

Planning & Design

Supporting Statement

October 2020

Erection of small agricultural building

Field off, Bradshaw Road, Holmfirth, HD93RD



Applicants-

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Snape View
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Introduction

This application seeks full planning consent for an agricultural building to support the existing established holding. The application has been prepared by ourselves although we have taken advice from suitable professionals. The building is required to comply with animal handling and welfare requirements, food / machinery storage and to enable business expansion through flock growth.

The statement sets out the proposal including relevant supporting information which should be read in conjunction with the plans provided. Due to the current Covid situation, we have included several photographs.

About Us

We are very aware of climate change, we try to live our lives in a sustainable way. We waste nothing and reuse whatever we can. The evidence of mankind damaging the environment is all around us, and its hard to ignore. Its our aim to limit our contribution to climate change, and promote a greener lifestyle, whilst operating the holding in the most environmentally friendly way.

We live on the holding in a super efficient off grid ECO house. All our annual electricity demand is generated sustainably on site, this way we believe that we can live with the lowest possible carbon output, and least damage to the precious environment.

Our main activity is sheep breeding, for income, but also to provide a sustainable method of producing food that has been raised in a natural, healthy and stress free way. 2021 will see us become more environmentally efficient as we will start to grow a small vegetable crop, initially for our own consumption. Producing more of our own produce will allow us to be more self sufficient, reducing our carbon output at the same time.

Keeping animals on the land maintains openness in the greenbelt by stopping development. Farming allows us all to enjoy the beautiful countryside as well as encouraging nature and biodiversity. Whilst we do most of the work ourselves, during busy times of the year we hire in assistance. In line with our environmental beliefs we try to conduct all our farming work to have the least impact upon the environment. Additionally to animal welfare and general land maintenance we have installed land drains and have rebuilt several sections of drystone walls, and fencing, helping to preserve the local landscape, for many years to come.

Site and surroundings

The proposed site is adjacent to Snape View off grid Eco House at Bradshaw Road Holmfirth. It is located in a rural area, high up above both Holmfirth and

Meltham, there are very few dwellings and they are well spaced apart. The local area has a small number of farm dwellings, converted barns and timber clad agricultural or equine related buildings.

This is an extremely exposed location, at over 1000 feet above sea level. The prevailing south westerly wind blows from Holme Moss across the valley and regularly blasts the site. There is very little tree cover or shelter from the wind. In winter its a very wet and windy place with no shelter from the cold prevailing wind. Being at high altitude and such an exposed location, necessitates a different attitude towards animal welfare, than perhaps that of a farm low down in the valley. Some shelter for the animals during the most severe weather is a necessity for animal well being.

Located just above the old Snape reservoir, this reservoir has been disused for many years, but is now a haven for wildlife including migrating birds, ducks and other animals. The reservoir was located here to take advantage of the natural springs in the area. This does however mean that in winter the fields can become very wet.

The main use of the land in the area is agriculture, for sheep, cows and horses. There are a number of agricultural timber clad buildings for housing animals over the winter.

Our holding currently has a series of ramshackle truck bodies and a shipping container that are all rather unsightly, however they are necessary for animal welfare as there are no other permanent buildings that could be utilized. Whilst there are no footpaths in the locality, Bradshaw Road does get regular walkers, and the mobile truck bodies / containers are visible from the road.



View of two truck bodies from Bradshaw road

Animal welfare

It's our intention to give the animals the healthiest start in life, followed by a stress free and comfortable life before its eventually time for slaughter or market.

DEFRA suggests that the wintering of sheep inside can help welfare. Sick or injured animals must be quarantined in a dry pen.

Schedule 1, paragraph 6 states: - where necessary, sick or injured animals shall be isolated in suitable accommodation with, where appropriate, dry comfortable bedding.

Our current arrangement of separate truck bodies makes it very difficult to handle the sheep under cover, as we are unable to set up pens. Usually any medical needs have to be dealt with in the fields. This can be dangerous for humans and not very comfortable for the animals, plus it's inefficient, and reduces profitability.

Some routine welfare processes are difficult to carry out effectively in the fields. Tasks such as foot bathing require a concrete area to stand the sheep on allowing the solution to dry before the animal is returned to the pasture. The hard standing building floor is ideal for this. Lambing under cover in a pen is easier with greater success and less animal stress in a controlled environment. Other veterinarian procedures must be carried out under cover for both human safety and animal welfare. This was highlighted by a recent veterinarian visit with the suggestions that a building is necessary for animal welfare, please see attached letter from Donaldson vets.



