

**HOWARDIAN HILLS  
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY  
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
5 NOVEMBER 2012**

**NEW AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS DESIGN GUIDE (DRAFT)**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To consider the draft New Agricultural Buildings Design Guide, prior to informal consultation with stakeholders and subsequent publication and distribution.

**2.0 NEW AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS DESIGN GUIDANCE**

- 2.1 Objective AG4.2 of the AONB Management Plan states that the Joint Advisory Committee will produce a basic design guide for new agricultural buildings and infrastructure, to indicate the principles it would like to see followed in the AONB. This was categorised as a Priority 1 task, to be completed in Years 1 and 2 of the 2009-14 Management Plan (i.e. in 2009/10 and 2010/11).
- 2.2 At previous meetings the JAC has indicated that the guidance would particularly assist the AONB Manager in commenting on planning applications, in that many of the comments made would be encapsulated in the Guidance and reference could therefore be made to this rather than repeating variations on a theme.
- 2.3 Whilst Design Guides had been obtained from other Local Authorities, AONBs and National Parks to act as templates, it has only been since the publication of the Consultation Draft of the North York Moors National Park Design Guide that this task has moved forward significantly. Whilst there are obvious differences in the farming practices between the AONB and the National Park, there are enough similarities to make much of the Guide applicable to the AONB as well. There is also logic in having similar guidance in adjoining areas.
- 2.4 Attached to this report is the draft Design Guide. Members are asked to provide comments on the content of the Guide, after which it will be amended (including adding illustrative photos) and circulated to stakeholders (District Councils, NFU, CLA, agents, etc) for external comments. Following further revision as necessary it is intended to print the Design Guide and send it to all known active farmers in the AONB, as well as to agents who regularly submit planning applications on their behalf.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that:

- a) the Design Guide be circulated for external consultation, following incorporation of any amendments suggested by the JAC.
- b) the Design Guide be printed and sent to all relevant farmers, landowners and agents.

# HOWARDIAN HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

## Design Guide

### New Agricultural Buildings and Infrastructure



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**Howardian  
Hills**   
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## SUMMARY

- The Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan recognises that, in order to thrive, the AONB needs a strong agricultural and rural economy.
- As part of that it is inevitable that new buildings and infrastructure will be needed, to enable farmers and rural businesses to remain competitive, access new markets and comply with animal welfare regulations.
- Modern farm buildings are often large in scale and use materials such as concrete wall panels and profiled sheeting. Without careful attention to detail they can be intrusive features within the AONB landscape.
- The AONB Joint Advisory Committee is a consultee in the planning application process and all proposals are assessed against AONB Management Plan Objectives.
- Objective AG4.1 of the AONB Management Plan states: “Support the construction of new farm buildings and infrastructure where these are appropriate in scale and use high standards of design, careful siting and good landscaping measures.”
- We are likely to OBJECT to buildings that we believe do not conform to this Objective, although we stress that the final decision on Approval or Refusal rests with the District Council (Hambleton or Ryedale), who will judge applications against the relevant Policies in their Local Plans.
- This Design Guide has been developed to provide practical advice and assistance to those considering the construction or extension of a new agricultural building within the AONB.
- Basic design principles:
  - Site new buildings near to existing buildings wherever possible.
  - Use dark colours for the roof sheets – e.g. Anthracite Grey not Natural Grey.
  - Use Yorkshire boarding or dark-coloured profile sheeting for the walls.
  - If using blockwork or grain walling, paint external wall faces in a dark colour.
  - Provide landscaping to either screen or break-up the profile of the building.
- We will work with applicants wherever possible to develop/modify schemes into ones that we feel able to support, although this may not be possible in all cases.
- Further details on all the aspects of design can be found in the sections following this Summary.

