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Ref. 15/00859/FUL

RYTHM

10 NOV 2015

DEVELOPMENT
MANAGEMENT

Principal: Ian Timothy Dykes Dip. T.P. M.R.T.P.I
Chartered Town Planner

AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENT

For

Agricultural Worker's Dwelling

To

Support Beef, Sheep, Contracting and Arable Farm

Situated at

Low Street

Thornton Le Clay

York

Prepared By:

R L Cordingley BSc FRICS FAAV

Stephenson & Son

York Auction

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Sons

1 BACKGROUND

The Mook family have farmed in the locality of Thornton-le-Clay and Flaxton since the late 1800s, originally running a dairy herd, sheep enterprise and arable farming, as well as taking on agricultural contracting work from Station Farm, Flaxton. In the 1950s the family also took on Rice Hill Farm, Flaxton. [REDACTED]

The business remains a beef, sheep and arable farm together with some agricultural contracting. The farm is running 800 acres and is split in two by the York to Scarborough railway line.

Rice Hill Farm is South of the railway line, situated in 200 acres of land with an additional holding at Harton. Another 400 acres is situated to the North of the railway line, to the East of Lilling and to the South of Thornton-le-Clay and in the village itself.

The attached plan shows the disposition of the land, the existing farmstead at Rice Hill and the site of the proposed agricultural dwelling.



In 2008 the applicant began employment at Rice Hill Farm and also studied general agriculture at Askham Bryan College one day a week until completing the course in 2010. Since the applicant joined the farm, he has increased breeding ewe numbers and started a beef suckler herd. The farm has also taken on around 360 acres more arable land and grazing, nearly doubling the acreage originally farmed. The farm now generates full time work for 4 workers (see Section 5) and additional part-time employment but is currently worked solely by Henry and his parents.

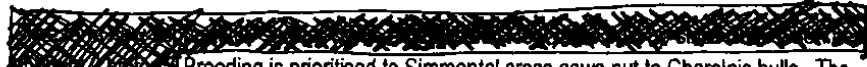
2 LIVESTOCK ENTERPRISE

The current livestock enterprise comprises:


- breeding ewes
- gimmer hogs
- suckler cows

The farm has a flock of breeding ewes which are mostly Suffolk crosses and Mules crossed with Suffolk and Texel tups. The farm keeps gimmer lambs as replacements each year and also buys in replacement ewes. All lambs are sold fat through local markets or sold directly to a local butcher. The ewes graze to the north of the railway line all year round on grasses, stubble turnips, or fodder beet tops, except for one month of the year where they are brought inside to lamb at Rice Hill Farm from January to February.

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 Breeding is prioritised to Simmental cross cows put to Charolais bulls. The farm breeds and buys in replacement heifers, which are put to an Angus bull. The majority of these cows and calves are kept to the North of the railway line in summer and housed in winter at Rice Hill Farm and additional buildings in Harton. Heifers are winter grazed on lighter soils situated just to the south of Thornton-le-Clay.

In time, the farm will increase suckler cow numbers, introduce year round calving and breed all its own replacements. The applicant also intends to increase ewe numbers with more replacement breeding and utilise cover crops on lighter soils for grazing in the winter months.

Effectively, more care and management is going on north of the railway line and to live closer to the livestock has become essential. Throughout the majority of the year  the livestock are kept north of the railway line, and are looked after by the applicant, and by his parents.

3 ARABLE ENTERPRISE

The arable land consists of approximately 600 acres. Over half of this acreage is North of the railway line. A wide variety of crops are grown in a traditional rotation and include winter wheat, spring barley, oil seed rape, winter beans, spring beans, fodder beet and maize. Maize and fodder beet are fed to the cattle and sheep. Wheat, barley and beans are fed to fattening stock all year round. The farm also grows stubble turnips on suitable land for the grazing of cattle and sheep in the winter months.

The arable operations are all under taken by Henry and Brian with additional help at busy times.

The farm uses its own machinery for virtually all operations as well as storing and marketing all its own produce.

4 FARM CONTRACTING ENTERPRISE

The farm undertakes contract combine harvesting, spraying, ploughing, mowing and drilling. It also runs an oil seed rape swather and beet drill, providing a service for local farmers.


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With the majority of the livestock and arable land to the north of the railway line, the majority of the man hours take place here.

[REDACTED] the livestock is kept north of the railway line therefore 288 SMD's are north of the railway line, this extra travelling does cause extra cost in fuel and man hours wasted travelling on the road, and also timeliness of calving heifers and other emergency's. (see section 7.4 and 7.6)

6 THE PROPOSED DWELLING

- 6.1 The proposal is to erect a permanent agricultural worker's dwelling on Low Street, Thornton-le-Clay, to enable the existing farming operations to continue and to facilitate the existing and expanding enterprises.
- 6.2 It is proposed that a detached 4 bedroom dwelling is erected at the North side of the bulk of the farmed land and to the North of the railway line, to tend to the expanding livestock and arable operations to the North of the railway line.
- 6.3 The proposed dwelling is sited on a field on which a shed is already built. The field is on Low Street, Thornton-le-Clay, between the pub and the village hall and is owned by the family of the applicant. The fact that no building plot need be bought means that the prospect of a home in the village becomes within the financial reach of the applicant. There is enough space on the site to accommodate an environmentally sound and cost effective energy source, such as a ground source heat pump or a wood pellet burner. Using his own labour and machinery skills, the cost to the applicant of building a home may be greatly reduced.

