

**PLANNING AND AGRICULTURAL APPRAISAL TO ACCOMPANY FULL PLANNING
APPLICATION FOR THE PROVISION OF AGRICULTURAL FARM MANAGERS
DWELLING**

Planning Portal Reference: PP-11275812

AT

Manor Farm Dairy, Downhead, Shepton Mallett, BA4 4LG

On behalf of

John and Sarah Cartledge

Prepared by Edward Dyke FRICS FAAV
Symonds & Sampson LLP

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Edward Dyke FRICS FAAV of Symonds & Sampson LLP has been instructed to undertake a planning and agricultural appraisal in connection with the planning application to be submitted for the erection of a farmhouse at Manor Farm dairy, Downhead, Shepton Mallett, BA4 4LG for John, Sarah, Winton and Anne Cartledge.
- 1.2** The appraisal is based upon information provided by John and Sarah Cartledge, an inspection, a detailed report prepared by Jess Buss of Kite Consulting and certain industrial standards such as the Standard Man Day calculation. The report from Kite will be made available to the planning officer on a Confidential basis once the application is registered.

2.0 SITUATION

Manor Farm Dairy is situated on the eastern edge of the hamlet of Downhead and approximately 8 km to the east of Shepton Mallett and 9.5 km west of Frome. The Grid Reference for the main farmstead is ST69546. See location plans uploaded with the applicaiton.

3.0 DESCRIPTION AND EXISTING USE

- 3.1** The property is owned and farmed by John, Sarah, Winton and Anne Cartledge in partnership.
- 3.2** Manor Farm Dairy extends to approximately 65ha (160 acres) with buildings including modern range of 800 cubicles, straw yards, a 64 point rotary parlour which is suitable for up to 750 cows and numerous silage clamps adequate for storing the fodder requirements for the cows and youngstock.
- 3.3** There is a poly tunnel suitable for rearing all 600 plus calves born each year to point of sale at 2-3 weeks old.
- 3.4** the current farming enterprise includes 750 dairy cows which are milked twice per day
- 3.5** There is also a range of slightly older buildings which are no longer required for the dairy enterprise and which are beginning to be converted to commercial lets in order to generate a much needed diversified income stream to the farming business.
- 3.6** In addition to the 65ha owned they rent a further 255ha on various agreements. They grow 44.5ha of maize and the rest is grass which is cut for silage about 4 to 5 times per year.
- 3.7** The farm partners are committed to the requirements of the Welfare of Livestock regulations 1994 and the code of Animal Welfare's five freedoms. This requires the need for a high level of stockmanship and the ability to be on hand and available for rapid intervention to treat sick animals. In addition the management of a herd of this size requires constant vigilance to be on hand as detailed in the Kite report.

- 3.8** Retention of farm workers has been an on-going issue for the business with a high turnover of staff due to the lack of onsite accommodation and lack of appropriate, affordable accommodation nearby.
- 3.9** There are a number of mobile homes on site which are available for staff but there is a clear need to provide more permanent accommodation especially for staff with families.
- 3.10** In addition, when John and Sarah purchased the farm they had to install a temporary mobile home for them to live in on site located to the east of the proposed new dwelling as shown on the site plan.

4.0 EXISTING STAFF

- 4.1** John Cartledge – joint owner and manager
- 4.2** Sarah Cartledge – paperwork, livestock husbandry. Married to John
- 4.3** Nathan Hutchings – herdsman – lives about 6.3 miles away as no suitable accommodation is available on the farm.
- 4.4** Three milkers who currently live on site in existing caravans. They are generally unskilled.
- 4.5** Two general farm workers including tractor driver and general worker roles. Currently live on site in existing caravans.

5.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1** The most immediate requirement is for the managers house on the farm to enable John and Sarah Cartledge to move into this with their family. They purchased the farm in May 2021 and temporarily rented a house in Mells which was a long way from the farm and meant that they spent very little time at that property. They are currently occupying a mobile home that they installed on site in November 2021 moving in on the 1st December.
- 5.2** There is currently no permanent accommodation on the farm and there is a clear and demonstrable need for the proposed dwelling.
- 5.3** The proposed managers house is located in the best available location. It will lie just to the north of the main drive providing a perfect position to monitor comings and goings to the unit. It is also in close proximity to the farm buildings ensuring that John and Sarah are on hand to be able to deal with emergencies and provide optimum management of their dairy cows and staff. See location and block plans included with the application.
- 5.4** The farmhouse is of a size commensurate with its use as the principal farmhouse on the holding.

