# Design & Access Statement

Erection of two free-range egg production units including silos and associated works at Land North West of Red House Farm, Guilsfield, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 9LW
Grid ref: 323942, 314280

Prepared for Mr & Mrs Farmer

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# Mr & Mrs Famer

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March 2021

## Site address

Land North West of Red
House Farm
Guilsfield
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 9LW

## Planning Authority

Powys County Council

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This Design and Access Statement considers the planning issues associated with a planning application for the erection of two free-range poultry unit on land at North West of Red House Farm, Guilsfield. This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted forms and plans.

# 2. THE APPLICATION SITE

2.1 Red House Farm is an established farm business, north of the village of Guilsfield.

2.2 Red House Farm has a large range of modern steel portal framed farm buildings including silage clamps and muck stores which are used for animal housing and general storage. There is one dwelling on site.

2.3 The farm business is run by Dave and Katie. Red house Farm is a traditional dairy farm, but are looking to stop this and start the free range business. The farm business is now proposing to diversify into free range poultry, with 12,000 layers proposed in the new shed. This diversification scheme will assist the farm business economically, in bringing in a new stream of income to counter the loss they have had since the phased reform of the single farm payment scheme.

2.4 It is important to note that the dairy farm will cease if this proposal is successful, therefore the ammonia, nitrogen, vehicle movements and manure will all be reduced significantly as part of this proposal.

2.5 **Aerial View**


2.6 The location of the proposed buildings have been carefully considered, to be relatively close to the existing range of farm buildings without being too close in order to ensure no biosecurity issues arise from the different agricultural activities. The proposed buildings will utilise the existing topography of the land, to ensure the landscape and visual impact is minimised from short and long distance views.

2.7 The site is located within two existing field, which is in close proximity to the existing buildings, its low lying nature and juniper green finish will ensure that the building will integrate well within the immediate and surrounding area.

2.8 The proposal will not have an effect on a large number of residential properties. The closest residential property to the proposal which is not associated with the farm is over 400m away to the North East of the building over the fields from the proposed building.

2.9 An existing field access will be altered to accommodate vehicles to the buildings.

# 3. PROPOSAL

3.1 The proposal is for two new free-range hen building which will provide 6,000 birds within each building. The new buildings will be located to the north west of the current farmyard on some of the land adjacent to the existing buildings and will be accessed utilising an existing gateway into the field. The birds are brought in and remain in the egg production unit for some 13 months. After this time the flock is removed and the whole building fully cleaned down internally and a new flock introduced to restart the egg production cycle.

3.2 This section seeks to explain and justify the design and access principle and concepts on which the development proposed is based and how these are reflected in the individual aspects of the scheme.

### *The Amount of Development*

3.3 The scheme proposes two buildings with feed hoppers and an access track. Each proposed building will be 60m long by 15.5m wide, with a roof pitch of 15°, eaves hight of 3.60m and ridge height of 5.98m. Each building will have a floor area of approximately 930m$^2$ which will house up to 6,000 hens.

3.4 The size of the proposed building is in line with the land availability surrounding the development, at a ratio of 1000 birds for every hectare of land. The formal drawings of the building are shown on the submitted drawings.

### *Layout of Development*

3.5 The development layout is shown in the submitted site plan. It is located relatively close to the existing buildings, with a degree of separation to ensure biosecurity is maintained together with minimising the visual appearance of the building from surrounding vantage points.

3.6 The proposed development will utilise the existing field access.

### *Scale of Development*

3.7 Two buildings are proposed, which will in total house 12,000 laying birds along with a service area and egg storage section.

### *Appearance of the Development*

3.8 The buildings are of a low lying nature which helps to minimise its visual impact. The proposed buildings would utilise ridge mounted low velocity mechanical fans which thermostatically control the building. The building roofs and sides will be clad with box profile sheeting in a Juniper green colour (or a colour to be approved by the LPA) set above a low concrete base wall. Each building will have feed for the birds is stored in two external dark/blue grey coloured, or a similar dark colour to be agreed with the local planning authority, on steel hoppers and conveyed automatically to the buildings. The external steel hoppers will be located directly adjacent to the buildings.

3.9 Adjoining the buildings they will be a concrete apron at the end of the each building that will be for access for delivery and removal of the birds and for cleaning out the manure, egg pick-up, feed and bird delivery.

