

An Access Statement

In Relation to

An Application for the Installation of

A SILO

at

**Crymbal Farm
Crabtree Green
WREXHAM
LL13 0YF**

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Access Statement

Access statements are communication tools showing that the principals of inclusive design and access for people have been considered from the outset of the development process. They inform decision making, aid those making assessments to understand the rationale that underpins the proposed development and show how access arrangements allow all users to have easy and convenient use.

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1 The Business

1.1. Background

Crymbal Farm is a family run dairy unit that extends to approximately 151ha (373 acres) of owned and rented land. The farm is situated on the outskirts of Crabtree Green at approximate map reference SJ333448 and at approximately 90m AOD. The land was described as generally flat or undulating with a medium to heavy texture.

The farm is stocked with some 180 dairy cows that calve all year around, with about 130 followers (calves to in-calf heifers).

The cattle are housed from mid/late October (subject to weather) through to early April. Slurry is generated by the dairy cows which are housed in cubicles, dry manure generated by the other cattle which are loose housed.

Accurate annual rainfall in the area is not known; the AHDB “Slurry Wizard” programme suggests average annual rainfall by STD code (01978) of 1,051mm. M5 rainfall over the 5-month period October 1st to end February is estimated at 684mm.

Winter fodder is provided to the livestock by means of silage fodder. This is formed either in one of two clamps or in “big bale” form. Well in excess of 1,000 bales are currently made annually (in the 2024 harvest year the figure was in excess of 1,700 bales). It is generally accepted that the quality of silage made in clamps is greater than that made in big bales.

1.2. Design Criteria for the Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the provision of a new silo to make silage within at Crymbal Farm. The structure will be built to demanding legislative standards (British Standard BS 5502, Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 and CIRIA 126).

The proposal is part of the existing businesses meeting relevant environmental challenges whilst at the same time reducing impact.

The present system of management will continue other than there being a significant reduction in big bales made on farm. This will reduce plastic use on farm as well as reducing fuel use and carbon footprint. Plastic will not be stored on farm before subsequent removal by a suitably licensed operator (further reducing fuel and carbon footprint). It will increase business sustainability. It will reduce labour demand on farm.

All new silage storage facilities must comply with the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021. The NRW have been invited onto farm to consider the application prior to application but their working practice does not now allow such visits.

A site has been identified adjacent to existing livestock buildings to the north of the farmstead. The proposed store will be offset 9.14m off the existing livestock building.

The site will be levelled before construction with a small bank formed along the outside of a proportion of the new store.

The proposal will not lead to an increase in livestock retained on farm; there will be no increase in phosphate on or off farm. The farm is not one causing risk to watercourses (NRW have previously stated this) and the proposal is only to replace existing big bale silage with that made in a clamp.

1.3. The Proposal

To install two walls, constructed with steel stanchions and concrete panels, on a concrete floor, within which silage will be formed. Around the perimeter of the concrete floor a channel will be formed that will collect any escaping silage effluent and direct it to discharge within a suitably constructed, below ground, prefabricated, silage effluent tank.

The proposed silo will have a length of 32m and a width of 12.2m (105' x 40'). The panel walls will be 3m in height. The silage effluent clamp will have a capacity of 24m³.

The site will be cleared. Currently it is generally a flat, improved grass field though there is a gentle slope fall. The proposed store will be erected on levelled land allowing the store to sit lower in the landscape. Soils from the site will be bunded on the northern side of the development to shield the development somewhat and a hedge planted on it to offer further shelter and increased biodiversity.

1.4. Access

Access to the proposal will be only for the occupier of the land or those authorised. Access to the silo will be off existing yard surface.

2. General

The reason for providing additional clamp silage capacity on farm is to reduce the reliance on big bale silage production, reducing plastic use, cost, carbon footprint whilst increasing quality silage made.

2.1. Reference to Planning Policy.

Regard has been had to the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011. The Plan reflects the Council's vision for the future based on (amongst other things) an attractive, viable hinterland, a modern robust economy across all sectors etc.

Sustainable development, both now and in the future, is embedded in the County's aspirations which include the protection and enhancement of the environment. The countryside is to be protected for its visual, ecological, historical, recreational, and agricultural value.

