

Committee: PLANNING
Date: 11 September 2007

**Report: PLANNING APPLICATION: FULL PLANNING PERMISSION FOR
ERECTION OF AGRICULTURAL BUILDING TO STORE
AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS AND TO USE AS AN ANIMAL
SHELTER, 2 LOW OAKS, MARTHWAITE, SEDBERGH, REFERENCE
S/03/404C**

Purpose of the report

1. To provide members with further information on the lack of agricultural need identified in the Agricultural Appraisal conclusion in order to assist in the determination of planning application S/03/404C, reported in the public papers.

Background

2. At the meeting of the Planning Committee on 14 August 2007, Members were minded to approve the planning application for a 5 bay building as they considered that the independent agricultural appraisal provided by Capita Symonds indicates in Appendix II that a 4.4 bay building would be reasonable for future expansion, despite the report's conclusion which states that a 2 bay building would be sufficient for the holding's current needs. A copy of the August Committee report is attached for Members' information.

3. Following the August meeting the Planning Officer requested further information from Capita Symonds on the size of building required for the existing stock, and on the size of building required for projected stock. In response to this request, Capita Symonds have confirmed that a 2 bay building would be sufficient for the existing livestock, fodder and machinery. If the applicant expands the business to 12 cows with calves kept on for the subsequent winter, just over 4 bays would be required for the proposals as currently put forward.

4. Capita Symonds advise that the proposed building is relatively large for a smallholding of 30 acres because :-

- a) The type of cattle to be kept (Longhorn cows) require a larger floor area per animal than traditional suckler cows.
- b) It is proposed to include a 6metre wide central feeding passage which is excessive in width and considerably increases the space requirement. Provision of feeding along an open elevation, perhaps with a part cantilever roof, to keep the weather off the feed, would much reduce the floor area requirement.

- c) The building is to house livestock, store hay and straw and farm machinery all of which have separate housing requirements eg, livestock housing needs to be well ventilated, often with open sides to allow a good flow of air to prevent pneumonia particularly in the calves of suckler cows, hay and straw storage is usually in a building with high eaves and good ventilation and open elevations, machinery storage of the type likely on this smallholding can be kept in a building with low eaves and access from open elevations to eliminate circulation space.
- d) The proposed penning arrangements of the cattle within this general purpose building have not been thought through. There is no provision to clean out the fouled bedding without crossing over the clean feeding areas; hay and straw will have to be carted around the outside of the building to feed and bed the cows and young stock, and access to the stock handling pen is not good for all the stock. These have all contributed to making the building larger than necessary for the number of cattle it could house.
- e) The proposals include provision for the storage of hay made on the holding. Making hay is becoming increasingly difficult as our summers become wetter. This year very little hay will have been made in this County. The majority of livestock farmers on small farms now make big bale silage to feed to their stock over the winter months, largely because it takes far less time from cutting the crop to baling and therefore it is less dependent on a period of good weather. These bales are invariably stored outside on a hard area. If they are stored inside they can become a home for vermin in the voids between the bales. Machinery for cutting, rowing up, baling, wrapping, carting and stacking is expensive and the majority of farmers now rely entirely on contractors to do this work. If big bale silage was to be made on this farm, then the storage space in the proposed building for hay and the machinery to make it could be deleted.

5. They advise that by planning the layout of this building better and modifying the method of conservation of winter feed, a smaller building would be sufficient for their current needs.

6. In terms of projected increases in stock levels at the holding, Capita Symonds have advised that there was no time period given by the applicants for the proposed increase in stock numbers. They advise that a prudent farmer would not increase livestock numbers unless sure he/she could provide the facilities to provide adequate care for them. ie. by building or renting existing buildings. As this is the applicant's first venture into farming it is very difficult to say if the proposed increase in stock numbers will materialise. They advise that an option in this case would be to consider the provision of a building in phases ie. provide a building now to accommodate the existing livestock and then to consider an extension to that building as and when livestock numbers are increased.

Conclusion

7. Based on the further advice offered by the Independent Assessor (Capita Symonds) it is considered that a smaller agricultural building of 2 bays would be acceptable based on the current land and stock levels. The enterprise is relatively new, and the application was submitted without any business plan identifying clear projections and timescales. It is

therefore considered that the proposal remains unjustified in terms of need for such a large building given the limited land and stock levels at the current time. Members should consider a smaller building based on the current needs, with the potential to extend the building in the future should the need arise.

RECOMMENDATION

8. That planning permission be refused for the following reason:

On the basis of the evidence which has been provided, the Local Planning Authority considers that it has not been demonstrated that the building is necessary in this location, as required under Policy F1 (agricultural buildings) of the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan, April 2006. The development, which would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape has therefore not been justified to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

9. Should members be minded to approve the planning application then the following conditions are recommended –

1. Standard time 3 years
2. Compliance with approved plans
3. Roof sheets – dark grey fibre cement
4. External upper walls and barge boards – timber stained dark brown within 3 months of the building being fully operational
5. External lower walls – block work rendered dark brown within 3 months of the building being fully operational
6. External doors – vertically boarded timber stained dark brown within 3 months of the building being fully operational
7. Exposed metalwork shall be painted dark brown (matt finish) within 3 months of the building being fully operational
8. No signage to be attached to the building
9. Removal of building when no longer required for agriculture

Andrea Burden
Area Planning Officer

24 August 2007

Background documents:

Yorkshire Dales Local Plan, April 2006

Report on the agricultural need in relation to a proposed general purpose agricultural building, Capita Symonds, April 2007