

**acorus**<sup>®</sup>



## **Design & Access Statement**

Improved site access and Building Extension

**PREPARED FOR:**

**Mr & Mrs A Marsh  
Hoofcount  
Catforth  
Lancashire  
PR3 0TE**

**October 2023**

**PREPARED BY:**

**Anthony Atkinson MRICS FAAV**  
Acorus Rural Property Services Ltd (North & Midlands)  
Rural Planning Consultant

**MOBILE:**

**07785 366698**

**EMAIL:**

**anthony.atkinson@acorus.co.uk**

**HEAD OFFICE:**

**The Old Market Office**  
**10 Risbygate Street**  
**Bury St Edmunds**  
**Suffolk**  
**IP33 3AA**

**DISCLAIMER**

**This report is for the sole use of the named client. While it may be shown to other professionals acting for them, the contents are not to be disclosed to, nor made use of, by any third party without our express prior written consent. Without such consent, we can accept no responsibility to any third party.**

## REVISED ACCESS AND BUILDING EXTENSION

### Development Proposal & Background

The proposal involves an extension to the existing commercial building and an improvement of the site access, incorporating also the provision of a turning area for HGVs.

The site is owned and operated by Mr & Mrs Marsh for their business 'Hoofcount'.

Hoofcount is involved in the production and sale of automatic footbaths which are supplied to dairy farms across the UK and exported to 16 other countries. Mr Marsh developed the automatic footbath having worked on dairy farms and for companies involved in the dairy industry (i.e. milking parlours and the service and repair of milking machine equipment). Following development of the product, the first automatic footbath was manufactured and installed in 2012.

Hoofcount operates from a building at High Meadows, Barnacre and also the workshop building at Lewth Lane, Catforth. The business employs a total of 13 staff, in addition to Mr & Mrs Marsh.

The site at Lewth Lane is the primary site for the delivery of the supplies for the manufacture of the footbaths and where steel is cut before being sent off site for the body of the footbaths to be welded.

The proposal is essentially needed for the following reasons:-

- To enable HGVs to enter the site to make deliveries and collections, and turnaround within the site before exiting in a forward gear (at the present time HGVs are having to park on the roadside when visiting the site to make deliveries/collections).
- Provide covered and secure storage for the components for the manufacture of the footbaths (at the present time the items are stored outside which means that they are prone to damage, theft and deterioration, and also being unsightly).

In April 2013 a pre-application submission was undertaken with the Highways department at Lancashire County Council in respect of the proposal. The conclusion to the advice was as follows:-

*'The wider site access is an improvement to highway safety HGVs being accommodated off the highway for loading and unloading. The re-construction of the verge, footway and concrete section of driveway in the adopted highway for the HGVs will allow for enhanced sightline splays. The re-construction for the vehicle crossing will ensure the highway does not get damaged with the HGVs using the site'.*

The County Council response is submitted with the application.

On the basis of the pre-application response, the preparation of the planning application was set in motion. Given the nature and setting of the site a tree survey report has been prepared and also a flood risk assessment (documents submitted with the planning application).

### Use and Amount

As detailed above the proposal involves an extension to the existing commercial building and an improvement of the site access, incorporating the provision of a turning area for HGVs.

### **Scale and Appearance**

The building will measure 18.3m x 18.3m (60' x 60'), which will comprise of two portal frame buildings side-by-side, each 4.0m (12') to the eaves and 6.0m (20') at the ridge.

The materials will match the existing adjoining building, which will be as follows:-

- Concrete panel walls with green box profile steel sheeting above;
- Green box profile steel sheeting to the roof, with clear Perspex roof lights;
- Green roller shutter door.

The turning area will be laid with hardcore/road planings, with a bound surface (minimum 5m) adjacent to the highway.

### **Layout and Landscaping**

The site plan shows the location of the building extension, adjacent to the other building, and the turning area.

Submitted with the application the tree survey report details indicative tree planting proposals, alongside the assessment of the existing trees.

### **Access**

Access to site will be via the existing access, as proposed to be improved, off Lewth Lane.

### **Planning Policy**

The Wyre Local Plan (2011-2031) was adopted in February 2019.

