

ROB ROYD FARM SHOP, BARNSELEY

Design and Access Statement

External enhancements and improvements to existing farm shop



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1.0 Introduction

This is a statement submitted in support of the proposed external enhancements and improvements to the facilities at Rob Royd Farm Shop, Barnsley. In brief these comprise;

- Terrace
- Picnic Lawn
- Children's Play Area
- Gazebo
- WC
- Store / Retail Space / Herb Garden
- Greenhouse
- Landscaping
- Overspill Parking Area

The site and surrounding area have been visited and this statement takes into account the site characteristics, surrounding land uses and characteristics, central government guidance, local planning policy and other material considerations.

2.0 Assessment of the site's immediate and wider context

In accordance with the requirements of Section 42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the context of the proposed development is appraised below.

2.1 History

Rob Royd Farm shop has been open for several years and during this time they have established a reputation as a retailer of quality home grown and local produce. They have developed an increasingly loyal following of regular customers, not only from Barnsley but also from the surrounding area, even as far as York. This customer base continues to expand as evidenced by the continued and ever increasing success of the business since it started trading.

This popularity is due to the reputation for top quality produce and service, with an ever expanding and diverse range of innovative and specialist products, some of which are unique only to the Rob Royd farm shop. The most recent development has been the completion of the extension to the farm shop. This striking building houses a café and restaurant serving meals created from the produce available in the farm shop. The cafe has proved highly successful and popular with customers and the building itself received an award for the best commercial building under £1 million at the 2012 Yorkshire and Humber Local Authority Building Control (LABC) awards. This expansion of the business means that over 30 jobs are now provided on site.

2.2 Physical

The farm shop (marked with an A) is on Genn Lane in the Ward Green area of Barnsley. The farm shop is situated in part of the Rob Royd farm holding of 180 acres, with the shop and surrounding site occupying approximately 36 acres.



The photo below shows the farm shop and the new extension which has recently been completed.



2.3 Access Audit

The existing access to the site is from Genn Lane.

2.4 Social Context

The proposal will have benefits for the local community and the town in terms of jobs, business, support of local suppliers, amenity and bringing additional visitors to the town.

2.5 Economic Context

Increasing the scope of the facilities and enhancing the customer experience at the farm shop will undoubtedly attract more visits from new and existing customers. This could potentially increase employment opportunities at the site and enhance the economy for the local area. The farm shop originally started trading with 6 employees, the business now employs over permanent 30 members of staff.

3.0 Relevant Planning History

The Planning history for this site is detailed below;

- **B/04/1853/WB** - the application for the original farm shop in 06/09/2004
- **2006/1922** - confirmed the variation to the planning permission for the farm shop to include the production and the sale of baked goods
- **2008/0619** - application to retain two cold storage units, permission granted
- **2009/0764** - application to extend the car park, permission granted
- **2009/1194** - application for the extension to the farm shop, permission granted

4.0 Relevant Planning Policies

4.1 The processes by which the client and their consultants have arrived at the current redevelopment proposals are set out below. The site lies within the Greenbelt and as such a proposal of this nature will require special justification for development. The following passages clearly explain the design processes behind the careful consideration to enhance the facilities and appeal of the farm shop in a sensitive manner that is entirely in keeping with Green Belt.

4.2 The Government is committed to delivering sustainable development as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It identifies sustainable development as having three key dimensions: economic, social and environmental. Taken in turn we believe this proposal strongly supports all the roles of sustainable development as defined by the NPPF;

(i) an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

The proposals represent a direct investment in a local business, the local area and the town in general. Enhancing the appeal and facilities of this thriving business will attract even more people to Barnsley from all over the region, whilst reinforcing the strong local customer base. Further investment in the business will ensure that it continues to support and improve the local economy in terms of jobs, skills, training and the chain of local producers.

(ii) a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being;

The business takes its responsibility to the town and the local community seriously. Since it opened the farm shop has become increasingly popular and provides the community with a place to buy and consume high quality, locally produced food. This ensures that more money is pumped directly into the local economy and businesses, rather than national supermarket chains in the town which source the vast majority of their produce from outside the region. Successfully capturing this local spending power has created a workplace for over 30 people, offering not only employment but opportunities to gain valuable skills in areas such as butchery, baking and cookery. The gradual improvement of the facilities at Rob Royd and the ongoing agricultural development of the land to the rear, which includes the proposed 'nature and animal walks', will provide the opportunity to invite school parties as a part of an educational programme to observe demonstrations and to understand where food comes from. It is proposed that schools be provided with individual plots to grow their own vegetables to encourage healthy eating and improve education. The further improvements to the external areas as proposed can only enhance the many positive ways in which Rob Royd farm shop supports the creation of a strong, healthy and vibrant community.

