

DESIGN AND ACCESS/PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

location	Land to the East of Cat Hill Lane, Hoylandswaine, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S36 7JX.
application	Erection of an Agricultural Building
client/applicant	Mrs R Smith
job number	24/1056
date	November 2024 Rev A Nov 24

ARCHITECTURE | PLANNING | DESIGN

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INTRODUCTION

This design and access/supporting statement has been prepared to support the full planning application for an agricultural building on land to the East of Cat Hill Lane, Hoylandswaine.

Accompanying the application are plans of the proposed building, proposed elevations and an ordnance survey location plan indicating the proposed building location along with surrounding land owned and farmed by Mrs Smith (the applicant).

Mrs Smith farms pedigree Grey Faced Dartmoor sheep, a rare breed sheep. The Grey faced Dartmoor sheep have a traditionally long, curly, lustre wool fleece, historically used for blankets, serge, carpets and cloth. The wool is not coloured. They are a staple length 25-30cms with a Bradford count of 36-40. The sheep need regular treatment and shearing due to the fleece. The Grey Faced Dartmoor lamb at an average of 150%. The heavy milking ewes rear their offspring rapidly with clipping around the udder generally required to ensure easy access for the newly born lambs.

Lambs/hogget currently attracts a premium price at market which makes the breed even more costly. For this reason Mrs Smith intends to naturally grow and breed her flock from selected bloodlines. The current flock stands at one pedigree ram and 7 ewes. The intention is to grow the flock to circa 75-90 head over the next 3 years. Some additional ewes will be bought in to facilitate this, selected from strong bloodlines. This will result in significant expense for the rural farm business in addition to the cost of providing the required/associated agricultural building to provide appropriate welfare facilities and reduce the number of lambing losses.

Mrs Smith has a business plan that, after heavy expenditure, will start to return good yields 2.5 years on and then consistently thereon being sustainable.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

The application site consists of a large agricultural field, pasture land, of circa 27.5 (11.09 hectares).

The farm business also owns land outright.

The applicant has a farming business operated at her residential address in nearby Hazelhead, this base holding amounts to circa 2 acres (0.8 hectares). The land at Hazelhead runs directly alongside the River Don, flood zone 3 and is at risk of flooding. Given the land size at the farm base in comparison to the land holding at Cat Hill we consider, for a number of reasons, that the building would be better sited at Cat Hill.

The farm base at Hazelhead has no other agricultural buildings or buildings capable for conversion.

The land at Hazelhead and Cat Hill is used for grazing purposes. The land at Cat Hill will also be used for lambing, overwintering, grazing, and possibly some cropped hay (by subcontractors).

Both sites and localities are rural in nature and fairly isolated. The nearest unrelated dwelling to the location of the proposed agricultural building is some 48meters away to the West (Clough Cottage).

Another reason for the proposed location is to utilise the dense planting/shrubbery directly to the West and to ensure the proposed building does not become an isolated feature in the greenbelt whilst respecting distances to ensure no pollution or noise issues.

There are no other agricultural buildings on Mrs Smith's overall holding land and this building is a genuine requirement predominantly to prevent losses at lambing time and to provide dry storage for hay bales (winter supplement feed).

The land where the building will be located is bound by dry stone walls directly adjoining Cat Hill Lane.

An existing field entrance is to be continued to be used to provide direct and easy access to the proposed building.

There are a cluster of trees/dense shrubbery directly to the West of the proposed building that will assist in providing a natural screen and shelter. No trees will need to be removed on the land to site the proposed building, indeed Mrs Smith has a grant in place for hedgerow and tree planting along with dry stone walling repairs. These will all serve to add to the ecological value of the site and help safeguard the greenbelt, ensuring its continued use for its intended purpose.

Many factors have been considered when determining the location of the proposed agricultural building, including, but not limited to;

- Building fit for purpose,
- Ease of access,
- Security/privacy,
- Pollution and noise control,
- Ensuring limited loss of grazing land,
- Located to ensure reduced impact on the openness of the greenbelt,
- Using existing planting (trees/dense shrubbery) to assist in screening the proposed building.

The existing access from Cat Hill will continue to provide the principal access to the land and subject application building, no new access is required or proposed.

Cat Hill lane is an adopted highway. There is an adjacent PROW in close proximity to the existing land access. This is to be fenced off in traditional post and sheep netting, principally to prevent dogs coming into access with the sheep. This will also provide a safer use of the PROW. The PROW is indicated on the proposed block plan.

