



October 2023

Agricultural Planning Appraisal

On Behalf of

Messrs. J&M Osborn & Son

Bolt How,
Holmrook,
Cumbria,
CA19 1YD

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1.0 Introduction

This report has been prepared in support of a proposal to site a new Agricultural worker's dwelling on the holding. All the information within this report has been provided by the client. A site visit was undertaken on 20th October 2023, after which this report was prepared. The farming proposals are to continue a sustainable agricultural system at the holding for the next generation. The current farming system requires an additional property to sustain the farming practices.

Messrs J & M Osborn & Son is a farming partnership with Tony, Denise and Maureen Osborn running the farming operations and Tony's mother Maureen (85) living in the farmhouse of Bolt How Farm under the AHA 1986 tenancy. Both Tony and Denise's sons Grant (28 and Matt (18) are employed on the farm.

1.1 Location

The Holding of Bolt How lies just outside the western edge of the Lake District National Park in the County of Cumbria. 1.5 miles North of Holmrook and 4.5 miles East of the coastal village of Seascale. This sits within the newly formed Unitary Authority of Cumberland Council.

1.2 The Land

The holding is made up of 340 acres of a mix of owner-occupied and tenanted land. 255 acres of tenanted land and 85 acres of owner-occupied land. The tenanted land is taken under an Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 tenancy of which a generational succession still remains. Maureen currently resides in the main farmhouse under the tenancy.

2.0 Farming Enterprise

The principal income for the holding comes from dairy production. With 80 cows passing through the parlour currently. Over the coming 24 months this is planned to increase to 120. There are currently 100 head of Holsetein x Montbéliarde dairy cows including followers. In addition, there are Limousine x Belgian Blue x Angus beef stores are kept on the holding for 18 months along with 70 dairy heifers. 100 breeding lambs are sold as fat and wintering is taken in across the holding in the region of 260 sheep. The farming system is run by Tony and his sons Grant and Matt, full time. During busier periods of the farming calendar additional assistance from contractors is utilised.

Stock husbandry and management of the holding is a daily routine throughout the year in addition to milking, feeding and covering daily routines. The health of the stock is vital to the performance of the holding, vigour of the animals and produce which is generated from the dairy cows, store beef and breeding lambs. There are a number of regular routine tasks conducted to manage the stock. These include clipping, dipping, worming, foot trimming and vaccinating. Although intensive tasks, the labour required to conduct these exercises are essential in the farming calendar.

3.0 Grassland & Fodder Production

Bolt How is a predominantly permanent grassland used for grazing animals through the summer and autumn months. Approximately 250 acres (101 ha) are mown for winter fodder and 12 acres (4.9 Ha) cut for maize.

5.0 Existing Property & Farm Buildings

The farmhouse at Bolt How is a 3 bedroomed, listed, traditionally constructed solid stone-built property under a slate roof construction. The farmhouse is occupied by Maureen (85) under the terms of the AHA 86 Tenancy. The house and buildings sit outside of the Lake District National Park, there is a traditionally built solid stone barn at the holding which also comes under the Listing of the property. In the farm steading there are a number of steel portal framed agricultural buildings. These consist of three cubicle sheds, two silage pits. A milking parlour constructed of a 12 a side swing over parlour. A calf shed which is constructed of steel portal frame and a young stock shed which is of block-built construction and holds cubicles within. There is also a Dutch Barn made of a timber pole frame and tin cladding.

Workforce:

The present workforce consists of Tony Osbourn (64) his sons Grant (28) and Matt (18). In periods of high seasonal demand and farming operations throughout the year, additional family members are utilised, and contractors arranged to undertake lambing, relief milking and tractor work as and when required. However, day to day the holding requires all three-family member's full time.