# Section 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 The two principal purposes of the Design Guide are to:

- inform farmers and land managers about the standards of design, colour of materials, siting, etc, that we would like to see used within the AONB;
- reduce the time input/cost for farmers, land managers, agents and AONB staff, by ensuring that well-designed proposals are submitted for planning approval first time round. This minimises the need for amendments and re-design following Objections.

### 1.2 The outcomes we hope to achieve are:

- new agricultural buildings/infrastructure that are designed within the context of statutory AONB purposes<sup>1</sup>;
- high quality design that conserves and enhances the character and special qualities of the area and respects the local distinctiveness and the built and natural heritage of the AONB;
- sustainable building practices which minimise waste and the use of resources;
- design that reduces the causes and mitigates the effects of climate change;
- wildlife and natural habitats that are maintained or enhanced.

### 1.3 Aims and Objectives

Farmsteads are a strong visual element within the landscape of the AONB. As such, they help to define the local distinctiveness and cultural heritage of the Howardian Hills.

Whilst in general terms the AONB landscape is well-wooded and undulating, the location of farmsteads can mean that new development may be particularly intrusive unless careful attention is paid to its siting and design.

Consequently these guidelines have been produced to encourage those requiring and/or designing new agricultural developments to carefully consider their potential impact and suggest ways of improving their appearance within the sensitive (and nationally protected) landscape of the Howardian Hills. The aim of the guide is to provide practical advice on the design of new farm buildings that function efficiently and have a minimal visual impact upon the environment.

Farming practices have to be flexible, the scale of operations has changed, building materials and styles are increasingly industrial and there are regulations and standards to be observed. Within this context the farmer has to make a living, because the AONB landscape cannot be conserved and enhanced without thriving agricultural and forest industries.

Whilst the guidance provides general design advice for a broad range of farm structures, it does not cover all potential types of farm building such as farm diversification schemes or agricultural workers' dwellings.

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<sup>1</sup> Summarised as: Conserve and enhance natural beauty; in doing so, take account of the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries, and the economic and social needs of villages; meet the demand for recreation, so far as this is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.

## Section 2

### An Approach: The Importance of Design

#### 2.1 Historic Background

Historically, the siting and design of farm buildings evolved in response to local climatic conditions, landscape, the farming system, locally available building materials, skills and traditions. Buildings were usually carefully sited and orientated, resulting in a close relationship between them and the landscape. The building forms, materials and colours tended to harmonise with the landscape and often enhanced it. Many farms have developed in stages over the years as and when new buildings have been required and are therefore generally characterised by a range of building styles and materials together on one site. The arrangement of buildings on a farm appears random rather than uniform. The older parts of farms, including the farm house, are typically stone and pantile.

Major changes in farming practice over the last five decades have had a significant impact on the design and function of agricultural buildings. Greater mechanisation, the introduction of different systems of production, hygiene requirements and the need to achieve greater output with less labour has led to the development of much larger farm units. Consequently, larger buildings are required for the efficient housing of livestock and the storage of produce, straw and general everyday equipment and machinery.

There is a continuing trend towards larger buildings with wider roof spans, even if fewer are being built per farmstead. These buildings can be industrial in appearance and scale and can have a significant impact on the rural landscape and the visual quality of existing farmsteads.

There has been increasing interest and concern expressed about the impact of some new farm buildings in the landscape. Amongst the most common issues are:

- poorly sited buildings, located for example in prominent skyline locations or without regard to existing development;
- inappropriate design and choice of materials; and
- the incongruous colour of materials.

Whilst it is important that new buildings are located and designed in a way that respects both their natural and man-made surroundings, they should not necessarily perpetuate past traditions in building styles and materials. In many cases these are no longer appropriate to contemporary farming practice or building technology, and can look awkward when scaled-up. Nevertheless, new buildings should respect traditional influences and be developed in sympathy with their surroundings and in a form appropriate to their function.

