



PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
PROPOSED LIVESTOCK AND DAIRY BUILDING AT CASTLE HILL
FARM, LLANILAR, ABERYSTWYTH

On behalf of
Mr P Loxdale

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Evans Banks Planning has been instructed by Mr P Loxdale (the Applicant) to prepare this Planning, Design and Access Statement to accompany an application for a new cattle housing building, milking parlour and associated dairy at Castle Hill Farm, Llanilar. The scheme represents a new diversified element to an existing mixed system holding, ensuring its future operation and financial sustainability is secured for the next generation.

1.2 This Planning, Design and Access Statement therefore forms part of the submissions of the application to be considered by the Authority, and in compliance with the requirements of TAN12 provides information on the following points:

- A brief description of the site and surrounding area
- A description of the proposed development
- Consideration of relevant planning policy
- Accessibility
- Character
- Community Safety
- Environmental Sustainability
- Movement to, from and within the development

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 THE SITE

2.1.1 The application relates to the area circled red on the aerial photograph below.



Photograph 1

2.1.2 As can be seen, the majority of the application site already forms part of the existing holding's core complex. As a result of this, the application site in part includes two existing buildings, pictured below.



Photograph 2



Photograph 3

2.1.3 The first (Photograph 2) represents part of the historic element of the holding, which due to its form and scale is now surplus to requirements due to being unable to be adapted to accommodate modern agricultural practices and requirements. The second then is a building historically used for housing the holding's sheep flock during lambing periods, but this has again become surplus to the holding's needs as other buildings have been brought in to serve the same purpose.

2.1.4 In terms then of access, all elements of the application site are then accessed directly from the adjoining remaining elements of the aforementioned complex.

2.2 THE SURROUNDING AREA

2.2.1 In the immediate sense, directly to the application site's west and south are a range of existing buildings (pictured below) that form the remainder of the core complex.



Photograph 4



Photograph 5



Photograph 6



Photograph 7

2.2.2 These existing buildings are used for a range of purposes including the housing of the holding's beef herd, fodder and the storage and composting of manure for re-use on the holding as a natural fertilizer.

2.2.3 In design terms, the bulk of the buildings of the core complex use a similar materials palette and general construction form. They are also all of a comparable height and orientated to provide maximum efficiency in terms of the movement of both animals, supplies and machinery around and throughout the complex itself.

2.2.4 In the wider sense, the core complex is framed by a band of woodland to its east, west and south, with the public highway from which it gains access then running along its northern boundary. Beyond this then the landscape is dominated by agricultural enclosures, further pockets of woodland and individual dwellings and farmsteads. The nearest settlement is that of Llanilar, located some 400m to the north of the application site.

2.3 PROJECT DESIGN PARAMETERS AND PRINCIPLE

2.3.1 As a result of the above, the following design principles and parameters have influenced the design subject of this planning application:

- **Scale** – To be fit for purpose and to provide sufficient livestock housing and operational facilities to serve the new element of the existing farming enterprise.
- **Design** – To draw on the finishes and the general style of buildings forming part of the existing core complex.
- **Access** – To be accessed via the adjoining core complex for efficiency of use.

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The proposal is for a new cattle housing building, milking parlour and associated dairy. As detailed previously, it represents a strategic part of securing the continued success of the existing farm holding, as well as a further generation in the family business. Full detailed drawings for the proposal are submitted as part of the application and the following information should therefore be read in conjunction with them.

The Holding and Development Justification

3.2 Caste Hill Farm is a successful and efficient mixed system that is constantly seeking to improve and enhance all aspects of its operation. The existing holding consists of 366 ha of owned land, spread over several blocks of land, as illustrated on the accompanying information.

3.3 The holding's current systems predominantly relate to beef and sheep production. Current livestock levels are therefore as follows:

- 2 Bulls
- 52 Cows
- 22 Heifers
- 38 Weiner Heifers
- 28 Weiner Steers
- 1,052 sheep (including rams)

3.4 As part of the proposed new dairy enterprise, the holding has already introduced 144 Jersey dairy calves (rising to 200 milkers and followers), which will come into maturity next year. The application proposal is therefore directly related to these animals, their welfare and their use in the production of high quality milk.

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- 3.5 The above has of course a large labour requirement, with the holding currently employing 4 full time workers. With the introduction of the dairy enterprise, this will then increase to 6 full time works and 1 part time worker.

Design

- 3.6 The proposal will consist of a new building based on a steel portal frame. Externally then the walls of the building will have a 2m high concrete panelled skirt, on top of which will be vertically clad timber boards in a 'Yorkshire' style. The roof will then be clad in grey fibre cement sheets, within which will be set a series of GRP rooflights.
- 3.7 Internally, the building will be split into three areas. The bulk of the building (two thirds) will be used for cattle housing, based on a straw bed system. This area will be split in two by a clean drive-through passage, for ease of feeding purposes. The second element then relates to the bulk of the western third of the building which will then house the collection and circulation yard, as well as calving bays and the milking parlour itself (based on a pit system). The final element located in the building's north western corner will then houses the dairy.

Drainage

- 3.8 All surface water generated from rainfall will be either collected and re-used, or will be disposed of via new sustainable drainage system. All waste then generated by livestock housed in the building will form part of the farm's existing management plan.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

4.1 In terms of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the adopted development plan for the area within which the application site is positioned is the *Ceredigion Local Development Plan* (LDP). It is therefore the policies of this document that have been referred to in the preparation of the proposal subject of the planning application in question, including the following:

- Policy DM06 – High Quality Design and Placemaking
- Policy DM09 – Design and Movement
- Policy DM10 – Design and Landscaping
- Policy DM13 – Sustainable Drainage Systems
- Policy DM14 – Nature Conservation and Ecological Connectivity
- Policy DM15 – Local Biodiversity Conservation

4.2 The guidance and requirements of all of the above have been given careful consideration in the preparation of the application scheme, but particular attention has been paid to those of Policy DM06 and so the following represents an assessment of the proposal against the relevant requirements of this key policy in question.