This requirement has grown over the recent years as further responsibilities have been covered by Grant and Matt. There is now a need for either Tony & Denise, Grant or Matt to have a dwelling on the holding to ensure a permanent location for them to be on site and cover the demands of the farming system and livestock husbandry along with ensuring the security of the holdings steading. The farm business faces severe management pressure due to the fact all partners and farmworkers currently live in properties away from the farm steading, with the closest being some 5 miles away in Seascale. This distance on a routine day means that it is taking Grant more than 30 minutes to commute to the farm one way being 25 miles, with Grant and Tony also making trips of more than 20 minutes each way in order to get to the farm steading.

To maintain high standards of animal welfare, particularly at times of peak labour requirements such as calving, lambing, drilling and silaging. There is regularly a need for Tony, Grant and Matt to make several trips in a day to the farm at all hours of the day, to oversee stock and operations along with managing routine tasks and contractors.

Future Labour Requirements

The Farming business and operations of Messrs J&M Osborn & Son are profitable and viable. **Appendix A** details the current standard labour requirements for the farming business. Using standard labour data taken from the John Nix Farm Management

Pocketbook 54th Edition 2024, the standard labour requirement for the farm business is 3.42 full time workers.

The Proposal

Messrs J & M Osborn propose to site a new temporary Agricultural worker's dwelling at Bolt How Farm, Holmrook. This is essential to support the sustainably growing business for the following reasons:

1. To manage the farming business more effectively with increased emphasis on managing and ensuring on farm safety and security.
2. To provide constant supervision of livestock by a trained stock person on site, including emergencies experienced at peak times such as calving and lambing.
3. The sustainable farming incentive and countryside stewardship schemes require increasing management time of onsite works, projects, and maintenance to ensure environmental and animal welfare benefits.
4. To ensure essential labour needs and cover are met around the clock in particularly during staff illness, injury, and annual leave.
5. To provide accommodation on site for sustaining a family member within the family business to promote and assist with the sustainable progress of the farming operations and increased animal welfare.

The preferred site of the new dwelling is off the farm lanning in the adjacent land. This will allow the occupant of the dwelling to be within sight and sound of livestock buildings and the surrounding fields where young stock calves and lambs are located depending on weather conditions and to monitor and vehicle movements on to the farm from the highway.

Justification for an Agricultural Workers Dwelling:

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) supports a prosperous rural economy and states that the planning policies and decisions should enable the growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings, well-designed new buildings and allow the development and diversification of agricultural businesses.

Local Planning

The site is within the remit of Cumberland Council however the reference to planning policy is by way of Copeland Local Plan which was adopted in July 2014, and Copeland Local Plan (Part 2) Adopted July 2020, this being the current planning policy for the local area. It is believed that the following policies support the proposed development by Messrs J& M Osborn:

The following Policies need to be considered in relation to this application : -

Cumberland Council inherited the local development plan documents of each of the sovereign Councils including Copeland Borough Council, which combine to form a Consolidated Planning Policy Framework for Cumberland.

The inherited the local development plan documents continue to apply to the geographic area of their sovereign Councils only.

The Consolidated Planning Policy Framework for Cumberland comprises the Development Plan for Cumberland Council until replaced by a new Cumberland Local Plan.

Copeland Local Plan 2013- 2028 (Adopted December 2013)

Core Strategy

Policy ST1 – Strategic Development Principles

Policy ST2 – Spatial Development Strategy

Policy SS1 – Improving the Housing Offer

Policy SS2 – Sustainable Housing Growth

Policy SS3 – Housing Needs, Mix and Affordability

Policy ENV1 – Flood Risk and Risk Management

Policy ENV3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy ENV5 – Protecting and Enhancing the Borough's Landscapes

Development Management Policies (DMP)

Policy DM10 – Achieving Quality of Place

Policy DM11 – Sustainable Development Standards

Policy DM12 – Standards for New Residential Developments

Policy DM22 – Accessible Developments

Policy DM24 – Development Proposals and Flood Risk

Policy DM25 – Protecting Nature Conservation Sites, Habitats and Species Policy DM26 – Landscaping

Other Material Planning Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)

Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2021 (SHMA)

Copeland Borough Council Housing Strategy 2018-2023 (CBCHS) National Design Guide (NDG)

Cumbria Development Design Guide (CDDG)

Emerging Copeland Local Plan

Cumberland Council are continuing the preparation and progression to adoption of the emerging Copeland Local Plan 2017-2038.

