

**Extensions to Three Existing Stock Housing Buildings and the
Erection of a New Building for Young Stock
Castle Farm, Bilstone, Nuneaton, CV13 6NQ
JC and CA Bayley**

**Planning Statement
(incorporating Design and Access Statement Requirements)**

This statement addresses material planning considerations and also fulfils the statutory requirements of a Design and Access Statement, the necessity for which is stipulated in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure Order) 2015 due to the buildings proposed being greater than 1000 square metres in floor area.

Background Information on the Need for the Buildings

These proposals for increasing the size of the dairy herd at Castle Farm result from the national trends in dairy production towards making economies of scale in milk production by increasing the size of herds and investment in more modern facilities. This has caused smaller units to leave the sector and the demand for national self-sufficiency and food security has encouraged investment in the remaining units. This gives an opportunity to improve the management of the production process to reduce the environmental impacts on water and air quality. These overall trends are being built into the current proposals to achieve greater production without having an increased impact upon the environment.

Mitigation of the Environmental Impacts of Dairy Farming

Grant aid from Natural England is assisting in the improvement of separation of rainwater at the farm to create improved water quality in the Sence catchment, which is to be used to create a separated drainage system which will take clean rainwater directly to surface water drainage without being in contact with animal waste, prior to the carrying out of the expansion scheme. This results in there being no increased need for slurry storage despite the increase in cattle numbers, which will have added benefit of no additional impact upon air quality. As a result of global warming leading to increased rainfall, the ability to utilise slurry as a fertiliser is being channelled into a shorter period during the annual cycle of grass and feed cropping. This leads to the need for greater storage requirements on production units because sufficient storage must be provided to cover the longer period before it can be used. Direct injection of slurry into the soil also takes place, which has considerably reduced the impact of the application of slurry on air quality. Recent advances in the management of the diet of dairy cows has also seen reduction in the discharge of gases, leading to a lower impact on air quality. These dietary measures have been adopted by Castle Farm.

The proposed animal housing buildings will allow an additional 50 cows to be added to the production herd, with an attendant additional 50 heifers bred on the farm as followers, increasing the total stock on the farm by 25%, without increasing the environmental impact of the herd above historic levels due to the factors set out above. The curtilage of the nearest protected building within the 400m radius from the proposal, so determining the need for a full planning application, is

at 300m from the application boundary, being the Congerstone Primary School. The only other potentially protected building within the 400m radius is a house to the immediate East of the school which is occupied by one of the proprietors of the applicant farm.

The Proposals

The additional buildings proposed are:

Building 1 (as marked on 1-500 scale plan):

Is an extension on the North side of an existing cow cubicle shed which will provide additional sand bedded accommodation for dairy cows

Scale and Description:

Floorspace 131.55 m² Length 16.61 m Width 7.92 m

Height to Eaves 3.66 m Height to ridge 4.67 m Roof pitch 15°

The external cladding of the building will be treated softwood Yorkshire boarding to match the existing building.

The roof will be natural grey corrugated fibre-cement sheeting to match the existing building.

Building 2:

Is an extension on the North side of an existing cow cubicle shed which will provide additional sand bedded accommodation for dairy cows.

Scale and Description:

Floorspace 200.72 m² Length 13.72 m Width 14.63 m

Height to Eaves 3.66 m Height to ridge 5.62 m Roof pitch 15°

The external cladding of the building will be treated softwood Yorkshire boarding to match the existing building.

The roof will be natural grey corrugated fibre-cement sheeting to match the existing building.

Building 3:

Is an extension with a double pitched roof with valley gutter on the North side of an existing cow cubicle shed which will provide additional sand bedded accommodation for dairy cows.

Scale and Description:

Floorspace 627.05 m² Length 22.86 m Width 27.43 m

Height to Eaves 3.66 m Maximum height to ridge 5.70 m Roof pitch 15°

The external cladding of the building will be treated softwood Yorkshire boarding to match the existing building.

The roof will be natural grey corrugated fibre-cement sheeting to match the existing building.

Building 4:

Is a new building to house the young stock necessary to provide replacements for the dairy herd which are bred from the existing stock. The calves and heifers will be kept on a straw bedded system which will avoid liquid run-off and produce solid farmyard manure utilisable as fertiliser elsewhere on the farm

Description:

836.77 m² floorspace Length 54.86 m Width 15.25 m

Height to eaves 3.66 m Height to ridge 5.95 m Roof pitch 15°

External cladding of gable ends and side walls above 2.4 m to be in treated softwood Yorkshire boarding.

The roof will be natural grey corrugated fibre-cement sheeting to match the existing building.

All buildings will have a 1.8 m cantilevered projecting roof on exposed sides to provide weather protection for the cattle.