The proposed building will take up a very small proportion of the overall land at the application site.

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

As noted previously Mrs Smith has a small flock of Grey Faced Dartmoor sheep. The size of the holding was previously restricted due to the land holding. Mrs Smith has explored other options but found rented land unsecure (long term viability) and very scarce. The subject site (just over 11 hectares) was recently purchased to enable the farm business to grow and develop.

The land is a nine minute drive, 6.2 miles from Mrs Smith's home. Whilst not in sight and sound, this is ideal for the rural business to enable continued growth.

Mrs Smith intends to have circa 45 breeding ewes by May 2025. In addition to the current 7 pedigree ewes these will produce circa 78 head of lambs in Spring 2026. The lambs will be reared with some kept back for breeding, poor lambs fattened for the food chain and other pedigree lambs sold on to be bred from by others. This will result in sustainable and natural growth of the rural business and initially trickle finance back into the business before it becomes self-sufficient.

Prime Lambs are currently fetching an optimum value with prices of average £314.44/Kg (£149.99/head) at the local livestock market in Holmfirth; (<https://www.holmfirthmart.co.uk/Market-Reports/Article/1391/Sale-Report-Tuesday-5th-November-2024>).

These prices are based upon sales on Tuesday 5th November 2024.

The farm business has a CPH (county parish holding) number of 49/741/0230.

This proposal will enable Mrs Smith to expand her rural business and develop further, providing locally reared lamb and mutton and positively contributing to a rare breed. The substantial purchase/investment of the application site enables Mrs Smith to provide more long-term certainty for her rural agricultural business.

The land is used for grazing, some haymaking will also be carried out on the land. Hay will be stored in the proposed building to provide a winter supplement feed for the housed sheep. It is proposed the sheep will be rotated on the land which assists with parasite and weed control and assists with worm control.

Once the hay has been cropped on the land, the sheep will graze this land and rotate on the land.

The impact of outdoor lambing in February/March results in avoidable livestock losses, the financial burden of this on the rural business is preventable. This application proposes to address this and make the business more financially efficient.

The building will be used for livestock housing (sheep/lambs) and for the storage of hay (winter supplement feed). Some straw (bedding) for lambing and over wintering will be bought in and also stored internally within the proposed building.

The resultant muck (bedding) from the building/housed livestock will also form a vital part of the rural business and provide a further cost saving with chemical fertiliser being cut from the business and the natural fertiliser being used to promote grass growth on the land to be cropped, prior to baling then grazing sheep. Again this is good farming practice and one that will save the business considerable expense and enable more profit and natural growth. Note chemical fertiliser needs to be stored internally to prevent waste, the current lack of an agricultural building forces smaller and more expensive quantities to be purchased. The use of natural fertiliser is a very good alternative that has positive impacts on growth and putting nutrients back into the soil prior to harvesting. The storage of waste (muck) is covered under Pollution / Noise Control on page 5 of this document.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

As noted above, it is clear that this rural agricultural business was hindered with a lack of secure grazing land for the flock, this has been addressed with the purchase of the land which now requires appropriate facilities (a purpose designed livestock building).

The proposed building is clearly designed as an agricultural building, a portal frame structure with an opening to enable ease of use, access and functionality in segregating stock and creating pens at lambing time, at overwintering time the pens will be dismantled and the building will be used 'open plan'.

The proposed building is a kit form type with the stanchions/bays at 20' centres. The building measures 60' x 40' (portal framework) with a small projection where the galvanised 'Z' purlins will support the cladding of Yorkshire boarding and profiled sheeting as indicated on the submitted plans. Openings will have stock gates/barriers and gale breaker type screens above. This will enable ease of access and a flexible layout internally. Sheep hurdles will be used internally to create demountable pens for lambing and segregation of stock for treatment, shearing, etc.

The proposed roof has a shallow pitch of 10degrees, covered with the traditional albatross grey profiled sheeting. A large solar array is indicated to the South East roof slope to provide internal lighting within the building during the autumn/winter months when daylight hours are significantly reduced.

The openings and Yorkshire boarding cladding will provide adequate ventilation to the housed stock to prevent respiratory diseases.

The building has an eaves height of 13' (3957mm) with an overall roof apex height of 16' 10" (5138mm).

