

PLANNING STATEMENT

AND

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

NOOK FARM, CLEATOR, CUMBRIA

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Statement supports a planning application for the comprehensive redevelopment at Nook Farm, Cleator, Cumbria. The redevelopment involves the replacement of the existing farmhouse, demolition of a substantial range of modern agricultural buildings, poly tunnels and replacement with purposely designed range of buildings to support equestrian and domestic use. A private outdoor equestrian arena will be laid out on the site of the former agricultural buildings.

1.2 The removal of the large dilapidated modern buildings and replacement with appropriately scaled buildings of a high quality of design, represents a significant improvement to the appearance of the farm grouping. The proposal will deliver a sustainable form of development which will have a positive impact in terms of building quality, design, landscape and visual impact and energy efficiency.

1.3 The Application to is accompanied by the following:

2.0 Site Description and Background

2.1 Nook Farm is located in open countryside to the south west of Cleator village. The property extends to 5.68 acres which includes the former farm grouping, farmhouse curtilage and grazing land. The principal buildings on site are as follows:

- (a) existing vacant farmhouse
- (b) a range of non-traditional, dilapidated agricultural buildings with a floor area of 2,978m² which appear to have been used for intensive cattle farming.
- (c) a redundant stone barn which is connected to the modern agricultural building.

2.3 It appears that the building has been used for large scale intensive cattle farming and it is reasonable to assume there was a high level of activity associated with the previous farming operations on site.

2.4 The farm no longer includes sufficient land to allow it to operate as a viable agricultural unit. The farm grouping has been vacant for several years and appears to have been in a state of decline for a significant period prior to becoming vacant. The farm grouping is in varying degrees of disrepair and contains redundant and unusable items from the previous agricultural use. Redevelopment will secure the removal of agricultural rubbish from the site.

3.0 The Proposal

3.1 The proposal has been formulated as a comprehensive scheme to meet the needs and requirements of the current owners. The individual elements of the scheme have been purposely designed to create a high-quality dwelling with a private equestrian facility. It has also been prepared to allow the proper consideration of the proposal and to avoid future ad hoc development.

3.2 The application is accompanied by a suite of plans, reports and documents related to specific aspects of the proposal. The supporting documentation is intended to meet

statutory and policy requirements. Further information is provided to assist the interpretation and assessment of the proposal.

4.0 Demolition of Farm Buildings

4.1 Drawing 25/04/0173-03 indicates the scale of the demolition of the non-traditional and dilapidated agricultural buildings. The group of buildings measuring 2,978m² will be demolished. This is both a considerable operation but also a considerable gain in terms of removing the buildings from the landscape. The buildings have been used for agricultural purposes, but their scale and design are almost industrial. The buildings in sections appear much higher than a standard cattle housing buildings increasing its visual impact. The buildings appear to have been built in several phases with changes in design and materials. The building sides are clad in a blue profile sheet with a variety of roofing sheets used as the roof covering.

4.2 The buildings have numerous external features including large catching pens constructed of concrete, heavy steel and railway sleepers. There are also various unique features in relation to water supply and surface water drainage attached to the outside of the buildings. If the buildings are allowed to remain their appearance and structural integrity will continue to deteriorate particularly in relation to the cladding. Repair of the buildings is not financially viable or desirable.

4.3 The northeasterly section of the modern building is immediately adjacent to the track and has a dominating appearance of views entering the farmyard and from the farmhouse. The removal of the building will create significant benefits both to the

inhabitants of the farmhouse, users of the public right of way and long-range views of the site.

5.0 Equestrian Arena and Buildings

5.1 The demolition of the building will provide a clear area to allow the formation of the 44m x 50m horse arena. The arena will have a permeable all-weather surface. The only physical features will be fencing and the lighting which is detailed in the lighting specification. This removes this substantial physical volume of the existing building and the associated visual impact. The removal of the existing hard surfaces and buildings will allow a natural and sustainable forms of drainage.

5.2 The northeastern section of the demolished building will be used to erect a stable building, implement shed and “L” shaped workshop/store. The existing traditional stone barn will be repaired. The proposed buildings are scaled to reflect the character of the property. The stable and implement shed buildings are portal framed and finished in blockwork with a masonry paint finish and vertical boarding. The east elevation of the stable and north/ east/ west elevations of the workshop incorporates reclaimed stone facing to give a traditional appearance.

