



Planning, Design and Access Statement

For the erection of a livestock building

At

NGR 225708 116886

Woolley, Eastcott

Cornwall

EX23 9PN

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Introduction

This planning statement has been prepared to support a full application for an agricultural building that has been submitted to Cornwall Council. The building is required to house agricultural animals, predominantly sheep and goats.

The purpose of the planning statement is to provide the local planning authority with relevant information to support the prior notification application.

The applicant is seeking the proposed development due to requiring a livestock and agricultural storage building to house predominantly sheep and goats on their agricultural holding on land at Woolley. The applicant owns 26 acres/10.5 hectares of agricultural land. The building is required to house/provide shelter for the applicants animals throughout the year. The building would also be used to store hay and straw and other feeds for the animals.

The proposed building would be sited in a field to the north of the highway that runs west from the A39 into and beyond the hamlet of Woolley. It would be the only building on the holding. There is an existing access from the highway. The building has been proposed close to an existing source of water and in a location in the landscape that is lower than the fields adjacent to the highway. The building will not be visually obtrusive in the landscape as viewed from the highway due to its lower position in the landscape and the intervening hedgerows. The building would have the appearance of a modern agricultural livestock building.

Planning History

Having reviewed the planning history viewable on the Cornwall Council online planning register, it appears that there is no planning history (at least none viewable) relevant to the applicants.

The Site and Surrounding Area

The application site is located in the parish of Morwenstow, in Woolley and close to the A39 north of Eastcott. The proposed location of the building is approximately 260m to the north of the highway and one field away from the road. It is located toward the southern edge of the field, adjacent to an established hedgerow and an existing water source.

Due to the roadside boundary hedgerow, the difference in levels between the application site and the highway and the distance between the road and the building, passers-by will only see part of the building. The building will sit comfortably alongside the hedgerow, preventing it from being obtrusive within the rural location.

The site lies outside of any defined settlement limit, and therefore in policy terms the land is 'countryside' and is characterised by medium sized fields bounded by mature hedgerows and woodland areas. The size and shape of the field is reflective of the landscape character of this part of the rural Cornwall landscape.

The site is not subject to any special landscape designation, not situated within an AONB or conservation area, and is located within flood zone 1, presenting a suitable location for the proposed agricultural development.

The Site Location



Site Location (Image reproduced from Google Maps 2023)

As the aerial map of the proposed site identifies that the site does not contain any buildings. The building would be accessed from the existing field access to the south of the building location.

The site is within an agricultural landscape. There are dwellings in the hamlet of Woolley, the closest of which is approximately 260m southwest of the proposed building.

There are interspersed pockets of development in the local area relating to nearby farm buildings, farmhouses and more sporadically located hamlets and other rural dwellings.

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The application site benefits from an abundance of hedgerows interspersed with wooded areas. While the upper part of the proposed building would be visible from the road and nearby properties, the existing hedgerows and distances between the proposed building and off-site buildings and dwellings results in an acceptable relationship between them.

National and Local Policy Context

The following section of this statement highlights the national and local planning policies which are relevant for the determination of the proposed development.

National Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2021 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. This revised framework replaces the previous NPPF published in March 2012, with a presumption in favour of sustainable development remaining at the heart.

Paragraph 84 of the NPPF emphasises that planning policies and decisions should enable the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses, both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. At paragraph 85 it states that: Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads...

With regards to achieving well-designed places, paragraph 130 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure all developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

Local Policy Context

Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030 (Adopted 2016)

The Local Plan is intended to deliver the vision and objectives of 'Future Cornwall', a sustainable community strategy. The underlying principles of the strategy seek to manage future development to ensure all communities in Cornwall have an appropriate balance of jobs, services, facilities and homes. The policies within this adopted plan carry full weight in the determination of planning applications, with the relevant policies for this application being the following:

Policy 1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

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- a) Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or*
- b) Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.*

This is a generalised and all-encompassing policy that requires development that is sustainable to be granted planning permission. As this supporting statement indicates, the proposed agricultural building is considered to be a sustainable and policy supportable development.

Policy 2 – Spatial Strategy

New development should provide a sustainable approach to accommodating growth, providing a well-balanced mix of economic, social and environmental benefits.

- 1. Respecting and enhancing quality of place*
- 2. Providing solutions to current and future issues*
- 3. Generating and sustaining economic activity*

This is a proposal for a new building on agricultural land. It would be the only building on the holding and would allow the applicant to relocate their agricultural animals to this land and to continue to provide high levels of animal husbandry as well as effective and efficient management and use of the land. The provision of the building would respect the quality of the site and surrounding landscape.