No shelter from the prevailing wind, looking toward Holme Moss

In order to control vermin and crows especially during lambing time, we applied for a shotgun license. West Yorkshire Police have visited, inspected the holding, found it suitable and issued a shot gun license to shoot over the land.

Holding

We currently own 5.7 acres (the holding base) and have a rental agreement up to October 2025 for some adjacent fields. The total holding is 19.2 acres. A plan of the owned land and rented land is included with the application. A copy of the tenancy agreement is available to view on request. In Addition to the above we also rent a 6 acre field at Grange moor that is used for hay production. This field always yields in excess of 300 small bales. This field is shared with another other farmer who has a suitable barn. Unfortunately due to our limited storage we must make several trips through out the winter season to collect the hay. This is time consuming and wasteful in terms of fuel and the unnecessary traffic and pollution created by the journeys.

As further fields become available its our intention to purchase/ lease more land allowing us to further extend our flock. Ewes are currently wintered outside, unfortunately this has lead to losses each winter season and messy fields during the winter, that take many months to get back to condition. The ewes are currently lambed in the fields, as the truck bodies are too small to create pens.

This will be our 3rd winter operating the holding, and during that time we have gained vital experience about the local climate, animals and their requirements for food storage, shelter and understanding of animal welfare, in this harsh environment.

Relevant registrations-

Business Identifier number- 200468134
County Parish Holding number (CPH)- 49/345/0438
Sheep Flock Number- 421031
Pig Flock Number -ZR2866
Animal health registration Number- C1278943
Shotgun license 13/D/003928/2020

We are registered for Sheep, Goose, Duck, Chicken, Pigs. All our Holding documents, business plan, tenancy agreement and flock book are available for inspection.

Our mobile vehicle bodies and shipping container provide a method of keeping a small number of animals out of the worst of the weather, and some equipment storage plus limited space for food and hay etc. However some of our larger equipment does not fit inside temporary truck bodies and is stored outside in the elements. Plus we really do need several more temporary mobile truck bodies to provide shelter and storage for our sheep throughout the year. Purchasing more truck bodies was our first thought, but a neighbour was concerned about the appearance, and suggested a purpose built agricultural shed would be better. We currently fall short of our animal welfare obligations, and removing the old temporary truck bodies to replace them with a new properly designed and sized agricultural building is also more efficient, more secure and will greatly improve the visual aspect of the holding.

Our current arrangement for storing food and hay is not very practical due to space limitations. We prefer to store traditional small hay bales inside rather than the larger wrapped bales that are often seen stacked in the corner of fields. This is because large bales rot and becomes an eye-saw that takes months to recover. Plus the smaller bales are much easier to move by hand.

The business is registered at Companies house-

Activity- Farming

Company Number-13030372

Registered name- SNAPE VIEW FARMING COMPANY LTD

Registered address at the holding base.



Damage to land though use of large bales

Security

Unfortunately theft from farms is again on the increase, in the last 2 years all of our neighbouring farms have experienced theft of farm equipment or valuables.

Having a secure building somewhere to store the equipment out of sight in a lockable unit is of great benefit, and is in its-self a crime prevention measure.

Access

The holding has excellent existing access off Bradshaw road. This has been in place for many years and has tarmac track with traditional central grass strip. Some of the track has a crushed stone surface, there is adequate access and turning. Recently an articulated truck with 40 foot trailer accessed the site. There is existing access from the track onto hard standing in the field where the proposed agricultural building will be sited. There are no highway implications to this proposal.



Area of hard standing and field entrance gate

Proposal

To erect a new agricultural building on an existing established holding.

1, To provide secure dry storage for animal feeds / bedding material. Bales of hay, straw, sheep pellets and mineral tubs, etc .

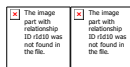
2, To provide essential winter shelter for the sheep, and other animals also providing shading when required from hot summer days, and periods of harsh weather. As required by DEFRA to comply with animal welfare requirements.

Keeping the animals inside during the worst of the wet weather helps to keep the fields in better condition and also is more attractive to the eye, the fields also recover sooner in the spring. Plus standing in wet muddy fields can cause foot problems for animals.

3, Lambing under cover in pens can be easier for ewes and more convenient for the farmer, with less chance of losses. It will also provide required penned shelter for quarantined / sick animals and orphan lambs that require feeding several times per day, for many months. Carrying out veterinarian procedures and general welfare tasks.

