lights allowing light to flood into the room.

## **Stables**

The horse loose box stables and tack room will be L shaped in plan, single storey and simple in their form and construction materials. The materials of the stables will be timber cladding with corrugated metal sheet roof.

## Historical context discussion

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Dairy House was converted in the 1990s from redundant agricultural use into a dwelling house. The buildings, or buildings in this location, appear on historical maps from the mid/ late 1800s.

On the opposite side of the road, at Steel Farm there is a cluster of farm buildings which are designated as Grade II Listed Buildings which are thought to date back to the C16. Their significance lies in their date and association with Hexham Priory. They sit over 40 meters to the west of Dairy House.

## Key Planning Issues

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### Extension

The following issues are considered:

- Principle of Development and Impact on the Green Belt;
- Design, Amenity Space, Layout and Scale;
- Highway and Access; and
- Ecology;

### **Principle of Development and Impact on the Green Belt**

Paragraph 117 of the NPPF, states that planning policies and decisions should promote the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes. In addition, paragraph 145 of the NPPF states that Local Planning Authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it is the extension or alteration of a building provided that it would not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

Policy GD1 of the Core Strategy states that development in the open countryside will be limited to the re-use of existing buildings unless there are other policies that set out a modified approach. The proposed development within the domestic curtilage will utilise the layout of the site by demolishing the existing detached garage and building a new garage more conveniently located to the main house. This and the extensions to the Utility and Garden Room significantly enhance the existing property, providing a comfortable home for the existing and future owners of the property. It is considered that garaging and utility space is a generally accepted requirement within a domestic setting.

Policy H20 of the Local plan states that extensions to residential properties in the countryside, including those in the Green Belt, will be allowed if proposals: a) are sympathetic to the character of the original building and does not substantially increase its size; and b) comply with Policies H33 and H34. Proposals which will result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building will not be permitted.

Local Plan policy H33 states that extensions to existing dwellings will be approved providing that they respect the character of the existing building, the surrounding area and the amenities of nearby residents.

The proposed extensions to the west and east of the existing property should be acceptable in principle under policies in the Local Plan provided that the extensions are sympathetic to the character of the existing dwelling and appropriate in terms of design and scale. The proposed extensions has been designed to ensure they will be sympathetic to the locality, building upon the unique and beautiful setting using materials to match the existing ones on site which help to soften and blend the extensions into the existing cluster of buildings. They are single storey which will ensure the original building retains the dominant form on the site and will not appear disproportionate within the context of the site. The relocated garage/implement store will form a more coherent group of buildings as opposed to the current disjointed garage block. The NPPF does not provide definition regarding the size of additional buildings which would be considered appropriate. The cumulative effect of the buildings on the site is:

Increase in floor area: 8.5%

Increase in building volume: 12%

These increases are modest and proportionate particularly in the context of the host building and the large site area. Therefore it is considered that the proposed extension would accord with the principles of saved policies H20 and H33, providing an extension to an existing property in the Green Belt.

Furthermore, the development will be an improvement to the existing cluster of buildings at Dairy House enabling the demolition of an isolated building within the open countryside (the existing garage), which will open up this space thereby contributing to the openness of the Green Belt.

Local Plan policy NE7 clarifies that planning permission will only be granted for a limited number of purposes within the Green Belt confirming that the limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings being acceptable. It is considered that the proposed detached garage would comply with policy NE7 as it would provide a replacement for the existing garage, with the utility extension being minimal in its form and design in keeping with the character of the buildings former use. The proposed development has been designed to ensure that it will reduce the impact of the collection of buildings on the openness of the Green Belt through their scale massing and using materials which match the host building.

Saved policy NE14 of the Local Plan further states that proposals for the extension of existing buildings in the Green Belt will be permitted where all the following criteria are met:

- (a) 'The buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; and
- (b) The proposed use and any associated use of land are in keeping with their surroundings and the proposed development does not have a materially greater impact than the existing on the openness of the Green Belt or on the purposes of including land in it'.

The proposed extensions and garage, through careful and considered design, would not have a materially greater impact than the existing on the openness of the Green Belt. This has been possible through two elements:

- 1) The proposed extensions have been carefully designed to ensure that they would be subservient to the main house; and
- 2) The demolition of the existing isolated garage.

Emerging policy HOU8 further states that within the open countryside the extension of existing dwellings will be supported where 'any extension is within the curtilage of the existing property and is incidental and subordinate to the new or existing dwelling in size and massing, uses appropriate materials and would not have an adverse impact on the open character of the area'. Careful design has ensured that the proposed extensions and garage would be subordinate to the existing property using appropriate materials to ensure that there would be no detrimental impact on the local character, in accordance with policy HOU8.

The proposed development would provide an extension to the property of 12% volume.

### **Design, Amenity Space, Layout and Scale**

The NPPF attaches great weight to the design of the built environment and requires a high quality of design to be secured.