The open frontage (South East) with the opposing North West opening will enable ease of tractor access (cabbed tractor with loader).

The building will have concrete panels or blockwork to the perimeter at low level with Yorkshire boarding/profiled sheeting above, all as noted on the proposed plans.

The openings will have galvanised stock gates/feed gates with galebreaker screens above to control ventilation/weather ingress but also provide ease of access.

The building size of 60' x 40' provides a floor area of 218m².

The code of recommendations for the [welfare of livestock \(sheep\)](#), a DEFRA production, states Lowland ewes, after lambing with lambs at foot up to 6 weeks of age, require 2-2.2m² of floor space.

It is intended the building, subject to support and planning approval, will be erected in 2025. Stock levels in 2025 are predicted to be circa 52 head pedigree of breeding ewes. This, at lambing time, equates to a floor space of 104m² to 114.0m². NB this calculation doesn't include for circulation space where pens will be all lined up but with easy access walkways between. 36No. 1.8 x 1.2m lambing pens are shown on the proposed floor plan (dashed rectangular pens). Whilst this doesn't

provide for all of the lambing ewes, a management cycle will be carried out with lambs quickly turned out when fit.

1.2m diameter straw and hay bales will be stored in the building, stacked 2 high. There will be circa 36 bales of hay straw stored within (6 straw and 30 hay), hay will be cropped from the applicant's land (baling circa 4-5 bales per acre). The indicative internal layout is shown on the proposed floor plan.

POLLUTION/NOISE CONTROL

The use of the land is not subject to change as a result of this application. The land has been used for agricultural/grazing purposes going back hundreds of years.

Pollution and noise control has been taken into account with regards to this proposal. Nearby residential properties have been factored into our designs. There is almost 50 meters between the proposed agricultural building and the nearest unassociated residential property, others are at a further distance from the proposed building. NB the nearest property, Clough Cottage, is across the public highway and mature trees/dense shrubbery. Livestock on the land already shelters by this area so we contend this distance does not give cause for concern.

Given the exposure and prevailing wind direction we contend this proposal will not create any noise, smell or insect nuisance.

When the sheep are turned out following lambing in spring, the pens will be mucked out with the resultant muck stored on site to rot down for spreading on the land the following winter. This acts as a natural fertiliser for the land assisting with hay making the following summer.

Defra standards require field heaps must not be;

- within 10m of surface water (including ditches) or of a land drain,
- within 50m of a spring, well or borehole,
- on land likely to become waterlogged, or
- on land likely to flood.

Piles must also;

- move any field heap at least every twelve months,
- leave a 2 year gap before returning to the same site, and
- keep a record of the sites used for field heaps, and the dates of use.

The subject site and other farmed land at Hazelhead is more than large enough to easily and practically comply with the above and ensure no pollution or insect nuisance is caused to the nearest dwelling and other nearby dwellings.

The site is located within Green Belt as defined within the adopted Local Plan;



NPPF

In respect of this application, relevant sections include:

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Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Paragraph 8 provides three overarching objectives to sustainability, social, environmental and economic. Paragraph 10 states to ensure that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 88 states that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas; and the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural business.

Paragraph 153 states that development in the Green Belt should only be approved in very special circumstances. Paragraph 154 sets out the various exceptions to which development in the Green Belt is considered as suitable. Part (a) includes buildings for agriculture and forestry.

Local Plan

In reference to this application, the following Local Plan policies are relevant:

Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

Policy GD1: General Development

Policy GB1: Protection of the Green Belt

POLL1: Pollution Control and Protection

BIO1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy T4: New Development and Highway Improvement

Policy D1: High quality design and place making.

SPD: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

These policies are considered to reflect the Principles in the NPPF, which relates to high quality design and good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of development

The application is located within Green Belt land as defined within the Local Plan. The application site is located amongst a number of agricultural fields and open farmland. The proposal seeks to erect a new purpose designed agricultural building to be sited on the land to the South West of the overall land holding at the application site.

The proposed building will be used for the storage of fodder, bedding (hay and straw) and the applicant's sheep, all associated with the applicant's rural business, which clearly falls within an agricultural use.

Policy GB1 states that development within the Green Belt will only be permitted in very special circumstances for purposes including agriculture, forestry, outdoor sport and recreation. GB1 also states that Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with national policy. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that development in the Green Belt should only be approved in very special circumstances. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF sets out the various exceptions to which development in the Green Belt is considered as suitable. Part (a) includes buildings for agriculture and forestry. The proposal clearly falls within this category.

Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas both through conversion of existing buildings and the erection of new. It also states that the planning decisions should also enable the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural business.

The proposed development is in connection with the existing farm business and use, in which livestock farming forms an integral part. The proposed development does not introduce a new use at the site, given that historically the land is and has been farmland, therefore in principle the proposal meets the criteria in both National Policy and Local Plan Policy and is considered appropriate development within the Green Belt.

Residential Amenity

It is usual practice to locate new agricultural buildings close to existing clusters of other buildings to ensure the openness of the greenbelt is retained. That said, the potential residential impact also needs to be assessed. On balance, we contend, when viewed within the immediate surroundings, space separation and considered potential impact to residential amenity, the proposed location of the building within the site away from the existing cluster of other non-associated properties should be deemed acceptable.

In terms of potential residential impact, the location of the proposed agricultural building away from the properties, taking into account the existing trees and dense shrubbery, ensures an adequate distance remains between the nearby dwellings and proposed agricultural building.

We contend the proposed building is unlikely to give rise to any significant detrimental impact upon residential amenity. The proposal is therefore considered to be in compliance with Local Plan Policy GD1: General Development and is acceptable in terms of residential amenity.

Impact upon the Openness of the Green Belt and Visual Amenity

Policy GB1 states that development within the Green Belt will only be permitted in very special circumstances for purposes including agriculture, forestry, outdoor sport and recreation. GB1 also states that Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development in accordance with national policy.

Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas both through conversion of existing buildings and the erection of new. It also states that the planning decisions should also enable the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural business.

The application is located within an area of Green Belt as defined within the Local Plan. It is accepted that agricultural buildings should ideally be located adjacent to other agricultural buildings.

Local Plan Policy D1 states that development is expected to be of high-quality design and will be expected to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive, local character and features of Barnsley. The proposed building is of a simple traditional agricultural style construction akin to the other modern agricultural buildings in and around the district. We contend that the design and materials are considered to fit in well with the rural landscape.

The location of the barn would be partly visible from public viewpoints. The proposed location, alongside the mature/established trees and dense shrubbery will reduce the impact and serve as an established natural screen. The proposed building does not appear standalone or a remote structure. Furthermore the location of the proposed barn ensures appropriate distance between the proposed agricultural building and unrelated nearby dwellings. The proposed siting is located to the South West corner of the land near the existing access, this prevents excessive engineering works to form a track leading to the proposed building. Considering the context of the setting along with the traditional materials and design proposed we consider that the siting of the proposed agricultural building is acceptable and should be supported.

The access is existing and given the long established existing and proposed use along with the location of the building, it is not considered to have a harmful impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.

Considering the above we contend this proposal is not inconsistent with the character of the Green Belt and complies with Local Plan Policy D1 and GB1 and as a result should be deemed acceptable in terms of visual amenity and Impact upon the Openness of the Green Belt.

Impact upon Biodiversity

The applicant plans a series of fencing, dry stone walling repairs and hedgerow planting. These all feed in to provide an uplift to the ecology and biodiversity of the land/application site.

A BNG (Biodiversity Net Gain) metric and report also accompanies this project. This demonstrates the required 10% uplift in biodiversity value.

Furthermore the applicant proposes to enhance the habitat by naturally improving the grassland. If the Barnsley ecology unit wish to discuss other possible enhancement, then we would welcome that discussion.

Considering the above, we contend, that the proposals are not contrary to Local Plan Policy BIO1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity and should be accepted in relation to biodiversity.

Highway Safety

The proposed agricultural building would be positioned approx. 33m from the public highway. The access is existing and longstanding providing access to the land.

The gates are recessed from the edge of the highway enabling vehicles to safely pull off the road whilst unlocking/locking gates.

The crushed stone access track has been kept to a minimum to protect the openness of the greenbelt and constrain the overall extent of proposed development. This crushed stone area in conjunction with the agricultural building access, provides adequate turning area to ensure vehicles can enter and exit the site in forward gear.

The use of the land will not change. Support and subsequent approval of this application will result in fewer vehicle movements to and from the site given the provision of shelter for hay and straw (feed and bedding). If no building is provided, then quantities would be far less and much more frequent. Stock movements would also significantly increase (more vehicle movements to and from the land) as without appropriate handling facilities for, but not limited to, lambing, shearing, segregation of stock, foot treatments, worming, veterinary visits, more regular welfare checks also.