Policy PS2 says that development must not materially detrimentally effect countryside, landscape or townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.

Policy GDP1 states that all new development should ensure in its scale, design and layout etc accords with the character of the site, takes account of community safety/security in design and layout, makes the best use of siting and orientation to conserve energy and water resources, ensures the development safeguards the environment from the adverse effects of pollution of water, land or air etc

Policy EC3 - the construction of new agricultural buildings will be permitted unless the development is materially detrimental in terms of its impact on the environment or surrounding landscape. The development should form part of an existing farm complex and take advantage of topography and other landscape features for screening. The Council is aware of the need for continuing investment in

modern farm buildings, slurry stores and equipment. Farm businesses need to change and grow in response to market forces and legislation if they are to survive.

Policy EC4 states that development proposals should provide for the conservation and management of features. The plan states that the landscape's quality stems from the pattern of hedgerows, trees and woodland and other natural features. These should be properly managed. Policy EC4 suggests that developments ought to include new planting to enhance the character of the landscape.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has published targets to reduce river phosphate levels in special areas of conservation (SAC) across Wales. Sources of phosphorous are from agriculture, sewage from homes and other developments etc. The targets are based on evidence about the damaging effects of phosphates to water ecosystems and species.

Any proposals for development within SAC river catchments (such as the Dee in which Crymbal Farm sits) where there is an increased volume or concentration of wastewater, must prove that the design will not contribute to increased phosphate levels.

The types of development that may be affected include (from agriculture) additional barns and slurry stores likely to lead to increased herds. The Authority can determine applications of developments that do not increase the volume or concentration of wastewater.

2.1.1 Comment

The driving need behind the development is to reduce plastic waste on farm, to reduce carbon footprint and increase sustainability. There are long term positive capital cost and labour impacts on the business. The proposal will collect any effluent generated as required by the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021. This proposal complies with all relevant environmental regulatory requirements. It does not increase the volume of pollutants generated on farm.

The proposal is adjacent to the existing farmyard and the size of the development similar to adjacent structures. It is not excessive or out of context with regard to adjacent facilities. The site of the proposal is in an improved grassland field; there is no loss of biodiversity by its erection. By clearing the site and slightly lowering it a bund will be formed around part of the store allowing a hedge to be planted on it increasing biodiversity on farm.

In construction it must meet demanding standards required by legislation (CIRIA 126 and SSAFO). It is believed that the above comments comply with the Authorities ambition for sustainable development as well as Policy GDP1, Policy PS2 and Policy EC3.

There are "features" on site to address in Policy EC4 though there will be a small length of new hedge and bank for wildlife to exploit (Policy PS11).

Nitrate and phosphate pollution is a for NRW and the UDP states that proposals within the SAC river catchment must prove that the design will not contribute to increased phosphate levels. The proposal will not increase production of waste on farm (**cattle numbers are not increasing**). The proposal is only to address silage making (there are significant environmental benefits as a result of the development). With no increase in phosphates, it is believed that the Authority can determine the application.

SuDS are dealt with in the section below.

2.2 Accessibility

The proposals will be accessed off existing yard surface. The store will be fenced off for security reasons. Only people employed by the business will access the store and then only for management.

2.3. Environmental Sustainability

Providing a clamp will reduce the number of big bales formed on farm. These use plastic in their construction. They require removal off farm by specialists dealing with waste plastic. This has a fuel and carbon footprint cost. Moving to clamp silage reduces these environmental costs and increases farm sustainability.

2.4. Character

The proposal will not impact on the character of the area. The proposed clamp is adjacent similarly sized structures and will benefit by some bank and screen screening.

There are properties within 400m of the development to the east, settling the store down, having a bank with a hedgerow atop it will reduce any impact.

2.5. Community Safety

The proposal will not result in any additional risk to the community. Access will be restricted to the applicants and approved workers. The proposed development is on private property and will not be subject to access from the general public.

2.6. Movement to, from and within the development

The proposed store will be accessed from existing yard surfaces. There will be no change to the access off the public roads for this proposal.

2.7. Sustainable Drainage SuDS

Sustainable development in Wales is established in legislation. The proposal will require SuDS permission from Wrexham SAB and an application is to be made.