

# Supporting Statement

**Client:**

J R Knowles and Son

**Location:**

East View Farm, Rossett, Wrexham, LL12 0AH

**Project:**

Steel Portal framed Agricultural livestock building

## **1 Introduction**

The following statement will endeavour to present justification for the size of the proposal for the construction of an agricultural livestock building at the property of Mr R Knowles at Stringers Lane to provide necessary livestock accommodation.

East View Farm extends to 72 hectares (150 acres) of land owned and 400 acres of land tenanted on (Full Farm Business Tenancy). Operations on the holding include a 500 head dairy herd with 450 young stock followers notwithstanding plans of continued expansion on site through the increase in the dairy herd (700 head in next fiscal year). The site is an active working dairy farm with a long standing contribution to agricultural in the community.

The holding is a sustainable unit, semi self-sufficient and has further plans to expand activities however being critical livestock accommodation this application is deemed urgent and critical to the business practice. The applicant are increasing stocking levels and need to ensure the highest standard of welfare and management of current stock and accordingly to ensure fruition of the holding.

This particular application is for the construction of a Steel portal framed agricultural building to provide vital livestock housing all year round for the expanding dairy herd and to support the holding's agricultural undertakings/activities.

On site there is an existing range of steel portal framed agricultural buildings and the proposal will form an extension of this established farm complex in order to construct a purpose built structure conducive to modern farming practice and welfare standards.

## **2 The Proposal and Justification for its Scale of Development**

Regulations, legislation, welfare codes and quality assurance schemes are all-embracing, from birth to the abattoir. Therefore, regardless of the breed and age of the livestock or the housing system used, the accommodation must provide for the animal's needs.

The proposed building is of steel frame construction and extends to 67.056 x 39.624 which equates to a floor area of 2657 sq m (28,600 sq ft) (Gross External). Pitched roof at 12.5 extending to a maximum 13.969 meters with an eaves height of 4.267 meters. Full detail of the structure can be observed on the enclosed drawings.

Due to the delay in processing this application and the complication it has faced during the application process the need for this housing is becoming increasingly critical to preserve the welfare of the heard. The approval of this application is imperative to the farming enterprise and the efficient management of the livestock.

The design and scale of the proposal has been done so as to minimise any detriment to the openness of the countryside at the same time as ensuring sufficient housing for the much needed cattle which meets regulatory guidelines.

### **2.2 Footprint**

In a publication released by Defra, "Caring for Beef Cattle and Dairy Cows" it states that housing for dairy cows needs to ensure that there is enough space for all the animals to:

- Lie in comfort at the same time
- Interact with each other
- Stand up and move freely

- Access feed and water troughs

These requirements are of particular importance when the livestock are to be housed all year round since when these four criteria are not met it can lead to physiological stress on the cattle and augments diseases that are endemic to most UK cattle herds. This would impact the cattle's wellbeing, as well as, decreasing their yields which decreases the productivity of the farming enterprise.

The report goes on to state that the floors should not slope too steeply (no more than about 10%) as steeper slopes can cause leg problems, slipping and falling. As illustrates in the topographical survey the subject site experiences a change in levels which has resulted in the proposed building cutting into the bank so as to ensure a flat gradient within the building to meet the guidance notes from Defra and to further minimise its visual impact.

The building is to include cubicles for the cows and Defra recommends that when:

*“using cubicles you should have at least one for each cow (about 5% more cubicles than the number of cows in the management group is also recommended)” and that “cubicle passageways should be wide enough for cows to pass one another easily.”*

The report also states that each cubicle for dairy cattle should be 10 m<sup>2</sup> to provide sufficient room for the four aforementioned criteria to be met. Furthermore, there needs to be sufficient room within the building to allow the cows to move freely so that they can exercise. Therefore, when applying these national standards to the subject proposal it means that the new building needs to be 2,100 m<sup>2</sup> to house just the cubicles for the 200 cattle. Additionally, there needs to be further space for the allowance of passageways and feeding areas. This means that to meet welfare guidance notes and regulations the internal area of the building needs to be a minimum 2,500 m<sup>2</sup>.

This clearly illustrates that the proposed size of the proposed development is in line with comparable holdings and is necessary to meet regulations, legislation, welfare codes and quality assurance schemes.

### **2.2.2 Height**

It is important in livestock buildings that thought is given to air circulation, dust levels, temperature, relative humidity and gas concentration since excessive levels can lead to harm to animals in the form of respiratory problems. These levels can be minimised through having effective ventilation that works throughout the year and insulation in the roof.

The design and slope of the proposed roof is influenced by the above factors and takes into consideration the type of stock and exposure of the site as recommended in the guidance notes “Better Cattle Housing Design” by Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board (AHDB). As such, the overshoot ridge roof design promotes air inlets and outlets so as to ventilate the building without mechanical equipment, as well as, maximises the ventilation potential on a still day, without exposing the livestock to elevated air speeds when the wind is blowing. If the pitch of the roof was to be decreased to lower the height of the building the ventilation of the building would be impinged, and this is not advisable for a building that houses livestock all year round.

Therefore, the height and pitch of the roof is required and meets welfare recommendations by the AHDB whilst blending in with the surrounding farming vernacular.

## **2 Conclusion**

Good design will support good health and welfare to the financial benefit of the farm business and the design of this building has been developed with this in mind so as to maximise the welfare of the livestock it is to house and to ensure that it is in-keeping with the existing built environment. The proposed building would cause no greater harm to the character and appearance of the countryside than existing and has already been deemed acceptable in siting, scale and design.

These supporting statement illustrate the need for the size and height of building. To decrease these dimensions would lead to a decrease in animal welfare which would also impact upon the yields and efficiency of the business. This size of building is needed to house the expanding business and to meet the changes in the farming industry.

The applicants are also open to implementing further landscaping provisions so as to minimise the visual impact of the building on the open countryside.

The unit is and will remain an agricultural holding which is in line with National and Local Policy requirements.