Policy 12 – Design

The council is committed to achieving high quality, safe, sustainable, and inclusive design in all developments. Development should demonstrate a design process that has clearly considered the existing context, and how the development contributes to the social, economic, and environmental elements of sustainability through fundamental design principles.

1. As part of a comprehensive place-shaping approach, proposals will be judged against fundamental design principles of:

a. character – creating places with their own identity and promoting local distinctiveness while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation. Being of an appropriate scale, density, layout, height and mass with a clear understanding and response to its landscape, seascape and townscape setting; and

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- b. layout – provide continuity with the existing built form and respect and work with the natural and historic environment; high quality safe private and public spaces; and improve perceptions of safety by overlooking of public space; and*
 - c. movement – creating a network of safe well-connected routes which are easy to read and navigate by the use of landmarks, spaces, views and intersections; and*
 - d. adaptability, inclusiveness, resilience and diversity – building structures can be easily altered, particularly internally, to respond to both climate change and changing social and economic conditions and provide a mix and pattern of uses; and*
 - e. engagement process – undertaking community engagement, involvement and consultation in the design process proportionate to the scheme.*
- 2. In addition development proposals should protect individuals and property from:*
- a. overlooking and unreasonable loss of privacy; and*
 - b. overshadowing and overbearing impacts; and*
 - c. unreasonable noise and disturbance.*

The agricultural building has been designed with function and form in mind. The design is reflective of many other modern agricultural buildings in Cornwall and its positioning and orientation have taken into account the environmental aspects of sustainability. It is a simplistic building proposing use of materials, the colour and form of which are practical and would help the building integrate with the surrounding rural landscape. The location of the building has been considered by the applicant for social as well as environmental reasons and in the proposed location it is considered that building would not have any adverse impacts on the privacy of nearby residents, nor would it result in any impact through unreasonable noise and disturbance.

Policy 21: Best use of land and existing buildings

To ensure the best use of land, encouragement will be given to sustainably located proposals that:

- a. use previously developed land and buildings provided that they are not of high environmental or historic value;*
- b. use despoiled, degraded, derelict and contaminated land provided that it is not of high environmental or historic value;*

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- c. increase building density where appropriate, taking into account the character of the surrounding area and access to services and facilities to ensure an efficient use of land;*
- d. take into account the economic and other benefits (including food production) of Grade 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, poor-quality land should be used in preference to that of higher quality.*

The area of land is not previously developed, is not of high historical value and is not proposed to be lost as agricultural land. The proposal seeks permission for an agricultural building that will support the agricultural use and function of the land in a manner that will not harm the surrounding rural landscape. In this regard it is considered that the proposed development is in accordance with the requirements of policy 21.

Policy 23 – Natural Environment

Development proposals will need to sustain local distinctiveness and character and protect and where possible enhance Cornwall's natural environment and assets according to their international, national and local significance. Development should be of an appropriate scale, mass and design that recognises and respects landscape character of both designated and un-designated landscapes.

The proposed agricultural building is of a scale, mass and design that is appropriate to the form of development being sought. It is proposed to be located in a position that will not have a detrimental impact on the rural character of the surrounding area nor any impact on the residents of nearby dwellings through either noise, disturbance or impact on privacy.

Policy 27 – Transport and Accessibility

All developments should: Provide safe and suitable access to the site for all people and not cause a significantly adverse impact on the local or strategic road network that cannot be managed or mitigated.

The proposed development would include the use of the existing access onto the highway. The current access has been in use to serve the wider agricultural use of the land, and this would continue. It is considered to be a suitable access in accordance with Policy 27.

Cornwall Design Guide 2021

Cornwall design guide is a lengthy document. With regards to built form, the Cornwall Design guide stipulates that *building forms and materials should respond to the local landscape, materials and traditions and climatic conditions. It goes on to states that building designs should respect the character of the surrounding area, in this case in relation to landscape, to help integrate new buildings.*

As has been stated above, both the form of the proposed agricultural building and the proposed materials reflect the function of the building. It would sit comfortably on the site without harm to the character of the surrounding area in accordance with the requirements of the Cornwall Design Guide.

