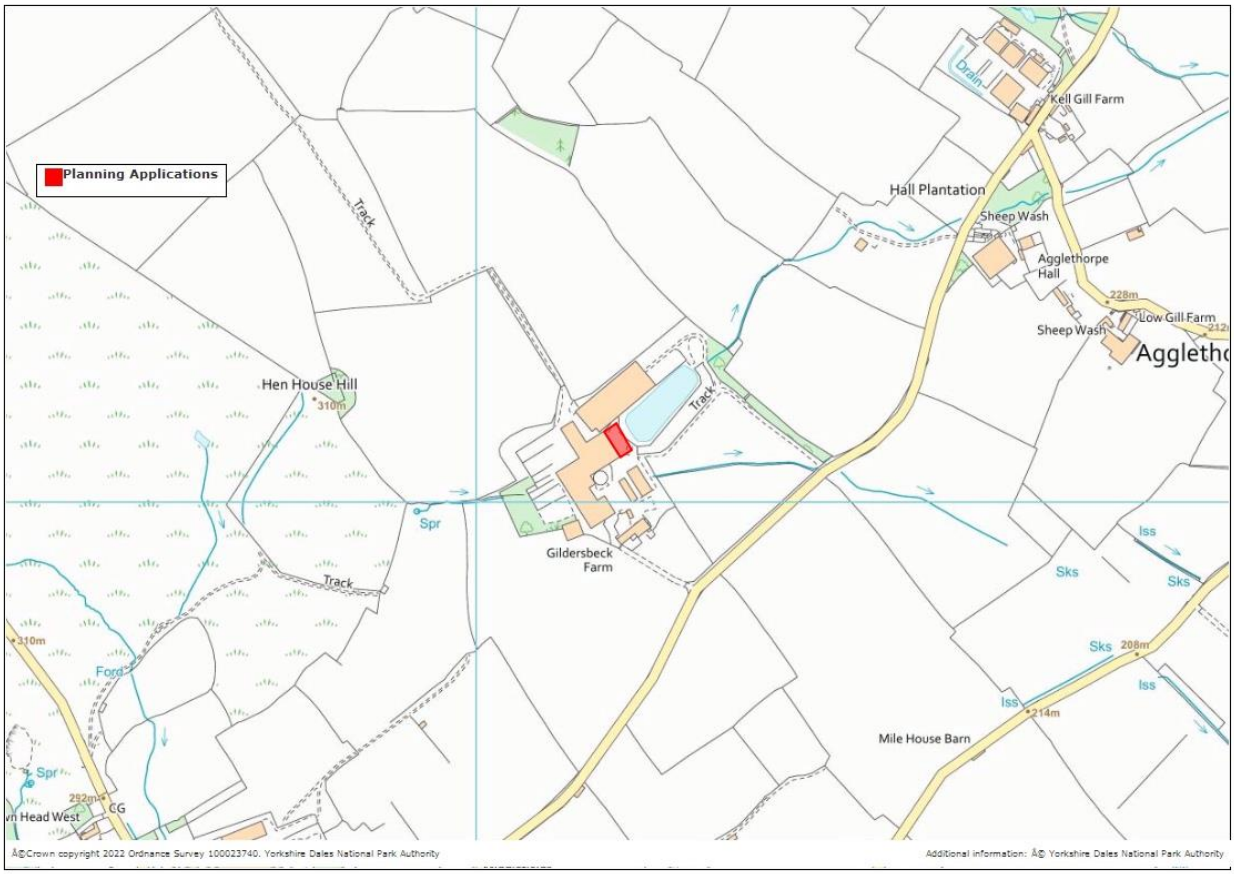
YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Committee:	Planning	**Parish:**	Coverham with Agglethorpe
Date:	25 October 2022	**Officer:**	Emma Heron
Applicant:	J H Simpson & Co	**Application No:**	R/60/26J
Site Address:	Gildersbeck Farm, Melmerby, Leyburn, North Yorkshire, DL8 4TW		
Proposal:	Full planning permission for erection of agricultural building to provide additional handling facilities for dairy cows		



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 areas on 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

6. The proposal is for the erection of an agricultural building for the handling of dairy cattle to measure lameness and cleanliness scoring and routine tasks such as foot trimming, group sorting, drying off and breeding. It would be sited to the west of the slurry lagoon with its gable south facing, and its long edge facing east. It would be 30 metres by 15 metres with a height to ridge of seven metres. It would be connected to an existing building and would be clad in vent air sheet walling, with concrete panels below. The north gable would be more open-sided. No lighting is proposed.

RELEVANT PLANNING BACKGROUND

7. 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.

8. There is an additional planning application on the agenda for the erection of an extension to the cattle shed at the top level plateau (R/60/26H).

CONSULTATIONS

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

Coverham-w-Agglethorpe PM Objection, noting that this is a 're-hash' of the previous planning application R/60/26H. 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.
- 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 No comments received.

PUBLIC RESPONSES

10. The application was advertised by site notice erected on 26th February 2022. No third party comments were received as a result of the application publicity.

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 is acceptable in principle 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 proposal the subject of this application would sit alongside gable-fronted buildings that are visually well-related to the original farm building complex. The building would also be partially screened from view by the existing buildings that are positioned immediately in front of it. No lighting is proposed, and the most prominent elevations are clad in vent air sheets. The landscape and visual impact is considered minimal relative to the scale and layout of the existing farm complex (policy SP4).

NEIGHBOUR AMENITY

17. 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

18. Biodiversity enhancement for a scheme of this size requires biodiversity enhancement measures in the form of multiple nesting boxes or bat roosts. Bat and bird boxes will be required by condition of any planning permission(policy W2).

PARISH MEETING COMMENTS

19. 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. It is important to note however that the Parish Meeting has objected to this application on the basis that it is a revised position for the extension to the cattle building (R/60/26J). This is incorrect. The proposal is for an entirely separate building with a different function.

20. The Parish Meeting comments are appreciated and understood, however in the case of this proposal, it is considered that the building is appropriately sited and the external appearance is such that it would have an acceptable landscape impact (policy SP4).

EQUALITY ACT

21. 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.

22. 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

23. The proposal would be a relatively modest addition to an existing building at Gildersbeck Farm, well-sited to the rear of an existing building and orientated such that an enclosed gable end would face south. The proposal would be acceptable having regard to policies SP4, BE2 and W2 of the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan (2015-2030).

RECOMMENDATION

24. It is recommended that permission is GRANTED subject to conditions based on;

I. Three years to implement
II. Plans list
III. Materials to be a dark recessive colour and clad as per the elevation details
IV. No external lighting; any scheme of lighting to be agreed
V. Bat and bird box scheme
VI. Rainwater harvesting scheme