### *Vehicular Access*

3.10 The access to the new buildings will be via an existing field access, minimal amount of hardstanding will need to be provided, only for the building itself, as the site is along an existing track.

### *Landscaping*

3.11 The location of the buildings has been carefully considered. The application site is set adjacent to the existing farmstead and provides a site which will be against a background of green fields, with a juniper green finish which will help to integrate the building well within the immediate and surrounding area. The proposed buildings will be landscaped as shown by the landscaping plan submitted.

### *Vehicle movements*

3.12 The proposed egg production units will require bulk food delivered to the farm by six or eight wheeler HGVs, which is the usual sized vehicle for agricultural use in this rural area. The feed will be delivered 2/3 times a month and stored in the hoppers on site. Eggs will be collected approximately every 3 days and vehicles delivering new birds will arrive once every 13 months.

3.13 The main labour force to be used in conjunction with the proposed development will be the existing farm workers who already live and work at Red House Farm and therefore have no need to leave the holding to access the proposed development.

### *Drainage*

3.14 Construction of the floor will incorporate a damp proof membrane preventing any dirty water percolating into the ground below the buildings. A stump in the floor will drain further below ground into a sealed tank, which will allow collection of any dirty water primarily arising from the washing down process at the end of the production cycle. This dirty water will then be taken off site in a vacuum tanker.

### *Manure Storage and Disposal*

3.15 The buildings proposed operates a multi-tier system. The two tier system allows the laying hens to perch on two tier perches which are slated to allow manure to drop the

floor onto the manure conveyor belt. The manure conveyor belt is operated every four days and removes manure from the building to either a manure spreader parked outside to directly apply the manure to the land, or a covered trailer which will carry the manure into the covered manure store on the farmstead.

3.16 Please see manure management plan.

### *Dead birds*

3.17 Dead birds will be carefully disposed with and collected by an approved contractor under the National Fallen Stock Disposal Scheme. Whilst awaiting collection they will be stored in a secure container

### *Emissions*

3.18 The buildings design incorporates the use of mechanical ventilator extractor fans, the mechanical extractor fans will thermostatically control building. Efficient design of ventilation fans has minimised the number needed for the buildings. Fans will be maintained and inspected in accordance with the manufacturers or supplier's instructions. This will minimise mechanical noise from the unit and also dust escape. Automated feeding by internal conveyor with augers direct from the sealed external feed hoppers will minimise dust creation. The insulated construction of the walls and roof also reduce sound transmission. SCAIL calculations can be seen in the SCAIL modelling statement.

### *Noise and Odour Management*

3.19 The proposed building design incorporates the use of mechanical ventilator extractor fans, the mechanical extractor fans will thermostatically control the building temperature. Therefore, they tend to operate more frequently during hot weather.

3.20 The nearest residential property is owned and lived in by the applicants. The nearest residential properties not owned by the applicants is over 400m away and therefore the development will not have an unacceptable noise impact on neighbouring amenities.

3.21 The primary noise from the buildings will be the fans, which are ridge fans.

3.22 The manure will be removed from the sheds every 3-4 days via conveyor belt. Therefore, there will be no long-standing manure in the sheds which would produce odour. This will also reduce pest activity.

3.23 The design of the buildings and the incorporation of slatted floors and conveyor belt has a proven history of creating no odour. A poultry unit removes manure less frequently than other agricultural enterprises. Any odour within the poultry unit will not be apparent outside the surroundings of the associated fields, so shall not detrimentally affect those residential receptor points that are closest to the proposed scheme.

3.24 The multi-tier system is a far better system that the historic single tier system in terms of the odour dispersion. The single tier system meant that all the manure created was contained within the building for the full 13-month cycle thus increasing the odour and dust.

3.25 Odour will be kept to a minimum within the Poultry units itself, with natural ventilation filtering through the incorporated pop holes. Water from the nipple drinkers is also controlled and is prevented from being spilt onto the manure, which would increase any associated odour issues.

3.26 It must be noted that odour is very rarely an issue in a modern poultry scheme, given that the buildings are now purpose built and the technology for natural ventilation mitigation and mechanical ventilation has improved unreservedly.

3.27 The manure will be spread on the applicant's farm holding as shown on the manure management plan.

3.28 It is imperative that there are no rodents on the site as this can impact egg sales, so the applicants will carefully monitor the situation and act upon it immediately should any appear. A local Pest Control agent will be employed should a problem occur. The birds are kept indoors at night and predators such as foxes should not be a problem. During the day electric fences around the outside perimeter will deter predators.

