

WS Jones & Son

**Planning Application for the Erection of an
Agricultural Building**

at

Ty'n y Coed Farm, Bonvilston, Vale of Glamorgan.

Justification and
Design and Access Statement

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Reading Agricultural Consultants Ltd. (RAC) is instructed by WS Jones & Son to submit a planning application for an agricultural building at Ty'n Y Coed Farm, Bonvilston, Vale of Glamorgan.
- 1.2 The Applicants propose erecting an agricultural building to provide shelter and housing for outlying sheep and store hay and feed.
- 1.3 The location of the proposed development is illustrated at RAC/6505/1. The building is to be sited as shown on plan RAC/6505/2, aligned south to north, with sheeted gates on the south elevation opening to the field, allowing easy access to the building for sheep during periods of poor weather.
- 1.4 The holding is a well-established family farm (over 50 years) and has been in organic production for some 14 years. The building would enable the storage of hay for the outwintering pedigree Lleyn flock of some 200 ewes and the efficient use of the outlying pasture land.
- 1.5 There is currently inadequate housing for the expanding flock on the holding and as a consequence there are animal welfare concerns, particularly for heavily pregnant ewes.

Site and Surrounding Area

- 1.6 The application site is located in the north-east corner of a permanent pasture field extending to approximately 5.04 hectares (12.4 acres), which is adjacent to a belt of woodland growing on an escarpment. Surrounding fields are in temporary and permanent grass leys. This provides optimum grass growth within the organic system.
- 1.7 The site is approximately 0.5kms south-west of Bonvilston, on the Bonvilston to Llancarfan lane. It is accessed via a private track to a local sewage treatment plant which is some 100m from the site of the proposed building.
- 1.8 The immediate surrounding area comprises undulating open fields of varying sizes interspersed with woodland.
- 1.9 A row of trees, running from north-east to south-west along the escarpment, forms a natural visual screen from the highway and the dwellings in Bonvilston and it is considered the building would cause minimal visual intrusion.



Fig. 1. Site of proposed building (looking north). The site is largely screened from Bonvilston by trees.

2 Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy

- 2.1 National planning policy is set out in Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7 - July 2014) (PPW), which is supported by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs).
- 2.2 The principle of sustainability lies at the heart of the objectives contained within PPW.
- 2.3 The Welsh Government considers that an efficient and flexible agricultural industry is essential for rural prosperity. To this end it states at paragraph 7.6.5 of PPW that:

“...local planning authorities should adopt a constructive approach towards agricultural development proposals, especially those which are designed to meet the needs of changing farming practices, or are necessary to achieve compliance with new environmental, hygiene or welfare legislation.”

2.4 TAN 6 *Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities* is broadly supportive of a strong rural and agricultural economy and states (paragraph 6.1.1):

“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.”

2.5 TAN 12: *‘Design’* advises that the Welsh Government is strongly committed to achieving the delivery of good design in the built and natural environments which is fit for purpose and delivers environmental sustainability, economic development and social inclusion at every scale throughout Wales.

Local Planning Policy

2.6 The relevant local development plan document is the Vale of Glamorgan Adopted Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011.

2.7 Of particular relevance is Policy ENV1 (*Development in the Countryside*) which indicates that:

“Within the delineated countryside permission will only be granted for:

- i. Development which is essential for agriculture, horticulture, forestry or other development including mineral extraction, waste management, utilities or infrastructure for which a rural location is essential;*
- ii. Appropriate recreational use;*
- iii. The re-use or adaptation of existing buildings particularly to assist the diversification of the rural economy; or*
- iv. development which is approved under other policies of the plan.”*

2.8 Policy EMP 8 (*Agricultural Enterprise and Associated Development*) is a permissive policy and states:

“Proposals for development on agricultural land will be permitted if the proposal:

- i. is necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the agricultural unit;*
- ii. is designed specifically for agricultural purposes;*
- iii. is compatible with the surrounding landscape, adjacent land uses, and any existing related structures in terms of scale, siting, design and external appearance of any new building or extension to existing buildings; and*
- iv. does not have an unacceptable impact on areas of ecological, wildlife, geological and geomorphological, archaeological or landscape importance.”*

2.9 Other relevant policies include:

- ENV 27 – *Design of New Developments.*

3 Design

Amount, Scale and Height

3.1 The proposed building is a portal-framed steel structure measuring 27.4m x 13.7m (375.4m²) with a height to the eaves of 4.9m and height to the ridge of 6.50m, as illustrated at RAC/6505/3.

Layout

3.2 The location of the barn will optimise operational efficiencies for the farm business by enabling access for pedigree Lleyn ewes during periods of poor weather and providing storage of hay and feed which can be taken to the outlying fields, or ewes can be fed in the building as necessary.