Policy DM06 (High Quality Design and Placemaking)

4.3 Policy DM06 represents the overarching policy against which all proposed developments are to be assessed. It sets out that “*Development should have full regard, and positively contribute to the context of its location and surroundings.*”. In order to achieve this, it sets out a series of 10 criteria against which to assess proposals, of which 4 are of relevance to the application proposal.

4.4 The first criterion for consideration (Criterion 1) requires proposals to promote “... *innovative design whilst having regard to local distinctiveness ... in terms of form, design and material*”. As detailed in previous sections of this Statement, the proposed

building seeks to replace in part buildings that are no longer required due to their unsuitability for modern farming systems and techniques. Through the process of design evolution and innovation, a design has been identified that would be better suited to meet the needs of the new dairy enterprise than those existing buildings present on this element of the existing core complex in question. This has then ensured that the application proposal adheres to the requirements of Criterion 1.

- 4.5 The second criterion for consideration (Criterion 2) deals more with an application's immediate context. The Criterion requires that a proposal must "*Complement the site and its surroundings in terms of layout, respecting views into and out of the site, producing a cohesive form in relation to the scale, height and proportion of existing built form.*". As detailed above, the design and form of the proposed building has drawn heavily on the nearby buildings of the existing complex, ensuring that it complements and respects the existing built setting. In addition, its position and orientation ensures efficient and ease of access in and out of the building, as well as around it. All elements of Criterion 2 are therefore satisfied by the application proposal, as well in turn those of Criterion 3.
- 4.6 The final criterion for consideration (Criterion 4) then deals with matters that could affect surrounding properties. The Criterion sets out that proposals must "*Protect the amenity of occupiers of nearby properties from significant harm in relation to privacy, noise and outlook.*".
- 4.7 As illustrated in Photograph 1 of this Statement, the application site does not adjoin any existing residential or commercial properties. The nearest dwellings are located to the north west (which is the Applicant's family home) and to the east. As can be seen from Photograph 8 below, both are separated from the holding by the public highway and belts of woodland.



Photograph 8

- 4.8 As a result of the above and the intervening topography, the proposal will have no detriment on the amenity of the respective properties, as well as their privacy and outlook. As a result, the application proposal adheres in full to the requirements of Criterion 7 and all relevant elements of Policy DM06.

5.0 ACCESSIBILITY

5.1 ACCESSIBILITY

5.1.1 The proposed development will gain access from the adjoining complex of the holding at an appropriate gradient for all users.

5.2 MOVEMENT TO, FROM AND WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT

5.2.1 Potential access points to the building will be available via the northern and southern elevation of the building. Access will however be on a level basis from the adjoining land for each of the building's elevations. General access to the building will then be gained from the adjoining complex, which in turn is then connected to the public highway to the north.

6.0 CHARACTER

Landscape Design

- 6.1.1 The application site currently consists of two existing buildings and elements of hardstanding of the existing farm complex..
- 6.1.2 Taking into consideration the existing landscape setting, the proposed structure seeks to harmonise and play a subservient role in the landscape through being closely associated with the development of the existing farm complex, but at a position that is comparable with existing development.

Scale

- 6.1.3 The proposal is to provide additional livestock housing and a dairy unit for the holding's new dairy herd.

Number

- 6.1.4 The proposal is for one new livestock and dairy building.

Layout of Development

- 6.1.5 The alignment of the proposed building has been steered by the existing topography of the location in question, together then with the level and form of existing development associated with the adjoining farm complex.

Appearance

- 6.1.6 As detailed in earlier Sections of this Statement, the physical appearance of the proposed building has sought to harmonise with the existing setting.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

- 7.1 The proposal does not include any public spaces and so no assessment of their community safety level has been undertaken.

8.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Landscaping/Townscape Setting

- 8.1 As detailed above, the proposed development respects the existing setting of the existing farm complex and surrounding landscape setting.

Biodiversity and Local Environment

- 8.2 The proposal will not result in any detriment to the existing biodiversity levels of the site, although the proposal does present the potential to increase them, through for example bird nesting opportunities.

Energy Efficiency/Carbon Reduction

- 8.3 We are advised that the following measures will be taken into consideration to maximise energy efficiency and carbon reduction of the proposal during its construction:

- Use local suppliers and labour wherever possible
- Use recycled products wherever possible

Sustainable Materials

- 8.4 We understand that recycled or reclaimed products will be used in the construction of the proposal wherever possible

Water

- 8.5 We understand that the existing water supply of the farm will be used if required.

Waste Management

- 8.6 All waste generated by the use of the proposal will be dealt with as part of the holding's existing waste management plan.

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposal is for the construction of a new cattle housing building, milking parlour and associated dairy
- 9.2 The application has come about as a result of the family business identifying that the existing systems must be diversified further in order to secure future financial sustainability, as well as ensuring that future generations can continue to have an opportunity to be part of the family farm moving forward.
- 9.3 The proposed building has therefore been designed to be fit for purposes, as well as respectful of the immediate adjoining core complex and wider landscape in both operational and visual terms. Combined then with being managed in an environmentally responsible manner and generating further employment in the local community, the application proposal therefore adheres in full to all relevant planning policy and guidance.