(iii) an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

The farm shop already provides a crucial environmental role by selling produce that is overwhelmingly locally sourced and which has a vastly reduced carbon footprint than most of the produce available in supermarkets. In addition there are significant recycling processes within the business and much of the food waste is used to feed the animals at Rob Royd Farm. It is anticipated that the enhancements to the external areas and the landscape improvements will enhance the natural environment and improve biodiversity at this site.

4.3 Taken in turn this proposal generally supports the purposes of the Green Belt identified in the NPPF document. Whilst not directly relevant to these action points, it helps to achieve and certainly does not prevent their collective long term delivery.

(i) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

The proposal does not add to the sprawl of the built up area and the site is predominantly agricultural which contributes to the openness of the Green Belt.

(ii) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

The proposal does not contribute to neighbouring towns merging into one another.

(iii) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

The proposal does not present further encroachment on the countryside.

(iv) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;

Barnsley is not an historical town so the proposal cannot be said to preserve the setting and special character of an historic town

(v) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

The site does not occupy an urban location and therefore cannot be said to encourage 'urban regeneration'. However we feel that this is clearly outweighed by the other material considerations.

4.0 Involvement of Community Members and Professionals, Undertaken/Planned

- 4.1 We have engaged in consultation with Steve Kirkham, Planning Officer at BMBC prior to the submission of this application.

5.0 Evaluation of the Context

5.1 Identification of Opportunities

This scheme will continue to support the diversification and sustainability of a thriving farm shop and local business. The provision of an attractive outdoor amenity area and overspill parking area will undoubtedly attract more visitors to the farm shop. This will have many positive benefits for the town in terms of jobs, supporting local business and suppliers, attracting more visitors to the town and promoting high quality, local produce.

5.2 Identification of Constraints

The site is located in the Green Belt ensuring extra care needs to be taken to justify the scheme

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6.0 Design of the Scheme

The scheme comprises a number of different elements that combine to create an attractive and high quality external amenity area for the farm shop. There are also items that will improve the on site facilities and enhance the customer experience further, including removing a growing risk to safety. These proposals will build on the success of the recent café and restaurant extension in providing a much more rewarding experience for the visitor. We also envisage that an attractive outdoor amenity area at this location countryside presents a very good opportunity to provide a high quality visitor attraction that will help to promote Barnsley and the surrounding area.

6.1 The Terrace

The focus of the scheme is an outdoor terrace. This will be located immediately adjacent to the farm shop café extension and enjoy fabulous views over the valley. The terrace will be easily accessible via a wide ramp leading from the farm shop and be constructed of high quality materials, with capped local stone walls forming the boundaries and natural stone paving for the floor. Immediately adjacent to the paved area is a grassed lawn. This will provide additional seating and an area for visitors to sit on the grass and enjoy a picnic.



Natural stone paving



Local stone walls



Picnic lawn

- 6.2** A children's play area is to be provided behind the terrace. This is a highly visible area that will allow adults and carers to keep a close eye on their children from the terrace and the picnic lawn. This zone has been deliberately set back so the visual impact of the play equipment will be minimised when viewed from the parking area and Genn Lane. To achieve this setback we propose digging out part of the embankment in an organic curve shape and building a retaining wall constructed from timber logs. This will allow a more natural transition from the hard landscaped areas to the fields behind the terrace than a stone wall would provide. This will be accentuated by planting on top of the retaining wall that will further blur and soften the top edge of the timber logs. All the children's play equipment will be built from timber and the play surface will be covered in bark chippings to provide a safe surface that blends into the natural setting.



Timber play equipment



Bark chippings surface

- 6.3** A gazebo will provide the facility to prepare and serve food and refreshments direct to customers on the terrace. It is located directly next to the farm shop to provide easy access to the service areas at the rear of the building via a stair down the embankment. The gazebo is a bespoke structure that has been specially designed to take its cue from the distinctive octagonal shape of the farm shop extension. It will be constructed from timber with natural stone walls hiding the food preparation work tops and equipment, topped with a treated timber roof.
- 6.4** An external WC is set into the slope behind the terrace and will be included within the timber log retaining wall. It will provide three separate cubicles and be constructed from breeze block walls, with the timber poles and timber doors to the only visible elevation of the structure. The roof will be covered in planting to ensure its impact will be negligible and respond to the Green Belt setting.



Timber log retaining wall

6.5 Store / Retail Space / Herb Garden

There are currently limited facilities on site for the secure storage of equipment used to tend the fields behind the farm shop. We therefore propose positioning a store next to, but set right back from the extension building. This timber structure is not intended to be designed as a building, but rather an attractive reclaimed timber wall part screened with planting. This will serve to hide the service area to the rear of the farm shop and provide a visual barrier to this area in order to enhance security.

