

rendered white). **If brickwork has to remain exposed the grey concrete bricks are preferable to commons** at no extra cost.

CONCRETE BLOCKS: Rapidly replacing bricks in farm building use, these too **should never be left exposed** unless visible only in distant views. Like bricks **they should be harled (or painted) in a suitable colour.**

GALVANISED STEEL SHEETING: Also economical and strong and due to their light weight are easily handled, require less purlins and are easily fixed. **Never leave galvanised sheets uncoloured:** they not only look unsightly because of rust and high reflectivity but their lifespan can be as low as ten years. **Paint them as soon as possible,** when the first signs of rust appear it could be too late.

Pre-primed sheets are much more preferable. **When an additional coat is not envisaged choose slate blue/grey colour. These primed sheets are intended to be painted and as this will improve appearance (use a dark colour) and increase their lifespan, this is recommended.**

PLASTIC COATED STEEL: Now a very popular choice. It is lightweight, maintenance free, durable, suitably coloured, simple to erect and easily re-used. The additional cost of the material can often be recouped in lower labour costs and elimination of maintenance. **This material is highly recommended in the right colours,** (particularly the darker tones of grey, blue and red-brown (green is not quite so pleasing) although lighter colours are acceptable for wall cladding). It is sometimes wrongly argued that this material cannot be used for livestock buildings due to condensation but with adequate ventilation there should be no problem, even with the darker finishes.

ALUMINIUM SHEETING: Little used but available in a range of finishes, some however are highly reflective or light coloured. **Only darker colours can be recommended for roofing** (unless on a skyline) but there is a wider application for cladding.

TOWER SILOS: One of the most notable intrusions into the landscape but if effectively used gives a vertical emphasis to an otherwise horizontal group. Silos, like windmills before them, could become perfectly acceptable elements in the landscape.

Try to avoid breaking the skyline or competing with other vertical features

The former is often unavoidable but do not build where a silo will compete with, for instance, a church tower.

Do not construct in uncoloured reflective materials

These can emphasise the prominence of silos.

Use colouring carefully

The lightest colours are only acceptable in predominantly skyline situations, whilst very dark colours will mask the roundness of the tower thus presenting a dark hole in the landscape. Lettering should be unobtrusive.

Make use of existing trees

A tower silo partly screened by trees can be much more acceptably fitted into the landscape.

TREE PLANTING: The appearance of farm buildings in the landscape is much more improved by the proximity of trees and their verticality provides a contrast to long horizontal buildings so common today.

Retain existing trees whenever possible and consider planting new trees

Tree planting is valuable not so much to hide a building (a well-designed building does not need hiding) but to break up its outline in the landscape. This can be accomplished by very minimal planting, a group of four or five trees may be adequate and room can usually be found nearby. In addition to enhancing the landscape the farmer will also be improving his own workplace. Species should be those found locally and for early effect should be semi-mature and fast growing, e.g. willows, poplars and, of course, conifers. Plant in groups, in preference to regimented rows.

Bank spoil material from excavations around the new building

In conjunction with planting this can be most effective in tying the building to the ground reducing its bulk.

GRANTS SITUATION

Grants may be available for traditional building works from the Scottish Executive, Agriculture, Environment & Fisheries Department with whom contact should be made (01382-462840).

PRIOR NOTIFICATION

Under planning legislation, a developer/farmer wishing to erect or significantly extend or alter a farm building must give the local Planning Authority prior notification. Prior notification application forms are available from the Planning & Transport Department and any application will require to be accompanied by plans and a small fee is payable.

The Planning Authority then has 28 days in which to notify the applicant whether or not prior approval is required.

In some cases (e.g. within 25 metres of a classified road, buildings over a certain size or to be used for intensive livestock rearing) full planning permission may be required.

PROSPECTS

Agriculture is a rapidly changing, nationally important industry that must have modern buildings to function efficiently but they do not have to be ugly. The choices made by farmers will determine the appearance of the countryside for years to come. Good building involves forethought and the use of appropriate materials and siting. Overall it need not cost much extra, if anything.

To the farmer the countryside is both his home and his workplace and therefore he should have a particular interest in not seeing the landscape of Angus spoiled by the thoughtless accumulation of shoddy, featureless buildings.

The Angus countryside can remain unspoilt and improved design standards can be achieved more quickly by greater co-operation between all concerned, rather than by the extension of statutory control.