### *Dust*

3.29 It is paramount that dust is kept to a minimum in the unit to protect the welfare of the birds and workers. All feed is stored within the silos outside the main buildings, to reduce dust particles. The open design of a free-range unit and associated ventilation systems limit significant dust build up. The automated feeding system, internal conveyor and the external feed bins will minimise any dust creation.

### *Fly control*

3.30 Flies are not an issue on a well-managed and hygienically run poultry unit; due to the feeding habits of poultry any maggots that hatch in the bedding are soon eaten.

3.31 Fly problems at poorly managed poultry farms can occur in the following areas:

### *Feed Storage*

3.32 Animal feed is attractive to flies as a breeding area. Problems mainly occur when feed is stored in unsuitable buildings or storage bins that do not function effectively. These breeding areas are designed out of the majority of poultry farms by installing modern feed storage systems to meet the requirement of the Food Hygiene Regulations and the assured chicken production scheme standards.

### *Field Manure Storage*

3.33 Managing poultry manure in such a way that it becomes unattractive as a breeding site is an effective way to keep the fly population under control. All flies go through four life stages; egg, larva, pupa, and adult. Eggs are deposited on the breeding media (frequently poultry manure) and larva (or maggots) hatch out in the moist or wet material where they remain until ready to pupate. Pupation may occur in a drier location than where the eggs hatch. Fresh poultry manure is approximately 60 to 80% moisture. If the moisture level can be reduced to approximately 30% flies will no longer find it an ideal site for laying eggs.

3.34 The storage of manure is one of the most important factors in preventing fly infestations. Manure that is produced, transported and delivered in a dry, fly free-state can in some cases become infested and cause problems. As good management practice, the applicant inspects existing poultry manure stores when delivered on a frequent basis to ensure that there is no fly activity. The following management principles for poultry manure storage to avoid fly nuisance will be followed:

3.35 Manure stores will be inspected frequently for signs of fly infestation and a record of the checks made will be kept for examination by the Local Authority.

3.36 At the first sign of fly activity on in field stores manure will be covered with suitable sheeting material; the sheeting raises the temperature inside the pile to a level which kills any flies or larvae.

3.37 Any manure covered in this way will remain covered for a minimum of ten days before it is used.

3.38 During the summer months from the beginning of May to the end of September manure will not be stored near to residential areas.

### *Private water supplies*

3.39 There are no private water supplies in close proximity to the proposed sheds. A buffer is provided around any water supplies in the manure spreadable fields.

### *Lighting*

3.40 The poultry units will not include any external or perimeter lighting, as the hens will be trained to find their own way back to the building prior to darkness. One small external light will be outside each of the egg collection units for use in winter months when staff enter the building to collect eggs in the morning and evening.

### *Quality Standards*

3.41 The chickens are managed to comply with the stringent conditions that are imposed by the RSPCA Freedom Food specification, which sets out the standards of welfare at all stages of the chickens life. Spot inspections from the associations are frequent.

3.42 The units will produce eggs in line with Defra 'Code of Good Agricultural Practice'. Manure will be spread onto the farm land in accordance with the Control of Pollution of Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Regulations and the farms manure management plan. If the time of year is not appropriate for the spreading of the manure, the farm business has hard standing areas and existing buildings to store the manure until required. The Codes of Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) and Cross Compliance will be adhered to.

# 4. PLANNING POLICY

4.1 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) confirms that the planning system manages the development and use of land in the public interest, contributing towards achievement of sustainable development. Local Authorities are required to ensure that the economic benefits associated with a proposed development are understood and that these given equal consideration with social and environmental issues in the decision-making process.

4.2 Technical Advice Note 6 (TAN 6) – planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (July 2010) confirms that the planning system has a key role to play in supporting the delivery of sustainable rural communities. TAN6 also states in section 6 that "The Welsh Assembly Government's objective is a sustainable and profitable future for farming families and businesses through the production and processing of farm products while safeguarding the environment, animal health and welfare, adapting to climate change and mitigating its impacts, while contributing to the vitality and prosperity of our rural communities. The planning system can play an important part in supporting the future sustainability of agriculture."

4.3 The site is within Powys County Council and therefore the relevant local planning policies will be within the adopted Local Development Plan (LDP).