7 FUNCTIONAL NEED

- 7.1 There is a clear need for the applicant as an agricultural worker to be located to the North side of the railway line and within close proximity of the grazing and arable land to the North side of the railway line in order to undertake the following duties.
- 7.2 Calving- The suckler herd will require the close monitoring of cows and heifers before, during and after calving when grazing pasture to the North side of the railway line. This is a particularly important point as the proposed site is only a quarter of a mile away from these grazing fields as opposed to the 3 mile trip from Rice Hill Farm. This would reduce the risk of stress, injury and disease to the animal and to ensure the best welfare for the animals and improve herd health performance.

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[REDACTED]

- 7.10 Monitoring farm workers- At peak working times, during harvest, autumn cultivations and spring cultivations, working hours can be long. It is important that staff are monitored to ensure that they are keeping up with safe working practices and a high standard of work.
- 7.11 The farm operations are currently supporting 3 full time staff and additional help at peak times. Section 6 demonstrates that the farm labour requirement for current enterprises is 4 full time workers, this clearly demonstrates that the farm can justify the applicant as a full time worker.
- 7.12 Having a key worker living at the North side of the farm would solve both local security issues and welfare issues for the arable and livestock enterprises and have a positive impact on the travelling times involved in running a mixed farm over a large area with a minimum workforce.
- 7.13 Alternative accommodation:

When the Mook family took the tenancy of East Lilling Farm (North of the railway line), a farm house was included in the rental and used by the family. Unfortunately, 3 years later in 2012, the landlady passed away and the farm house was separated from the land and given to a beneficiary. The loss of this house has left a generation of the family looking for alternative accommodation in the area.

The price of residential housing in Thornton-le-Clay area is well beyond the means of an agricultural worker. (See annexe 1).

The site of the proposed house would place the applicant in an ideal position to tend to the livestock and arable land to the North of the railway line, while Henry's parents attend to the South side of the farm. The proposed site is owned by the family and this gives Henry the ideal opportunity to build a home for much less than he would be able to buy one.

8 PLANNING POLICY

- 8.1 Previous national planning guidance given in PPS7 has now been withdrawn and the technical guidance set out in Annexes A and E has also been 'lost'. Annex A dealt with agricultural workers dwellings and Annex E explained the practical operation of agricultural permitted development under Part 6 to the GPDO. Government guidance is now given through the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 8.2 The only reference to agricultural workers dwellings in the NPPF is in paragraph 55 which states that local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.

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- 8.3 The current proposal complies with the general thrust of the NPPF which is to avoid new isolated homes in the countryside because although the siting is just outside Thornton le Clay village development limits, it is effectively within the physical environs of the village but at the same time caters for the essential need of a rural worker to live at or near their place of work in the countryside.
- 8.4 Even if the methodology explained in Annex A is followed it is considered that the proposal complies. Furthermore Circular 11/95 on the use of planning conditions remains in force, paragraphs 102 to 105 dealing with agricultural occupancy conditions still apply.
- 8.5 The former Annex A stated that 'new permanent dwellings should only be allowed to support existing agricultural activities on well-established agricultural units providing:
- (i) there is a clearly established existing functional need. 7 above sets this out;
 - (ii) the need relates to a full time worker or one who is primarily employed in agriculture and does not relate to a part time requirement. 7 above clearly sets this out;
 - (iii) the unit and the agricultural activity concerned have been established for at least 3 years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound and have a clear prospect of remaining so. 7 above clearly sets this out;
 - (iv) the functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the worker concerned. This alternative is not available to the applicant; and
 - (v) other planning requirements, e.g. in relation to access or impact on the countryside, are all satisfied in this case.
- 8.6 The former Annex states a functional test is necessary to establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at most times. Such a requirement might arise, for example, if workers are needed to be on hand day and night:
- (i) in case animals or agricultural process requires essential care at short notice;
 - (ii) to deal quickly with emergencies that could otherwise cause serious loss of crops or products for example by frost damage or the failure of automatic systems
- 8.7 The above supporting assessment clearly demonstrates the new dwelling in Thornton le Clay is essential to cover the farming operation north of the railway line.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 There is an existing functional need and a financial justification for the applicant to build a home on the North side of the farm, due to the nature of the family's farming operations and for general livestock welfare. Furthermore, the proposed site carries out its function but avoids being an isolated dwelling in open countryside. The proposed site already has an agricultural building on it with a fairly similar sized footprint to the proposed dwelling. This proposal would fulfil a need for a farming family with strong local connections, who wish to carry their business forward through future generations.

Signed:

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R L Cordingley BSc FRICS FAAV

Date:

9th Oct 2019

Stephen

ANNEXE 1

As Thornton-le-Clay is a small village, the opportunity to buy a house within budget is almost impossible. At the moment, there are three houses for sale. They are all five bedroomed properties and are priced from £475,000 to £499,999:-

Thornton House, High Street, Thornton-le-Clay	£499,999
The Coach House, Low Street, Thornton-le-Clay	£495,000
The Willows, Low Street, Thornton-le-Clay	£475,000

In the past two months, three properties have been sold in Thornton-le-Clay:-

The Forge, High Street, Thornton-le-Clay	£550,000
Field View, Low Street, Thornton-le-Clay	£370,000
Ivy Cottage, High Street, Thornton-le-Clay	£610,000