Policy BE1 of the Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development is of a high quality design which maintains and enhances the distinctive local character of the District's towns, villages and countryside. The proposed extensions and garage have been designed to a high quality, maintaining and enhancing

the existing property and its setting, and will use materials which match the existing property all in accordance with policy BE1.

In addition, local plan policy GD2 states that the design of new development proposals should be appropriate to the character of the site and its surrounding, existing buildings and their setting, in terms of scale, proportions, massing, positioning and appearance of buildings.

Emerging policy QOP1 states proposals will be supported where design makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and contributes to a positive relationship between the built and natural features. Local Plan Policy HOU9 supports proposals for well-related subordinate extensions which respect the character and style of the host building.

The proposed extensions have been designed to ensure they will make a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of the area through ensuring they are of a scale and appearance which are appropriate to the setting, grouping the detached garage closer to the existing buildings with a palette of materials which match. It is considered that due to the position of the development and orientation of the existing development there would no significant negative impact on light, overshadowing or dominance to neighbouring properties. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would maintain an acceptable level of amenity for all.

Following the feedback from Northumberland County Council in their pre-application enquiry response (ref: 20/00847/PREAPP) the proposed extension to the west of the house has been reduced in its scale and massing. The proposal is to extend the existing offshoot to provide additional utility space with a pitched roof which provides a more appropriate scale and design to the proposal. By blending the materials to match the existing with windows to the existing design and material the extension is an appropriate and minimal addition to the house and respecting the character of the original building by improving the incongruous lean-to extension on the building by including a pitched roof over the minimal extension.

Moreover, the proposed extensions will use materials to match the existing building to ensure the character of the built form is retained and the extensions will blend with the existing property, making a positive contribution to the host property and wider locality in accordance with local plan policy GD2 and emerging policy QOP1.

### **Highway and Access**

Tynedale Core Strategy Policy GD4 and Tynedale Local Plan Policies GD4 and GD6 are relevant to this application. The site is adjacent to the public highway which has a speed limit of 60mph. The proposed development seeks consent for the construction of a new access directly off the highway to replace the existing access which affords poor sightlines.

Speed studies have been undertaken and the results attached to this application. The results provided guidance for appropriate sight lines for road safety entering and leaving the site. These measures have been incorporated in the design. The attached swept path analysis drawing illustrates that there is adequate space for turning on the site for a horse box to enter and exit the site in a forwards facing direction, this applies to cars on the site also.

Bicycles will be stored within the new garage. Drawing P2 identifies locations for refuse bin standing for both daily storage and on collection days.



It is considered that the proposed development would not impact on highway or pedestrian/public safety and as such the proposals would accord with Local Plan Policies GD4 and GD6 and Northumberland Local Plan Policies TRA1 and TRA4.

## **Ecology**

Relevant advice has been sought from a qualified ecologist. The resulting report is attached to this application with recommended mitigation included.

## **Stables**

The following issues are considered:

- Character and appearance
- Highway and Access

## **Character and appearance**

Given the isolated position of the site, the proposed development would be visible from the highway. However, the proposed materials of timber and steel sheet roofing would not look out of place in the existing agricultural landscape. Stables and the keeping of horses is an activity commonly found in rural areas and the use this site for these purposes would be consistent in this countryside location. Therefore, in relation to the impact on openness (a test of the Green Belt), the proposed stabling would not harm the character and appearance of this location and would not have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area.

## **Highways and access**

Tynedale Core Strategy Policy GD4 and Tynedale Local Plan Policies GD4 and GD6 are relevant to this application. The site is adjacent to the public highway which has a speed limit of 60mph. The proposed development seeks consent for the construction of a new access directly off the highway to replace the existing access which affords poor sightlines. The use of the stables is solely for the applicants own personal use.

The proposal includes a fence and gate system around the stables to ensure that the unloading and loading of horses is contained within the stable yard area, as above a consultant has advised on the design for a new access providing safe sightlines for entering and leaving the site, along with 'swept path manoeuvre' comments.

It is considered that the proposed development would not impact on highway or pedestrian/public safety and as such the proposals would accord with Local Plan Policies GD4 and GD6 and Northumberland Local Plan Policies TRA1 and TRA4.

## **Summary**

Following the pre-application advice received from Northumberland County Council the proposals for Dairy House have been adjusted to reflect the comments received. This proposal includes three main elements:

- Improved highways access to the site to improve the safety of the public highway;
- Alterations and modest extensions to Dairy House to provide an improved layout; and

- Creation of loose horse box area for own leisure use contained within a fenced area.

These proposals are appropriate in scale, massing and design providing which are in accordance with local and national planning policy. Given the valued input already received from Northumberland County Council it is requested that the Local Planning Authority approve the application and contact the agent at their earliest convenience should there be any questions arising.