3.3 The internal configuration allows flexibility of use that can be varied according to the time of year and the number of sheep which require housing or shelter.

3.4 The floor would be a hardcore surface. It is anticipated that a minimum amount of groundwork would be required, as the proposed location is level and the sub-surface is rock. The hardcore surface would extend some 3m beyond the southern building elevation, in order to prevent poaching by sheep at the entrance/exit of the proposed building in order to avoid poaching.

3.5 The proportions of box-profile sheeting or Yorkshire boards reflect the prevailing wind and provide optimum protection from driving rain whilst providing ventilation for the housed sheep. The gated gable end provides access for farm machinery when loading or stacking hay.

Landscaping and Biodiversity

3.6 The immediate surrounding area comprises open fields and semi-mature, wooded copses. This obscures views of the site from any possible residential viewpoint and the nearest residential dwelling is some 100m west, on the Bonvilston to Llancafán lane.

3.7 Views of the site would be momentarily available to vehicle users along the narrow Bonvilston to Llancafán road during the winter. However, the site was specifically chosen over another option to the west of the road as its proximity would enable a more efficient use of the whole farm.

3.8 Due to the wooded area it is not considered that there would be a need for landscape mitigation.

3.9 The existing woodland, to be retained and protected from inadvertent damage by *Heras* fencing which would be maintained *in situ* throughout the construction phase. As the building would be 10m from the trees it would not impact upon the root zones or branches of the trees.

3.10 There would be no requirement to remove or cut any hedgerows or trees to undertake the construction work or utilise the building.

3.11 No new access would be required.

Appearance

3.12 The design of the hay storage and sheep accommodation building is intended to create a light and well-ventilated space that will provide protection from the elements and minimise draughts at animal level.

3.13 Three of the walls would comprise concrete blockwork for the first 2.5m and the fourth elevation would include three 4.6m wide, double galvanized sheeted doors, some 2m in height.

3.14 The west elevation would be protected from the elements by the trees and so Yorkshire boarding would be sited above the blockwork.

- 3.15 The north and east elevations would be more exposed and would be sheeted with juniper green box-profile metal sheeting. The south elevation would be clear to the eaves to enable ease of access for tractors. Yorkshire boarding would be fixed in the gable.
- 3.16 The roof would be constructed with natural grey fibre-cement sheets which will blend into the backdrop of the sky, thus reducing any perceived visual impact. It would have 12 clear profile sheets to provide natural daylight at a density of 1 on either side of the roof, per bay.
- 3.17 The steel portal-framed building would be similar to most modern agricultural buildings within the Vale of Glamorgan and the materials used are similar to modern agricultural buildings. The structure would be built to modern agricultural building design standards BS5502. Since the site is in an agricultural area, it is common to see agricultural buildings used for storage and for accommodation of livestock.
- 3.18 No external lighting will be required and the rooflights will ensure additional internal lighting is minimised.
- 3.19 Sheep would be segregated from fodder and feed storage areas through use of temporary partitions (hurdles) within the building.

Community Safety

- 3.20 It is not expected that the proposal will have any impact upon users of the highway or any public footpaths.
- 3.21 As there are no footpaths or other means of access through the site there will be no access to the general public. Access to the site is via the existing track which is also used by Welsh Water staff accessing the sewage treatment works.
- 3.22 The nearest public footpath is some 100m distant to the east. Whilst it is possible that members of the public could trespass into the building, it is the Applicants' intention that it will be locked when not in use by sheep.

Environmental Sustainability

- 3.23 The building will be sourced from local fabricators and the timber will be responsibly sourced.

- 3.24 The manure produced by the sheep would be used as fertiliser for the fields as part of the organic system. However, it is not the Applicants intention to routinely house the sheep for long periods – preference is given to sheep grazing for as long as possible in order to utilise the farm’s resources as efficiently as possible.
- 3.25 It is considered that the proposed building will have a minimal environmental impact on wildlife and vegetation as the site is improved pasture.
- 3.26 The structure will give the Applicants an opportunity to store hay produced on the farm in close proximity to where it will be consumed by the sheep. It will reduce the amount of agricultural machinery on the highway ferrying bales back and forth to the main farm, potentially leaving mud on the road through the winter period.
- 3.27 Rainwater will be collected from the roof and diverted to a soakaway and small stream at the base of the adjoining escarpment. The option to collect roof water for sheep use will be explored in order to reduce the requirement for mains water.

4 Access

Vehicular and Transport Links

- 4.1 The site is located in a field, accessible off the minor road from Llancarfan to Bonvilston and connects with the A48. No additional access roads would be required. Access is via a minor private track used by the farmer as a right of way to his land, as well as by Welsh water staff to service the sewage treatment works adjoining the Applicants’ land.
- 4.2 All necessary vehicular access to the proposed building would be *via* the existing track and field. The gate to the field is shut at all times.

