

DESIGN, ACCESS & ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Proposed Replacement Dwelling, farm office and workshop at
Applehead Farm, The Hill,
Millom, Cumbria



Context

Applehead Farm comprises a traditionally constructed Lakeland farmhouse, with attached cottage and associated stone barns and outbuildings. It is situated within 27 acres of grazing land and woodland on high ground above the village of The Hill, Millom.

The house and buildings sit on the edge of this land, backing onto a steeply wooded hill and with an open aspect and distant views to the south east.

The main house comprises 2 storey accommodation plus an attic space with staircase access. There are 3 bedrooms at first floor and two rooms in the attic. There is a single storey utility room to the north side.

The attached cottage is a two up/two down configuration with a single storey entrance porch to the rear, west elevation.

A double lean-to garage abuts the southerly elevation.

The property is unheated, unmodernised and generally in a state of disrepair and hot and cold water distribution systems are not fit for purpose. Constructionally, a new slated roof covering is required and a number of the roof timbers are defective and require replacement. The ground floors are significantly damp, as are the stone walls and external render at low level. The cottage is in a state of serious disrepair.

Foul drainage is by means of an existing 'onion' type tank with a discharge drainage field in the adjoining land. This tank currently serves both dwellings.

The applicant has recently purchased the property. Having qualified in agriculture at college, the applicant has been running a successful building and groundworks company in the locality. His intention is to develop the farm as a diverse and viable agricultural business and to improve the facilities of the farm to suit current living and working standards.

In terms of the wider physical characteristics and planning policies, the proposal, as a like for like replacement dwelling, should have little effect. A sustainable farming business, run by a young local family should however have a positive effect in social and economic terms for the local community.

The existing building footprints comprise the following:-

Main farmhouse:	102m ²	}	Existing houses 144m ²
Attached cottage:	42m ²		
Attached garage:	32 m ²		
Detached garden outbuilding:	23 m ²		
Total existing building footprint:	175 m²		

The proposed building footprints comprise the following:-

New house:	141m ²
Workshop/garage	74 m ²
Office/store	26 m ²
Total proposed building footprint:	241 m²

The proposed main house is broadly equivalent in footprint to the existing house and cottage combination. The increased overall footprint represents additional business facilities for the farm ie. office and workshop.

Layout

The layout of the proposed replacement buildings is very similar to the existing site arrangement, but brought forward and rotated slightly to the east. This will permit improved manoeuvrability for farm vehicles within the farmyard to the rear (with access to the existing stone barn). It will also ease the distance between the building and the wooded embankment to the rear. It is considered that the re-building will have no detrimental effect upon the mature trees to the rear as these are set upon the embankment at a level some 3m plus above nominal ground/floor level. They are of sufficient distance from the development area to be excluded from potential effect of construction activities, and with sufficient canopy clearance. The existing stone embankment wall to the rear of the farmyard will naturally protect the trees from construction activities and form a natural exclusion zone.

The new garage is large enough to provide workshop facilities for maintenance of the applicants' plant and farm vehicles. This building is set away from the gable of the main house, but linked by the new farm office and entrance porch, which creates a 3-sided courtyard for parking and turning of vehicles, and an element of shelter for this exposed site.

Use

The intended use of the proposed buildings remains as principle dwelling serving the farm, farm office and garaging/workshops for associated vehicles.

Scale

The scale of the re-development proposals is in keeping with the existing buildings. The two storey house is broadly equivalent not only in footprint but in height and massing to the existing, and is therefore considered to be modest within its surroundings.

Appearance

Although the proposal is a contemporary interpretation of the existing, proposed materials will be a natural slated roof above rendered walls with an element of natural stone cladding and dry-stone garden walling. This will reflect and be sympathetic to the character of the surroundings.

Landscaping

With regard to landscaping, it is proposed to re-create the enclosed farmhouse garden within a new low drystone wall to distinguish this from the wider rural landscape.

Access

Access to the replacement dwelling will remain as existing, via an unmade track from the adopted highway. This will be upgraded immediately adjacent to the house where the new parking and turning area is to be formed, giving level accessibility into the house. The dwelling will be constructed in compliance with the requirements of Building Regulations Part M4 (1) Category 1: Visitable Dwellings.

Sustainability: Policy CS16 Environmental Design Statement

The existing dwelling has a poor thermal performance, defective fabric and exhibits dampness throughout.

The opportunity to construct a replacement dwelling offers the chance to create a vastly improved environment for its occupants. The design will encompass high levels of thermal insulation and airtightness, whilst maximising natural lighting and taking advantage of positive solar gain. Renewable energy measures will include a ground source heat pump and photovoltaic panel array.

The timber frame construction proposed, inherently offers insulation levels well above Building Regulation standard and permits a fabric-first approach to energy efficiency. High specification window and door frames will further add to the efficiency and reduce energy use.

All principal rooms are located to face south east to maximise early day solar gain, whilst the generous covered verandah overhang will limit peak summer overheating.

The ground source heat pump will serve underfloor heating to the main ground floor spaces, with the floor mass acting as a heat reservoir. No conventional fossil fuel boiler will be required and the heat pump will largely be run on electricity generated by the photovoltaic panels located on the garage roof. Any surplus electricity generated will be sold directly to the National Grid.

Conclusion

The design proposals align with Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028: Policy DM16 – Replacement Dwellings. The scale and character of the proposed replacement dwelling is sympathetic to that which it is proposed to replace, whilst creating an improved environment for contemporary living and farming. This will contribute significantly to the new owners' aims to secure the future of this small agricultural estate.