4, Create a tidier more eye pleasing holding. Removing the various containers and van bodies, water storage tanks and keeping the equipment under cover in a secure agricultural building.

5, Storage for farm machinery, wet work-ware, boots, PPE equipment, tools, animal welfare supplies and horticultural equipment required to maintain the land, fences, gulleys and walls.



Current unsuitable hay and food storage



Agricultural building construction

The proposal is for a small agricultural building measuring 14m wide, 10 meters deep, giving a gross area of 140m². The land coverage of the current container/ truck body arrangement is 46m², however this is much smaller than our actual requirement for animal welfare alone. The low roof pitch will follow the slope of the land and also happens to be the same as the existing nearby dwelling. Our proposal is to excavate the ground by approximately 0.5 to 1meter and use a single storey low height building, both will help to reduce the visual impact. Note also that the frontage length is actually less than 2 meters longer than the existing mobile shipping container, and will be set further back from the road, again helping to improve the appearance.

A steel portal frame, covered in traditional vertical sawn timber Yorkshire boarding topped off by a grey (ral7016) profiled metal roof will reflect local building style and materials. The timber will grey after a couple of years and fit in well with the surrounding timber clad barns in the area. The boarding will be almost full length with only a low block work wall, this is to reduce the amount of carbon intensive masonry block work, and instead use sustainable timber. This will also replicate the style of boarding on the adjacent dwelling. The steel frame allows for an open plan interior that can easily be reconfigured as the seasons and animal requirements demand. Traditional sliding timber doors not only function well on the windy site but are also more pleasing on the eye than galvanized gates. This is sustainable construction as many components are recyclable at the end of their life, timber and steel are the main cladding materials.

The building will have access openings to the south and the north elevations. This will for example allow us to get the sheep in from the north field, process them and put them out to the south field. It also is important for ventilation for periods when animals are kept inside, as controlled regular air changes are very important for animal welfare. It will also allow easy egress for farm machinery.

Animal drinking water will be collected off the roof, with surplus draining into a soak away. The electrical power supply will come directly from our renewable energy off grid power system. There will be no connection to the national grid and therefore there will be no additional carbon emissions associated with electricity use in the proposed new agricultural building.

Any topsoil removed from the site of the building will be redistributed on our fields.

Internally a small secure feed store, will provide a lockable secure area to store bagged animal feed, mineral tubs, medicine and welfare supplies and the like plus tools. This will also prevent mice and vermin from entering. Hay will be stored over the feed store. The larger machinery will be located adjacent to the feed store. The area occupied by the feed store is 15m² leaving around 125m² of open space that can easily be reconfigured by a series of metal folding pens, depending upon the seasonal requirements. E.g. in winter two or three large pens will keep the sheep out of the weather when necessary. During Lambing small pens will be set up for the expectant Ewes. They will only stay in the pen for a short time after lambing until they have bonded and then turned out onto the pasture, with the next ewe moving in. During the summer / Autumn more space will be dedicated to hay storage, and some of that will be eaten up before the Sheep may need to take shelter from the winter. The aim is to create a fully functioning adaptable facility from a small footprint

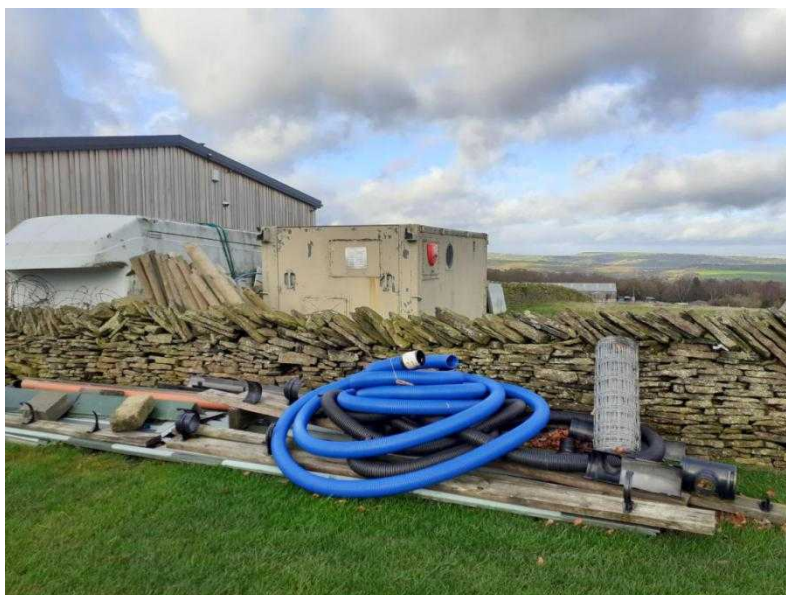
Due to the open nature of the agricultural building, it is envisaged that bats and migrating birds will make it a home.