#### *Functional and Operational Requirements*

Good design is not just a question of appearance or form but also relates to the suitability of the building to its function. The operational requirements of farming are a major consideration and will often determine the general location and in some cases the particular siting and form of a new building. Reconciling functionality with landscape impacts can sometimes be a challenge, but with careful consideration it can be achieved. New buildings have to contribute to effective functioning of the farm in order to be economically viable. On this basis, applications for new agricultural will also

need to demonstrate that the scale of the proposed building is commensurate with the functional need for it.

## Section 3

### Design Guidance

It is important for economic reasons that all new farm buildings and other agricultural structures should be properly designed and constructed. A quality building, though perhaps of higher initial costs, will save ongoing maintenance and perhaps even future replacement costs, and should assist in achieving greater productivity.

When planning and designing a new agricultural building, consideration should be given to how this and associated works could help to enhance the appearance of the farm as a whole. The advice below applies equally to extensions as to new buildings.

#### 3.1 Landscape Character and Setting

The landscape is a complex combination of physical and cultural elements, the character of which has been created over a long period of time and through environmental changes and human intervention. Farming and farm buildings are an integral part of the AONB's landscape and contribute towards its appeal. The Landscape Character Assessment in the AONB Management Plan identifies seven different landscape character types across the AONB. The objectives for landscape enhancement in each of these character types are set out in the Future Local Management Priorities section of the Management Plan<sup>2</sup>.

It is important to ensure that development proposals respect their context and are sensitively designed to protect and enhance the intrinsic character and local distinctiveness of the AONB's landscape.

Early consideration of the landscape context as part of the design process is essential if development is to successfully integrate with its surroundings. High quality design can enhance both the development itself and the local environment. Considering the landscape early in the design process can also save time, as a lack of detailed information at the planning application stage can lead to delays.

When considering the form, materials and colour of the new building (see below), consideration should be given to maintaining the overall appearance of the farm in the landscape, including the varied and ad hoc appearance of farms as they have developed over time, whilst ensuring that it complements the existing buildings and surroundings.

The construction of a new building may also provide an opportunity to enhance the appearance of an existing farmstead in the landscape through, for example, screening existing parts of the site from wider view or softening the appearance through the use of landscaping.

There may be instances where higher standards of design may be called for. Proposals for new buildings or extensions within historic villages, prominent

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<sup>2</sup> Please see [http://www.howardianhills.org.uk/downloads/Management\\_Plan\\_2009-14.pdf](http://www.howardianhills.org.uk/downloads/Management_Plan_2009-14.pdf)

open countryside, conservation areas or adjacent to a Listed Building will require particular care and attention to detail.

### 3.2 Siting

The position of a new farm building is usually dependent on its function and the space available, but as a general rule new buildings should be sited within or adjacent to existing groups of agricultural buildings. No matter how well designed, a poorly sited building can have a significant impact on the landscape. It is acknowledged however that, due to the practicalities of farming, it may not always be possible to site a new building in or around an existing farmstead.

#### **General design guidance:**

- Subject to operational requirements, the impact of a new structure can be reduced by locating it in close proximity to existing buildings within an existing group. Rarely will it be acceptable to locate an isolated free-standing structure within open countryside.
- New buildings should respond to contours and the natural form of the land by fitting into folds or valley bottoms and avoiding platforms or exposed skylines or ridges.
- Buildings located on the crest of a hill are not only more exposed to the elements but are often more visually prominent and intrusive in the landscape. Where it can be demonstrated that such a location is unavoidable the impact of the building can be reduced by siting it below the skyline and by the careful choice of colour for the walls and roof.
- On sloping sites it is generally best to align a building parallel with the contours and to use cut and fill in preference to raising floor levels.
- Where it is possible to accept different floor levels a building can be stepped down a slope. This can minimise disturbance to the existing land form and reduce its visual impact.
- New buildings should be sited so as to minimise impacts from public vantage points such as roads and Public Rights of Way.
- Avoid 'unneighbourly' siting, especially for buildings that will house livestock.