The relevant sections of the Local Plan regarding the proposed building at the site off Lewth Lane are as follows:-

#### ***8.8 Rural Economy***

*8.8.1 A significant part of the Borough is rural in nature containing a number of settlements. Farming is the main industry supplemented by a number of small businesses within settlements and scattered throughout the rural areas. The rural areas are an important resource for tourism in the Borough. The rural economy is important to the overall economy in Wyre and to employment in the Borough. Policy EP8 aims to contribute toward maintaining a healthy rural economy.*

#### ***EP8 Rural Economy***

- 1. The Council will support proposals to help diversify the rural economy including proposals for the provision of digital infrastructure in the rural areas of the Borough.*
- 2. The expansion of existing businesses within countryside areas will be supported where it meets the requirements of the Core Development Management Policies and where it is demonstrated that:*

- a) *The scale and nature of the activity is not detrimental to the rural character of the area;*
- b) *Any new building and supporting infrastructure is necessary.*

*3. Sustainable development which enhances the diversity of recreational opportunities and visitor attractions in rural areas will be supported.*

#### **SP4 Countryside Area**

*2. Within Countryside Areas as defined on the Adopted Policies Map planning permission will only be granted for new development that meets the requirements of the Core Development Management Policies and it is for the purposes of:*

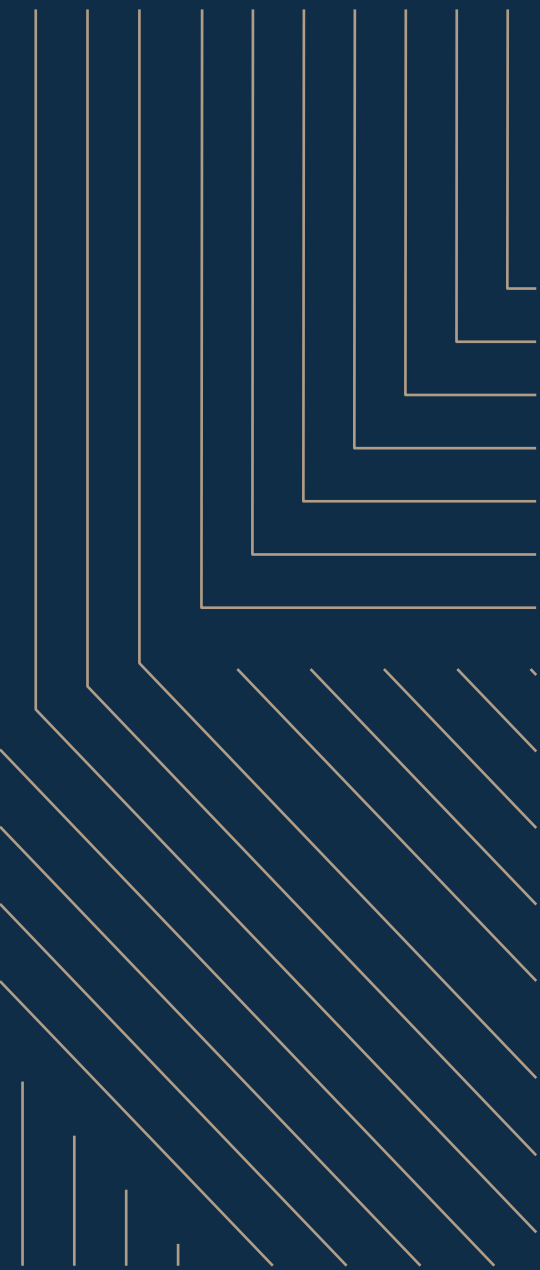
- h) The expansion of business in rural areas in accordance with policy EP8 (Rural Economy)*

As per the above extracts it is recognised and accepted that the building is within the Countryside Area.

In respect of the proposal the primary Local Plan policy is EP8 Rural Economy. As outlined above the building is for the rural business Hoofcount, which is involved in the production and sale of automatic footbaths which are supplied to dairy farms across the UK and exported to 16 other countries. This is a business which the applicant (Mr Marsh) has developed having worked hands-on within agriculture and the dairy farm sector for many years. After several years of product development, the first automatic footbath was manufactured and installed in 2012. Since this time the business has gone from strength to strength and now provides valuable rural employment, and of course supports and works alongside the wider agricultural community. The projection for the business, for 2023, is a doubling of unit sales since 2020.

The building is required for the rural business, which is essential to provide undercover secure storage for the materials for the manufacture of the footbaths. The site is involved in the first stage of the production of the footbaths, i.e. taking delivery of the materials and the cutting of the steel sheeting. The improvement of the access, and the turning area, is required for the safe movement of goods to and from the site, and also in order to not compromise the safety of other road users.

In relation to Policy EP8, the scale and nature of the proposal for the rural business will not be detrimental to the rural character of the area, this in turn will not impact upon the Countryside Area. As per the pre-application response from Lancashire County Council (Highways Dept), the proposal for the site access and the turning area will provide an improvement to highway safety.



**acorus<sup>®</sup>**

[www.acorus.co.uk](http://www.acorus.co.uk)