

Planning Statement

Cranberry Farm
Drury Lane
Whitchurch
SY13 3BD

Proposed roof covering over existing agricultural yard

S M Hockenhull

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Contents

Contents i
1.0 Introduction 1
2.0 The Application Site & Background 1
3.0 The Proposed Development 2
4.0 Planning Policy Context 3
5.0 Review of Main Material Planning Considerations 4
6.0 Conclusion 5

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement is prepared and submitted in connection with a full planning application made to Wrexham County Borough Council ("The Local Planning Authority") for the construction of a new roof covering over an existing agricultural yard at Cranberry Farm, Drury Lane, Whitchurch, SY13 3BD.

1.2 The proposed building would provide much needed cover over an existing uncovered yard on the farm and would be of an appearance similar to the existing modern agricultural buildings forming part of the surrounding agricultural complex at Cranberry Farm.

1.3 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the other documentation submitted as part of the application, listed below:

- Completed Full Planning Application Form
- Green Infrastructure Statement
- Dwg No: 80202 / GD / 001 – Site Location Plan
- Dwg No: 80202 / GD / 002 – Existing Block Plan
- Dwg No: 80202 / GD / 003 – Proposed Block Plan
- Dwg No: 80202 / GD / 004 – Proposed NBB Plan
- Dwg No: 80202 / GD / 002 – Proposed Floor Plan
- Dwg No: 80202 / GD / 101 – Proposed Elevations

1.4 This Planning Statement provides a balanced overview of the planning issues associated with the proposed development and is designed to aid the Planning Officer in making their recommendation.

1.5 The information set-out within this statement confirms that the proposal can be delivered on-site without giving rise to any unacceptable or adverse impacts in planning-terms.

2.0 The Application Site & Background

2.1 The application site comprises an existing agricultural yard within the existing agricultural complex of yards and buildings at Cranberry Farm.

2.2 The site is located within a rural location approximately 2.1km to the north-east of Horseman's Green and approximately 6km west of Whitchurch. The area is primarily comprised of existing farmsteads of varying scales interspersed with isolated dwellings and the immediate area is dominated by the A525 public highway between Wrexham and Whitchurch.

2.3 The site is located outside of any defined settlement/development boundary and therefore is located within the open countryside in planning terms.

2.4 An aerial view of the application site is provided below within Figure 1, with application site being identified by the red star:

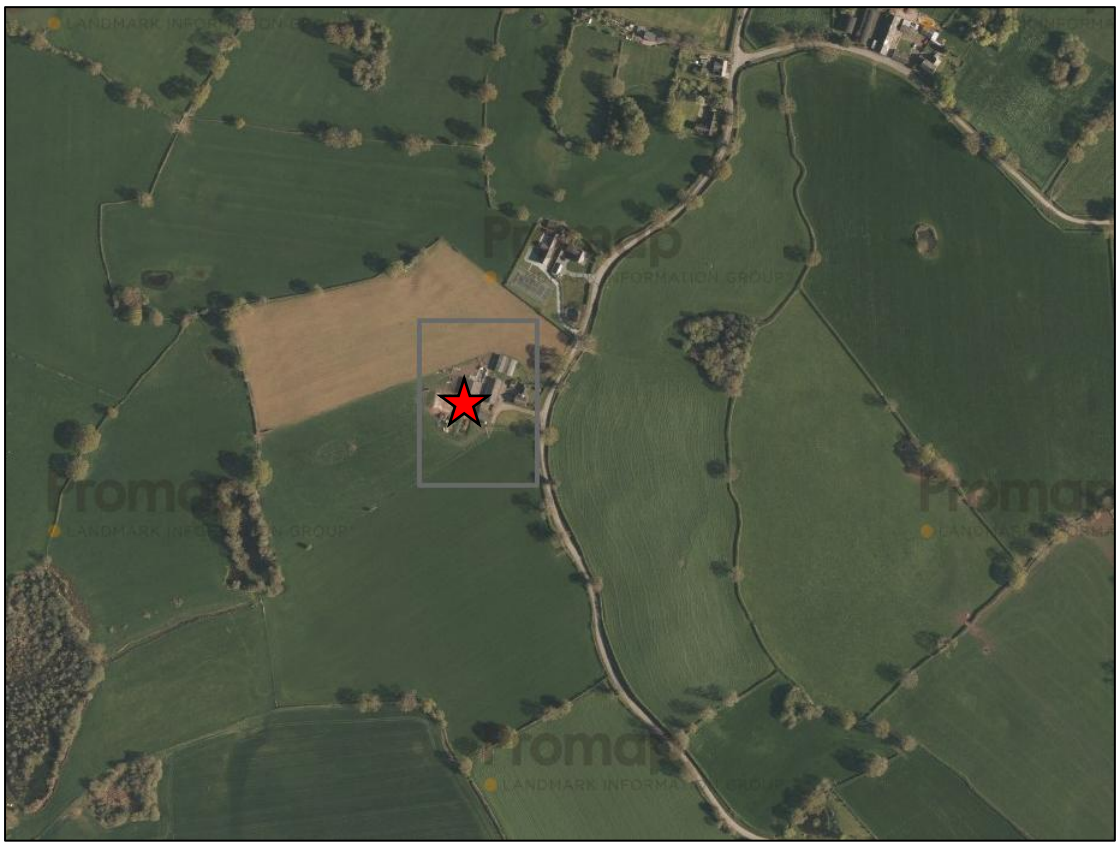


Figure 1: Aerial context of application site

3.0 The Proposed Development

3.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the construction of a roof covering over an existing open agricultural yard, forming an integral part of the wider complex of buildings at Cranberry Farm. The proposed structure would adjoin existing agricultural buildings on-site to both the north and the east.