Angus Council



ADVICE NOTE 1

FARM BUILDINGS

This leaflet was originally produced in consultation with a wide range of agencies involved in agriculture and has the approval of the National Farmers Union.

For further information and advice contact:

Planning & Transport
Angus Council
County Buildings
Market Street
Forfar
DD8 3LG
Telephone 01307 461460

INTRODUCTION

New farming techniques have evolved over the last few decades to make agriculture one of the most efficient of all “industries”. Farmers are justifiably proud of their record in producing more and more food from the land but on occasions this success has been achieved with insufficient consideration of the effect on the landscape.

Angus Council is well aware of the importance of farming, not only to Angus, but to the nation as a whole, and it is accepted that its continued prosperity depends on the adoption of modern techniques and buildings. It is not the intention of these notes to impose onerous conditions or to interfere unnecessarily with the natural progress of the agricultural industry.

The Council is in fact hoping for the co-operation of the farming community, agricultural engineers and architects in designing, locating and erecting farm buildings.

The Angus countryside has so far avoided the worst of the damage evident in some English counties and, with the co-operation of the farming community, there is no reason why this should be otherwise.

FARM BUILDINGS PAST AND PRESENT

Historically farm buildings, and buildings generally, were constructed from local materials, namely stone with darker roofs of stone or blue slates. These materials, being naturally extracted, tend to blend with the landscape particularly as they mellowed and not only are they comfortably accepted into the landscape, they often enhance it.

These traditional construction methods and materials are very expensive to utilise today and the farmer finds it far more economical to use mass-produced factory components. In addition to the cost aspect, traditional methods of construction can rarely produce the range, size or flexibility required in modern farm buildings.

The current trend in farm buildings is away from smaller units to large industrialised buildings which are now becoming so much more prominent in the landscape.

The construction adopted for most modern farm buildings is universally similar and consists of a steel or concrete frame clad by fibre cement sheeting, steel sheets or timber boarding.

They are designed for maximum efficiency but must be at a price which the farmer can afford and therefore a high proportion of factory-made components can be, and are, used. Unlike town buildings, farm buildings can usually be seen from a distant view, middle-distance and close quarters, but there is no reason why such buildings cannot be designed so as to form an acceptable addition to, or indeed, enhance the landscape.

THE PROBLEMS

As farm buildings increase in size their impact on the landscape can become more pronounced. The problem, therefore, is one of how to accommodate these large structures without detriment to the landscape whilst still meeting the farmers’ requirements.

It is generally accepted that farm buildings are of reasonably simple and good proportions. The major

problem arose in the extensive use of cement based materials, which gave a light-grey all-over appearance and which in turn results in a pale patch on the landscape. With the demise of asbestos this is now less of a problem but other light coloured materials can be just as inappropriate.

Other problems, although generally less serious, are associated with location (in relation to skyline, ground formation, existing buildings, etc.) and design (e.g. roof pitches).

Modern farm buildings can be designed to blend into the landscape and the employment of a designer or architect with experience in farm buildings can go a long way towards accomplishing this and will usually repay the farmer in producing better management and operational solutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SITING: Some principles worth considering outwith the obvious functional requirements of a new farm building, are given, although it is realised that there is often very limited flexibility in siting.

Respect the quality of the landscape

In considering potential locations bear in mind the contours, existing trees, viewpoints, etc.

Avoid skyline locations

Probably the most objectionable of all locations are those situated on hillcrests.

Use site contours and excavation

A minimal amount of site excavation can greatly improve the appearance of a building - being fitted into the ground the building becomes part of the ground instead of a man-made appendage.

Do not build in isolation

Farm buildings should preferably form part of, and relate to, an existing group of buildings.

Site carefully in relation to trees

Existing trees in front of or acting as a backcloth to a new building, can go a long way to breaking up the harder outlines and reducing its visual impact.

DESIGN: The design of a farm building is to a large extent determined by its function and there is often little flexibility without incurring price increases. There are, however, certain basic principles worthy of consideration.

Avoid a multiplicity of materials, building shapes, roof pitches, etc. in one group

Proposed buildings should relate to the existing: nothing looks worse than a jumble of unrelated buildings. Where several factory made buildings are used together, they should have a family likeness.

Vary the design of the building away from the standard box wherever possible

If varied from the standard box shape the building can appear more interesting and less dominant.