### 3.3 Scale and Form

Historically the scale and form of traditional buildings was conditioned by functional requirements, the local climate and the availability of building materials, which has resulted in distinctive local types.

Modern farm buildings tend to be large single span structures with shallow pitched roofs based around a portal frame construction. The width allows flexibility for large numbers of livestock (particularly in winter), machinery, crops, forage or feed to be housed under one roof at a cost-effective price. As a result modern buildings are at risk of being out of scale with smaller, more traditional buildings.

#### **General design guidance:**

- Avoid locating very large buildings close to smaller ones. Large new buildings can look out of scale with smaller (older) buildings and consideration should be given to the possibility of building two or more smaller units.
- Using a multi-span building rather than a single span structure can reduce the overall height and create a more varied and interesting roof

- Where possible roof pitches should be matched with those on existing buildings. Although low pitched roofs can make a building less obtrusive, they are often out of harmony with the steeper pitches of older buildings.
- Large expanses of roof and walling can be broken up with well designed and carefully positioned functional elements such as roof ventilators, gutters, downpipes, doors and windows.
- Flat roofs are not part of the Howardian Hills building tradition and should not be used. Dual pitched roofs are usually preferred, although mono-pitch can be suitable for smaller buildings or lean-to extensions to existing structures.
- Extensions should not result in an excessively sized building with large expanses of roof and walling – where a new large space is needed consider breaking the roofline or stepping the new element down a slope. Depending upon the scale of space required, in some instances an extension may have less impact than a new building whilst in other cases a new building may have less of an impact. Small additions can help to enhance the traditional ‘ad hoc’ feel of a farmstead.

### 3.4 Colour

The colour of a building can have a significant impact on the landscape.

Cladding materials for agricultural (and forestry) buildings are available in a wide range of colours and the choices must be carefully made since colour and finish are important factors in helping to reduce the visual impact of a building.

Very light colours and large areas of intense strong colours do not blend particularly well within the landscape and dark colours are usually less apparent than light tones. A building will therefore appear smaller if darkly coloured.

#### **General design guidance:**

- Dark colours (dark green, brown, black or dark grey) are generally more acceptable as they complement the natural environment throughout the seasons and the different characteristics of daylight during the year. Consideration should be given to the general colour of the backdrop against which the building will be most commonly seen.
- As a general rule the roof of an agricultural building should be darker than the walls, to bring out the building’s form. Dark roofs reflect less light and generally make buildings look smaller and less conspicuous. The main exception may be when lighter colours are required for high humidity livestock housing because of the operational need to reduce solar heat gain, or when a building will be primarily viewed against the sky.
- Where more than one colour is used, they should be in harmony. Technical information on preferred colours which can be used together without resulting in severe colour clashes and considerable visual intrusion is contained in British Standard BS5502 (Part 20).
- Use of the same or similar colours on new and existing structures can help to unify a group of buildings.
- Gloss finishes should be avoided – matt finishes are significantly less reflective.



### 3.5 Materials

The type, colour and texture of external materials can greatly affect the impact that a new building has on the landscape.

In the past, the range of building materials available in rural areas was fairly limited with the result that buildings tended to harmonise and be in scale with each other. New construction methods have resulted in a wider range of building materials being available for use on agricultural buildings.

Many modern farm buildings tend to be constructed using a steel or wooden portal frame, clad with timber or sheeting, with a 2-3m high base (plinth) layer of concrete blocks or panels.

Timber is readily available, relatively cheap, robust, easy to handle, easy to replace, easy to fix and with the proper treatment (see below), can be virtually maintenance free. Spaced vertical boarding (known as 'Yorkshire boarding') is functional and sustainable. It provides a good source of natural ventilation and light, and can be stained to meet the requirements of a particular site.

Profiled sheet is available in a wide range of colours and is often the preferred material for crop stores where birds and other pest species need to be excluded.

