

18. FULL APPLICATION – ERECTION OF NEW STOCK & FODDER STORAGE BUILDINGS AT PICTOR FARM, WARDLOW (NP/DDD/1215/1212, P.2286, 418271 / 374387, 31/03/2016/AB)

APPLICANT: MR JD & LB JACKSON

Site and Surroundings

The application site comprises a flat area of farmyard that is associated with an existing farm known as Pictor Farm. The farm currently comprises an open-fronted agricultural building constructed of blockwork with Yorkshire boarding and blue box profile sheeting to the walls and blue box profile sheeting to the roof (approved in 2011). This building is sited immediately to the south of an older agricultural building that is constructed of similar materials. The buildings are sited east of the B6465, approximately 16 metres from the road at the closest point, with access to the farm taken from this road. The buildings are sited at a lower level than the road, with the newer of the two buildings excavated into the side of the bank. The yard area associated with the farm is located to the east of the buildings.

Proposal

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a new stock and fodder storage building at Pictor Farm, Wardlow. The building would be sited to the east of the existing farm buildings, on part of the existing yard. The building would measure 23.3 metres by 13.7 metres, would have an eaves height of 3.65 metres and a ridge height of 7 metres. It would be open-fronted and constructed of materials to match the existing farm buildings, comprising blockwork with box profile cladding and Yorkshire boarding to the walls and a box profile pitched roof.

The application site is located within the Wardlow Conservation Area and the Open Countryside, on the edge of the village of Wardlow. The existing farm buildings are the first buildings that are seen when approaching the village when travelling in a northerly direction through the village of Wardlow. The Grade II listed 'Hall Farm' with its associated listed barns is located approximately 60 metres to the northwest of the application site and is the nearest residential property to the application site. A public footpath is located approximately 85 metres to the south of the application site that extends from the B6465 in a south-easterly direction.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the application be REFUSED for the following reason:

- 1. The siting of the proposed building, with particular reference to its orientation, would result in a prominent structure that would project beyond the existing building line into the Open Countryside. It would thereby have a detrimental effect on the valued rural characteristics and visual appearance of the surrounding area, particularly as this is a gateway Conservation Area site into the village of Wardlow. The proposed building would therefore be contrary to policies L1 and L3 of the Core Strategy, policies LC4, LC5 and LC13 of the Local Plan, as well as the SPG: 'Agricultural Developments in the Peak District National Park'.**

Key Issues

- Whether the design of the development has an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, the Conservation Area, and the adjacent listed buildings.
- The impact of the development on the amenity of neighbouring properties.
- Any highway implications for the proposed development.

Relevant Planning History

2010 – Erection of new cattle shed and extension to existing – Application withdrawn

2011 – Erection of a new agricultural building and removal of an existing lean-to building to form larger unit - Approved

Consultations

Derbyshire County Council (Highways) – No objection subject to the development remaining ancillary to the agricultural operations of Pictor Farm and surrounding tied land only, with no future sub-letting or selling-off and no loss of any areas of existing off-street manoeuvring space.

Wardlow Parish Council – Voted unanimously in favour of the application. This application appeared to be a simple, straightforward decision for the Parish to make as it was an extension to the current farm buildings and had no impact on the village. It was on the edge of the village yet retained the linear line of the village and maintained the balance of the village with a farm at the top and bottom of it.

Derbyshire Dales DC – No comments received

Representations

Two letters of representation have been received, both of which support the application. The first states that they believe that this is a genuine agricultural scheme for a genuine farming family and they are fully aware of the requirement for the livestock to be removed at certain times of the year on Cressbrook Dale by Natural England.

The second states that they consider that the proposed building would have little or no impact on their property, bearing in mind its close proximity to their dwelling and garden. They also conclude that any increase in traffic entering or leaving the farm would have little or no adverse impact, as they are aware of the care and sympathetic approach that the Jackson family have in respect of their neighbours at Pictor Farm. Those most likely to be affected would be the walkers using the footpath on the Longstone side of the farm and connecting the B6465. However he walks his dog along this route and he concludes that the addition of a further building at Pictor Farm would not detract from his enjoyment of this beautiful area.

