

Planning Statement

Ref. 2023-06

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Summary:

This planning statement is provided in support of a planning application for the construction of farm office and parking. The proposal is on land at North Park, Halls Farm, Stibb Road, Bude, EX23 9HN. The application is submitted on behalf of Mr & Mrs Drew who farm and own the land / site.

The proposal delivers an essential element of the growing farm business; it provides improved office/meeting space and staff welfare facilities. The proposal is functionally well related to the farmhouse, main yard, and farm buildings. It is also of a modest scale and designed to be sympathetic to the wider AONB landscape within which it sits.

The proposal represents sustainable development and fully accords with the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2, 3, 5, 12, 23 and 27 and the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

Relevant planning policies:

Under section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, to the extent that development plan policies are material to an application for planning permission, the decision must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise.

In the absence of a made Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), the development plan comprises the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030 (the CLP):

CLP:

Policy 1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Policy 2 Spatial strategy

Policy 2a Key targets

Policy 3 Role and function of places

Policy 5 Business and Tourism

Policy 12 Design

Policy 13 Development standards

Policy 16 Health and wellbeing
Policy 21 Best use of land and existing buildings
Policy 23 Natural environment
Policy 26 Flood risk management and coastal change
Policy 27 Transport and accessibility

Climate Emergency DPD:

Policy SEC1 – Sustainable Energy and Construction;
Policy AG1 – Rural Development and Diversification;
Policy T1 – Sustainable Transport

Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework (20 July 2021) (the NPPF):

1. Introduction
2. Achieving sustainable development
3. Plan-making
4. Decision-making
6. Building a strong, competitive economy
8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
9. Promoting sustainable transport
11. Making effective use of land
12. Achieving well-designed places
14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Cornwall Design Guide (adopted December 2021) (CDG).
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
Cornwall AONB Management Plan 2022 - 2027

Detailed policy/guidance wording relevant to agricultural development within the Cornwall AONB:

CLP policies and supporting text:

Policy 2: Spatial Strategy:

Para.3, C): Supporting the expansion of existing businesses and the indigenous businesses of **agriculture**, fishing and mining.

Policy 5: Business and Tourism:

Para.1, C): (new employment land and uses) in the countryside and smaller rural settlements be of a scale appropriate to its location or demonstrate an overriding locational and business need to be in that location such as *farm diversification*.

Policy 23: Natural environment:

Para. 2(a). Great weight will be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty within or affecting the setting of the AONB. Proposals must conserve and enhance the landscape character and natural beauty of the AONB and provide only for an **identified local need** and be appropriately located to address the AONB's sensitivity and capacity. Proposals should be informed by and assist the delivery of the objectives of the Cornwall and Tamar Valley AONB Management Plans including the interests of those who live and / or work in them.

Page 11: Future Cornwall themes; the plan's objectives Theme 1: To support the economy Objective 1: Remove unnecessary barriers to jobs, business and investment through a positive policy framework with a focus on sustaining a range of local businesses including.....the traditional industries of fishing, farming and minerals.

Page 33, Para 2.4: Our emphasis will be on supporting; Indigenous business including **agriculture**, fishing and mining;

Page 34, Para. 2.7, Agriculture: Cornwall's agricultural sector accounts for almost 10,699 jobs and 3% of the GVA for Cornwall. Overall, it is estimated that Cornwall's agricultural sector contributes more than £244m to the gross domestic product of Cornwall. Agriculture also adds considerably to the management of our landscape, upon which tourism relies. It also supplies our food. Supporting the continued growth of the agricultural sector and *supporting diversification* of the industry will be critical to the Cornwall's future, long term prosperity.

Climate Emergency DPD:

Agricultural businesses: We will support proposals that demonstrate sustainable practices that do not compromise the long-term running of the farm. To ensure that proposals for new development do not compromise the working of the farm business we will expect proposals to consider the overall viability of farm holdings.

Policy AG1 – Rural Development and Diversification:

Proposals for diversification and/or improvements to agricultural holdings that help to manage, reduce or absorb carbon or other emissions, provide public benefits and help to maintain a viable and active countryside within farms and land holdings will be given particular support where:

Diversification and development proposals deliver multiple social, environmental and economic benefits such as employment and enterprise opportunities, sustainable access, social and cultural facilities, environmental enhancements, conserving and enhancing heritage and landscape assets, and providing improvements to land management in line with the spatial strategies of the Climate Emergency DPD and Cornwall Local Plan and particularly in relation to providing or enhancing ecosystem services and support the long-term sustainable operation of the farm business.

Relevant paragraphs from the NPPF:

Para 84: Planning policies and decisions should enable: b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

Relevant paragraphs/policies from the AONB Management Plan:

'Cornwall AONB consists of 75% farmed land. We are committed to supporting farmers to achieve a sustainable and profitable farm business and deliver outcomes for people, place, nature and climate'. (Cornwall AONB Management Plan, page 45).