#### **General design guidance:**

- The range of materials on one building should be limited since too many contrasting finishes can create a cluttered appearance.
- Choose materials which are appropriate for the climate and which will weather well over time.
- Take account of the maintenance implications of the materials used. Low initial construction costs can result in hasty construction and poor detailing which, in the longer term, can lead to increased maintenance costs and a reduced life-span of the building.
- The use of traditional materials should be considered where it can provide an important link to existing, more traditional buildings.
- Treated (tanalised) timber is now an extremely versatile material with an extended life and, in particular, can be effectively used as space boarding where natural ventilation is required.
- Concrete block/panel plinth walls are visually more appropriate when treated by either painting, rendering or where appropriate, cladding with sheeting or natural stone.
- Shiny materials should usually be avoided.

### 3.6 Constructional Detailing

All guttering and downpipes must be sized in proportion to the area of roof being served. All downpipes must be linked into a drainage system to ensure that they do not discharge into an area that may be contaminated, as this could result in the pollution of a watercourse.

Good ventilation is essential to provide healthy conditions for livestock. Ventilation units should be in proportion with the whole building and careful use of colour can assist in making these a design feature. Ventilation comprises two main types: at the junction of materials (for example between the upper and lower sections of a wall); and purpose-made ventilators for use on roofs or walls.

Most agricultural buildings require natural lighting, except crop or bulk feed stores where natural light should be excluded to discourage birds. The most economic and efficient way of providing natural light is in the form of roof lights. Roof lights can transform the working conditions in a building but they should be in proportion to the roof area. They should not dominate the roof nor be placed to give a 'checkerboard' appearance. A few large roof lights are generally better than many smaller ones and should be positioned on the least prominent roof slope.

### **3.7 Access Tracks**

Access to buildings, particularly in the case of stock routes, vehicles arriving for crop/milk collection, distribution and delivery and the associated manoeuvring space required for large vehicles and machinery all need to be carefully considered.

Access tracks, roads and services should be designed with particular respect for the landscape and historic patterns of land use and movement. Consideration should be given to the impact of tracks on the landscape.

There may also be opportunities to rationalise access points by reducing multiple access points to a single, more acceptable point. Access routes should be clearly marked on plans and should include sufficient space to accommodate any planned landscaping.

Buildings should also be designed having regard to the movement of plant and stock around them. If tractors and trailers are required to pass between buildings a 4.5m gap is recommended plus space for turning at the ends. Access for service vehicles, such as milk tankers or feed lorries, must also be allowed for.

Where a completely new access onto a highway is proposed, early discussion with the highway authority is strongly recommended.

#### **General design guidance:**

- Locate new buildings on sites that minimise the need for the creation of new access tracks.
- Where there is an unavoidable need for a new access track to be created it should, where possible, be routed next to existing field boundaries and follow the contours of the land.
- Spoil from construction should be removed and not banked-up along the side of the new track.
- New tracks should take account of the potential impacts of vehicles on neighbouring residential properties that are not associated with the farm.
- Tracks should be surfaced with darker, less visually intrusive, materials (e.g. road planings) if they are in particularly prominent locations. Crushed limestone is an appropriate local material and is often acceptable for other tracks.

### **3.8 Other Farm Structures**

#### *Silos & Towers*

The erection of any structure that will significantly exceed the height of existing buildings within the farm group will rarely be acceptable. Where the need for a tower or silo is unavoidable the following points should be considered:

- Try to integrate the structure within an existing group of buildings;
- Take advantage of any existing landscape features such as trees, slopes and hills to mitigate any visual impacts;
- Avoid sites which are visible from public vantage points; and
- Paint in a dark colour – a shiny, reflective galvanised steel finish can be very conspicuous within the landscape.

#### *Silage Clamps & Slurry Stores*

Slurry stores or tanks can be located below or partly below ground to reduce their impact, with above-ground walls painted in dark colours. Consideration should be given to screening silage clamps and slurry stores from wider view through the use of existing features such as trees, buildings, slopes or hills.