6.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 6.1** The National Planning Policy (NPPF) is the leading policy and that the relevant policies are as follows:

Para. 8 - “There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental”

Para. 11 – “a presumption in favour of sustainable development”

Para. 83 – “Promote the development and diversification of agricultural businesses”

Para. 79 - “Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as:

“the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside”

6.2 The proposed development satisfies the criteria detailed above in the following ways;

This development is sustainable, the business to which it relates is successful and generates an income stream for the owner whilst employing a large number of local workers.

As identified below there is an essential need for the provision of the additional accommodation for the workers to live permanently at Manor Farm Dairy.

6.3 The relevant Local Plan Policy makers are Mendip District Council, whose Local Planning Policy is contained within the Mendip District Local Plan which was adopted in 2014. In particular, Accommodation for Rural Workers is dealt with by Policy DP13 which states;

“1 Proposals for permanent or temporary accommodation outside of defined Development Limits which are necessary to support agriculture, forestry or other rural enterprises will be supported where:

a) It can be demonstrated that:

i) the dwelling and its proposed location are essential to support or sustain the functioning of the enterprise;

ii) there is a need for permanent occupation which relates to a full-time worker or one who is primarily employed by the business;

iii) all alternative accommodation options have been explored and no satisfactory alternative means of providing accommodation has been identified;

iv) the size of the proposed dwelling is commensurate with the established functional requirement for the enterprise;

v) the design and siting of the proposal does not conflict with the intentions of Development Policy 5, particularly in relation to Natura 2000 sites and Development Policy 4: Mendip’s Landscapes.

2. The Council will support proposals for permanent rural workers’ dwellings where:

i) the enterprise has been established on the unit for at least three years;

ii) business accounts for the preceding 3 years indicate that at least one of those years has been profitable, and that the enterprise is currently financially sound and has clear prospects of remaining so;

iii) The criteria in clause 1a) continue to be satisfied.

Where permission is granted under this policy a condition will be imposed which

limits occupation of the dwelling to a person solely, mainly or last working in a local rural enterprise, or a widow, widower or resident dependants of such a person.”

- 6.4** The proposed development satisfies the criteria detailed above in the following ways;
- The development and provision of the permanent dwelling is required for the sole purpose of agriculture and the use of the dwelling is to be occupied by full time agricultural workers who are the managers of the unit.
- The farmhouse is essential for the proper functioning of the holding, as detailed below dairy farming on this scale requires close supervision and the permanent availability of workers on site at all times is required.
- The size of the farmhouse is commensurate with the established functioning requirement of the enterprise. The enterprise is of a large scale and good quality accommodation is required to house the manager of such a unit. It is increasingly difficult to retain high quality managers and the principal dwelling needs to be of a standard to attract the best people. It is not in conflict with Policies DP4 or DP5.
- The very nature of this scale of dairy farming requires that someone has to be resident on site 24 hours a day to deal with issues and problems as and when they arise. On a unit of this size it is unrealistic to expect a single worker to be available 24 hours of the day and 365 days of the year, there is a clear need for a permanent residential unit and would suggest that ultimately the farm will need between 4 – 5 dwellings.
- The positioning of the proposed farmhouse to the north of the main drive and west of the farmstead keeps it within close proximity to the farming unit and main farm access offering the required level of security and availability to deal with emergencies as and when they occur.
- There are no other houses which are either available or affordable in the immediate vicinity. The farm was purchased without any dwellings included in the purchase. There are no buildings that are suitable for conversion to provide the standard of accommodation required for a farm manager’s dwelling.
- There is a clear demonstrable need for at least five workers to deal with animal welfare, emergencies and provide site security (see functional appraisal below). The provision of permanent farmhouse will allow the farming operations to be managed in a significantly more efficient and effective manner than is being operated currently.