3.2 The proposed roof covering will measure approximately 16m in length and 15m in width; with a resultant floor area of approximately 256m2. It will have a gabled roof, with a maximum height of approximately 6.7m above ground level; matching that of the adjacent buildings.

3.3 The proposed structure will be 'open-sided' whilst the roof will be finished with grey fibre cement sheeting.

3.4 As noted, the proposal would cover an existing open agricultural yard, on an existing concrete base.

3.5 Dirty water drainage arrangements would remain unchanged, however it is noted that the proposed roof covering would significantly reduce the amount of dirty water produced on-site.

3.6 Stock numbers on the holding would not change as a consequence of the proposed development. The development is instead proposed to align the farm with current and future manure storage regulations set out by NRW and the Welsh Government, namely the CoAPR.

4.0 Planning Policy Context

4.1 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024) advises at Paragraph 5.6.8 that ***"Planning authorities should adopt a constructive approach towards agricultural development proposals, especially those which are designed to meet the needs of changing farming practices or are necessary to achieve compliance with new environmental, hygiene or welfare legislation"***.

4.2 Technical Advice Note 6 (Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities) also sets out the Welsh Government's support for agricultural development proposals owing to the positive impact they can have upon the rural economy and rural communities.

4.3 There are no directly applicable policies contained within the adopted Wrexham Local Development Plan relating to proposals for new agricultural development. However, general support for new agricultural development and farm diversification proposals is expressed throughout the plan.

4.4 Of some relevance is LDP Policy EM4, which reads:

"New employment development outside of settlement limits will only be permitted through:

ii. New development required in connection with a rural enterprise, including proposals for farm diversification where:

(a) The development is located within or forms a logical extension to the complex of buildings on an existing rural enterprise; or
(b) In the case of buildings located away from an established rural enterprise complex, where a clear need for the development has been demonstrated and where there is no reasonable alternative location for the development".

5.0 Review of Main Material Planning Considerations

Principle

5.1 The development relates to the provision of a roof covering over an existing agricultural yard at Cranberry Farm; an established agricultural holding.

5.2 The development is needed to comply with new and future manure storage regulations implemented by the Welsh Government and NRW, and would help to reduce the volume of dirty water produced on the holding.

5.3 Given its modest scale and the siting of the proposal adjacent to a range of existing agricultural buildings, the principle of development is acceptable.

Design & Visual/Landscape Impact

5.4 The proposed roof covering would be located amongst the existing farm complex at Cranberry Farm and any views of the development would be very much within the context of the existing built development on-site.

5.5 The building would be of standard modern agricultural appearance and would be akin to that of the adjacent buildings already in-use and present within the host landscape.

5.6 Given the above considerations, the development would not cause any harmful impact upon the character of the surrounding rural landscape in accordance with LDP Policy DM1.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

5.7 The closest non-associated residential dwelling to the application site is located approximately 130m to the north-east. In light of this distance, and the fact the proposed development relates solely to the covering of an existing yard on the farm, no adverse impacts upon neighbouring residential amenity would arise.

5.8 Therefore, the development would not result in any adverse impacts in terms of amenity on this occasion.

Ecology & Green Infrastructure

5.9 The application site currently comprises an existing concrete agricultural yard forming an integral part of the complex of buildings and yards at Cranberry Farm. Given its use and siting amongst the existing farm complex, the application site is considered to be of no ecological value at present and is therefore unlikely to be in use by protected species.

5.10 There are no SSSIs, SACs or Wrexham Local Wildlife Sites located within close proximity to the application site, and as such impacts upon protected sites are deemed unlikely.

5.11 It is acknowledged that the site does lie within the freshwater catchment of the Bala Lake and River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and therefore NRW's *Advice to planning authorities for planning applications affecting nutrient sensitive river Special Areas of Conservation (July 2024)* is of relevance. However, the development as proposed is unlikely to be a source of additional phosphorus or a pathway for additional impacts. The development can therefore be screened out as not likely to have cause significant effect upon the integrity of the River Wye SAC as it falls within the following criterion in the published advice:

- *Any development that does not increase the volume and phosphorus concentration of wastewater.*

5.12 In terms of green infrastructure and providing a net benefit for biodiversity (NBB), Dwg No: 80202 / GD / 004 shows the proposed installation of two Woodcrete bat boxes and one Woodcrete bird box on an existing adjacent building forming part of the farm complex. This would provide an NBB effect over and above the site's green infrastructure baseline. Please refer to the submitted Green Infrastructure Statement for further details.

5.13 In light of the above, the development would not cause any adverse ecological effects and would provide an NBB effect on-site in-line with the requirements of PPW (Chapter 6) and TAN 5.

Highways

5.14 The vehicular movements associated with the site will remain unchanged as a consequence of the proposal.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The proposed roof covering is of an overall modest and subservient scale compared to the wider farm complex at Cranberry Farm, and would be of an acceptable appearance within the host rural landscape. It would also not cause any adverse impacts upon the natural environment, neighbouring residential amenity nor upon highway safety within the application site's vicinity.

6.2 The development has been proposed and designed to align the holding at Cranberry Farm with the CoAPR (2021) and the requirements of NRW and the Welsh Government in that it would help to reduce the volume of dirty water produced on the holding.

6.3 Therefore, the proposal is fully compliant with both national and local planning policy, and it is respectfully requested that full planning permission be granted for the development without delay.