#### *New electricity connections*

Where a new building requires an electricity supply, and particularly if the building is separated from existing buildings, then this should be placed underground. New overhead lines are unlikely to be acceptable and farmers should be able to undertake much of the preparation work themselves (e.g. trench excavation), which can significantly reduce costs.

### **3.9 Landscaping**

Consideration should be given to the best way of integrating a new building with its immediate surroundings. New areas of hard standing, fences, boundary walls and additional planting should all be regarded as part of the overall design. They can be used or restored to link buildings into the landscape, join buildings together, reduce their apparent scale and create enclosures that will provide shelter and privacy. Height should be considered: 1.5 metres is below eye level but 2.0 metres cuts off most views. Minor detailing such as the colour of fencing can be very important - white concrete posts for example can be very intrusive in the landscape.

The impact of new buildings can be softened by careful landscaping reflecting the local landscape character. Planting around modern farm buildings with appropriate native species, reflecting the existing pattern of woodlands, copses, individual mature trees and hedgerows can create new landscape features and wildlife habitats. This helps to integrate new buildings into the wider landscape.

#### **General design guidance:**

- Look at the site of the new building from points in the surrounding landscape that are accessible by the public, in particular roads and Public Rights of Way. Consider how new planting either near the new building or near the principal viewpoints (if the land is in your control) could help integrate or screen it.
- Consider the layout and design of large areas of hard standing, fences, walls and hedges since they can make an important contribution to the appearance of the holding by creating a unifying visual link between buildings and integrating the site into the surrounding landscape.
- Consider the advance planting of trees before the construction of the building as this will result in earlier integration with the landscape.
- Retain and if possible augment existing groups of trees and shelter belts. Trees can improve the appearance of large new buildings by softening their outline and horizontal emphasis.
- It is not always appropriate to plant a dense belt of trees and shrubs to screen a new building. Planting groups of trees or even a scatter of

- Only use native tree species or those which are characteristic of the area, since this will have additional benefits for the conservation of flora and fauna. Avoid ornamental trees of any sort.
- Avoid planting so close to buildings that there is a risk of damage to cladding by falling branches, gutters becoming blocked with leaves or root damage to foundations.
- Before undertaking new planting, take account of possible future building expansion and operational and building maintenance requirements.

### **3.10 Sustainable design**

The rural, often remote, location and the design of many modern agricultural buildings can offer the opportunity to incorporate renewable energy. It may be possible to accommodate technology such as solar panels or wind turbines if they are carefully sited to minimise their visual impacts. The roofs of modern farm buildings can offer greater scope for integrating solar panels than those of traditional buildings.

Consideration could be given to how the building can help in adapting to the predicted effects of climate change, for example considering how the building may be used during warmer, wetter climates. Where this will not lead to risk of pollution, permeable surfacing should be used to reduce the potential for water run-off from the site to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

## **Section 4:**

### **Other Statutory Considerations**

#### **4.1 Built Heritage**

Particular consideration should be given to the design of new agricultural buildings where they are likely to have an impact on a Listed Building or are sited within a Conservation Area. Features of historical importance and their settings should not be compromised or damaged in order to facilitate a new structure.

#### **4.2 Archaeology**

The Howardian Hills has a rich archaeological and historical landscape with many sites and features, nearly 80 of which are protected as Scheduled Monuments. These represent a finite resource that can be easily damaged or destroyed by development. Once lost, they cannot be replaced.

Wherever excavation is involved and if you are unsure whether or not your proposal might adversely affect an archaeological site or feature, you are strongly advised to consult with the Historic Environment Team at North Yorkshire County Council at an early stage ([archaeology@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@northyorks.gov.uk)).

#### **4.3 Natural Environment**

The AONB contains some areas that have been specifically designated on the basis of the flora and fauna that they support. These include Sites of Special Scientific Interest and the non-statutory Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation. However, important habitats and species exist across the whole of the AONB.

