Design and Access Statement for a Roundhouse Livestock Building at Cannon Hall Farm, Cawthorne

BACKGROUND

Cannon Hall Farm has been in the Nicholson family for 50 years. It is a mixed farm, consisting of 200 acres of grassland.

Given the pressure on agriculture post-Foot and Mouth disease and BSE, and now the widespread prospect of Blue Tongue disease, the challenges have never been greater for the farmer to increase his efficiency and/or to diversify.

The Nicholsons embarked on a diversification project 20 years ago. The objectives were two-fold; firstly to develop a source of income to supplement the declining farming incomes, and secondly to provide an educational facility to increase public awareness of farming.

Cannon Hall Farm has, over recent years, become a valuable learning resource for local schools and a popular local attraction for families, whilst retaining its function as a working farm. The Nicholson family are proactive in their desire to keep abreast of farming innovations and this has led to the current proposal to extend the farm to keep pace with the demand for prime, suckled beef which is produced, processed and retained at Cannon Hall Farm. All the cattle have lived a natural life with their mother for the first ten months, including at least one summer's grazing. They are finished to the optimum specification and slaughtered only four miles away, which keeps food miles to the absolute minimum. The carcasses are hung for four weeks to ensure optimum flavour and tenderness. The beef produced at Cannon Hall Farm is to the very highest quality and welfare standards. The proposed Roundhouse will enable the Nicholsons to maintain and continue to improve their standards.

For questions relating to appearance in the landscape (see Landscape Design Statement below) the reader may wish to talk to a planning officer in one or more of the following districts, where Roundhouses have been erected:

Richmondshire, North Yorkshire
Darlington Borough
Teesdale District
South Ayrshire
Lambourn, West Berkshire

Planning approval has been granted for a Roundhouse at Enfield in County Meath and applications have recently been submitted in Northamptonshire and Aberdeenshire.

SITE ASSESSMENT

LOCATION

The location chosen for the Roundhouse has been selected to minimise the impact on the historic landscape and position the building in a situation which allows views of it from the main access, without it dominating the immediate landscape.

ACCESS

Vehicular access to the site will be from the already established road into the Open Farm via a new access through the adjacent field. The new road will be set down into the landscape and minor earthworks and new planting will serve to settle the structure into it surroundings, whilst retaining a view into this innovative structure. Although construction traffic during the build period will increase, this is not expected to average more than three vehicles per day over a 30 day construction period. Once the building becomes operational the livestock currently housed elsewhere will be relocated, and it is envisaged that this will reduce the number of vehicles leaving/arriving at Cannon Hall Farm by about six vehicles per week.

Pedestrian access will be from the Open Farm to allow spectators to view the Roundhouse in operation. The access will be a gravel-topped, tarmac surface which will satisfy DDA requirements for an evenly graded access for wheelchair users and ambulant users alike.

DESIGN

The proposal is to construct what is the very latest design in livestock housing, but which uses Bronze Age principles in its layout. The circular building has a curved tensile fabric roof in matt grey/green, (a colour used by the Finnish army for its camouflage qualities). Around the sides the building is open. The benefits to animal welfare and safety of operatives with this design have been staggering. Rather than try to explain this in text the enclosed brochure and DVD should be self-explanatory. Further questions can be addressed to Mr Geoff Simpson at Roundhouse Building Solutions Ltd.

The building requires a level base and a perimeter access road that serves the building. This has led the designer to locate the building in the position shown, to allow maximisation of available space with minimum intrusion into the landscape. The building itself is an attractive one and the use of minor earthworks and appropriate native planting will allow the Roundhouse to be assimilated into the

agricultural landscape, where it will sit as a feature of interest as well as a functioning farm building.

The design of the building itself makes use of gentle flowing lines which will sit comfortably in the landscape (see attached brochure).

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

This development follows on from a series of other developments at Cannon Hall Farm. Each development proposal has taken careful account of the historic setting and the sensitive nature of the site. Landscape consultancy has always been sought to ensure sensitive solutions to development proposals.

The proposed Roundhouse will be located close to the existing Open Farm and has been positioned between an existing roundel and the native hedgerow that surrounds the farm. Minor earthworks and an extension to this hedgerow will assimilate the proposed building into the landscape.

The access road to the Roundhouse will be constructed as a 4m wide single track road, which will be surfaced in tarmac with a gravel top rolled into a bitumen tack coat to match the existing site access road. Again, this 'softer' construction will minimise the impact on the landscape.

Additional planting around the western perimeter of the proposals will conceal the necessary straw store and extend the existing boundary hedge habitats into the site.

CONCLUSION

Cannon Hall Farm now employs 160 people and the Roundhouse will help to secure and expand these numbers. Every effort will be made to ensure that the quality of work actually exceeds the expectations of the planning department.

FDA Landscape Ltd
August 2008