

MR. RICHARD HOPKINS

**BLAENGWEFFRITH FARM
TONMAWR
NEATH
SA12 9TA**

**Town & Country Planning
(General Development
Procedure) (Amendment)
(Wales) Order 2009**

**Technical Advice Note 12 –
Design (June 2009)**

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

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Design & Access Statement

INTRODUCTION – The applicant is Mr. Mr. Richard Hopkins of Duffryn Farm, Duffryn Lane, Caerau, Maesteg, CF34 0SH who is applying for planning permission for the retention of an agricultural building - retrospective planning permission (see below for details).

This Design & Access Statement [DAS] is provided in accordance with the provisions of the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2009 & Technical Advice Note 12 – Design (June 2009). Also relevant is the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012.

The purpose of a DAS is primarily as a communication tool to illustrate that the objectives of good design have been considered at the preliminary stage of development.

APPLICATION SITE – The application site comprises land and buildings at Blaengweffrith Farm, Tonmawr, Neath, SA12 9TA. The site is shown edged red on the accompanied 1:4000 scale Ordnance Survey map.

EXISTING USE – The existing use of the application site is agricultural.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL – This application is for full planning permission for the retention of a new agricultural building. The building, as built, measure 23.0 metres long (75.5 ft) by 13.7 metres wide (45 ft) and is 5.12 metres (16 ft) high. It has a total floor area of 315 sq. metres (3,392 sq. ft).

PLANNING POLICY – Section 38 (6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications (and appeals) should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan comprises the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (2011 – 2016) which was adopted in January 2016. From the Proposals Map of the Adopted Local Development Plan, the application site is situated within an area of countryside. It is also situated within the Valleys Strategy Area.

Section 5.3 of the adopted LDP concerns Environment and Resources. Strategic Policy SP 14 deals with the Countryside and the Undeveloped Coast. It states that the countryside and undeveloped coast, including landscapes, seascapes and agricultural land, will be protected and where feasible enhanced, including criterion 1 that requires the protection of the open countryside through the control of inappropriate development outside settlement limits. This would include the application site

From the Proposals Map (Map 30), the application site is within the area identified under Strategic Policy SP 5. This policy concerns Development in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area. This states that in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area,

sustainable growth and development will be promoted to benefit the County Borough as a whole, while protecting and enhancing the area's character and environment. Looking at the area-specific measures listed under this policy, it would appear that none of these are of any direct relevance to the application proposal.

The site is not situated within a Special Landscape Area (Policy EN 2) or a Green Wedge (Policy EN 3). Similarly, the site is not located within a designated Quiet Area (Policy EN 10).

Taking the adopted LDP as a whole, it would appear that there are no directly relevant policies that would prejudice the approval of the development proposal.

DESIGN ISSUES – It is acknowledged that the design of the proposal is an important issue to consider in the determination of this planning application. However, it should be recognised that the applicant has a very limited amount of input into the design of a standard, pre-fabricated, general-purpose agricultural building.

The proposed building is of a traditional design. It comprises a steel frame structure which is bolted together on-site. The lower portion of the building uses pre-cast concrete panels that are bolted directly onto the steel frame using brackets. The roof has a low-pitched roof which is comprised of standard, uniform steel sheet cladding coated in plastic. Natural light to the building is provided by opaque cladding, allowing sunlight through.

The design of the building can be described as multi-purpose, with its primary use to house livestock, mainly sheep. However, given its open plan layout, it could also be used to store animal feed and agricultural equipment and machinery.

This Design & Access Statement will consider the following key elements:

- Environmental Sustainability
- Movement to, from and within the development
- Character
- Community Safety
- Accessibility

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY – Having considered the requirements of the existing agricultural enterprise, there are very limited environmentally sustainable solutions to providing this sort of building. In terms of the agricultural enterprise, the Local Planning Authority should recognise that the proposed building represents a significant investment on the part of the applicant. As such, there is limited scope for any additional environmental initiatives that could be undertaken, having regard to its primary purpose, which is to house livestock etc. All components of the building have been locally sourced.

MOVEMENT – This includes movement to, from and within the development site. There are no movement issues to consider with this particular application. This includes parking, pedestrian access and bus services etc. It is not anticipated that the proposed development will impact on the movement of either vehicles or pedestrians in the surrounding area. The building is part of a working farm and members of the public are not permitted. Notwithstanding that the application site is

private property, there are clearly potential dangers associated with the day-to-day running and the public are therefore discouraged from entering. Vehicular access to the site is via a narrow, single tracked lane. The only vehicles anticipated to use this track are either farm vehicles (tractors, loaders etc.) or livestock vehicles (lorries) bringing animals, feed too and from the site. There is no scope for promoting sustainable means of travel, other than the use of electric vehicles. It is not anticipated that the limited use of the proposed building would justify the likely considerable investment with the use of electric vehicles.

CHARACTER – This includes landscaping, amount of development, layout, scale and appearance of the development. The character of the building is clearly agricultural in its overall design and appearance. It is contended that the building sits well within the context of its surroundings. It is respectfully submitted that the building, as designed, does not have a negative impact on the surrounding landscape. Given the use of the building and its position with regard to its surroundings, it is not anticipated that any additional landscaping is required. There are a number of existing mature trees in the immediate vicinity of the building and these are all to remain. The building is well below the height of these trees.

As stated earlier, there is limited scope for promoting innovative design with an off-the-shelf, prefabricated building. It will be seen for what it is – a traditional, modern agricultural building, typical of those found elsewhere within the Borough and elsewhere in the country.

ACCESS & ACCESSIBILITY – Vehicular access to the site is via a narrow, single tracked lane. No additional access points are either proposed or needed as the existing access is considered sufficient. This will not be affected by the proposed development.

There will be no access to this particular part of the site, including the location of the development by any members of the public. There are therefore, no additional disabled access provisions or indeed for any other groups with special needs.

CAR PARKING & TURNING PROVISION – There is sufficient on-site parking available. No additional parking will be required. Similarly, there is sufficient space for large vehicles, such as lorries etc

LANDSCAPING – It is considered that a landscaping scheme will not be required for this particular proposal.

COMMUNITY SAFETY – It is considered that the proposed development will have little if any impact on community safety.

CONCLUSION – In conclusion, it is hoped that this DAS has been helpful as a communication tool to illustrate that the objectives of good design, as far as possible, have been considered for this proposed development.