Climate Emergency Development Plan Document (February 2023)

Relevant policies from this document are:

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:

1) The proposed development helps to encourage the development and sustaining of low carbon and wider sustainable practices that deliver a demonstrable reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, water and air pollution from the production process; and

2) 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.

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3) Proposals for agricultural buildings to house livestock, any new or expanded pit, tank or lagoon for storing slurry and anaerobic digesters deliver measures to resolve potential adverse impacts on air quality from ammonia and other air and water pollutants, including the covering of slurry pits and installation of waste-water treatment systems. Particular weight will be given to proposals that specifically include measures designed to reduce and/or capture and process fugitive emissions from the development.

4) Where development could have a likely significant impact on the integrity of a European protected site or a Site of Special Scientific Interest it must provide mitigation measures in line with an Appropriate Assessment or SSSI Impact Assessment.

5) The design, location and specification of equipment installed helps reduce the overall carbon emissions of the holding, including the installation of solar panels on the roof to supply energy and the choice of equipment (for example chilling systems or grain drying equipment).

The creation of Whole Farm or Estate Plans setting out a transition to net zero carbon and/or reduction plan for Methane and Nitrous Oxide emissions by 2040 will be encouraged and given weight in the determination of applications.

The most applicable elements of this policy to the modest proposal for an agricultural building are considered to be (2) as the provision of the building allows the applicant to maintain their employment and there is a sustainable existing access, close to the A39 and (5) as the provision of the building will help the applicant to manage the animals and the enterprise in a more sustainable way, within only one building in a sensible location.

Policy T1 - Sustainable Transport

New development should be designed and located in order to minimise the need to travel and support a modal hierarchy which prioritises walking, then cycling, then public transport, then car clubs, electric vehicles and lastly private fossil-fuelled vehicles.

Development should be designed to:

1) Facilitate integration between different modes of travel, especially walking, cycling and public transport. Every opportunity should be taken to connect to, and benefit from, existing

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walking and cycling networks and to maximise permeability for these modes within and outside of sites;

2) Integrate with the existing settlement through inclusive, active travel networks ensuring easy and sustainable connections to community facilities and infrastructure and enabling connections to potential future travel modes;

3) Provide conveniently located and secure cycle parking, including private home provision throughout the development, including close to the development access points, and benefiting from natural surveillance;

4) Provide an appropriate level of safe, secure, accessible and usable parking provision having regard to policy T2 and reflecting principles set out in the Cornwall Design Guide and the level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;

5) Deliver more sustainable streets including by;

- Making it easier and more attractive to walk, cycle and considering access only streets to create green networks;
- Enabling greater use of public transport;
- Making streets accessible for users with disabilities;
- Providing varied spaces for people to meet and rest, and for children to play, enabling greater social interaction;
- Incorporating high levels of green and blue infrastructure.

6) Support the use of electric vehicles (including electric bikes) by providing electric vehicle charging points.

The most applicable elements of this policy to the modest proposal for an agricultural building are considered to be (4) as the proposal can ensure provision of safe, secure, accessible and useable parking for the limited vehicles that would be attracted to the site.

Taking into account the above overarching policy framework for the proposed development, it is considered that the proposal fully complies with the above national and local policy requirements.

The Case for Permission

The applicant is seeking the proposed development for the erection of an agricultural livestock building on land near Woolley, to provide year-round shelter for the applicant's farm animals and agricultural storage.

The applicant owns approximately 26 acres of agricultural land at Woolley. The applicant owns a number of sheep (approximately 100) as well as a number of goats and pigs.

There are currently no buildings on the land to meet the applicant's need to provide animal shelter and secure storage for animal feed, hay and straw as well as storage of implements such as the hedge cutter, roller and trailers. The building is required for housing for the animals, provide space for any animal receiving treatment to be cared for/animal isolation as well as agricultural storage. The building will support the applicant's enterprise.

The proposed location has been selected as there is an access onto the land to the south, it is placed adjacent to the hedgerow on a flatter area of ground that is lower than the highway to minimise the height within the landscape. It will be adjacent to an existing water source serving the land. It is considered that the proposed building will, in this location, assimilate well into the field and wider surrounding rural area.

The proposed building is considered as a necessary form of development to support the existing enterprise and use of the site, complementing and supporting the applicant's enterprise. As such the development is considered to be in accordance with local plan policies 12, 21, 23, 23 Cornwall Local Plan

The site is not subject to any special landscape designation, not part of an AONB or conservation area, and is located in flood zone 1, presenting a suitable locality to accommodate the development.