The emerging Copeland Local Plan 2017-2038 comprising the Publication Draft (January 2022) and Addendum (July 2022) have recently been examined by the Planning Inspector and their report on the soundness of the plan currently remains awaited.

As set out at Paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of preparation of the emerging plan; the extent to which objections to relevant policies have been resolved; and the degree to which emerging policies are consistent with the NPPF.

Given the stage of preparation of the emerging Copeland Local Plan 2017-2038 some weight can be attached to policies where no objections have been received or objections have been resolved. The Publication Draft (January 2022) and Addendum (July 2022) provides an indication of the direction of travel of the emerging planning policies, which themselves have been developed in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF. The policies relevant to this proposal include;

- Strategic Policy DS1PU - Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Strategic Policy DS2PU - Reducing the impacts of development on Climate Change
- Strategic Policy DS3PU - Settlement Hierarchy
- Strategic Policy DS4PU - Settlement Boundaries
- Strategic Policy DS5PU - Planning Obligations
- Strategic Policy DS8PU - Reducing Flood Risk
- Policy DS9PU: Sustainable Drainage
- Strategic Policy H1PU - Improving the Housing Offer
- Strategic Policy H2PU - Housing Requirement
- Policy H6PU - New Housing Development
- Strategic Policy N6PU - Landscape Protection
- Policy CO7PU – Parking Standards and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

We believe that the above policies are of particular relevance to this application, and we feel that the application has demonstrated that the circumstance of the development meets the policy criteria for both local and national planning policy.

With regard to the proposal at Bolt How, Holmrook, the 5 tests are now outlined and considered:

1. The clearly established and functional need test

Animal welfare remains of paramount importance at Bolt How Farm. The daily milking routine, livestock husbandry and land management throughout the seasons requires constant supervision. This will include twice daily milking, feeding, and bedding of livestock and outside stock husbandry depending on the time of year. It will also include hourly supervision at the busiest times of the agricultural year when lambing, calving and so on. There are also additional seasonal requirements throughout the year. For the sheep flock these include tuppings, dipping, shearing, crutching, weaning, and marketing

to name some of the tasks. In the cattle stock these require daily supervision whether inside or out, routine vaccination, worming, de-horning, castration, preparation for marketing, blood testing and so on. Within the dairy herd there is the daily milking and parlour operations, routine foot trimming and herd management for calving times and housing.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. Normal farming practice requires excellent grassland management with animals being rotated around the farm during the summer months. Fodder making and harvest operations are essential, together with transporting animals to market on a regular basis throughout the year.

Finally, there is a daily requirement for a member of staff to be available to deal with emergency situations, such as at calving, lambing, escaped livestock, illness, or injury.

These tasks are essential to the health and welfare of the animals, along with the farmers duty as custodians of the countryside and the importance of their role within the landscape they live, particularly in the Lake District. They preserve the landscape, managing pests and invasive weeds. As part of this stewardship a considerable amount of time is spent on managing, repairing and reinstating field boundaries, hedges, walls, and fencing.

The proposed location of the new dwelling is ideal to ensure that the farm buildings and land are accessible and easy to observe or supervise. This is an added benefit to a rural location such as Bolt How Farm where there are few neighbours.

It is therefore essential that a full-time worker is required to live on the holding to maintain the highest animal husbandry and also to protect the sustainable workforce which under the current arrangements are experiencing significant pressure.

2. The Time Test

The Standard Man Days calculations contained within Appendix A specifies the need for at least 3.42 full time workers for a farming enterprise of this operation and scale. With only one full time worker currently living at the farm, it is clear there is a need for a second agricultural workers dwelling at Bolt How Farm.