Main Policies

National Planning Policy Framework

In the National Park the development plan comprises the Authority's Core Strategy 2011 and saved policies in the Peak District National Park Local Plan 2001. Policies in the Development Plan provide a clear starting point consistent with the National Park's statutory purposes for the determination of this application. It is considered that in this case there is no significant conflict between prevailing policies in the Development Plan and more recent Government guidance in the NPPF with regard to the issues that are raised.

Development Plan policies

Relevant Core Strategy (CS) policies: GSP1, GSP2, GSP3, DS1, L1, L3

Relevant Local Plan (LP) policies: LC4, LC5, LC6, LC13, LT18

Core Strategy policy DS1 allows in principle agricultural development within the countryside. The NPPF also encourages the development of agricultural businesses in rural areas.

Core Strategy policy L1 states that development must conserve and enhance valued landscape character, as identified in the Landscape Strategy and Action Plan and other valued characteristics. Local Plan Policy LC4 states, amongst other things, that any development must, at least, respect and conserve the landscape of the area.

Local Plan policy LC13 states that any agricultural development must avoid harm to an area's valued characteristics, making use of the least obtrusive or otherwise damaging possible location.

Local Plan policy LT18 states that the provision of safe access arrangements will be a prerequisite of any development.

Core Strategy policy L3 seeks to conserve and enhance archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic assets. Local Plan policy LC5 states that development in Conservation Areas should assess and clearly demonstrate how the existing appearance of the Conservation Area will be preserved and, where possible, enhanced. Whilst Local Plan policy LC6 relates to the effect a proposal would have on the setting of Listed Buildings.

Assessment

Design/Use of the Buildings

The proposed building would be constructed of blockwork with a mix of Yorkshire boarding and box profile cladding to the walls with box profile cladding to the roof. It would be open-fronted and would be used for the storage of cattle and sheep as well as fodder and straw. The building's design and materials is typical of modern agricultural buildings and would reflect the existing buildings at the farm.

The applicant has provided information in respect of the existing farm (i.e. stock numbers, land ownership, land occupancy etc). The holding is the same size as when the earlier planning application for an agricultural building was approved in 2011, with the number of cattle and sheep remaining at a similar level. They are also still part of a Farm Business Tenancy that runs until 2020 for 138 ha of land on Cressbrook Dale (the majority of the holding). The FBT prevents animals from grazing on the land until later in the year and results in them having to be housed inside, hence the need for the agricultural buildings.

Whilst the farm's existing circumstances have not altered since the 2011 permission, the existing buildings were only intended to house cattle and sheep whereas they are now also used to store hay and straw. The farmers also wish to increase the number of ewes and suckler cows but the current buildings are restricting this expansion. In addition, the existing buildings currently cannot house all of the straw, with some having to be stacked outside during busy periods. The proposed building would allow more space for the storage of straw; allow for the separation of fodder and straw from the animals; would allow more space for cattle to be housed in more suitable groups (either by size or age); and would allow housing at critical times when extra space is needed (i.e. during calving and lambing time).

The farm is run in conjunction with another farm at the opposite end of the village known as Meadow Farm. Consideration was given at the time of the 2011 application for the erection of the new buildings at Meadow Farm rather than Pictor Farm, with the Case Officer stating in their Delegated Report:

'Consideration has been given to extending the floor space available at Meadow Farm, but the lack of land associated with this site, the congestion of the site and its access, the remote proximity to the main areas of land owned and rented and the close proximity to neighbouring properties all lend support to the argument for the building at Pictor Farm, despite this being a more prominent site from distant views.'

The circumstances at Meadow Farm have not altered in the intervening five years and therefore it is considered that this same argument still stands. No evidence was provided by the Parish Council or neighbours to suggest that the proposal has not been made for genuine farming reasons. Based upon the evidence outlined above it is accepted that the development is proposed for agricultural purposes and it would support the enterprise on the site.

Character/Landscape

The application site is located within the White Peak landscape character area as identified within the Landscape Strategy and specifically within the 'Limestone Village Farmlands' landscape character type. The landscape around the application site is characterised by a gently undulating plateau of pastoral farmland enclosed by drystone walls made from limestone. It has a repeating pattern of narrow strip fields originating from medieval open fields with scattered boundary trees and tree groups around buildings.