With regards to the design and scale of the development, the proposed design for the agricultural building represents a regular approach which is nowadays considered to be a traditional approach for a building of this type and function. The appearance of the building

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will reflect many of the surrounding agricultural buildings that can be seen within the wider locality.

The size and scale of the development is commensurate for its intended purpose and function, with no overbearing impacts or overdevelopment created upon this parcel of land or upon the surrounding rural landscape. Due to the siting and layout of the site, views of the building from public vantage points will be possible but not overbearing and it is not considered that the placement of the building will result in any harm to residential amenity of any nearby occupiers, or harm to the wider visual amenity.

With an agricultural/vehicular access already present on site, the proposed building would be sited on the southern side of the field where this access and the interfiled access can be utilised.

The surrounding grassland and hedgerows on the site will be retained, as will the wooded areas to the north and northwest of the proposed barn location.

The proposed materials and appearance allow the development to reflect the rural character of the locality, not detracting from the open landscape nor creating any visually intrusive impacts from its appearance in this location.

The erection of an agricultural building for farm animals and storage in this location would utilise a proportion of the field, however the proposal presents an appropriate form of agricultural and countryside development to complement and support the existing enterprise, commensurate in scale for its intended use and need.

Essentially, there is no loss of character or visual amenity of the land, but rather the proposal is a functional and necessary form of agricultural development in an appropriate location that would fully adhere to both the NPPF and Local Plan policies 12, 21, 23 and 27 Cornwall Local Plan, policies AG1 and T1 Climate Emergency Development Plan Document and the Cornwall Design Guide. With no adverse impacts outweighing the benefits of the proposal, the development is considered to be a sustainable form of rural agricultural development.

Use

The predominant proposed use for the building is for housing the applicants farm animals, animal feed and agricultural implements. As mentioned above, it could also be used to care for any animal that needs treatment in isolation from other animals. The building will be used in connection with the existing enterprise. There are no other buildings available for use within the holding or in the local vicinity that would meet the applicants need for animal housing/storage on this site. As the land is already used for agricultural purposes there is no change proposed to the use of the land.

The proposed uses for the building relate to the applicant's existing enterprise and utilises only part of the field to address a need for an agricultural building. Agricultural development is supported by the NPPF and local policies 21, 23, 27 Cornwall Local Plan and policy AG1 Climate Emergency Development Plan Document and this proposal presents an appropriate form of rural countryside development that will relate well to its agricultural context and rural surroundings.

Amount and Layout

The proposed amount and layout of the building is shown in greater detail on the accompanying plans. In terms of the site layout, the proposed building will be located as shown above on the aerial image, to the south of the field.

Internally the proposed building would have a single storey open planned space suitable for the agricultural uses proposed.

The proposed building measures 23.26m in length and 14.22m in width, therefore providing a total external footprint of 330.75 square metres. With regards to the height, the ridge height of the building would measure 6.6m to ridge, with the height to the eaves being 4.573m.

The proposed layout and size of the development provides a building which is a suitable size and commensurate for its intended uses, with a simplistic and functional layout.

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It is considered that due to the site's location and the layout of the development that there will be no adverse impacts. This reflects and complies with the core design principles, making efficient use of the site and its context to provide the required internal space to meet the requirements of local policies 12, 21, and 23 and the Cornwall Design Guide.

The building would be approximately 260m from the nearest dwelling. There would be two intervening hedgerows separating the proposed building from the nearest residential dwelling. The distance and intervening landscaping are considered to provide a good separation distance and will prevent the proposed building having any detrimental impact on the residential amenity of the occupiers of any residential property.

Scale

Local plan policies 2, 12, 21, 23, Cornwall Local Plan, policy AG1 Climate Emergency Development Plan Document and the Cornwall Design Guide identify that development should be appropriately scaled and designed to demonstrate how the proposal has a clear regard and respect for the existing site, its size, context and surroundings.

It is considered that due to the appropriate scale of the proposal that it will not result in over-development across this parcel of land, with the building to be situated within a substantially sized field and able to be accessed easily from the highway.

The scale of the proposal reflects the space that is required to serve the applicants enterprise while respecting the context and size of the site it sits within.

As the accompanying site location and block plans demonstrate, the agricultural building will utilise a modest part of the southern area of the field and allow the remainder of the land to continue to be used for grazing.

