

Planning Statement

Formation of a Slurry Lagoon

Threapthwaite Farm, Cleator Moor



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by PFK on behalf of our clients, Mr and Mrs Donaldson, in support of their planning application for the formation of an earth banked slurry lagoon at Threapthwaite Farm, Cleator Moor, CA25 5JF.
- 1.2. Threapthwaite Farm is located off the B5294 Bowthorn Road to the north of Cleator Moor. Planning permission has recently been granted for a number of new buildings at Threapthwaite Farm including a milking parlour, a new office, a silage camp and an agricultural worker dwelling.
- 1.3. The application is supported by the following information –
 - Location Plan
 - P001/001 Proposed Sections
 - P001/002 Proposed Site Layout
 - L01 Proposed Planting Plan
 - Odour Management Plan
 - Manure Management Plan

2. THE SITE

- 2.1. Threapthwaite Farm is located off the B5294 Bowthorn Road to the north of Cleator Moor. The farm has 140 hectares in total with most of this land circling the steading. 25 acres are located approximately 4 miles from the steading and 10 acres are located approximately 5 miles from the steading.
- 2.2. The proposed slurry lagoon will be located immediately to the east of the farm steading and the existing slurry bed. This site has been chosen due to its proximity to existing agricultural buildings and its relationship to the farm holding.
- 2.3. The application site is also not located within a 'Coal Referral Area' or 'High Risk Development Area' unlike other parts of the applicant's land holdings to the north and west of the steading.
- 2.4. The buildings at Threapthwaite Farm include –
 - A range of traditional byres and hulls;
 - a slurry collection facility and tower;
 - a milking parlour, and
 - modern cattle housing and cubicle housing.
- 2.5. Cleator Moor is the nearest town with a population of approximately 6,000. The surrounding land use in Cleator Moor is predominantly agriculture, with agriculture and associated businesses playing a major role in local employment.
- 2.6. The application site is not located within a Flood Risk Zone and there are no known surface water issues affecting the site.

- 2.7. The site is not located within a Conservation Area and there are no listed buildings with the vicinity of the site.
- 2.8. There are no other designations affecting the site and there are no protected trees.

3. THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The main enterprise at Threapthwaite Farm is dairy farming. There is an average of 210 cows per year which are fed and milked twice a day. Mr and Mrs Donaldson also accommodate 400 fattening sheep from September to January each year.
- 3.2. The dairy business has existed since the 1940s and was established by Mr Donaldson's parents. Mr and Mrs Donaldson have continued to invest in the farm holding to maintain a milk contract with Meadow Foods Ltd. It is anticipated that a new parlour and handling system will be built within 2 years to reduce the milking time.
- 3.3. The existing slurry storage capacity is not appropriate for the modern requirements of Threapthwaite Farm. The ability to store slurry to allow for its timely application to the land is essential in order to enable efficient agricultural operations and protect the natural environment.
- 3.4. The proposed development will have no adverse impacts on the wider landscape and the residential amenity of existing occupiers. Threapthwaite Farm is not located in area of landscape importance and the nearest residential properties are located at Rheda Terrace which is 115m away from the proposed location of the lagoon.
- 3.5. The Proposed Planting Plan shows that a natural landform mound will be formed to the east and south of the slurry lagoon. The mounded landform and native woodland species with understorey will screen views from residents at Rheda Terrace to the south-east and travellers on the B5294.

- 3.6. The proposed earth banked slurry lagoon has also been chosen instead of other alternatives for a number of reasons including a reduced visual and landscape impact and the use of clay to blend the scheme into its surroundings.
- 3.7. Whilst there are no public rights of way that cross or adjoin the application site, for safety precautions, the lagoon will be fenced to prevent any accidental pedestrian or animal access. The proposed fence will be 3m high with barbed wire at the top to prevent climbing. Warning signs will also be in place.

4. PLANNING POLICY

Copeland Local Plan 2013 - 2028

4.1. The Copeland Local Plan 2013 – 2028 Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD was adopted in December 2013.

4.2. Policy ST1 Strategic Development Principles states that the following principles inform and underpin the Borough’s planning policies:

- Economic and social sustainability;
- Environmental sustainability;
- Protect, enhance and restore the Borough’s valued assets, and
- Ensure the creation and retention of quality places.

4.3. Policy DM30 states that Proposals for new agricultural buildings, small holdings and equine related development will be permitted so long as they –

- Are well related to an existing settlement or farm building complex, or where this is not possible or appropriate are accessible and well screened;
- Are of an appropriate design and scale;
- Use materials and colours that enable the development to blend into its surroundings;
- Do not adversely impact on the local landscape character or built environment, and
- Do not significantly impact the amenity of any nearby residential properties.

- 4.4. The development is sought to improve the environmental management and conditions of the farming enterprise. The lagoon will provide sufficient storage to ensure that slurry is only spread at the appropriate times of year to maximise effectiveness and ensure no damage is done to the environment.
- 4.5. The development is a proportionate expansion to the existing built form of Threapthwaite Farm and will facilitate the continued use of the site in accordance with modern agricultural practices. Therefore, the development proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle.
- 4.6. The proposed development is adjacent to an existing agricultural building group and will not exacerbate existing impacts of this established use upon neighbouring residential amenity. The agricultural use of the application site remains unchanged through this application. The Odour Management Plan explains that due to the considerably larger storage capacity of the proposed new lagoon, the number of times that slurry needs to be spread will be significantly reduced. Therefore, minimising the occasions when odours are released.
- 4.7. The nearest residential dwellings are approximately 115 metres to the south of the proposed development. Given that the scheme does not introduce a new or intensified use, in addition to the submitted Odour Management Plan and Proposed Planting Scheme, the proposal is considered to have no adverse impact upon neighbouring residential amenity.
- 4.8. It is considered that the proposal meets the requirements of local and national planning policy and will support further investment in the farm business.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. The planning application seeks full approval for the formation of an earth banked slurry lagoon at Threapthwaite Farm, Cleator Moor, CA25 5JF.
- 5.2. Threapthwaite Farm is located off the B5294 Bowthorn Road to the north of Cleator Moor. The main enterprise at Threapthwaite Farm is dairy farming. The business has existed since the 1940s and has an average of 210 cows per year which are fed and milked twice a day.
- 5.3. The proposed slurry lagoon will be located immediately to the east of the farm steading and the existing slurry bed. This site has been chosen due to its proximity to existing agricultural buildings and its relationship to the farm holding.
- 5.4. The proposed development will have no adverse impacts on the wider landscape and the residential amenity of existing occupiers. Threapthwaite Farm is not located in area of landscape importance and the application site will be well screened by the proposed planting scheme.
- 5.5. It is considered that the proposal meets the requirements of local and national planning policy and will support further investment in the farm business.

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