There is also an opportunity to use this structure to enhance business opportunities at the site. We envisage it being used for the sale of herbs, plants and other associated horticultural products. A three metre wide opening for this space has been created by sliding double doors that are clad in the same timber as the rest of the elevation. Attractive display areas can also be positioned in front of the timber wall whilst the unit is open. In addition it is proposed that timber planting beds be provided to allow herbs to be planted on the roof. This is an attractive facility that could allow customers to pick their own herbs and the chefs to pick ingredients fresh from the garden whilst they are preparing food in the gazebo. Direct access will be provided from the terrace near the gazebo via a stair up to the herb garden. Overall this structure will help to rationalise the facilities at the farm shop in terms of storage whilst providing a number of other functions; enhancing business opportunities at the shop (retail space), providing an attractive feature (herb garden) whilst creating a visual screen clad in reclaimed timber and screened by planting which will hide the service area and enhance security at the site.



Herb garden



Reclaimed timber wall screened by planting

6.6 Greenhouse

This will enhance the facilities at the site and be located completely out of sight at the rear of the farm shop. The footprint for the greenhouse is only shown as indicative on the plans (1982-004) as we envisage it being an off the shelf structure, however additional details can be provided if requested.

6.7 Landscaping

The area identified for the terrace is currently visually poor and unattractive. These proposals represent an opportunity to greatly enhance the visual amenity of this area and a key part of this will be a comprehensive landscaping strategy. New planting is proposed on top of the timber log retaining wall, raised planting beds will be built into the terrace walls and herb plants will sprout above the top of the reclaimed timber wall which screens the storage and retail space. The most significant component of the landscaping strategy will be a series of wild flower meadows which will be planted on the various embankments within the scheme. These will form an attractive natural screen to the terrace and overflow car park whilst softening the edges of the stone perimeter walls and screening the storage and retail space.

A wild flower meadow has been chosen for this scheme as it is the deliberate intention for the landscaping to be 'less urban and more rural' in appearance and therefore appropriate for the Green Belt location. Proposed flowers and plants for these meadows include; Meadow Buttercups, Red Campion, Common Sorrell, Red Clover, Yarrow and Foxglove.



Wild flower meadow

6.8 Additional Parking

As the business has grown the existing car parking arrangements have become inadequate at very busy periods. This has led to customers having to park on Genn Lane on numerous occasions and this has proved to be highly detrimental to highways safety. This situation is what the previous application to extend the car park had sought to avoid, however it is now clear that this is now inadequate for some occasions. We therefore propose that part of the site be allowed to be used as an occasional overflow car park, providing customers with a much safer alternative to parking on Genn Lane during busy periods. An area has been identified further up the site from the farm shop that is difficult to see from Genn Lane. To screen the area further we propose building a series of embankments covered in wild meadow planting (please refer to drawing no. 1982-004). This should ensure that any cars that are parked here will be screened completely from view when viewed from Genn Lane. This is in order to preserve the visual amenity of the nearby properties and to be sympathetic to the Green Belt setting.

- 6.9** The development will comply fully with all requirements of Approved Document 'M'. The landscape around the building will be fully accessible to all and where changes of level occur in the landscaping ramped alternatives will be provided. Any transitions between hard and soft features will be less than 15mm in elevation.

7.0 Conservation Area Appraisal

The farm shop is not in a conservation area.

8.0 Concluding Statement

- 8.1 This Design and Access statement has been written in support of a Planning application for the external enhancements to Rob Royd farm shop: The statement clearly demonstrates the four steps required by Section 42 of the Act in that:
- The context of the site has been considered and documented, and includes an accessibility audit, together with references to the relevant planning policy
 - Community and professional involvement has been used to inform the development proposals and is documented in this statement
 - The context and feedback from the engagement exercises undertaken has been used to formulate design and access principles for the site
 - The design of the proposals has been justified in terms of the use, amount, layout, scale, landscaping, appearance and access arrangements.
- 8.2 The scheme has been designed which responds to the constraints and opportunities identified and will provide significant benefits to the community in terms of:
- *National and Local Policies with regard to Economic, Social and Environmental Sustainability*
 - *Developing the 'Green Economy' in Barnsley*
 - *Supporting local Business and Agriculture*
 - *Food Knowledge and Education*
 - *Tourism and attracting visitors to the town*
 - *Visual Amenity*
 - *Safety and Security*
- 8.3 In conclusion, it is considered that the proposal meets the requirements of National, Regional and Local Planning Policy and that the Council should be supportive of the scheme and grant Planning Permission.