Whilst the proposal results in a new building being erected on site, the development will pose no harm or unacceptable adverse impacts due to its scale and siting. It is not considered that the development will result in any significant loss of amenity to the occupiers of any nearby residential property.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed building will integrate well with the agricultural context of the site and surroundings and will meet the requirements of local policies referenced above.

Appearance

National and local policy, highlight that design of development should retain local distinctiveness, enhancing the appearance of the rural countryside to integrate well with the existing character of the site and the primary surrounding landscape.

With regards to the proposed materials, scale and overall external appearance of the agricultural building, the development is considered to reflect to rural and agricultural context of the locality, ensuring there is no reduction in the visual amenity of the site, with no intrusive visual impacts as a result of the development.

The proposed materials for the building consist of a portal steel frame, dark green (juniper green) box profile cladding for the sides and doors, Big 6 fibre cement roof sheeting, also dark green. These are appropriate material choices with regards to the agricultural function of the building. The use of these external materials will enable the building to integrate well with the rural site, reflecting the rural character of the locality. The building design will also reflect other modern agricultural buildings that have been constructed within the district.

The building has been designed with function and practicality at the forefront, reflecting core design principles. The simple agricultural building style does not detract from the visual amenity of the surrounding open landscape and has been sited toward the southern boundary of the field adjacent to the hedgerow. The proposed design is reflective of numerous buildings of this type and function and is appropriately scaled to provide the agricultural space required, with no reduction in the visual amenity of the site.

Overall, the proposed design and appearance represent core design principles and successfully retain the character of the rural and agricultural landscape to ensure there is no loss of visual amenity to the site and meets the requirements of local plan policies 12 and 23.

Landscaping

Apart from the siting of the building itself, it is proposed to provide a concrete strip hardstanding around the perimeter of the building to allow for cleaner access in to and out of the building.

The proposal will retain the surrounding agricultural grassland, the established hedge boundaries as well as wood areas to the north and northeast, which will provide some natural filtering of views toward the building. The retention of the surrounding natural features of the site and chosen location will help the building to sit quietly on the site in accordance with policies 12 and 23.

Access

The NPPF and local plan policy require development to create safe and accessible places. Proposals should also ensure there is no damage to the surrounding area, and that the local road network can adequately support the proposed use.

With an appropriate access already in place to the south of the host field, the applicant will use this access to reach the proposed building. This access provides an existing access and egress point for agricultural vehicles entering and leaving the site. There is acceptable visibility in either direction when exiting the site.

With no changes proposed to the access arrangements and the use of the access to be retained for agricultural purposes, there is no additional harm associated with the use of the access. The proposed development is unlikely to result in significant additional journeys to the site, over and above those made by the previous owners of the land in association with its agricultural use. The provision of the building will not result in an additional number of vehicular journeys that the adjoining road and surrounding highways networks cannot support. As such, the scheme fully complies with local plan policy 27 of Cornwall Local Plan and policy T1 Climate Emergency Development Plan Document.

Surface Water Drainage

Surface water run-off from the proposed building will be connected to above ground water tanks and any excess will be connected to soakaways in the field. Due to the levels and topography of the land, the proposed development will not result in surface water leaving the site toward the highway. The access to the site is on land that is higher than the building.

The site is located within flood zone 1 and there are no adverse impacts or risks posed in terms of flooding in this location or elsewhere as a result of the proposal. In this regard it is considered that the proposal is compliant with local plan policy.

Conclusion

The proposed development for the erection of an agricultural building on the application site near Woolley presents an appropriate form and suitably scaled development in this rural location to complement the agricultural activities undertaken by the applicant.

The proposed development by virtue of its scale, massing, design and location is not considered to harm the privacy or amenity of the occupiers of any dwelling or building, the future amenities and services of the land or its surroundings.

The proposed design and appearance of the development will reflect the existing rural and agricultural character of the site, enhancing the functional amenity of the land to meet the applicant's needs. The proposed design is straightforward and reflects the common design approach to provision of modern agricultural buildings and the building will relate well to its agricultural context.

Taking these factors into account, the proposal is considered to comply with both national planning policy and local plan policy requirements set out in policies 1, 2, 12, 21, 23, 27 Cornwall Local Plan, policies AG1, T1 Climate Emergency Development Plan Document and the Cornwall Design Guide as it is a functional, necessary and contextually sensitive proposal. With no unacceptable or adverse impacts created that outweigh the benefits of the proposal it is considered that planning permission should be granted.