

PLANNING STATEMENT

Location	Delph House Farm, High Flatts, Denby Dale, Huddersfield, HD8 8XY
application	Change of Use of Silage Clamp Pit and Agricultural Building to Caravan Storage
client/applicant	Delph House Farm
job number	24/1091
date	December 2024

INTRODUCTION

This planning statement forms part of the planning application for the proposed Change of Use of Silage Clamp Pit and Agricultural Building to Caravan Storage (Use Class B8), at Delph House Farm, High Flatts, Denby Dale, Huddersfield, HD8 8XY.

BACKGROUND

Delph House Farm is the home of Yummy Yorkshire, an ice cream parlour that has developed since its inception in 2007 to its current established form. The farm goes back three generations as a former dairy farm with herds of circa 300 head in its prime. Following the forced reduction in prices paid for milk the farm set out on its diversification route in creating artisan ice cream. The business flourished, winning award after award, employing more staff and growing the business. The growth and specifically family management of the business led to milk being sourced from another neighbouring farm.

The dairy herd became redundant and agricultural operations diminished with the focus on the diversification.

In 2012 the farm further diversified and created the Hide and Hoof, a larger coffee shop, ice cream parlour and restaurant.

The business has further evolved in providing a base for local talented traders who attend the 'Market on the Farm', this again has created more employment opportunities with the business now being a substantial employer of many local residents.

The former dairy and milking parlour was ageing, outdated and in need of significant financial investment to keep abreast with legislative changes and advances in technology. This also contributed to the closure and sourcing of a greater volume of milk from another very local farm.

The farm no longer has a dairy herd which has rendered large agricultural structures around the farm redundant and in dire need of innovative reuse measures. This application proposes to reassign the agricultural buildings that form part of this application along with the redundant silage clamp pit (where fodder was stored for the former dairy herd). It is proposed to re-purpose these buildings and silage clamp pit but in a sensitive way which has no impact on the current business on site. The proposed use, we contend, is one that compliments the rural diversification on site here adding to the other popular well used services along with the ice cream parlour remaining the mainstay of the farm.

Various options for the buildings and silage clamp pit were assessed but many options were found inappropriate for a number of reasons. The scale of the existing silage clamp pit and buildings presents an optimal opportunity to provide storage for motorhomes and caravans. This option also allows diversification without large levels of impact or change to the overall setting and aesthetic of the farm and can be achieved with very small internal alterations. This is important when assessing the proposals against the visual amenity within The Green Belt.

The proposed block plan accompanying this application shows indicative spaces for 38 standard sized 2-berth towed caravans. This will be the maximum number of caravans to be stored but realistically is likely to be less.

PROPOSAL

Following increased financial difficulties placed on farms around the country, loss of farm payments (BPS – Basic Payment Scheme & CSS – Countryside Stewardship), diversification of use is becoming increasingly popular for ensuring that farms can remain in use and create enough income to continue running. Achieving feasible diversification especially when the site is within the Green Belt is difficult and often highly expensive for the site owners. New ways of providing new uses of existing structures that react to growing needs and requirements of the community is paramount to ensure the longevity of not only the continued use of the farm, but ensuring the site remains as a large part of the context of the local area and green belt having been in use over multiple generations.

It is proposed that the vacant barns and silage pit that were previously used for a circa 300+ head of cattle are to be sympathetically internally modified to allow vehicle storage. By making small internal changes, this will allow for no external aesthetic changes and ensure the visual context of the site remains exactly the same, protecting the visual amenity and visual of the Green Belt.

As noted above the proposal is to change the use of the previous silage pits and cattle housing barns to caravan storage (Use Class B8).

The proposals will have no impact on the existing other businesses on site. The site has a good access route suitable for such vehicles leading to the proposed storage spaces which will be away from the public and existing business location.

The applicant has a robust management plan to ensure no impact on the other business on site.

All bookings for caravan storage are to be by prior appointment or booking only. Caravan movements are proposed to be restricted to 7am-8:15am and 6pm-9pm which ensures any additional traffic movement created by the proposals is controlled and outside of the business hours of the existing stores on site, this ensures no negative impact on the local highway network.

The existing silage clamp pit area requires no change to allow for external caravan storage and the entrances to both that, and the existing barns provides ample space for vehicular manoeuvring. The silage clamp pit will remain uncovered but given the topography and arrangement this will not be visible from public viewpoints.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

With regards to highways, we contend the current established use as a dairy and collecting yard had a significantly adverse impact on highway safety. Cattle were brought into the farm 'on the hoof' for milking twice daily, they were walked back out to local pasture, generally across the Highway (Penistone Road) 4 times per day for the two milking sessions. This would effectively close the road for a short period whilst cattle were moved to and from the dairy, the vehicle movements of the herdsman and other farmhands associated to the herd and milking added to the vehicle movements to and from the site at regular intervals. This proposed use potentially requires additional vehicle movements however these will be outside usual business hours which will not increase traffic pressures at busier times of the day.

Given the popularity of Yummy Yorkshire as an ice cream parlour and Café, vehicular traffic is present only during daytime opening hours with good standards of access, parking and internal turning accessed directly from Penistone Road.

To ensure that no additional pressure is subjected to the site and the existing traffic volume, the caravan movements are proposed to be restricted to 7am-8:15am to 6pm-9pm which falls outside of the existing business hours when traffic levels are very low. The site isn't open to the public out of these hours, unless for a specific event, in which case bookings for caravan movements can simply be avoided.