All British bat species and nesting birds, plus many other species, are protected by law. Buildings and the landscape are home for many different protected species. The development of new agricultural buildings should avoid, mitigate or as a last resort compensate for any significant harm to important sites and species.

The geology of the AONB is also an important component of its natural environment and should be taken into account when planning new buildings or infrastructure.

Further advice and guidance can be obtained from the AONB Manager ([info@howeardianhills.org.uk](mailto:info@howeardianhills.org.uk)).

#### **4.4 Public Rights of Way**

The view of a development from Public Rights of Way can affect the special qualities of the AONB and people's enjoyment of it. Where Public Rights of Way cross a site, their incorporation into a scheme should be considered at an early stage so that any potential impacts can be minimised.

In these situations, the ability to link the site to the surrounding countryside and near-by settlements should be regarded as an opportunity and potential benefit to the proposal. Where possible, Public Rights of Way should retain their route alignment and form an integral part of the design to provide an attractive, accessible and secure route for all users.

#### **4.5 Non-planning considerations**

It should be remembered that there are a variety of other regulations which apply to the design and construction of new farm buildings, many of which are subject to change over time. These include requirements relating to animal welfare, pollution, odour, waste management and health and safety matters - all of which can have implications for the way in which a new building or an extension to an existing building is developed. Applicants are therefore advised to refer to the most up-to-date technical and statutory requirements or to seek professional advice.

## **Section 5:** **Planning Approvals**

The planning system regulates the use of land and buildings in the public interest and has an important role to play in promoting sustainable development.

Ryedale and Hambleton District Councils are the statutory planning authorities for the AONB and they determine all applications for planning permission to carry out agricultural development within its boundaries. They have regard to national planning policy guidance and the relevant planning policies of their respective Local Development Frameworks.

The planning legislation relating to agricultural buildings is complex. There are a limited range of exemptions and there are various works that can be authorised using a streamlined 'prior notification' procedure, rather than the full planning application process. However, these opportunities are limited to specific circumstances and it is strongly recommended that specific advice is sought from a planning officer before work starts.

## 5.1 Prior Notification

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995<sup>3</sup> (GPDO) grants a general planning permission (known as permitted development rights) for certain types of development – including the erection of some agricultural buildings. A specific planning application is not needed if your project falls within one of the categories set out in the GPDO and meets all the conditions laid down. However, you must apply to the relevant District Council under the requirements for prior notification for a determination as to whether approval is needed for details relating to siting, design and external appearance of the proposed development.

You should contact the District Council for advice on whether you need to submit details under the prior notification procedure or apply for planning permission.

Under the prior notification procedure applicants are required to provide details of their proposal to the District Council using the 'prior notification' form. The application should be accompanied by the appropriate fee and supporting information including a site plan and brief details of the proposed appearance and scale of the structure.

The District Council has 28 days in which to decide whether or not a more detailed 'prior approval' process supported by more detailed information and drawings is required. If you have not been informed of the Council's decision within 28 days of the date of the Council receiving the notification, you should contact the Council to confirm whether or not it has taken a decision. If the Council confirms that it has not reached a decision within this period, you may proceed with the development, as notified to the Council. If you are advised that prior approval is not required, you may go ahead in accordance with the details that you have already submitted.

In those cases where you are informed that the Council's prior approval is required, you must, within one week of receiving notice from the Council, put up a site notice in the prescribed form on or near the land, which must stay up for at least three weeks.

No work should begin before an application is approved.

## 5.2 Planning Permission

Planning permission will be required for some new agricultural buildings, depending upon the size, location and nature of the proposal. You should contact your District Council for advice on whether planning permission is needed.

### *Submission documents:*

Submitting the correct documents is a crucial part of the application process and can assist in the time taken to determine an application. Using the advice and guidance set out in this Design Guide should assist in producing a comprehensive and detailed application.