Impact upon the landscape

A major incentive is to tidy up the appearance of the holding, but as with any development there will be some visual change. Upon balance we believe that the impact will be positive and reduce the sprawl of temporary mobile truck bodies / container and equipment out in open view.

The new agricultural building is proposed to go on the site of two of the truck bodies to the East of the dwelling (that also has the appearance of an agricultural barn), there has been an area of hard standing here for a number of years. The existing drystone wall behind the new agricultural building will be retained, partly screening the rear wall of the building if viewed from Dean road to the south. The drystone wall will significantly reduce the visual impact of the proposed agricultural building, especially as the timber greys over time.

We understand that this building is not as large as some agricultural buildings, but we believe that it will however be suitable for our animal welfare/ genuine requirements. Its important that the proposed agricultural building is not dominant in both appearance and scale. The foot print is around half of the adjacent building. Being next to another building it is therefore not an isolated building and will be located on an area of existing hard standing. Portal frame construction is relatively easy to extend if further capacity is required at a later date (subject to planning consent). Whilst a larger building would be preferable the financial burden would be too great, especially at this time when we are concentrating on expanding the flock.



Fence poles drainage & maintenance materials stored in the open near the truck bodies.

The new agricultural building will have a much smaller frontage and lower ridge height than the nearby dwelling, and will be clad in vertical Yorkshire boarding similar to the dwelling. We believe that the similar materials, shape and roof pitch will make it pleasing to look at.

We have consulted with our neighbours, and received positive comments, particularly regarding removal of the various truck bodies, shipping container, and having the ability to put equipment and materials out of sight.

Currently rainwater is collected to water the animals, this is stored in large plastic containers, unfortunately they are unsightly, but will be moved and reused for the same purpose but inside the new agricultural building.



Shipping container viewed from Bradshaw Road

The location on the site has been selected because:

- 1, Its directly off the existing track with suitable existing field entrance on to existing hard standing. No new tracks or field entrances are required.
- 2, Conveniently close to the house for lambing, animal care, and security.
- 3, Keeping buildings reasonably close has less visual impact and is in line with policy of greenbelt agricultural development.
- 4, Divides two fields so aiding processing of animals
- 5, Is located on a pre existing area of hard standing, currently home to two of the van bodies.
- 6, Travelling down Bradshaw road the building would be screened by the existing Dwelling.

Current flock

As with all holdings the flock size will vary throughout the year. As I write (October 2020) we have a mixture of Texel cross, North of England Mules, and some Ryelands. This years lambs are still with us and the males will be mainly off to market soon, with the Gimmers used in our breeding program to expand the flock. The Ryelands have received positive feedback, the meat from our initial lambs, sought after by premium chefs, described by one as *"Ryeland is the best lamb I have ever tasted, super tasty super tender with a real good fat content."* We will be extending our Ryeland flock to exploit this premium

market. Ryelands are however not a hardy highland sheep, they are lowland sheep and originate from Herefordshire. In order to flourish they require shelter from the worst of the weather.

The October sales will further extend our breeding program, with the addition of some shearlings, excluding this, our live stock today totals 101.

Our business plan has an ambitious 25% incremental flock growth year on year, for the first 3 years with further expansion dependant upon securing additional grazing, and suitable welfare facilities.



Orphan lambs require regular supplementary feed for many months

Orphan lambs require regular additional feeding to make up for the lack of mothers milk early in life, firstly milk supplement and then lamb pellets for many months after. The truck bodies have no heat or light, so the orphan lambs usually start life in the kitchen, a situation that would be much more appropriate in a pen in the agricultural building.

Policy

The proposal meets the requirement a,b,c & d of planning policy LP54, although our enterprise may not be of the scale of some large farms it is unquestionably agriculture, and is genuinely required for agricultural and animal welfare and to support business expansion.

