

Justification Statement from Applicant

1. Cattle Welfare and Livestock Management

A B Barker are a long-established agricultural enterprise specialising in pedigree Charolais cattle breeding. We initially operated out of Caylers farm, whilst now being based at Tower Yard farm following progression and expansion. The business has functioned successfully for a number of years and continues to invest in the development of high-quality breeding stock.

The primary justification for the proposed dwelling is the essential need for a permanent on-site presence to ensure the welfare, health and management of livestock at Tower Yard Farm.

The farm currently manages approximately 120 head of pedigree Charolais cattle. The herd forms the cornerstone of the agricultural enterprise and consists of high-value breeding stock developed over many years through careful genetic selection. Breeding bulls produced on the holding regularly achieve sale values in excess of £8,000, whilst female breeding animals are retained to strengthen bloodlines and maintain the long-term quality and reputation of the herd.

Unlike commercial beef enterprises, pedigree livestock require particularly intensive management and supervision. The financial success of the business is directly linked to maintaining the health, welfare and breeding performance of individual animals. The loss of a single calf, breeding cow or pedigree bull can have significant economic implications for the business and may represent the loss of years of genetic progress.

A continuous on-site presence is particularly important during calving periods. Complications can arise at any time of the day or night and often require immediate intervention. Difficult births, malpresentations, retained calves, post-calving complications and other welfare emergencies can quickly become life-threatening if assistance is delayed. The ability to respond immediately can make the difference between a successful outcome and the loss of both calf and cow.

During peak calving periods it is not uncommon for inspections to be undertaken several times throughout the night to ensure the welfare of both cows and calves. This level of monitoring is essential to identify problems at the earliest opportunity and to provide timely assistance where required.

The need for close supervision extends beyond the calving season. Daily monitoring is required to identify illness, injury, lameness, breeding issues and other welfare concerns at the earliest opportunity. Prompt intervention not only protects animal welfare but also reduces veterinary costs and minimises the risk of disease spreading throughout the herd. The location of the proposed dwelling immediately adjacent to the livestock facilities would allow continuous observation of the herd and enable a rapid response to emergencies at any time. This level of supervision cannot reasonably be achieved from off-site accommodation and necessitates the permanent presence of a worker on the holding.

The proposed dwelling is therefore not sought as a matter of convenience but is required to meet the ongoing welfare needs of a valuable pedigree livestock enterprise and to ensure the effective and responsible management of the farm.

2. Farm Security

A further significant justification for the proposed dwelling relates to the security of the farm business.

Tower Yard farm is currently without any residential presence on site. As a result, valuable livestock, agricultural machinery, equipment and fuel stores remain vulnerable to theft, vandalism and trespass outside normal working hours. The pedigree Charolais herd represents a substantial financial investment, as stated above breeding bulls alone regularly achieving values in excess of £8,000, whilst the machinery and equipment necessary to operate the holding also carry considerable value.

Rural crime continues to be an increasing concern for agricultural businesses, particularly in isolated rural locations. The absence of a residential presence limits the ability to monitor activity during evenings, overnight periods and weekends when incidents are most likely to occur.

The occupation of a dwelling by a person directly involved in the day-to-day operation of the farm would provide continuous passive surveillance across the holding. A permanent on-site presence would act as a deterrent to criminal activity and would allow immediate response to any incidents involving livestock, machinery, buildings or infrastructure. The proposed dwelling would therefore provide a significant benefit to the security and resilience of the agricultural enterprise and help safeguard the substantial investment represented by both the pedigree livestock and farm assets.

3. Reduction in Vehicle Movements and Environmental Benefits

At present, regular journeys are required between the applicant's existing residence and Tower Yard farm in order to monitor livestock, undertake welfare checks and respond to operational requirements throughout both the day and night.

Due to the absence of on-site accommodation, multiple vehicle trips are undertaken each day solely for the purpose of checking livestock, ensuring animal welfare standards are maintained and responding to any issues that arise. During calving periods, adverse weather conditions or periods of ill health within the herd, the frequency of these journeys can increase significantly, including late evening and overnight visits.

The provision of a permanent agricultural worker's dwelling would substantially reduce these journeys by enabling the management and supervision of the livestock directly from the holding. The need for repeated return trips would be eliminated, resulting in a meaningful reduction in vehicle mileage, fuel consumption and associated carbon emissions.

In addition to the environmental benefits, the reduction in travel time would allow more efficient management of the farm business and ensure that valuable time is devoted to livestock welfare and agricultural operations rather than unnecessary travel. The proposal therefore delivers a clear sustainability benefit by reducing vehicle movements whilst simultaneously improving livestock welfare, operational efficiency and the long-term viability of the agricultural enterprise. The development aligns with local and national objectives to reduce emissions and support sustainable rural businesses.

4. Established and Viable Agricultural Enterprise

The enterprise is financially viable and capable of supporting the proposed dwelling, as demonstrated within the accompanying financial information submitted as part of this application.

5. Lack of Alternative Accommodation

There is currently no residential accommodation available within the farm holding capable of meeting the operational requirements of the business.

No existing farm buildings are suitable for conversion to residential use. All buildings within the holding are actively used for essential agricultural purposes, including cattle housing, calving facilities, machinery storage, straw storage and feed storage. The loss of any of these buildings would have a detrimental impact on the operation of the farm.

Off-site accommodation would not provide the immediate access required to respond to livestock welfare emergencies, calving complications, security incidents and other time-critical situations associated with the management of the pedigree Charolais herd.

Accordingly, there is no suitable alternative accommodation available to meet the functional requirements of the agricultural enterprise, and the proposed dwelling represents the only practical means of providing the necessary on-site presence required for the continued operation at Tower Yard farm.