The buildings associated with the adjacent Hall Farm effectively screen the existing and proposed agricultural building from view when travelling in a southerly direction through the village; however Pictor Farm is the first group of buildings that are viewed when travelling in a northerly direction along the same road. The existing farm buildings are sited below the level of the road and in the case of the more modern building, has been cut into the adjacent ground. This has resulted in the buildings having a less prominent appearance as only the roofs of the buildings are visible when travelling in a northerly direction. In contrast, the proposed building would be sited on an existing level part of the yard, due east of the existing buildings. It would be more prominent than the existing buildings when travelling along the road in a northerly direction and it would extend the built development out into the open countryside, beyond the existing ribbon of the village.

There are also wide-ranging views of the site, particularly when viewed from the public footpath to the south and from another road located across the fields to the east. The proposed building, whilst located within the existing group of farm buildings, would be a prominent addition when viewed from the surrounding landscape. If the building was marginally re-sited and orientated through 90-degrees, it is considered that its impact on the landscape could be significantly lessened. However this could not be achieved through this application due to the application site being drawn tightly around the proposed building. The proposed building therefore does not make use of the least obtrusive or otherwise less damaging possible location, contrary to the policy and guidance on agricultural buildings.

Due to the siting and orientation of the proposed building, it is considered that it would result in a prominent structure that would have a detrimental impact on the valued landscape characteristics of the area, as well as the gateway into the village and the surrounding Conservation Area. The proposed building would therefore be contrary to policies L1 and L3 of the Core Strategy, policies LC4, LC5 and LC13 of the Local Plan and the SPG: 'Agricultural Developments in the Peak District National Park'.

The application site is located approximately 60 metres from the Grade II listed Hall Farm and its associated listed outbuildings. The proposed building would have a similar scale, design and materials as the existing farm buildings that are located closer to the adjacent listed buildings than the proposed building and therefore it is not considered that the proposed building would have a detrimental effect on the setting of the adjacent listed buildings. The proposal would therefore comply with policy L3 of the Core Strategy and policy LC6 of the Local Plan in this regard.

Amenity

The application site is surrounded by fields, with the nearest residential property being 'Hall Farm' and its associated converted barns that is located approximately 60 metres northwest from the proposed agricultural building. The existing buildings at Pictor Farm currently house cattle and sheep and whilst it is proposed to increase the number of animals at the farm, this would not be to a significant degree that is likely to have a detrimental effect on the amenity of the neighbouring property. The open-front of the proposed building would be located within the southern elevation, facing in the opposite direction from the neighbouring property. Due to the distances separating the proposed building from the nearest dwelling it is not considered that a new agricultural building of the scale proposed would result in a loss of light or an overbearing effect. The proposed development would therefore not have a detrimental effect on the amenity of the neighbouring properties and it would comply with policy LH4 of the Local Plan and policy GSP3 of the Core Strategy.

Highway Considerations

The farm is accessed from the B6465, Main Road by an existing access. A driveway and associated parking area is located to the north of the existing buildings that provides access into the yard to the rear. No changes are proposed to the existing access. The siting of the proposed building would not affect the existing parking/turning areas as this part of the yard is currently used for the storage of bales. The Highways Engineer has assessed the application and raises no objection subject to the proposed building remaining ancillary to the existing agricultural operations of Pictor Farm and providing there is no loss of existing off-street manoeuvring space. As this is the case in both aspects, it is considered that the proposed development would be served by satisfactory parking and access arrangements in accordance with saved Local Plan policies LT11 and LT18.

Conclusion

It is considered that the applicant has provided sufficient information in order to fully justify the proposed building for agricultural purposes and that the building has been designed for its intended purpose with materials that would complement the existing buildings at the farm.

It is not considered that the proposed building would have an adverse effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties, highway safety, or the setting of the adjacent Grade II listed buildings. However, it is considered that the siting of the building, together with its orientation, would result in the built development of the farm extending into the surrounding open countryside, resulting in a prominent building in the landscape and on the gateway into the village as well as within the Conservation Area. It is considered that the building could be sited in a less obtrusive manner at the farm and therefore the current proposal should be refused.

Human Rights

Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

List of Background Papers (not previously published)

Nil