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PROPOSED EXTENSION TO FREE RANGE POULTRY HOUSING AT
LANGRIGG HALL,
LANGRIGG, WIGTON, CA7 3LH

DESIGN, ACCESS AND PLANNING STATEMENT

JM-Ref.G124 P003.03

Introduction

This statement is to accompany the planning application submitted on behalf of J.W. Gate & Son, of Langrigg Hall , Langrigg, Wigton, CA7 3LH

Section 42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a Design and Access Statement to be submitted with the majority of planning applications. The purpose of this report is to satisfy the requirements of Section 42 of the aforementioned Act.

This report has been prepared to illustrate the process that has led to the development proposal and to explain and justify the proposal in a structured way.

The Proposed Development

The applicant currently farms from Langrigg Hall in excess of **200** acres of agricultural land and is operated as a mixed livestock and arable agricultural business. The applicant also farms an additional 96 acres in close proximity to Langrigg Hall.

The applicant presently operates a free range egg production enterprise totaling some 21 000 birds and the proposal is to extend the second shed to provide space for a further 6 000 birds and ancillary space associated with the operation such as clean storage for packaging, feed supplements and similar.

The market for free range eggs remains strong and the applicant seeks to optimize the efficiency of the present operation and realize the spare capacity of the presently installed automated systems. The proposed extension of the existing building will further improve efficiency and the long term economic viability of the operation and minimize the implications of any fluctuation in the egg supply price on the business.

Amount

The proposed development involves the erection of an extension to either end of the existing no.2 building and will accommodate a further 6 000 bird free range egg laying unit. The proposed extensions will have an eaves and ridge height that matches the existing building and is situated on an effectively level site and will benefit from the continued use of the existing access track/service road etc.

Use

A free-range egg production system is a welfare friendly form of egg production and is a growing market in the UK. The proposed building includes an egg store, egg collection point and packing area with accommodation for 6,000 birds.

The bird housing area within the building includes a scratch area and a plastic slatted dunging area.

Nest boxes are situated central to the building adjacent to an egg collection conveyor. The nest boxes are angled towards the conveyor and the hens lay their eggs in the nest boxes. The eggs then roll onto the conveyor and are brought to the west end of the building from where they are transferred by the existing overhead conveyor to the central sorting and packaging area to the north end of building 1.

The existing feeding system to building 2 is based on an automated chain feeding system, which operates every 2 hours between the hours of 6.00am and 9.00pm and will be extended into the proposed additional poultry areas of the extensions. Nipple drinkers provide water supply and will be extended into the building additions.

The lighting within the building is programmed providing the birds with a constant 14 hours of daylight per day. There are no roof lights or translucent panels that would create possible light pollution. The building is naturally ventilated but is fan assisted, with side inlet vents and roof fans. The fans are linked to a thermostat, which maintains the optimum temperature within the building for bird welfare. There are no sirens, flashing strobe lights or similar and all warning systems and alarms are computer linked to the operator's mobile phone.

Pop holes are situated in one side of the building. These pop holes provide the birds with direct access to the range area. Pop holes are opened at 8.00am daily and closed at 9.00pm (or dusk).

The proposals are that the manure generated by the additional birds and to some degree the existing birds will be used in an anaerobic digestion plant and not stored on site or spread on the land. To reflect the fact that no manure is being spread or used on the land a manure plan is not appropriate.

Layout

The proposed extension to building 2 will require a range area which will incorporate areas of the existing range to reflect the building arrangements and the position of the extensions. The range areas are managed to ensure that they are not poached or over grazed in line with good animal husbandry practice. The reallocation of the range areas to the extensions will ensure that all range areas or within the preferred 350m of the building. The proposed unit extension requires 5 hectares (12.5 acres) of range area which is being provided.

The proposed building extension will benefit from the use of the existing infrastructure of the main farm complex including field access and farm track and is well related to the farmsteading to ensure an economical operation.

There is an existing hard standing to the south/west of the proposed building providing a turning area for vehicles delivering feed, birds and for egg collection.

Scale

The scale of the extensions are the same as the existing building in both height and width and will increase the total length by 37.050 m

The size of the buildings is linked to the size of the enterprise. Free - range egg production legislation dictates that stocking levels cannot exceed 9 birds per square metre.

Large buildings are necessary for free range egg production units, rather than a number of smaller buildings due to the substantial set up costs of the enterprise and the equipment that is necessary for the units to operate efficiently. The extension of the existing building maximizes the efficiency of the existing facilities reducing the cost of expansion in comparison to the provision of a new building.

Landscaping

The site for the proposed extension to the free-range egg unit is located to the North of the existing farm complex. The site is on low-lying land and is enclosed to the North by gradually rising land and to the west by a mature hedgerow and trees. To the North of the building is a track with rising topography beyond. The site is screened from views from the south by the existing farm complex. Landscaping of the site for both poultry requirements and esthetics have been undertaken and at this stage no further landscaping works are intended.

The lower lying nature of the site, together with the rising topography and the mature hedgerow and trees minimize the scale and massing of the proposed building extensions and provide a degree of screening so that it will not be prominent within the landscape.

The construction materials will match the existing building and are appropriate to a rural landscape, with the external facing material being Juniper Green and concrete paneling. The roof material is profile sheeting, which is typical of agricultural buildings in the countryside.

Access

Access to the existing free range egg laying units is required by HGV's. The traffic generated by the existing free range egg laying unit presently averages 2.5 lorry movements per week, including feed delivery, egg collection, bird delivery and bird collection.

The traffic movements associated with the existing unit and the extension will in total generate 114 egg collection lorries, 34 feed lorries, 4 bird delivery lorries and 4 bird collection lorries every 14 months. This equates to an average of 2.6 lorries per week.

It is not envisaged that there will be a significant increase in vehicle movements other than at either end of the cycle and nominal increase in the number of feed deliveries. The current egg collection lorries only collect a part load and therefore have capacity to accommodate an increase in eggs with only a minimal increase in vehicle numbers to accommodate fluctuations in production. Similarly, feed deliveries will increase by 6 in the 14 month cycle. The increased number of birds will result in the average number of vehicle movements per week increasing from 2.5 to 2.6.

The site itself was originally laid out to facilitate the type of vehicle which is required to service the unit and will be unaffected by the extension of the building. Access to the development from the public highway is via the existing access.

Inclusive Access

Due to the nature of the development as a free range egg laying unit, inclusive access is not considered relevant. However, there will be level access to the packaging and sorting area.

Jeff McMaster BSc MRICS August, 2013