4.4 The relevant policies of the LDP are:

- DM2 – The Natural Environment
- DM4 – Landscape
- DM13 – Design & Resources
- DM14 – Air Quality Management
- DM15 – Waste within Developments
- E6 – Farm Diversification

## *Policy Analysis – DM2*

4.5 <u>Policy DM2 – The Natural Environment</u>

Development proposals will be permitted where they do not unacceptably adversely affect important site designations, species and habitats.

4.6 Documentation and assessments are provided within the submission to address NRW's guidance on poultry units, and they are the statutory body to request any compensatory measures which might be required to ensure their proposal does not raise unacceptable adverse effects on the Environment.

4.7 The proposal meets the requirements of this policy as the development designed to fit in with the surrounding landscape and will have minimal impact on views into the site. The proposed buildings will be seen in context within an agricultural setting and with the farm holding itself. The buildings has been designed to be sustainable as possible as discussed earlier in this report. Materials will be sourced locally where possible and material already onsite will be recycled. The application will have no impact on any environmental features and there are no trees or hedges on the site.

4.8 *Policy Analysis – DM4*

Policy DM4 – Landscape

Proposals for development outside settlements must not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the characteristics of Powys' landscape.

4.9 The proposed siting, the low-lying nature of the buildings and its colour juniper green, will ensure that the development will integrate well within the built environment on the farm.

*Policy Analysis – DM13*

4.10 POLICY DM13 – Design and Resources

Proposals for development must demonstrate good quality design and have regards to the qualities and amenity of the area and resources and follow a set of general objectives.

4.11 The proposed poultry units will be located relatively close to the existing buildings, with a degree of separation to ensure biosecurity is maintained together with minimising the visual appearance of the building from surrounding vantage points.

4.12 In terms of noise, dust, air pollution and odour, these have been addressed in section 3, of which no unacceptable impact should arise to any neighbouring property.

*Policy Analysis – DM14*

4.13 Natural Resources Wales has published guidance on how developers should consider the air quality impacts of livestock installations on sites of international or local designated sites. This has been thoroughly investigated and discussed with NRW through the pre-consultation process. We have undertaken detailed modelling, and it confirms that the proposed scenario will have a significant reduction on the ammonia and nitrogen

deposition on nearby sensitive sites, and therefore is a benefit to the overall environment.

4.14 In light of this assessment, no significant detrimental impact will occur in terms of air pollution due to this development.

### *Policy Analysis – DM15*

4.15 Waste within this development has been fully explained in the previous sections of this statement. The manure management plan, maps and processes involved with manure belts from sheds, means no detrimental impact will occur in terms of waste.

### *Policy Analysis – E6*

4.16 Farm diversification is a vital factor in the coming years, as traditional farming activities such as beef and sheep are getting less and less viable every year. Proposals for diversifying will be permitted whereby the use is appropriate in terms of location and setting.

4.17 The use is considered acceptable, given the existing units that have been constructed in Powys over the last 15 years, there is no cumulative impact, as proven through detailed modelling.

4.18 In light of the above the diversification scheme is considered fully compliant with Policy E6.

## 5. ACCESS

5.1 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) seeks to avoid discrimination against people with impairments and disabilities and for instance ensures that work premises do not disadvantage someone with a disability.

5.2 The access arrangements have adopted an inclusive approach and aims to ensure that all users will have equal and convenient access to the site and buildings. The design of the application will have full consideration for ease of access for disabled pedestrian use.

5.3 All of the measures detailed above will be maintained in such a way that will allow all people access to / from and around the buildings. Also the facilities within the buildings will also be constructed and maintained in such a way to ensure people's access within the development.

5.4 The proposal therefore will comply with UDP policy DC1 – Access for disabled persons.

# 6. COMMUNITY SAFETY

6.1 Site security is critical throughout day and night to prevent the theft of equipment and livestock, which may injure or adversely affect the welfare of animals. The proposed scheme will be no different to the existing farm business, and will run efficiently and not raise any adverse community safety issues.

# 7. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

7.1 Wherever practicable, developments shall be designed to reduce energy consumption and maximise energy conservation and maximise energy conservation through the use of appropriate materials, design, layout and orientation.

7.2 The strategic aims supporting sustainable development in National and local planning policy are as follows: -

- promote energy conservation and efficiency
- encourage appropriate energy generation from renewable energy sources
- Strengthen design standards and promote good design.

