

DAVID HILL

Planning, Design & Access Statement

Proposed Agricultural Building at
Bent Laithe Farm Cottage, Lothersdale



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Introduction This report has been prepared in support of the Full Planning Application for the proposed Agricultural Building at Bent Laithe Farm Cottage, Lothersdale, BD20 8HS in the Craven District.

The proposed building will be used for feed and bedding storage and sheep accommodation.

The purpose of this document is to explain the existing farming practices at the farm, give details on the proposed building design, as well as providing the justification for the new building and assessing the proposal against relevant planning policy.

Farmland

Bent Laithe Farm extends to approximately 48.5 acres, as shown on the land ownership map drawing P2158-005. The farm was inherited by the applicant with a promise to pass the farm on to the next generation. The proposed building will help to ensure that there is a viable farm to pass on in the future.

The land is used to claim the agricultural subsidy the Basic Payment Scheme, paid for keeping the land in good agricultural order. Approximately 10 acres of meadow each year is conserved for hay. The hay bales are used for feeding to the sheep throughout the winter months. The rest of the land is used for grazing. The system is sustainable and not reliant upon much bought-in feed.

Farming System

The land currently supports a sheep flock of 20 Cheviot and Mule breeding ewes, but the applicant's aim is to establish a flock of approximately 150 breeding ewes. This is not yet possible due to the lack of suitable building space.

The ewes currently give birth outdoors from the start of April onwards each year. Shearings are purchased each autumn as replacements for the flock. The female lambs are reared on the farm and then retained to further increase the sheep flock and the male lambs are reared on the farm and sold as fat lambs for meat.

Existing Buildings

There is an existing agricultural building that is currently used to securely store the farm machinery and equipment. There are also two small wooden huts that are currently used for emergency sheep housing, but are far from ideal.

Proposed Scheme

The proposal is for a new agricultural building, that will be used for livestock housing and the storage of hay and straw. The proposed building measures 18.3 metres by 9.1 metres and will be 3.6 metres to the eaves. Timber sheeted doors to the northeast elevation will allow safe access and egress into the building with farm machinery. Timber post and rail fencing will enclose the site, with a small farmyard for safe manoeuvring. The proposed scheme is shown on submitted drawings P2158-001 to 004.

Proposed Materials:

The building will be a modern steel portal framed building. The proposed materials are those that are typically used to construct agricultural buildings:

- Roof: grey fibre cement sheets
- Walls: timber Yorkshire Boarding with concrete panels

Landscaping:

The proposed building will be dug into the slope of the hill as shown on the cross sections and artists impression on Drawing P2158-001. It is therefore considered that landscaping is not required. However, the applicant is open to suggestions from the Local Planning Authority if required.

Access:

Access to the proposed building will be from a short length of new track taken from the existing farmyard, which in turn is accessed from the existing agricultural access from the main road as shown on Drawing P2158-004. The proposed new track will be crushed stone wheelings with a grass centre so as to reduce visual impact. Care has been taken with the siting of the proposed building to ensure that the public footpath is avoided.

Justification **Livestock -The Five Freedoms:**

The Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2000 (S.I. 2000 No. 1870) states that *“the owners and keepers of animals shall take all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare of the animals under their care and to ensure that the animals are not caused any unnecessary pain, suffering or injury.”*

To reflect this fundamental requirement the Farm Animal Welfare Council developed a framework known as the ‘Five Freedoms’ which sets out the basic principles of good animal husbandry and diligent stockmanship:

- 1. Freedom from hunger and thirst** - by ready access to fresh water and diet to maintain full health and vigour;
- 2. Freedom from discomfort** - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area;
- 3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease** - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment;
- 4. Freedom to express normal behaviour** - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animals’ own kind;
- 5. Freedom from fear and distress** - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

The farm has now reached the scale where there is not enough building space on the farm to ensure that these Freedoms are met. There are no available existing agricultural buildings on the holding for the accommodation of livestock. The proposed building will allow the applicant to lamb the sheep indoors, which will increase the efficiency of the animal husbandry and increase welfare standards. Housing the sheep indoors during birthing and having the option to house them indoors during adverse weather conditions will allow the applicant to keep a closer

watch on them for signs of illness or distress, meaning they will receive medical attention (if it is necessary) faster.

The proposed building has been designed for livestock accommodation, with spaced Yorkshire boarding that promotes good ventilation of the building, reducing the incidence of ventilation-associated disease. An open internal layout allows a flexible layout with moveable pens as required depending upon the time of year, for example during lambing time each ewe will have a small individual pen, whereas later in the year the youngstock will be run together in a single, large pen. Large sliding doors will allow access with the tractor to remove soiled bedding periodically to then be spread on the land. The proposed building will also provide a covered space for carrying out regular maintenance tasks with the sheep, such as shearing, grading and administering medicines.

Freedom 2 clearly states that appropriate shelter must be provided. The proposed building will provide this shelter in accordance with Freedom 2. In addition, the proposed building will improve welfare standards and help to achieve Freedoms 4 and 5.

Straw is used as bedding for the sheep when they are housed indoors. Straw cannot be grown on the farm and so instead is purchased from arable farmers on lowland farms. The applicant currently has to purchase straw in small batches due to the lack of available space to store it. This is uneconomical as the applicant cannot benefit from the economies of scale of bulk buying, and is also very impractical, wasting a lot of time travelling and transporting small loads of straw. It would be much easier and more economical to buy the straw in one purchase and store indoors onsite.

Straw cannot be wrapped in plastic and stored outside like the silage. Straw should ideally be stored indoors in order to protect it from wet weather and vermin, and preserve its quality. If straw gets wet and dirty then it can quickly deteriorate, which is an unnecessary waste of resources and money and can be dangerous to the welfare of the livestock.

Hay is made on the land in the traditional manner and then stored indoors for feeding to the sheep throughout the winter. Incorrectly stored hay can go mouldy which if eaten can then go on to cause Listeriosis in sheep, which in pregnancy (the time of year when you would normally supplementarily feed the gestating livestock conserved forage) is a life-threatening illness for to both the animal that ate the mouldy forage and the unborn foetus. It is therefore very important that dry storage space is provided to correctly store the hay and other feedstuffs.

**Planning
Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has a general presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 84 supports economic growth in rural areas and supports the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of rural business, including through well designed new buildings, in order to promote the development and diversification of agricultural and rural businesses.

Craven Local Plan (2019)

The farm is located within the Craven District and as such the proposal has been assessed against the relevant Local Plan policies. Policy EC3 relates to the Rural Economy:

“Craven’s rural economy will be supported, so that it may grow and diversify in a sustainable way to provide long term economic, environmental and social benefits for local communities. This will be achieved in the following ways:

d) Enabling farm, forestry and other land-based businesses to build the new and replacement buildings and infrastructure they need to function efficiently, including dwellings where they are fully justified on functional and financial grounds;”

It is considered that this Statement has set out the full justification for the proposed agricultural building and demonstrated its requirement for sheep accommodation and straw and hay storage to allow the farm business to continue to operate and grow efficiently.

Conclusion

This report has set out the background to the farm and demonstrated the need for an agricultural building to serve Bent Laithe Farm Cottage, Lothersdale.

The proposed building has been informed by the needs of the enterprise. The design and construction are that typically found on modern agricultural buildings in the locality. Its siting has been carefully considered.

It is considered that the proposal meets the requirements of national and local planning policies.

Disclaimer

This report has been prepared for the applicant for the purposes of supporting a planning application to the Local Planning Authority for the proposed agricultural building. Details on the farming system have been supplied by the applicant.

Date: April 2022

Signed:



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