Policy PD-P17: Farm diversification and infrastructure will generally be supported where they provide sustainable rural businesses, enhance local distinctiveness and cultural heritage and where the development is of a scale, design and location that can be accommodated within the sensitive landscapes of the AONB.

Existing site:

The site is immediately east of the curtilage of the farmhouse and north of the main farm access and yard area. The proposal sits between the farmhouse curtilage (to the west) and an existing farm track (to the east). The application site is in direct sight and sound of the main farm entrance and yard area.

The applicants, Mr & Mrs Drew, operate the established farm business which covers some 430 acres in total. Currently, the only office is a small room within the family home; this is no longer functional suitable for managing the business given its constrained size. It also intrudes unacceptably on the family home.

The site lies within the Hartland section of the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is within a Heritage Coast designation. It is not within any other landscape designations or ecological designations.

Use and Amount:

The proposal seeks to site the farm office adjacent to the farmhouse and off the main farm access and yard area. It provides improved office and meeting room facilities for the owners and staff, as well as improved staff welfare facilities and dedicated parking clear of the main access.

The scale and position respond to the operational requirement of the farm business and is read with the farmhouse and associated buildings in the wider landscape. It is also a scheme appropriate in scale to the landscape sensitivity and capacity of the wider AONB and Heritage Coast landscape setting.

The proposed use is wholly appropriate in this working agricultural landscape and there is an identified local/business need for it to be in this location. The proposed use and amount fully accord with Policies 2 and 23 of the CLP and Para. 84 of the NPPF.

Scale and Appearance:

The proposed building is of small, single storey scale in terms of adjoining modern agricultural buildings and the wider AONB landscape. It is of a limited scale which only delivers the necessary farm office, meeting and welfare facilities required for the growing farm business.

The proposed south and east building elevations are predominately clad in vertical timber boarding; this provides a visual link to typical agricultural cladding used for larger barns and is recessive in the wide landscape setting. It also uses a slate roof to harmonise with the adjoining farmhouse.

The scale and appearance respond to the sensitivity and capacity of this landscape resulting in a negligible impact upon the wider AONB. The proposal conserves and enhances the wider AONB landscape and fully accords with Policies 2, 12 and 23 of the CLP and Policies Policy PD-P17 of the AONB Management Plan.

Layout:

The siting and layout have been chosen to deliver a building functionally well related to the main yard, access, farm buildings and farmhouse; the proposal is in sight and sound of all of these. It also groups buildings in the AONB landscape and avoid more incremental, sporadic development which could harmfully encroach into the undeveloped AONB.

Access:

The proposed building is an ancillary element of the wider established farm business. It is served by the established farm access off Stibb Road which has good visibility in both directions for egressing traffic. As such, the proposed access is safe and suitable for the proposed development in accordance with Policy 27 of the CLP.

Travel Plan/Travel Plan Statement:

The proposal provides a farm office and associated staff welfare facilities ancillary to the adjacent farm buildings and to the farm managers dwelling. The introduction of a new milk vending machine is a minor, incidental element of the farm business which is not expected to attract significant numbers of customers to the site. Equally, it will mostly be focused on passing traffic rather than and will be seasonally dependent as well.

As such, the proposal does not generate any significant additional travel or parking requirements because staff are already travelling to or residing at the site, and customers using the milk vending machine will be focused on passing traffic. Notwithstanding this, suitable customer parking and turning is provided within the proposed layout.

There is also limited opportunity to improve access by public transport, walking, or cycling to the proposal other than encouraging staff or visitors to use such modes of transport where possible/convenient.

Landscaping:

Given its position immediately adjacent to the farmhouse, yard and roadside hedgebank, no additional planting is proposed at this stage. The extent of the site will be defined by post and rail stock fencing.

Heritage assets:

Neither the location nor neighbouring buildings are designated heritage assets.

Flood Risk:

The site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 and is not within a Critical Drainage Area. As such, and given its scale, further Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is not required in this instance.

Surface water run-off from the proposed building will be dealt with via a sustainable drainage system.

Ecology:

The site is not within or close to any sites designated for their ecological value. The proposal is positioned on existing pasture of more limited ecological habitat value. Equally, the proposal does not include the removal of any established, natural landscape features; the east roadside boundary hedge is to remain completely undisturbed. One bird box is proposed as per the submitted plans. As such, the proposal does not introduce disturbance to any protected species and further protected species survey work is not considered necessary or proportionate in this context.

Conclusion:

The proposed farm office building is both ancillary and essential to the growing farm business. It is functionally well related to both the farmhouse and main yard and access. It represents a sympathetically designed scheme to ensure an appropriate scale and location which conserves and enhances the wider AONB landscape, within which this working farm operates. There are no other residual impacts which result in harm to the character or amenity of the surrounding area.

The proposal fully accords with the policies of the Cornwall Local Plan, AONB Management Plan and the NPPF. The application should therefore be supported by Cornwall Council.