5.3 The retained and proposed buildings will create a form of enclosure in the existing farmyard but will largely screen the all-weather equestrian arena. Existing natural landscaping will be retained as shown on the site plan. Additional landscaping is proposed and will introduce suitable indigenous species to screen the arena and the farm grouping. Hard landscaping in form of stone walling will be used to define areas

of the site. The applicant is willing to accept a planning condition reserving the approval of hard and soft landscaping

5.4 Policy RE2 of the plan 2021/2039 (COP) relates to equestrian related development. The policy requires the proposals should reuse an existing building or be well related to existing building and structures and satisfactorily relate to existing vehicular access and bridleways. Whilst this proposal does not reuse an existing building it repurposes the site of an existing building in a manner which substantially reduces the impact of the proposal in terms of visual and landscape impact, scale, design and sustainability.

5.5 The site has good vehicular access and links to the local bridleway network.

6.0 Justification for Replacement Dwelling

6.1 The Applicants wish to provide a dwelling on site which is commensurate with the proposed redevelopment of the site. An assessment of the existing farmhouse has been undertaken to determine whether a scheme of refurbishment and extension would meet this objective. The following issues have been identified making refurbishment and extension financially and practically unviable:

(a) the construction of the building is such that it would be difficult to improve and adapt the building to modern standards due to an accumulation of defects and adverse features which have been identified including:

(i) cracking is apparent in all elevations which would need extensive structural repair,

(ii) sandstone lintels and surrounds have sufficiently deteriorated to require replacement,

(iii) timber infestation and rot to the roof timbers and defective roof coverings means the roof requires complete replacement,

(iv) the rear wall retains the garden level which results in damp in the rear wall and requires extensive work to remedy,

(v) the cracking to the elevations indicates that further investigation is required in relation to the foundations to determine whether any further structural remediation is required.

(b) The building has solid stone walls and floors which cannot accept effective insulation to improve the buildings energy efficiency. The current EPC rating is G. The main contributors to the poor energy efficiency are structural (solid walls, floors etc) and cannot be practically remedied. The energy efficiency rating achieved by a new build dwelling will be in the A or high B range.

(c) The internal layout and arrangements are unsuitable for modern family living. The building would require extensive alteration and extension which would inevitably change the appearance of the building in its current form. Considering the above factors a new build dwelling will provide better overall design outcomes.

(d) It is considered unlikely that the existing building could be adapted to include inclusive design for all users in contrast to a new build which as a minimum would be Building Regulations compliant including in relation to accessibility and adaptability.

(e) The building lacks any domestic scale ancillary building such as a garage which are likely to be required for modern living.

(f) The farmhouse is built immediately adjacent to the track, and any maintenance of the gable end requires obstruction of the public right of way and farm access. This can be avoided by modest re-siting of the dwelling.

(g) The existing septic tank is defective and requires replacement.

7.0 Proposed Replacement Dwelling

7.1 The proposed replacement dwelling is sited overlapping the footprint of the existing dwelling moving the building in a westerly direction to create some separation between the track and the building.

7.2 The proposed eastern elevation of the property creates a more logical frontage to the dwelling. This is traditional in design and reflects the local vernacular. The prominent features will be faced in local natural stone including stone reclaimed from the demolition work. This includes the 1.5 story addition to the south elevation which incorporates barn style architectural features. The traditionally rendered front elevation includes a stone porch feature with traditional slate roof and verge tabling.

7.3 The west elevation extends views towards Longlands Lake incorporates contemporary elements of design blended with the traditional. This includes a timber truss gable feature with substantial glazed elevation and looking towards the landscape and cedar boarded elevations.

7.4 Ancillary to the farmhouse is a detached domestic building which incorporate a car port, gym and log store. The building is predominantly single story with a room in the roof space. The external finish is predominantly timber and slate.

8.0 Planning Assessment and Conclusion.

8.1 The size and scale of development have been given careful consideration. Buildings with a total floor area of 3,085m² will be removed from the site. This represents a significant planning gain particularly in relation to the removal of the large modern agricultural buildings which are in disrepair. The total floor area of the replacement buildings will be 889m² resulting in a net reduction of 2,196m² or 71% floor area on site.

8.2 Significantly, the massing and volume of the replacement buildings will be substantially reduced. The size and scale of the development should also be considered in the context of its setting. The local landscape is expansive, and the proposal will not have any significant effect on its setting. Overall, the proposal will represent a significant improvement in comparison to the existing development. The proposal incorporates high quality design, natural materials and landscaping compliant with the design standards expected by policy DS4 of the CLP.

8.3 Due to the current condition and scale of the buildings the property presents significant challenges in terms of reuse and remediation. This proposal offers a high quality scheme with obvious planning benefits in terms of the scale of development, scale of use and quality of design. The proposal offers the best possible opportunity for the successful re-development of the site.