3. The Financial Test

Three-year summary of Messrs J & M Osborn & Son's farm accounts can be made available in confidence to the planning representative. These accounts reflect the business as being viable and were profitable in each of the three years. despite difficult market conditions and weather throughout these years. The business is financially sound and there is a clear prospect that this can continue. This businesses situation could certainly be improved and made more sustainable by making the provision of a second dwelling at Bolt How Farm. The development costs for the dwelling would be borne by the farming business.

4. The Other Dwelling Test

Bolt How Farmhouse is occupied by Maureen (85) Tony's mother who is named on the AHA 1986 tenancy which has a further generational succession remaining on the tenancy. The farming business is managed from this property. Denise & Tony Osborn live in a bungalow within Drigg. Tony is full time working on the holding assisted by Denise. The business also supports sons Grant and Matt. However, with the pressures of additional accommodation required on the holding, both are currently living away from the holding in properties. It is not feasible to house the full-time workers in the farmhouse with Maureen currently living in the property under the conditions of the tenancy, and in succession the property could only accommodate one of the three full-time workers required on the holding.

Conversion of an agricultural building

The traditional stone building adjacent to the farmhouse is not suitable for conversion as it has listed status and is also in a poor structural condition. Financially the increased material and building costs would also result in the costs of renovation and conversion far outstripping that of a new, purpose design and built dwelling on the holding. Alongside it is not natural to consider such significant investment on a tenured farmstead.

Due to the remoteness of the holding, there is no likelihood of any local properties becoming available that would be within a close enough proximity to the farm for livestock supervision and agricultural operations to offer a benefit to the applicant.

Permanent Dwelling on site

The business is well established, viable and profitable. Therefore a permanent dwelling can be justified as set out above. In this situation we are seeking only for a five year licence for a timber chalet within the farmstead which is to provide the LPA with confidence in the business and needs in the rural area.

The proposed location is within sight, sound and easy access of the farm buildings and the existing farmhouse. This will help to enhance the animal welfare and of farming good practices.

Other Planning Requirements Test e.g. in relation to access, or impact on the countryside.

This planning application is for the siting of timber chalet for a limited duration to assist with an immediate need on site at the farm, and whilst the appraisal does consider support for a more permanent dwelling this is not intended currently. We have not identified the shape and size of the timber chalet at this time given it is likely to be purchased once planning consent is granted and will be subject to a suitable building coming available. We are able to provide approximate sizing and specification if the LPA feel this is essential in positively determining this application.

Conclusion

Having considered all the 5 tests in relation to the farming business at Bolt How Farm, our conclusion is as follows:

There is an established functional need for a further agricultural workers dwelling at Bolt How Farm.

There needs to be adequate labour on the farm available day and night through the agricultural year not only to cover normal operations day to day but also in times of optimum labour requirements and for emergency tasks.

Animal health and welfare is a primary consideration. The test for a full time worker on site has been adequately met and it is clear that two full time workers are required on site to maintain the viability of the business and to care for the animals to the best possible standards under the terms of good animal husbandry and welfare.

The farming business is established, financially viable and profitable. It is likely to remain operating sustainably so into the future.

The business is of a size and scale that requires a further full-time worker to be resident on site with easy access to the land, buildings, and livestock, being the core production assets of the agricultural business. As currently there is no fulltime worker living on or near the farm holding.

Appendix A

Enterprise Per Head or Per Hectare	Standard Man Days Per Head or Per Hectare	Standard Man Days Total
Livestock		
120 Dairy Cows	4/Hd	480
40 Beef 18 month	1.6	64
70 Calves to 6 months	1.2	84
Sheep		
100 Breeding Lambs Fat	0.3	30
Land		
Grassland Silage 2 cuts	2.8	121.04
Grassland Grazing	0.4	33.6
Maize	1.15	5.61
Subtotal		818.25
Plus Management 15%		940.99
Divided by 275 SMD's per worker		
Full Time Employees Required		3.42

Appendix B

Site Plan of existing farmstead and proposed location of a second farm workers dwelling(attached)