Policy LP54

Buildings for agriculture and forestry **Proposals for new buildings** for agriculture and forestry will **normally be acceptable**, provided that;

- a. the building is genuinely required for the purposes of agriculture or forestry;
- b. the building can be sited in close association with other existing agricultural buildings, subject to the operational requirements of the holding it is intended to serve. Isolated new buildings will only be accepted exceptionally where there are clear and demonstrable reasons for an isolated location;
- c. There will be no detriment to the amenity of nearby residents by reason of noise or odour or any other reason; and
- d. the design and materials should have regard to relevant design policies to ensure that the resultant development does not materially detract from its Green Belt setting.

This application fully complies with Policy LP54.

Policy LP1 –Presumption in favour of sustainable development

1, Economic role- We are a growing business, held back by a lack of suitable facilities. The heart of this policy is to support growth and innovation. Supporting this proposal will help this innovative off grid low carbon holding to expand and contribute to the local economy.

2, Social role- Whilst farming has little to do with the built environment, it does contribute towards the well-being of the village community, in terms of visual amenity, maintaining landscapes and footpaths. Plus healthy, locally produced organic meat.

3, Environmental role -Farming unfortunately all too often is the cause of environmental issues. Often because of processes passed down by generations, but also because this is a hard pressed industry, with low profit margins. The success or failure of a farm can often be linked to the weather and harvests. However as environmentalists, along with animal welfare our priorities are the environment. Farming also encourages biodiversity. This building will have no carbon emissions linked to electricity use, due to its off grid power system. Helping to reduce climate change, and is a great example of assisting a low carbon economy and supporting the rural economy at the same time. Further to this;

Policy LP10- States the economic performance of the rural economy will be improved by, supporting the needs of small enterprises.

Justification

Animal welfare is our primary concern, currently we fall short because of a lack of animal housing and storage facilities. That will be rectified by the new agricultural building. The various truck bodies are separate and don't give us

the space to create proper pens, making lambing and welfare activities very difficult.

Our lack of space for food storage is also restricting us. This becomes more noticeable each year as the flock grows. The truck bodies offer very limited space, and require awkward manual handling of hay and winter food stocks. The limited storage also precludes us from bulk buying, this has a negative effect profitability, and our ability to further expand.

Moving the agricultural equipment into the building will tidy the holding, this helps toward the safety of animals and humans, it increases security, plus it improves the appearance from the road side.

Keeping the animals inside during the worst weather not only protects them and keeps them in better health, but it also keeps the fields in better condition for longer, something that most passers by will appreciate.

In the last ten years, almost one person a week has been killed as a direct result of agricultural work. Many more have been seriously injured or made ill by their work. An agricultural building helps to provide a safe working environment, out of the weather elements and with night time lighting to help prevent accidents, that may be caused by animal handling / procedures or perhaps machinery maintenance.

Closing statement

We believe that this application fulfils the planning requirements, it is essential to allow our business to move forwards and also to provide animal welfare and human safety. The building is genuinely required to support our current and growing farming enterprise. Considerable time and effort has gone into the design and appearance and we feel that this, low height, sustainable building will fit in comfortably with the general appearance of the area. After construction there will be no additional carbon emissions associated with the running of the building due to the off grid power supply. To our knowledge there are no other truly off grid farm holdings in the area.

If there is any doubt, or you have any questions, we ask that you contact us in good time so that we can clarify any details as you may require. You are welcome to visit site for a pre arranged viewing or we would be pleased to send over any requested photographs. Upon approval and in the interests of visual amenity we will remove the shipping containers from the holding and are happy for this to be a condition of approval.

We would also like to take the opportunity to promote a lower carbon lifestyle through education and demonstrating that we can all live in a more environmentally friendly way. We believe that through our Eco house we have demonstrated our commitment to sustainability. This agricultural building is the next step in achieving food sustainability.

If you would like to see live data from our off grid eco house, use the link below. We provide this information, so that others can learn and perhaps aspire to a lower carbon lifestyle.

<https://vrm.victronenergy.com/installation/50285/share/2441d131>

Additional photographs-



Looking West up Bradshaw Road, the existing dwelling is just visible. The proposed agricultural building will be lower in height, and will be excavated into the ground, at what is all-ready 0.5m lower than the dwelling. It is thought that from this position the building will either not be visible, or perhaps the roof line might be in view. From this point on it will come into view.



Lambing in the fields in Spring. Late Snow significantly increases the mortality rate



View looking north with Meltham behind and below Brooks plantation. Note that the plantation blocks the view in the opposite direction also.