7.0 FUNCTIONAL APPRAISAL

- 7.1** Please refer to the Kite report which details the standard man day requirements for an enterprise of this size. .
- 7.2** The following are examples of situations that can happen at any time during the day and night requiring the immediate attention of more than one agricultural worker, it should also be noted that during milking the herdsman cannot leave the parlour to help attend to any other situations that may be occurring elsewhere on the holding:

Milking

The cows are milked twice a day at 05:30 am and 4:00 pm with each milking taking about 3 hours to complete. Milking is undertaken by a minimum of 4 workers and

while they are occupied with that job the other agricultural operations need to be undertaken by other employees.

Calving

Problems can occur during calving due to oversized or misplaced calves and illness in the mother. Regular inspections of the cows due to calve throughout the day and night is required in order to determine distress and ensure prompt action is taken if required to protect the welfare of the animal. Issues with calving will often require more than one person in order to ensure health and safety of the farm workers. Due to the calving pattern of the herd, calving can happen any time of the day or night, throughout the year.

Illness and Injury

Dairy cows are prone to illness and injury and in order to tend to the animal safely the attention of two people is required to catch and steady the animal and attend to the injury or administer the medication.

Oestrus Detection

Detection of cows that are “bulling” is essential for the performance of the dairy herd. In order to detect bulling, regular inspections are required in order to ensure that the cow is put to the bull or AI is applied. If bulling is missed this affects the productivity of the herd, having additional workers full time on the holding will help with oestrus detection and herd efficiency.

Security

Cattle can escape regularly by breaking fences which can threaten the welfare of the herd and the general public, especially if they get onto the road. This requires the immediate attention of more than one farm worker to attend the scene. The overall security of the holding will also be increased through the provision of additional dwellings, this is particularly relevant due to the increase in activist intent, machinery robberies and general rural crime.

- 7.3** As mentioned above, on a unit of this size it is important to ensure that there are always an adequate number of workers available 24 hours of the day and 365 days of the year. Therefore it is vital for there to be full time accommodation provided to house three full time workers at the farm.
- 7.4** In terms of demonstrating functional need, it is concluded that the farming system clearly demonstrates an essential need for the proposed farmhouse plus a number of farm workers accommodation units.
- 7.5** A letter of support for the need to be on site has been included with the application from the Frome Farm Vet practice.

8.0 FINANCIAL APPRAISAL

- 8.1 We refer you to the Kite report which will be made available to the planning officer on a confidential basis once the application is registered. The business is a profitable enterprise and has been run as such for many years.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposed farmhouse is required for the dairy enterprise at Manor Farm Dairy for the following reasons:

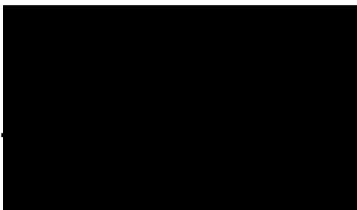
- Due to the scale and nature of the business, it is necessary to have staff available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to ensure the health and safety of farm workers and welfare of the animals. There is a clear and demonstrable need for at least 5 full time members of staff to be living full time at the property in order to provide the required level of management.
- The existing labour requirements at Manor Farm Dairy demonstrate the need for a farmhouse to provide suitable accommodation for a farm manager. This will help with the long term retention of staff by providing suitable on site accommodation. There is also the need for a number of further dwellings on this unit which are currently met by temporary accommodation.
- The enterprise generates a significant income that is more than capable of servicing the investment and supporting the workers at Manor Farm Dairy.
- To create a safe environment. With rural crime an ever present issue the provision of the dwellings on site will improve farm security.

- 9.2 The proposal is in accordance with the NPPF and the adopted Mendip District Local Plan.

10.0 QUALIFICATIONS

- 10.1 The property has been inspected by Edward J B Dyke FRICS FAAV who has prepared this report. Edward Dyke is a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, a Fellow of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers and a Partner of Symonds & Sampson LLP. He has worked in the North Dorset area since 1992 and has been advising farmers and preparing Agricultural Appraisals and Planning Reports on behalf of applicants on a regular basis. He is therefore fully qualified to undertake this Report.

Signed



Dated ...20/06/2022.....