YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Committee:	Planning	**Parish:**	Coverham with Agglethorpe
Date:	25 October 2022	**Officer:**	Emma Heron
Applicant:	J H Simpson & Co	**Application No:**	R/60/26H
Site Address:	Gildersbeck Farm, Melmerby, Leyburn, North Yorkshire, DL8 4TW		
Proposal:	Full planning permission for erection of extension to existing cattle shed		

REASON FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

1. This application is reported to Committee for the following reason: the Parish Council recommendation is contrary to the decision which the Head of Development Management proposes to take.

APPLICATION SITE

2. The application site is Gildersbeck Farm, which comprises a complex of large farm buildings and a slurry lagoon. The farmstead is accessed from the road which runs between Carlton and Agglethorpe, Melmerby. The farm complex sits on several flattened steps, or plateaus in the hillslope.

3. The enterprise extends to over 250 hectares, of owner-occupied and rented land and comprises a range of modern agricultural buildings with slurry lagoon, designed for intensive dairy farming. The livestock comprises 650 dairy cows and 200 dairy followers.

PROPOSAL

4. The proposal is for the erection of an extension to the existing cattle shed. The existing shed was constructed in two phases under two separate planning permissions. It has a footprint of over 3,100 square metres (based on aerial images) and an overall height of 7.5 metres. The proposal has a footprint of 450 square metres, and a height to match the existing. It would be sited at the western end of the existing building on a plateau at the top of the access track.

5. The building would be used to house dairy cows, allowing heifers currently overwintered in Coverham, to be kept on the main farm. The application states that bringing the cows back into the main unit will help improve biosecurity and will reduce the need for additional travel by farm vehicles and machinery, to the overwintering site. Waste would be fed into the existing slurry lagoon via the existing slurry channel system.

RELEVANT PLANNING BACKGROUND

6. There have been a range of planning permissions and prior approvals for new agricultural buildings and extensions to buildings, from 1997 to date. In 2013 retrospective planning permission was granted for the slurry lagoon. In 2009 and 2015 permission was granted for the cattle shed and an extension to it (R/60/26D and R/60/26E). The proposal would be a further extension to this building.

7. There is an additional planning application on the agenda for the erection of an agricultural building to provide additional handling facilities for dairy cows (R/60/26J). This relates to the farm buildings below the level of the cattle shed described above.

8. It is understood from the applicant that there is likely to be a future application to extend the proposed cattle shed to the rear, on the existing plateau (ie north westwards into the hillslope.)

CONSULTATIONS

9. The comments of statutory and non-statutory consultees are summarized below:

Coverham-w-Agglethorpe PM Objection. Summarised below. The full text of the Parish Council's comments is available on the Authority's website, and will also be made available to members prior to the meeting.

- The farm is over-stocked and the proposal increases the density of stock on site. Large proportion of feedstock brought in.
- The position of the building will exacerbate the length of the existing prominent building.
- Degradation of water quality of the river Cover.
- Severe impact on dark skies from existing development on south side of the dale, and the proposal also has a negative effect.
- Additional farm traffic creation and the pressure this puts on the road network, and compromises highway safety. All feedstock needs to come in by road.
- Further intensification is not appropriate and the proposal is more suited to an industrial estate.

- Employment does not trump all, especially in the National Park.
- Caldbergh with East Scrafton and other neighbouring parishes should have been consulted, as well as Middleham Trainers Association and Middleham Town Council.

Richmondshire DC EHO Have considered the potential impact on amenity, and likelihood of the development to be affected by, or cause, a nuisance and consider that overall there will be limited adverse impact. No objection.

Trees & Woodlands No tree survey has been submitted. However, the development does not affect neighbouring trees. The proposed planting plan seeks to add to already existing planting. Adding to the existing hedgerow and tree line will lead to loss of young trees through competition. It is considered that it would be better to get light standard field trees in the area.

PUBLIC RESPONSES

10. The application was advertised by site notice erected on 4th October 2022. Any responses received as a result of this publicity will be reported to members at the Planning Committee meeting on 26th October.

An objection has been received raising the following points:

- Proliferation of industrial buildings at odds with size and character of the area
- Impact on health and quality of the river Cover from the increase in cattle farming in Coverdale
- Intensive farming has degraded the highway network including damage to a listed bridge
- Impact on dark skies by adding to the proliferation on the north side of the dale.

ASSESSMENT

11 **Key Issues**:

- Planning policy
- Landscape impact
- Neighbour amenity
- Biodiversity enhancements
- Parish Council comments
- Equality Act

PLANNING POLICY

12. The statutory purposes of the National Park are to: conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public. The Authority also has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park (Environment Act 1995). Also, great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, and the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage (para 176, NPPF).

13. Government policy also requires planning decisions relating to rural areas to enable the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, amongst other things (para 84 NPPF).

14. Policy BE2 of the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan (2015-2030) permits agricultural development where it is necessary to serve the needs of the enterprise in that location. Policy SP4 requires new development to meet certain standards relating to design, transport impacts, human safety and amenity.