When you are ready to submit a planning application, the Council will need adequate plans and drawings of a high quality (for photocopying purposes) to assess the proposal. The checklist below sets out the documentation which is likely to be required for a full planning application:

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<sup>3</sup> The GPDO is frequently amended and you should therefore check that, where appropriate, you obtain the up-to-date text for the relevant Part.

- Three copies of completed and signed application forms
- Location plan (at a scale of 1:2500 or 1:1250)
- Supporting Planning Statement
- Existing and proposed site layout plans (at a scale of 1:100, 1:200 or 1:500)
- Other relevant drawings such a floor levels, sections, floor plans and layouts
- Photographs or photomontages
- The relevant fee

To ensure that decisions are made on as fully an informed basis as possible applicants are also strongly encouraged to provide basic details relating to livestock numbers and the range of land use types on a holding in support of the application.

The AONB encourages early discussions between applicants and District Council planning officers to assess whether siting, design and materials might need to be tailored in order to achieve better integration into the landscape. Conditions covering these matters will normally be attached to the planning permission.

# Appendix A

## Glossary

Wherever possible this document has sought to avoid the use of specialist terminology and jargon. However, it is inevitable that certain phrases and terms are used whose meaning may not be immediately clear. This glossary seeks to define and clarify the meaning of a number of references in the Design Guide. Please contact the Planning Policy Team should any further guidance be required.

### A

- Agriculture** Section 336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 defines 'agriculture' as:
- 'horticulture, fruit growing, seed growing, dairy farming;
  - the breeding and keeping of livestock (including any creature kept for the production of food, wool, skins or fur, or for the purpose of its use in the farming of land);
  - the use of land as grazing land, meadow land, osier land, market gardens or nursery grounds; and
  - the use of land for woodlands where that use is ancillary to the farming of land for other agricultural purposes.'

It should be noted that the following uses **do not** fall within the definition of agriculture for planning purposes:

- Equestrian or horse related development (except where the use only involves the grazing of horses);
- Parking or maintenance of agricultural contractor's plant and machinery;
- Hobby farming;
- Buildings used to store equipment that will be used to maintain non-agricultural land e.g. mowers to cut grassed fields not used to keep livestock or to grow crops.

### C

**Character** Distinguishing qualities, features or attributes.

**Character Assessment** An area appraisal emphasising historical and cultural associations.

### D

**Design Guide** A document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with the design policies of a local authority often with a view to retaining local distinctiveness.

**Development** The legal definition of development is "the carrying out of building, mining, engineering or other operations in, on, under or over land, and the making of any material change in the use of buildings or other land" (Section 55 of 1990 Act); this covers virtually all



construction activities and changes of use.

## F

**Farmstead** Group of farm buildings generally consisting of a farm house and a range of associated outbuildings

## H

**Historic Environment** The historic environment is the physical legacy of thousands of years of human activity within the towns and the countryside, in the form of buildings, monuments, sites and landscapes.

## L

**Landscape** The appearance of land, including its shape, form, colours and elements, the way these (including those of streets) components combine in a way that is distinctive to particular localities, the way they are perceived, and an area's cultural and historical associations.

**Listed Building** A building designated by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended, as being a building of special architectural or historic interest.

**Local Distinctiveness** The particular positive features of a locality that contributes to its special character and sense of place and distinguishes one local area from another.

## M

**Material Consideration** A matter that should be taken into account in deciding a planning application or on an appeal against a planning decision.

## P

**Public Right of Way** Routes over which, even where in private ownership, the public has a right of passage. They comprise byways, which are open to any user; restricted byways, open to any user other than mechanically propelled vehicles; bridleways, which can be used by those on foot, horse or bicycle; and footpaths which are open to those on foot only.

## S

**Scale** The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly as experienced in relation to the size of a person.

**Setting** The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or

negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

**Sustainable  
Design**

Design that seeks to create spaces or buildings where materials, energy and water are used efficiently and where the impact on the natural environment is minimised.