All bookings for caravan storage are to be by strict prior appointment only to ensure traffic and security is controlled to the highest level.

The existing access from the North-East of the site provides a straight and safe easy access route through the site to the proposed areas for change of use.

Due to the farm previously being used for dairy purposes and having large farm equipment to be manoeuvred, the existing access routes are of sufficient widths and turning spaces.

PROPOSED WORKS (Appearance)

The proposal results in minimal works to the building/site as indicated on the plans. These are all internal with no external change to the appearance.

The existing building lends itself to the proposed use with the simple internal changes to facilitate the process and change of use.

MEANS OF ACCESS

Means of access to the site and building is unaffected.

Arrivals and departures will follow strict time restrictions, pre-bookings only, and utilise existing access routes.

All arrivals and departures will be made outside of the existing Yummy Yorkshire business hours.

LANDSCAPING

There is no proposed change to the landscaping to the site, although we are willing to discuss any landscaping measures considered appropriate.

LAYOUT

The submitted plans indicate the layout illustrating minimal change as a result of the proposals.

SCALE

The scale and massing is unaffected by this change of use proposal. Building operations are to a minimum, with all the works being the reconfiguration of internal spaces.

PLANNING POLICY

The application site falls within the greenbelt on the Kirklees Local plan;



The following Kirklees local planning policies apply to this proposal;

- LP1 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- LP2 – Place Shaping
- LP7 – Efficient and effective use of land and buildings
- LP21 – Highway Safety and Access
- LP22 – Parking
- LP24 - Design
- LP31 – Strategic Green Infrastructure Network
- LP60 – The reuse and conversion of Buildings

The following NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) policies are also applicable;

- Chapter 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Chapter 4 – Decision Making
- Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities
- Chapter 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land
- Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Given the simplistic proposals with minimal alteration to the buildings we focus on the re-use and conversion of the existing building (LP 60).

LP 60 states;

The re-use and conversion of buildings

Proposals for the conversion or re-use of buildings in the Green Belt will normally be acceptable where;

- a. the building to be re-used or converted is of a permanent and substantial construction;
- b. the resultant scheme does not introduce incongruous domestic or urban characteristics into the landscape, including through the treatment of outside areas such as means of access and car parking, curtilages and other enclosures and ancillary or curtilage buildings;
- c. the design and materials to be used, including boundary and surface treatments are of a high quality and appropriate to their setting and the activity can be accommodated without detriment to landscape quality, residential amenity or highway safety

This application is for the change of use of agricultural barns and silage clamp pit. The conversion works required as a result of the proposal are minimal with all the proposed works internal

(consisting of levelling the concrete floors (infilling the swill runway with crushed stone) and the removal of the steel cattle stalls).

These existing structures are some of the oldest buildings on the farm. Their permanence and construction clearly indicate they are longstanding structures capable of the proposed use without structural intervention or rebuilding works.

We contend the proposed use does not introduce any incongruous domestic characteristics. The only addition externally will be the storage spaces to the rear of the units within the silage pit, however the high raised walls to the perimeter and general topography of the site the caravans will be masked from public view this ensures no negative impact to the visual amenity and provides levels of safety. There is already access to this area with it being previously used as access for large farm plant and vehicles.

There will be no landscaping or formal gardens to be laid out as one would expect with a domestic conversion.

With regards to highways, we contend the current established use as a dairy and collecting yard had a significantly adverse impact on highway safety. Cattle were brought into the farm for milking twice daily. Depending upon the location of grazing this would regularly involve the crossing of the busy Penistone Road. This would effectively close the road for a period of time whilst cattle were moved to and from the dairy, the vehicle movements of the herdsman and other farm hands associated to the herd and milking added to the vehicle movements to and from the site at regular intervals.

No built form or additional hardstanding is required as a result of the proposals which shows compliance with LP60b.

The proposals have no negative impact on ecology, protected species or trees.

Given no sales will take place on site, the proposal does not require a premises license.

This purposeful re-use of the redundant building encourages the recycling of existing resources, it positively contributes to the generation of economic activity in the locality.

All in all, we contend the impact of this proposal is negligible and an enhancement on the previous dairy use, specifically with regards to economic growth, protecting local business and highway safety.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN STATEMENT

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a key requirement under the UK Environment Act 2021, requiring certain development projects to deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity.

However, exemptions exist for specific scenarios, and the details regarding this change of use planning application suggest it may qualify for an exemption.

See overleaf;

1. Change Of Use Application

In most cases, where a change of use application is submitted the land in question is already developed and so any the habitat score will likely be zero and so no BNG is required.

2. No Habitat Present on Site

The redlined site is already fully developed in terms of hardstanding, tarmac, concrete and structures/existing buildings and therefore supports no habitat of ecological value, the baseline biodiversity value of the site is effectively zero. In such cases, there is no practical opportunity for a net gain, therefore an exemption is likely to be acceptable for these proposals.

We trust the Local Planning Authority to consider this type of project to align with the above reasons and apply discretion in enforcing BNG requirements.

CONCLUSION

We ask the local authority to support this proposal and enable a local/rural business to expand and develop further.

Should any further information be required please don't hesitate to contact us.

It would be appreciated if you could contact Paul Matthews Architectural Ltd prior to drafting up your recommendation for determination.