Avoid vast expanses of a single coloured material

These tend to emphasise the bulk of a building and are visually disturbing. Use up to three materials or colours

for roof, cladding and walls. Interest can be achieved by the use of profiled sheets (larger profiles on bigger buildings), with windows or doors, cladding or weather boarding and by leaving exposed the columns of the structural frame.

Relate the roof pitch to existing buildings and the landscape

Roof pitches should harmonise with existing buildings if possible and, generally speaking, steeper pitches are appropriate on hilly terrain while shallower pitches blend with greater success in level country.

Consider split-level roofs on sloping sites

This will help to maintain the scale and adds variety and interest to the building. Can also aid ventilation.

Eaves treatment should be generous and avoid flimsy downpipes

A generous overhang at the eaves gives an effective shadow line and much improves a building’s appearance by making it appear smaller and will also protect any cladding. Flimsy downpipes look ridiculous and are totally out of scale on large buildings.

Emphasise doors, etc. by colour contrast

Greatly aids appearance, e.g. dark brown door against light red-brown roughcast. Doors of unpainted galvanised flat sheets should always be avoided.

Incorporate a dark plinth if possible

This will help set off the building, make a large building appear smaller and can be functional.

Don’t forget the fine detailing

Good buildings can be scarred by ugly sliding door tracks or poorly designed projections.

Finish the work off properly

For instance sloppy mortar work on concrete blocks can ruin an otherwise reasonable building.

Don’t forget the building’s surroundings

Tidy farm entrances, roadways, fences, enclosures, waste areas, etc. all enhance the building’s appearance.

COLOUR: Undoubtedly the most vital consideration in modern farm buildings is colour.

Avoid materials producing an all-over light grey colour

These tend to produce an ugly white blob or hole in the landscape. Colour can be incorporated in a number of ways still using inexpensive materials.

Dark colours are almost always more acceptable than light colours

Dark tones are more easily absorbed by the landscape. The exception is on the unavoidable skyline situations where an all-over light appearance is more acceptable.

Try to obtain a contrast in colour between roof and walls, with the roof having the darker tone

Traditionally roofs are darker than walls, thus helping to “anchor” the building to the ground. It also cuts down reflection making the building less conspicuous and helps to emphasise the shape and scale of the

structure. If the roof, cladding and walls are in different but mutually agreeable colours, the height and bulk of the building appear to be reduced.

Where continuity of roof colouring has been established continue the practice

For instance, where a number of new asbestos roofed buildings already exist the previous recommendation on darker roofs should not apply.

Recommended colours are, for roofs:

Dark Grey, Dark Blue, Very Dark Green, Deep Red, Brown, Dark Brown and Even Black.

For walls:

Grey, Blue-Grey, Brown, Grey-Brown, Light Reddish Brown and Dark Green

This does not mean to say that any permutation is acceptable. Colours chosen should blend together well.

Remember walls, wherever possible, should be a lighter colour than the roof, if this is not possible, an all-over dark tone is preferable to all-over light, unless in a skyline situation.

Avoid Light Green, particularly on roofs

Green, unless dark, should be avoided, as light greens do not harmonise well with the landscape and tend to look disturbing and incongruous as they conflict with the subtlety of natural colours.

MATERIALS: There is a wide range of modern materials from which to choose giving ample scope for both good and bad results.

FIBRE CEMENT SHEETING: The modern and safer equivalent of asbestos cement sheeting once so popular. Unlike the latter it is available in a wide range of colour finishes and different profiles.

Use the natural colours, not the light ones

Colours such as dark blue, dark grey, browns, even black will help to prevent a new building appearing intrusive. Where a complex of existing slated buildings is involved, a close match will be particularly effective. There is more scope when cement sheeting is used as side cladding but avoid the garish colours like yellow.

TIMBER: Timber will almost always look good on any farm building. Timber is easy to handle, strong, easily fixed and replaced. With proper treatment it can be maintenance free. There are many methods of preservative treatment in most reasonable colours. Pressure treated timber is now very popular as it is maintenance free. It is usually finished in one of two colours, (the pale brown being more environmentally acceptable than the pale green) but can still be painted.

Timber is a most acceptable material for any farm building application but is most commonly used as space boarding which as well as being functional, can greatly enhance the appearance of the building.

BRICKS: Good facing bricks are now rarely used for farm buildings. “Commons” are still used but when left exposed are totally alien to Angus. **Bricks should be harled in a suitable colour**, e.g. shades of brown, red-brown, grey-brown or grey (never white unless existing buildings are