7.3 Our planning application has taken into consideration the following energy efficiency measures and technologies that can be incorporated alongside wider energy efficient design principles to ensure high energy performance.

7.4 The proposed use is a purpose-built poultry units which is specifically designed for the welfare of birds. The pop holes will be open during the day to provide natural ventilation to the building rather than using mechanical ventilation. The mechanical ventilation (fans) will only be used to assist the natural ventilation in hot weather.

7.5 The buildings will be insulated (roof, walls and floors) according to the most recent building regulation standards in order to reduce heat loss in winter and excess solar gains in summer.

7.6 Wherever possible materials will be sourced and produced locally and will come from a source that can be renewed without harm to the environment. High quality reclaimed materials can save resources and may also provide a better match with the surrounding development. The scheme will avoid the use of tropical hardwood and look for timber which is certified as coming from sustainable sources. The materials used in this development including the steel, box profile sheeting and fibre cement roof sheets, will

be sourced locally. These locally sourced materials can be renewed without harm to the environment.

7.7 Rainwater harvesting will be considered in the construction.

7.8 The development of this land will contribute to the aim of sustainability through the productive use of the above-mentioned features.

7.9 The above points will ensure that the scheme is sustainable in terms of its building design and the supply and use of energy in accordance with National and local planning policy guidance.

# 8. MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

*Economic Context*

8.1 Mr & Mrs Farmer have been running the established farm business from Red House Farm for decades, mainly concentrating on dairy.

8.2 The poultry enterprise has been seen as an opportunity to generate a different income. It will enable the next generation at Red House Farm to live and work on the farm.

8.3 Farm businesses need to change and grow in response to market forces and legislation if they are to survive. Poultry egg laying is becoming an important element in Wales' agricultural economy. The current market dictates that agriculture must adapt to meet consumer demands, the applicant has chosen to diversify to respond to the demand for free range eggs.

8.4 The farm business is proposing to diversify into free range egg production, this enterprise has been researched fully and they are confident that the business can be a success and supplement the current marginal farm profits.

8.5 Farm businesses need to change and grow in response to market forces and legislation if they are to survive. Poultry egg laying is becoming an important element in Wales' agricultural economy. The current market dictates that agriculture must adapt to meet consumer demands, the applicant has chosen to diversify to respond to the demand for free range eggs.

8.6 Planning policy Wales is supportive of diversification of agricultural enterprises.

*Social context*

8.7 The new buildings will be located to the north west of the current farmyard on land currently used for grass production. Each building will be approximately 60m x 15.5m wide including a service area on the western end.

8.8 The positioning of the buildings has been carefully considered by the applicant (in respect of practicalities) and ourselves (in planning terms). The position although slightly divorced from the existing farm yard and buildings, the site within the immediate and surrounding landscape.

8.9 Having considered alternative sites on the farmstead, it is determined that the proposed site is the best site presented in terms of landscape and visual impact, and highway access to name only a few positives.

*Physical context*

8.10 The new buildings will be located to the north west of the current farmyard on the land adjacent to the existing buildings and will be accessed utilising an existing field access. Each building will be approximately 60m x 15.5m wide, which in total will house 12,000 birds, together with a small service area on the western end. The birds are brought in and remain in the egg production unit for some 13 months. After this time, the flock is removed and the whole building fully cleaned down internally, and a new flock introduced to restart the egg production cycle.

# 9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The proposal is an economic development that is supported by both local and national policy; it amounts to sustainable development that will improve the agricultural business located on site.

9.2 The buildings are sited on an incline of the landscape the visual impacts will be reduced because of the background of grassland. The buildings proposed are juniper green but the applicant is willing to discuss this further should the Local Planning Authority have another opinion.

9.3 Adequate provision is made for the disposal of foul and surface water drainage and animal wastes without risk to watercourses through a sustainable drainage technique.

9.4 Adequate provision is made for access and movement of machinery to avert the perpetuation, intensification or creation of traffic hazard.

9.5 The proposal is of an appropriate location, scale and type so as not to be detrimental to the amenities of any nearby existing residential properties.

9.6 Please be aware that this is a free-range poultry unit and not an intensive livestock unit (battery unit). The poultry will be able to roam the agricultural land around the building.

9.7 This proposal has significant merit, fits within the policies of the development plan and national planning guidance, and it is respectfully requested that the submitted planning application be approved.