15. The proposal is for an extension of an existing agricultural building on an existing viable farmstead. It's acceptability is subject to an assessment in respect of the landscape and visual impact, and other matters

as addressed below. The planning balance relates to visual and landscape impact in a National Park setting, and the sustainable economic growth of a rural business.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

16. Gildersbeck Farm is sited in an elevation position on the north west flank of Coverdale. It is widely visible, particularly when viewed from across the dale. This is due to the massing of the buildings as they are large, to accommodate the intensive nature of the enterprise. The orientation of the largest (cattle shed) building at the highest elevation has a light coloured roof and has its long, open-sided elevation facing across the dale, and this particular building compounds that visual impact. At night-time when the buildings are illuminated, the visual impact is also significant due to the wide-ranging vantage points, proliferation of rooflights, external and internal lighting systems and the open-sided building. The effect is made worse as there are other farm groups in the dale of a similar intensive nature that have a landscape and visual impact.

17. From closer views along the nearest roadside and footpaths at a lower elevation trees break up views upwards towards the farm complex, and it is viewed as partially tucked into the hill slope.

18. The proposed extension to the cattle shed, whilst narrower in width than the existing cattle shed would be at the same height, and would therefore present as a continuation of the long run of building at this level. However, it would have a Yorkshire boarded southern elevation with no rooflights, and would have darker colour walls and roof.

19. Whilst it would add 30 metres on to the end of the building, proportionately this is relatively modest, particularly given the design treatments that would assist in making the building more recessive in the landscape than the building it would form a part of.

20. The application is also accompanied by a landscaping plan, which includes additional tree planting with native trees along the tracks leading to the farm, a tree grouping at the access, and additional tree-planting to supplement existing planting across the field to the immediate south of the farm complex. Given the stepped heights of the buildings rising steeply uphill from south east to north west, it is not possible to provide full landscape screening, as there is not the space to provide this at the elevation the building is sited on. However, the proposals do assist in softening views from lower elevations. Given the comments of the Trees and Woodlands Officer in respect of overcrowding existing planting, full landscape details will be required by condition.

21. Overall, whilst the proposal extends the existing building, it is considered that this would be a modest accumulation over and above the existing, which would be mitigated to some extent through the scheme detailing so on balance is considered to have an acceptable landscape and visual impact in accordance with policy SP4 of the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan.

22. It Is noted in the RELEVANT PLANNING BACKGROUND section of the report that the applicant may seek a further application to extend this cattle shed rearwards into the hillslope. Whilst the merits of this are to be left for the assessment of that application, it is relevant to note that this current proposal can be viewed entirely as a standalone building, and one is not dependant on the other.

NEIGHBOUR AMENITY

23. There are no protected residential properties (ie those unrelated to agriculture) in the vicinity of the farm complex, and as such there are no impact in this respect (policy SP4).

BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENTS

24. Biodiversity enhancement for a scheme of this size requires biodiversity enhancement measures in the form of multiple nesting boxes or bat roosts, boundary and landscape enhancements. Whilst there is a native planting landscaping scheme this is relatively small-scale and is for softening landscape impact rather than specifically for biodiversity enhancements. Bat and bird boxes will be required by condition of any planning permission.

PARISH MEETING COMMENTS

25. The Parish Meeting has made detailed comments about the proposal, particularly focussing on the landscape and dark skies impact, intensive nature of the farming enterprise, traffic generation due to feedstock requirements and water quality concerns. These concerns are understood and appreciated, and primarily relate to the intensive nature of the existing enterprise. In this case it is the officer's view that the proposal is a modest addition to an already intensively farmed site, and the additional impacts associated with the proposal are not so great as to warrant a refusal.

EQUALITY ACT

26. The Authority has a duty under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share it. The relevant characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

27. It is considered that there are no overt reasons why this proposal would affect anyone with the protected characteristics such that the application should be permitted or refused on equality grounds.

CONCLUSION

28. The proposal is an extension to a large cattle shed at Gildersbeck Farm. The group of farm buildings as existing has a landscape and visual impact particularly when viewed from across the dale. There is also a dark skies impact as the existing farm complex incorporate open-sided buildings and external lighting. Whilst the proposal adds 30 metres to the length of the existing cattle shed, its impact will be softened by measures including the boarding of the southern elevation, recessive colour and no rooflights. Additional landscaping assists with breaking up views from closer vantage points. Overall, it is considered that the additional impact will be small-scale, to the extent that a recommendation of approval can be made.

RECOMMENDATION

29 It is recommended that permission is GRANTED subject to conditions based on the below;

I. Three years to implement
II. Plans list
III. Materials to be agreed (van dyke brown or anthracite grey), concrete walling to be recessive colour
IV. Southern elevation to be Yorkshire boarded with solid boarding to a point 0.5 m below eaves level; lighting to be positioned at or above eaves height
V. No rooflights on the southern elevation
VI. No external lighting on the southern elevation; a scheme of lighting to be agreed
VII. Landscape scheme to be submitted, implemented and maintained for five years
VIII. Bat and bird box scheme
IX. Rainwater harvesting scheme
X. Waste water must enter slurry lagoon only