Inclusive Access

- 4.3 Access into the site for all users would be from the access track off the minor road linking Llancarfan and Bonvilston. It is not expected that the development would have any detrimental effect on users of the road or local footpaths. On the contrary it is anticipated that it would significantly improve highway safety because sheep would not be required to walk 1km along the highway to reach

the main farm and fodder and feed would not be transported the other way during the winter period.



Figure 2. Existing access gateway to western fields and access track to site. Bonvilston in the distance.

Traffic Movements

- 4.4 There is unlikely to be any change in the number of vehicle movements along the highway, although the distance travelled on the highway by the farm machinery will be reduced. Likewise, the distance travelled by the flock of 200 ewes will be reduced from almost 1km to 50m as they cross from one side of the highway to the other.
- 4.5 Hay will be cut in the adjoining fields to the building and stored inside, ready for use in the winter.

Justification

- 4.6 Ty'n y Coed Farm extends to some 117ha (290 acres) of grassland and has been registered for organic production for some 14 years. The livestock

comprise some 45 pedigree Hereford suckler cows, 80-90 store cattle and 200 pedigree Lleyne ewes and their lambs (in season). Pedigree breeding ewes are sold to farmers who are upgrading their flocks or purchasing replacements.

- 4.7 All fieldwork and harvesting is undertaken using farm staff and owned machinery. Some agricultural contracting work is undertaken for others, locally
- 4.8 The majority of the buildings at Ty'n y Coed are dedicated to the cattle with specific feeding passages and bedding areas. Straw and hay are stored in other buildings together with machinery. Lack of dedicated sheep housing and treatment areas has been an increasing problem in recent years as the flock size has increased.
- 4.9 Outlying fields to the north of the farm buildings have been less intensively grazed due to poor access and the inability to feed and treat stock through the year. This has resulted in an increasing amount of pasture rejection and reduced farm efficiency.
- 4.10 Currently the sheep have to be walked up to 1 km along the public highway to the main farm buildings in order for them to be gathered and treated. This creates welfare issues for heavily pregnant ewes or sheep which require foot treatment, and is highly stressful for ewes with young lambs which are not used to following their mothers in the early weeks of their lives. Under such conditions the ewes are very susceptible to grass staggers and twin lamb disease – both of which are frequently fatal.
- 4.11 This is wholly contrary to the ethos of organic production.
- 4.12 The proposal will mean that sheep would have to walk a maximum of 50m on the highway when they cross to the western fields. In the past there has been considerable difficulty moving the sheep because traffic conflicts with them creating difficulty at times as sheep become frightened by traffic and run in the opposite direction, creating hazards. As yet they have not escaped onto the A48 to the north but there is that potential risk.
- 4.13 The building would be used as a covered treatment area for undertaking worming, shearing and routine foot treatment, for example. It would also provide shelter for groups of ewes or lambs which require housing through ill health or if there is persistent bad weather which warrants housing and feeding, with hay being available inside the building.

- 4.14 Hay would be stored in the building with a tractor and loader, thus enabling bales to be taken to the adjoining fields with ease under any weather conditions.
- 4.15 The space requirement for the 200 ewes is 280m². However, it is not proposed to house the ewes in the building for extended periods as they are generally lambed outdoors, Lleyns having an exceptionally good mothering ability. The remainder of the area would be taken up by hay storage and the storage of a tractor and loader, although it is anticipated that some 250-300m² of the building would be used for hay and fodder storage at the end of the summer/autumn period. This area would be depleted as the winter progresses as hay is fed to the sheep in the adjoining fields before any anticipated requirement to house the ewes, thus optimising space efficiency in the proposed building.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The proposed agricultural building at the northern end of Ty'n y Coed Farm will allow Mr and Mrs Jones to provide a much improved welfare environment for their pedigree sheep, improve utilisation of outlying pasture and increase farm efficiency.
- 5.2 The dimensions of the proposed building are matched to the requirements of the business, taking into account sheep numbers, welfare and storage.
- 5.3 The proposed development would be appropriate in size and scale, in accordance with the local area.
- 5.4 The appearance of the building is typical of modern agricultural buildings and is appropriate within the rural location of the farm.
- 5.5 The development would not increase vehicular movements over the current situation and would decrease significantly the conflict of farm traffic and sheep with other road users as the sheep would not need to walk back to the main farm buildings.
- 5.6 The proposed development would not harm the visual amenity and it is not considered necessary to require a landscaping scheme.
- 5.7 Biodiversity will not be affected by the proposed development.