The building will also provide intermittent secure storage for implements (trailer, loader tractor, bale squeeze, portable hay rack, sheep hurdles, livestock medicines, muck spreader, livestock trailer and weight crate) these items are valuable and could not be safely kept at the application site without the security of a building where implements can be secured/trapped in to prevent the current spike in rural crime.

We consider that the proposals do not adversely impact upon highway safety and therefore should be considered in compliance with Local Plan Policy T4 and deemed acceptable in terms of Highway Safety.

Justification

The applicant purchased the subject site/land and is building up her own land holding. The flock of sheep has been restricted due to the uncertainty of rented land. The holding is almost 30 acres in total. The currently restricted livestock number will now grow naturally, given the purchase of this additional land.

The farm is on a spring lambing system and therefore the ewes and lambs need to be indoors to ensure survival/reduce livestock losses (lambing outdoors is far from ideal). Furthermore, 1.2m diameter bales of hay and straw (6 straw and 30 hay) will be stored within the proposed building to avoid unnecessary wrapping (the applicant doesn't have a bale wrapper and prefers to avoid the unnecessary use of plastic).

The farm business has an agricultural holding number (47/741/0230).

Whilst it is difficult to provide climate change enhancements on agricultural buildings of this nature, we have taken the opportunity to cover the South East facing roof slope with solar panels. This will reduce the reliance upon electric for providing internal lighting within the proposed building that will assist with Autumn and winter welfare checks/requirements.

It is proposed that the surface water run off will be collected in IBCs for reuse (livestock drinking water, with an overflow to soakaways).

The nearby trees have been considered and utilised in screening the proposed building. The proposals include for an offset to the proposed agricultural building to ensure the tree root protection areas are respected.

The proposed building size has been kept to a minimum size genuinely required by the rural business and its requirements, in agricultural terms it is not a large structure.

This development proposes to further extend the existing rural agricultural farming business. The cost-of-living crisis and the retraction of the single farm payment over the next few years, farmers are being forced to look at ways to diversify to supplement their farming businesses. The applicant is very keen to continue with his rural business, however the ever-increasing cost of fertiliser, travelling costs and livestock losses (outdoor lambing) along with general running costs take its toll on this rural business. The proposed agricultural building is an important aspect to enable this rural farm business to develop and reduce current expenses whilst maintaining the quality of the finished product (meat).

The economic impact of the development is not just limited to the applicant's own rural business, it will feed into other local businesses (provision of associated medication, supplement feeds, and agricultural items such as lambing gates and other ancillary items), this will contribute positively on safeguarding other local jobs. The applicant will continue to manage the agricultural unit, and initially it is not expected there will be prospects for additional employees. The lack of job creation however is not unusual for farming businesses, typically the employment opportunities are kept within their own family.

The production of locally produced meat should not be underestimated. The cost of importing lamb from New Zealand/Australia has significant impacts on transportation and freshness of the meat.

With regard to the issues of the production of meat, the impact of this upon climate change is still being established/considered. We accept that there are arguments both for and against the principles of livestock farming but considering imported alternatives, we contend this application assists in combating climate change with the production of local and fresh meat as opposed to imported meat with lower welfare standards from the other side of the world.

It is acknowledged that as a result of the development, the application will be able to produce onsite manure/fertiliser which will reduce the need for manufactured chemical fertiliser. This will help to reduce emissions.

An agricultural building, on land within the applicant's ownership, is essential to safeguard the future of their business. It will prevent unnecessary losses associated with outdoor lambing. This will enable this rural farm business to thrive and develop. A building is required to ensure the safe handling of livestock and to create pens to lamb internally.

It is wholly reasonable to require the construction of a suitable functional farm building to facilitate the functioning of the farm business.

It will be noted that a key characteristic of this immediate vicinity is the predominance of agricultural buildings throughout the landscape. The sporadic development of older farm buildings and farmsteads can be seen around the very immediate locality and, therefore, this proposal will not be out of character or keeping with the surrounding area and the character and appearance of the countryside.

Considering this statement, accompanying plans and BNG matrix/report we trust this application can be supported and approved without delay.

Naturally should the Local Authority Planning Department require any further information please contact Paul Matthews Architectural Ltd. We respectfully ask for contact from the case officer prior to the formal determination of this application.