Design

All the buildings are a continuation of style of the existing farm buildings. The design is dictated by the balancing of the need for shelter and ventilation for the animals. For them to be maintained at peak health, especially preventing respiratory complaints and the transmission of infectious disease, avoiding extremes of temperature and accumulation of liquid and solid wastes are the priorities for animal welfare. Good design will support good health and welfare to the benefit of the farm business. Adequate stocking densities for feeding, drinking, loafing or lying down will all impact on positive health and performance. Surfaces and materials that provide adequate drainage, control wind speed, minimise sharp edges, provide non-slip floors, and are easy to clean, will all contribute.

In visual terms, the extension of the existing group of farm buildings will not materially impact upon the landscape of the area. The nearby roads and footpaths already have views of the farm. The new buildings will be seen without any significant increase in the overall scale of the farm complex. Effectively, the overall extent of the group of farm buildings would be extended eastwards by 24 metres and northwards by 23 metres beyond the existing footprint of the farm buildings of 130 metres (East/West) and of 100 metres (North/South). The farmyard silage and straw storage areas and the slurry pit all extend well beyond the tightly clustered buildings. From the East, the nearest public view is from Shackerstone Road, shown in Photograph 1. From the South the view is from Gopsall Road as shown in Photograph 2. These demonstrate that the modest extension of the footprint of the farm buildings will not materially alter the appearance of the complex from any significant viewpoint.

Access

There are no proposals to alter access to the buildings as the circulation passages and internal roadways are already all in existence. It is only due to the stipulated requirement in the Government Planning Practice Guidance for every planning application to be connected with a public highway that this has been shown down the existing service track to the main farm entrance.

There will be no material increase in the number of deliveries and collections from the farm resulting from the development. Economies of scale mean that existing arrangements for the daily collection of milk and delivery of, for example, feed supplements, will take place in larger quantities, but utilising the same size of vehicles which currently are used, so would not involve additional vehicles. The additional milk produced per day as the result of the development is about 10% of the capacity of a modern milk tanker. The level of traffic generation by the farm resulting from tractor movements for fieldwork will not alter.

The additional animals will not result in the employment of more staff, representing another example of the economies of scale of an efficient, modern farm unit, therefore there will be no additional traffic generation resultant from that. Accordingly, there will be no necessity for increased parking either. The existing farm parking has plenty of spare capacity in any event.

Planning Policy

There is a lack of specific guidance in both local and national planning upon the principles which should be applied to decision making in relation to the expansion of farms and the design of the buildings. A detailed examination of the Adopted Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan – Development Management Policies and Allocations Document and the Council's adopted supplementary planning documents reveals no policies or advice other than general Countryside management policies regarding sustainability and uses acceptable in the countryside contained in Policies DM 1 to DM6.

The National Planning Policy Framework also only makes reference to encouraging the support of the rural economy, including agriculture, with no detailed guidance on the design of farm buildings.

The general presumption with development in open countryside is to locate new buildings as close as possible to existing ones. This application has no difficulty in showing compliance with this requirement.

Bio-Diversity Net Gain Requirements

The bio-diversity net gain metric statutorily required is submitted with the application providing details of the 10% net gain proposed by the planting of a belt of hawthorn scrub to provide a habitat to compensate for the small amount of habitat lost by the extension of the farmyard area into the adjacent field.

Whilst the statutory requirements have been met, it is observed that the carrying out of the equivalent amount of agricultural buildings by a non-livestock unit by implementing up to 1500 square metres of permitted development under Class 6 of the General Permitted Development Order would incur no bio-diversity net gain requirement. This anomaly should be taken account of in consideration by the Local Planning Authority of their position on this matter.

Surface Water Drainage

The planned scheme of separation of the clean roof-water from the ground level exterior yard areas of the existing development will incorporate the storage of water for the purpose of providing drinking water for the cattle. By this means, the additional rapidity of run off resulting from the new development will be mitigated by storage of water from both the existing and proposed roofs of the

buildings. 400 cattle have a large drinking requirement and in the summer months the harvested rainwater will be inadequate to provide all their needs and will be augmented from other sources. This means that summertime flash rainfall events will be very effectively mitigated by the available storage. During the winter period, it is more likely that a steady consumption of the water will lead to a reasonably balanced outfall from the site, which is likely to be less than that currently dissipated as dirty water into the slurry lagoon. Accordingly, there will be benefits in reducing both the dirty and clean water run-offs from the site. The detailed storage requirements for this system will be provided as part of the subsequent applications for the detailed design of the buildings.

Conclusion

This development will make a contribution to the efficiency of dairy production in conditions of high welfare standards without increasing impact upon the environment. The improvements to the farm infrastructure will result in better management of clean water and waste. Those improvements will also ensure that air quality will be maintained.

The visual impact upon public viewpoints will not be materially altered by the very marginal increase in the overall size of the building complex set within the context of the existing farmyard.

Planning Policy objectives are met, with there being no specific guidance on the form of development specifically for agriculture contained in either local or national policy.

Appendix 1

Photograph 1



The View from Shackerstone Road – Building 4 would be seen in front of the existing buildings

Photograph 2



The View from Gopsall Road – The new buildings would lie behind the existing buildings and the straw stack on the right